

# Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

**8 November 2016**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

## Local Plan Examination Update

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Cheryl Parks, Project Manager Local Plan
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. This report makes no recommendations and is purely provided as information to update the Committee on progress with the examination of the Local Plan.

### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all -
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough – The Local Plan, once adopted will assist the Council with meeting its strategic objectives and corporate objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan, complimenting other Council strategies and plans.

### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	8 November 2016

# Local Plan Examination Update

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report makes no recommendations and is purely provided as information to update the Committee on progress with the examination of the Local Plan.
  - 1.2 Hearings commenced on 4 October 2016 and are scheduled to be completed on 1 December 2016.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Committee has considered the Local Plan in a number of its formative stages, including making recommendations to Council regarding its publication and submission to the Secretary of State earlier this year.
- 2.2 The Committee has been further updated regarding the organisation of the examination and the appointment of the Inspector to examine the plan.
- 2.3 Examination Hearings commenced on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Prior to commencement the Inspector issued an agenda and questions for each session, to which responses were invited. The Council submitted a series of responses to aid discussion during each of the sessions, as did a number of the participants of the hearings.
- 2.4 All of the information has been uploaded to the Council's website, along with documents and other information relating to matters discussed at the hearings. The support of the web team with the uploading of documentation has been greatly appreciated. Following a few technical hiccups on days 1 and 2, the new webcasting system has also been used to allow those unable to attend the hearings to see what was discussed.
- 2.5 There has been significant media interest with journalists from both the Kent Messenger and Downs Mail in attendance as well as a television crew from Meridian News. There has also been considerable interest from the public with an audience present in every session to date.
- 2.6 The sessions completed during October have focussed primarily on strategic matters. Session one considered Legal Compliance and Duty to Cooperate before moving on to housing needs in the afternoon.
- 2.7 The debate that ensued was particularly interesting to observe with parties arguing that the figure was too high. This contrasted significantly with the arguments of the following morning (Session 2) where the development industry and the Home Builders Federation were arguing for a higher figure to accommodate both overspill from London, and also to increase affordability.

- 2.8 Later sessions considered strategic elements of housing supply including windfalls, and broad locations, as well as the strategic development underway in the south-east of Maidstone. Later sessions (in November) will consider in more detail the allocated sites as well as hearing from landowners and agents who are promoting sites not currently allocated in the submitted plan.
- 2.9 There was a helpful “workshop” session on the third morning between the Council, Kent County Council Highways and Highways England to consider all the recently completed highways and transport evidence. The Inspector will use the discussions to assist in his deliberations and in his questioning for the later transport and infrastructure sessions.
- 2.10 As a result of the hearings concluded to date the Inspector has issued a series of actions for participants to which specific parties have been asked to respond.
- 2.11 The examination is now in a period of recess with the remaining sessions commencing on Tuesday 8 November. Matters to be considered in these sessions are relating to Rural Service Centres and Larger Villages, Transport and Infrastructure and Gypsy & Traveller issues amongst others.
- 2.12 A further update is scheduled to be provided to the Committee in January 2017 by which time officers may have interim conclusions from The Inspector.

**3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress made to date with the examination hearings and the further update to be provided in January 2017.

**4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress made to date with the examination hearings and further update as set out in 3.1 above.

**5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The Local Plan is one of the key strategies that will promote delivery of the Council’s Vision, Mission, Priorities and Objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

<b>Risk Management</b>	There is a small risk relating to the outcome of the Local Plan examination, however officers are confident that the supporting evidence for the Local Plan justifies the approach. The mandate of Council was sought prior to submission.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Financial</b>	The Council will incur significant expenditure in the current financial year on the Local Plan examination and funds have been set aside to cover the likely costs. A detailed profile of projected costs has been drawn up and will be closely scrutinised and monitored. Securing the use of the Town Hall as opposed to an external venue has been helpful in keeping estimated expenditure lower than initial budget forecasts. Some additional, unplanned, expenditure will be incurred to facilitate the webcasting of all hearing sessions.	Mark Green, Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	The Spatial Policy Team is sufficiently staffed to manage the examination. A detailed plan has been prepared in relation to presenting topics at the examination, making use of officers from Development Management, and also limited use of specialist consultants to defend key pieces of work.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications arising from this report.	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning), Mid-Kent Legal Services
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	An EQIA was undertaken to support the Publication of the Local Plan, and this will be reviewed prior to the commencement of the examination. Any specific needs of those wishing to take part in	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager

	the process will be accommodated wherever possible. The webcasting of the sessions assists in reaching out to those unable to attend.	
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The Local Plan is founded on the principles of sustainability and sustainable development, and this is a golden thread that runs through the plan and supporting evidence. Specific evidence relating to environmental matters supports the Local Plan and is available as part of the evidence library.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Community Safety</b>	There are no specific impacts or issues.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	There are no specific impacts or issues.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Procurement</b>	All procurement regulations have been met and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules followed in the preparatory work for the Local Plan and its evidence.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development & Mark Green, Section 151 Officer
<b>Asset Management</b>	There are no specific impacts or issues.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

## 6. REPORT APPENDICES

None

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## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None