

Appendix I – Summary of the Inspector’s Report

The non-technical summary of the Inspector’s report includes the following useful summary of the Main Modifications required;

- **“Strategy**
The creation of a Strategy Chapter in order to: incorporate strategic objectives that are present in various parts of the submitted Local Plan; fill gaps in the strategy; and to more clearly identify which are the strategic policies of the Local Plan.
- **Natural and Historic Environment**
A revised strategy for the natural environment and the historic environment to include the de-merging of relevant development management policies on these matters for greater consistency with national policy.
- **Minerals Safeguarding**
The identification of minerals safeguarding areas in the recently adopted Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the addition of requirements for minerals assessments where appropriate for consistency with national policy for minerals safeguarding.
- **Transport and Air Quality**
Modified policies to confirm and strengthen the use of sustainable transport measures as well as highway improvements in order to mitigate the potential impacts of additional movements on congestion and air quality. The development management policy on air quality is modified for clarity and effectiveness to include updated reference to other measures that are being pursued.
- **Housing Need and Supply**
The objectively assessed housing need is reduced and the backlog is to be addressed over 10 years in order to smooth the trajectory with a further review of housing needs to form part of the intended review of the Local Plan as set out in the submitted plan but with a target adoption date brought forward to April 2021.
- **South East Maidstone Strategic Development Location**
Modified policies in relation to transport mitigation, infrastructure provision, the setting of listed buildings, and open space.
- **Other South Maidstone Allocations**
Delete housing allocations H1(29) New Line Learning, Boughton Lane and H1(53) Boughton Lane due to their adverse traffic impacts on Boughton Lane and the A229.
- **Policy H2 Broad Locations for Housing Development**
Modify the Broad Location policies to: increase housing provision in Maidstone town centre and further define its location within the town centre; reduce the proportion of the housing at the Invicta Barracks

site that is likely to be delivered within the Local Plan period ending 2031; reduce the amount of housing that is likely to be delivered at Lenham and provide that its location is to be determined by the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan or, by default, the Local Plan Review.

- **Other Housing Supply**

A series of modifications to individual housing allocations and the windfall housing allowance to reflect new evidence.

- **Other Relevant Development Management Housing Policies**

Moving the Housing Mix Policy to the Strategy chapter whilst providing that Neighbourhood Plans can provide flexibility and local context in determining the appropriate housing mix.

Modifying the housing density policy for reasons of clarity and effectiveness.

Modifying the policy on Affordable Housing for consistency with modified national policy to exempt smaller developments.

Modifying the policy on Local Needs Housing in the interests of clarity and effectiveness.

- **Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

Modifying Policy DM16 in the interests of effectiveness and consistency with national policy

- **Employment**

Modify the requirements for employment floorspace in the interests of clarity and effectiveness. To address viability issues it is necessary to modify where provision is to be made to meet the identified need for office floorspace allocations as well as including windfall provision.

Modifying the policy for the strategic employment site at Woodcut Farm to reduce its impact on the landscape and on heritage assets whilst safeguarding office provision. Modifying policy for employment development in economic development areas in the countryside and for development involving the expansion of existing rural businesses.

- **Retail and Mixed Development**

Modifying relevant policies to clarify when retail impact assessments are or are not required for consistency with national policy. Remove the residential and employment allocation at the former Syngenta Works in Yalding for reasons of flood risk whilst retaining a policy to allow for other uses that can be shown to be compatible with that location. Add a new policy for the Baltic Wharf site to address a policy vacuum concerning the comprehensive approach to the future use of the site that has regard to the listed status of the principal building. Redefine the Mote Road site in Maidstone as a mixed use residential led allocation with a reduced requirement for office floorspace in order to address viability issues.

- **Other Development Management and Open Space Policies**

Allowing for the redevelopment of qualifying brownfield sites in the countryside with revised transport criteria whilst clarifying that residential gardens in the countryside do not qualify as brownfield

land. Modifying policy for non-conforming uses in the interests of clarity and effectiveness. Modifying policy on external lighting to protect intrinsically dark landscapes and wildlife. Providing that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy developments in the AONB would be addressed by AONB policies and not precluded which would be inconsistent with national policy. Modifying some open space allocations as a consequence of changes to housing allocations or where the original allocation is not justified.

- **Infrastructure Delivery**

Modifying misleading wording in the interests of effectiveness and providing that sufficient infrastructure is to be available in order for new development to be supported.

- **Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

Comprehensively modifying the monitoring provisions with new more specific and measurable targets and triggers for review.”

On specific matters, the Inspector;

- Supports the Plan’s overall distribution of development in the borough
- Revises the Objectively Assessed Housing Need figure to 17,660 dwellings (2011-31)
- Confirms that the Council can demonstrate a 6.11 year housing land supply (at 1st April 2016). The Inspector also references the Council’s updated position of 6.3 years based on 1st April 2017 data although he is unable to endorse this further improved position as these latest figures have not been tested during the Examination¹.
- Does not require the Plan to include additional housing allocations to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need
- Confirms the Plan’s approach to meeting employment needs including the need for the Woodcut Farm allocation at M20 J8.
- Endorses MBC’s approach to transport mitigation, including opportunities for sustainable transport modes, to limit the traffic impacts of development.
- Confirms that a first review of the Local Plan is required with a target adoption date of April 2021. Amongst other matters, the Review may make additional housing site allocations to secure and diversify the housing land supply for the latter part of the Plan period, supplementing the delivery from the three Broad Locations (Lenham, Invicta Barracks and Maidstone Town Centre).

¹ It is important to note that the same methodology used to calculate housing land supply at April 2016 has also been used at April 2017