

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/local-plan/examination>

SESSION 3A – TRANSPORT MODELLING SEMINAR

Inspector's Agenda

1. Introduction

- 1.1. There are significant objections to the submitted Local Plan from Kent Council as the local highway and transportation authority, and from Highways England, which has responsibility for motorways and trunk roads including the M20.
- 1.2. Whilst the County and Borough Councils have established a Joint Transportation Board, the councils were unable to agree a proposed Integrated Transportation Strategy before the Local Plan was submitted for examination.
- 1.3. The Borough Council is intending to seek areas of common ground with the County Council including agreement on an Integrated Transport Strategy. This should be available in advance of the Transport Seminar.
- 1.4. In a letter dated 18 July 2016 that has been posted on the examination website the Borough Council responded to a series of questions from the Inspector about further evidence on transport matters that is in preparation, including new modelling. This is relevant to the issues raised by both the County Council and by Highways England. In particular there is to be modelling of a 'Do nothing' scenario at the year 2031 but with the development of the 18,560 dwellings identified by the submitted Local Plan to meet local needs. Also localised modelling is proposed for junctions 5-8 of the M20 using a methodology to be agreed with Highways England.
- 1.5. This new evidence is not yet available to inform consideration of other relevant transport issues including the many representations from other persons on transport matters. There will therefore be a need to present and explain the technical transport evidence at an early stage in the hearings.

- 1.6. The County Council is also expecting to consult on its Local Transport Plan 4 which may be published as a consultation draft before the hearings but is unlikely to be finalised or adopted until 2017.

2. The Seminar

- 2.1. The use of technical seminars is described in the Planning Inspectorate publication '*Procedural Practice in the Examination of Local Plans*' (June 2016) at paragraphs 9.25-9.26. This provides that where a plan raises complex technical considerations the Inspector may seek to hold a technical seminar at which the methodology and basis of the evidence being presented is explained.
- 2.2. As the Practice document explains, the seminar will not test the evidence. Its purpose is to save time during the hearing sessions and help to ensure a more effective examination by enabling all parties to obtain a clearer understanding of the technical basis including the methodological underpinning of the evidence.
- 2.3. The Borough Council is requested to cooperate with the County Council and Highways England to prepare explanatory material in advance of the seminar by **Thursday 15 September**. This will be placed on the examination website together with any agreed Statements of Common Ground and the latest version of the Integrated Transportation Strategy.
- 2.4. Relevant experts from these parties are invited to attend the seminar and to present and explain the results of the modelling and its implications for their respective positions.
- 2.5. The seminar will be held in public and is likely to be broadcast by webcam. However the seminar is not the place for a general discussion about the related issues. The relevance and appropriateness of the evidence will instead be explored and tested as necessary at subsequent relevant hearing sessions and at a transport and infrastructure hearing that is currently programmed to be held on 17 November 2016.

