

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

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SESSION 6B – LARGER VILLAGES HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Deadline for Statements: Thursday 15th September.

Please refer to the Inspector's Procedural Guidance Notes for information on the provision of hearing statements.

Inspector's Agenda with Matters, Issues, and Questions

Issue (ii) Whether specified Loose and Larger Village housing allocations are sound or require modification.

1. Loose

H1(29) New Line Learning, Boughton Lane

- 1.1. Loose is part of the Maidstone Other Urban area in the Local Plan and is not designated as a larger village. It has been included in this session because of its close relationship to Boughton Monchelsea with which it shares some issues relating to development on Boughton Lane
- 1.2. Following the dismissal of an appeal in respect of a planning application for this site (Document ORD 031) the Council proposes to retain the allocation but with a series of Proposed Changes to Policy H1(29) including:
 - a reduction in dwelling numbers from 220 to 180 (an average density of 28.5 dwellings per hectare);
 - an amended design criterion,
 - amended site access, and
 - an additional criterion requiring improvements to capacity at the A229/A274 Wheatsheaf Junction.
- 1.3. Helen Grant MP (R19421) draws attention to the dismissal of the appeal by the Secretary of state and especially to the congestion and safety issues both in Boughton Lane and on the wider network, including cumulative impacts with other development.

- 1.4. BDW Trading Ltd (R19515) control the allocation site. Ownership is divided between BDW and Kent County Council. BDW Trading supports the allocation, and their participation in the hearing is requested because of their knowledge of the proposed access arrangements and their relevance to the changes proposed by the Council which have not yet been the subject of public consultation.

- 1.5. Kent County Council has questioned whether capacity improvements can be achieved at the Wheatsheaf Junction given that the traffic signals are already optimised and that a proposal to close a side road is not being pursued.

Qn6.24 How do the proposed policy changes address the reasons for the dismissal of the appeal and are they sufficient for the site still to be deliverable?

Qn6.25 What capacity improvement is possible at the Wheatsheaf Junction and would that be sufficient to clear the Swan Junction as claimed having regard to traffic from other proposed developments?

- 1.6. A Neighbourhood Plan has recently been adopted for North Loose

Qn6.26 Does the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan have any implications for the Local Plan?

2. Boughton Monchelsea

H1(53) Boughton Lane, Boughton Monchelsea and Loose

- 2.1. The Council has proposed changes to the policy in respect of pedestrian and cycle access arrangements and a criterion concerning improvements to capacity at the A229/A274 Wheatsheaf Junction.

Qn6.27 What capacity improvement is possible at the Wheatsheaf Junction and would that be sufficient to clear the Swan Junction as claimed having regard to traffic from other proposed developments?

H1(55) Junction of Church Street and Heath Road, Boughton Monchelsea

- 2.2. There is a pending planning application for the development of 41 dwellings on this site (Ref 15/509961/FULL). The application is expected to go to Committee on 24 August 2016. An extension of time to determine the application to 30 September 2016 has been agreed between the Council and the Applicant.
- 2.3. Mr Carpenter (R199) considers that the allocation of this site would be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2.4. Mr Carpenter also claims conflict with former government Planning Policy Guidance notes, Regional Planning Guidance and the Kent Structure Plan. However all these policy and guidance documents have been withdrawn and are no longer part of national or regional policy or guidance. Insofar as the allocation may conflict with the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the Regulation 18 consultation draft Borough Local Plan, those documents either would be, or have been, superseded by the submission Local Plan.

Qn6.28 Setting aside claims of conflict with policies and guidance that are either no longer in effect or which would be superseded, would Mr Carpenter please clarify where he considers the proposed allocation to be inconsistent with the national policy as currently set out in the National Planning Policy Framework?

Qn6.29 Would the Council please advise the Inspector if the planning application is determined before the examination hearing or of any other update to progress of the application?

3. Coxheath

SP11 Larger Villages

SP13 Coxheath

- 3.1. Coxheath PC (R19193) considers that with a 30% increase in the number of dwellings excessive growth is proposed for Coxheath relative to its size and by comparison with other large villages and does not constitute limited development. It is also claimed to be contrary to the Local Plan's strategy and to statements in the reasoned justification. Other detailed comments are provided.

Qn6.30 Would the Council please respond to the Coxheath PC representations?

- 3.2. There is an emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Coxheath which provides for fewer dwellings than does the Local Plan.

Qn6.31 Which are the strategic Local Plan policies with which the Neighbourhood Plan should be consistent once the Local Plan has been adopted?

- 3.3. The Local Plan includes 5 housing site allocations in Coxheath. Planning applications have been submitted for 4 of the 5 sites of which 2 have been permitted and 2 are at the date of writing subject to a resolution to permit subject to the completion of a S106 obligation.

Qn6.32 Would the Council please advise the Inspector should these planning permissions be issued before the examination hearings?

H1(60) Forstal Lane Coxheath

- 3.4. Coxheath PC seeks the deletion of the allocation on the basis that no developer has expressed an interest in the site, highway access is said to be inadequate, and the high cost of sewerage is said to render the site unviable. The development is said to be in excess of 'sustainable needs'.

Qn6.33 Is there evidence that the site is both viable and deliverable?

H1(61) North of Heath Road (Older's Field) Coxheath

- 3.5. Coxheath PC refers to a claimed shortage of open space in Coxheath and notes that the open space provision on site H1(58) has been reduced. The Parish Council seeks that land for which permission has been granted for 'public open space' in relation to this allocation is itself allocated for 'public open space' in the Local Plan.

Qn6.34 Would the Council please respond to the Parish Council's representations on this matter?

Qn6.35 Is the Neighbourhood Plan proposing to make provision for public open space to address the claimed shortfall?

4. Sutton Valence

SP15 Sutton Valence

- 4.1. Sutton Valence is designated as a Larger Village with a single housing allocation H1(66) for 40 dwellings for which planning permission has already been granted Ref 14/504556/FULL).

- 4.2. Sutton Valence PC (R19170) seeks the deletion of Sutton Valence as a Larger Village and refers to a petition in that regard. Reasons cited include a poor and expensive bus service, lack of access to private playing fields. Lack of other facilities which other large villages possess and because this status has attracted speculative planning applications.

Qn6.36 Would the Council please respond to the Parish Council's representations on this matter?