

## **Maidstone Local Plan Review: Scoping, Themes & Issues**

**FAQ's July 2019**

### **What is the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review?**

A Local Plan is a document produced by councils across the country which guides the way new development will happen over the coming years. It provides the key framework for future decisions on planning applications. It sets out how much new development is needed, where it should be built and what supporting infrastructure such as roads, schools and health centres should be provided. It also guides the quality of development.

There is already a Local Plan in place (the 'Maidstone Borough Local Plan') and reviewing the plan now means that we will continue to have a Local Plan that is fit for purpose into the future. The Local Plan Review will look ahead to at least 2037 and possibly further into the future than that.

### **Why the Local Plan Review important?**

Having an up to date Local Plan is key to keeping local control over new development. Without an up to date Local Plan in place, it is much more likely that planning applications will be approved on appeal by the Government's Planning Inspectorate for developments which the council considers are inappropriate. An up to date Local Plan is also the best way to protect what we value most about the borough including our distinctive heritage, important wildlife habitats and attractive countryside. It is also an important way that we can help to tackle the global challenge of climate change at the local level. Further, if the council does not make progress with its Local Plan Review, the Government could decide to take over its plan-making powers and prepare the Local Plan itself. Again this would mean key decisions about the future development of the borough would not be made locally.

### **Why has MBC already decided to embrace growth and enable infrastructure?**

Before starting the Local Plan Review, MBC prepared its own Strategic Plan (2019-45). This sets out a long term and ambitious vision for the borough and ways it will be achieved. The council has decided to 'embrace growth and enable infrastructure' as one of its four key priorities. This means that it is taking a positive view of growth and the benefits it can bring for all our local communities including ensuring that the right infrastructure is delivered in conjunction with new development. The Strategic Plan is available here [http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/269721/Strategic-Plan-2019.pdf](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/269721/Strategic-Plan-2019.pdf)

## **What happens at this stage?**

This is the first public consultation stage for the Local Plan Review. We have published a consultation document called 'Scoping, Themes & Issues' which provides background about the Local Plan Review, the matters it may need to tackle and suggestions for what the way forward could be. You can give us your views on the overall scope of the Local Plan Review by answering some or all of the consultation questions in the document.

## **What will happen to my comments?**

Your comments will be published on our consultation portal (via our website) so you can view your comments and those made by others. Your name will be published but other personal data (such as addresses) will not be published. You will not receive a bespoke response to your comments but we will consider each comment we receive and take these into account as the Local Plan Review is progressed.

## **What happens next?**

The consultation responses are an important influence on the Local Plan Review. Other important factors are national planning legislation and guidance and the council's own Strategic Plan.

Specialist evidential studies will also be an important input into the Local Plan Review. These help to ensure that the Local Plan Review has a robust basis and can withstand technical scrutiny. Amongst other things, these studies will give us information on the current and future needs of the local economy, specialist housing needs and transport impacts. The studies will be published on the council's website as they are completed.

## **Will I have a further chance to comment?**

Yes. A second public consultation on Preferred Approaches for the Local Plan Review is scheduled for February 2020 to be followed by consultation on a full draft of the Local Plan Review in October 2020.

## **Where can I find out more about the Local Plan Review?**

Information regarding the MBC Local Plan Review will be updated throughout the Review process. This can be found online at [www.maidstone.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/localplanreview)

If you are unable to find the answers to your questions on these pages, please do not hesitate to contact the Strategic Planning team: [ldf@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@maidstone.gov.uk)