



Gladman Developments Ltd

Maidstone Local Plan EiP

Examination: Hearing Sessions

Session 14B – Alternative Sites

Issue (i) – Whether the alternative site would be suitable, sustainable and deliverable

Land to the west of Maidstone Road, Marden

Qn14.12 Does the site have any relevant planning history? (Applications, permissions, appeals, previous allocations)

1. An outline planning application (Application Ref: 16/504584/OUT) for up to 150 dwellings (including up to 40% affordable housing) was submitted to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) on 26th May 2016 and validated on 2nd June 2016. The application was subsequently refused by the MBC on 21st October 2016 for three reasons for refusal.

Qn14.13: What is the site's policy status in the submitted Local Plan? (eg whether in defined settlement/countryside/AONB/conservation area/Landscape of Local Value etc)

2. The site is located adjacent to the draft settlement boundary and is defined as countryside in the submitted Local Plan. The site is therefore covered by draft Policy SP17 (Countryside).

Qn14.14: What is the site's policy status in any made or emerging neighbourhood plan?

3. The area designation for the Neighbourhood Plan Area for Marden was approved on 14th January 2013. There is no evidence that the emerging Neighbourhood Plan has progressed

since the area designation was granted. There are no currently no draft policies and therefore the site does not have a policy status in the emerging neighbourhood plan.

Qn14.15: Is the site greenfield or previously developed (brownfield) land according to the definition in the glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework?

4. The site is greenfield and is part grassland scrub and part used for the production of turf.

Qn14.16: What previous consideration by the Council has been given to the site's development (eg inclusion in a Strategic Housing and Economic Development Land availability Assessment (SHEDLAA) and does the Representor have any comments on its conclusions.

5. The site has previously been considered in the Council's SHEDLAA (site reference: HO-151). The site was however assessed as part of a much larger potential strategic allocation for 500+ houses plus retail and not as a much smaller defined parcel as submitted by Gladman.
6. A smaller parcel was submitted for review in October 2015 but this was not properly considered in the context of how appropriate the smaller parcel would be in comparison to the larger previously considered site. In this instance it is clear from reading the SHEDLAA, that the scale of the site (as assessed, not as we are promoting) is one of the key influence on the outcome. It is considered that the assessment of a site smaller in scale than that previously considered could well lead to an entirely different outcome and assessment.
7. The site is materially different to the larger site assessed within this SHEDLAA. Gladman maintain that much of the Council's Statement is only applicable to the larger site and an assessment of the smaller site would lead to an entirely different outcome and assessment. We therefore have serious concerns at the robustness of the document for the plan making process.

Qn14.17: What is the site area and has a site plan been submitted which identifies the site?

8. The site area is 6.72 hectares (16.6 acres). A site location plan was submitted as part of the Regulation 19 Local Plan representations in March 2016.

Qn14.18: What type, and amount of development could be expected and at what density?

9. The recently submitted planning application included the proposed development for up to 150 dwellings at a density of 33 dwellings per hectare. The proposed development included 40% affordable housing (60 homes), 2.05 ha of public open space provision (30% of the site)

and an additional car park for Marden Train station for up to 50 spaces to reduce car parking problems in the village.

10. The proposed development also includes improvements to existing footway links to Marden along Maidstone Road, which would improve accessibility to the main facilities and services within the settlement. It is also proposed to improve pedestrian and disabled access to the northern platform of Marden Train Station.

Qn14.19: When could development be delivered and at what rate?

11. It is anticipated that that it would take approximately 18 months to sell the site to a house builder, submit reserved matter(s) and discharge pre-commencement conditions. It is anticipated that the developer could deliver approximately 30 dwellings per annum with the majority of the proposed 150 dwellings delivered in the next five years.

Qn14.21: Has the site been the subject of sustainability appraisal and does the Representor have any comments on its conclusions?

12. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) considers the site (site reference: HO-151). As with the SHEDLAA, the SA has assessed the site for 500 dwellings. The proposed site submitted by Gladman is much smaller and is greatly reduced in the number of dwellings, as such it has little of the impact identified by the assessment in the larger HO-151.
13. The SA concludes that *“despite being located in close proximity to Marden, the SA findings demonstrate that site HO-151 presents additional constraints. The delivery of a substantial number of houses (500) may have adverse effects on the existing landscape which is characterised as open and rural in character.”*
14. The site that Gladman are promoting is materially different to the larger site assessed within the SA. Gladman maintain that much of the assessment is only applicable to the larger site and a SA of the smaller site would lead to a different conclusion and assessment. We therefore have serious concerns at the robustness of the Sustainability Appraisal for the plan making process.

Qn14.22: What constraints are there on the site's development and how could any adverse impacts be mitigated?

15. There are no technical constraints why this development could not come forward. There were no objections from statutory consultees as part of planning application reference: 16/504584/OUT with regard to highways, drainage, flood risk, ecology, noise and air quality.
16. The submitted application was however refused by MBC because the proposed development lies outside any defined settlement boundary and would consolidate sporadic development in the area, causing unacceptable visual harm to the character and appearance of the countryside.
17. Gladman however consider that a well-planned and designed development would be an appropriate addition to the existing settlement in a location which would limit any effects upon the wider landscape. The site is also already heavily influenced by urbanising features by residential properties to the east, the business park to the west and the train station to the south.
18. The application was also refused because the proposed development would result in harm to nearby heritage assets. A detailed assessment of nearby heritage assets was undertaken as part of the submitted planning application, which considered that appropriate contextual development within the site will have no impact upon the significance of these heritage assets.