



Maidstone Local Plan Examination

Response to Inspector's Session 5B Questions: South East Maidstone

Prepared on behalf of



COUNTRYSIDE
Places People Love

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This evidence is submitted on behalf of Countryside Properties, which controls a number of major development sites within the Maidstone Borough.
- 1.1.2 Specifically, land south of Sutton Road Langley features as allocation H1 (10) for 800 new homes within the South East Maidstone area. The land is also subject to a recent resolution to grant planning permission for 800 homes subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement. Accordingly, it represents a development of strategic nature for Maidstone Borough.
- 1.1.3 Given the scale of the homes to be provided, our client wishes to be present at the relevant hearing session and to have the ability to provide further comments in respect of the Inspector's questions.

1.2 Scope of Representations

- 1.2.1 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) has submitted its Local Plan and associated documentation for Independent Examination. An Examination Programme has been published, which divides the hearings into various sections over six weeklong sessions. The first tranche of hearings will be held in October 2015 and will address issues of national policy consistency, housing land supply and other strategic borough-wide policy issues. The subsequent parts, to be heard in November and December 2016, will consider site-specific allocations and more generic planning issues.
- 1.2.2 This statement constitutes Countryside Properties' formal response to questions raised by the Inspector in regards to Matter 5B in respect of South East Maidstone only.

2 Response to The Inspector's Questions

2.1 Overview of Evidence

2.1.1 The Inspector has raised four questions in respect of matters relating to South East Maidstone. Whilst the majority of these questions are directed to the Council, we also take the opportunity to respond where we feel can add to the discussion and assist the Examination.

2.2 Q 5.11 – When will the H1(10) S106 legal agreement be completed?

2.2.1 Planning application 15/509015 was subject to a resolution to grant planning permission on 14 July 2016 subject to completion of a suitably worded legal agreement. In this regard, the agreed Heads of Terms require the following contributions to be agreed:

- (1) Health Facilities - contribution of £800,000 (actual figure to be confirmed) towards health at the Orchard Langley Surgery and/or Wallis Avenue Surgery. Or the provision of on-site health facilities to be determined at reserved matters stage;
- (2) Primary Education provision of a primary school on a site of a minimum of 1.2 hectares but cascade approach to allow for 2.1 hectares if the needs of the development requires it, through reserved matters process. If required the additional land to be provided at agricultural land value (£5,625 per dwelling assuming 1 form entry);
- (3) Community Facilities - £600,000 towards on or off-site community facilities, proposed as part of the development (£750 per dwelling);
- (4) Provision of a minimum 19.77 hectares of public open space;
- (5) Secondary education: £1,887,840. towards the expansion of the Cornwallis School (£2359.80 per dwelling);
- (6) Community learning £24,560 (Toward the refurbishment required at St Faiths Adult Education Centre in Maidstone to provide additional capacity to meet the needs of the additional attendees) - £30.70 per dwelling
- (7) Youth Services £6,792 ((Towards additional equipment required to support the additional attendees at the Fusion café Youth project nearby (£8.49 per dwelling);
- (8) Library book stock £38,416 (Towards additional book stock required to mitigate the impact of the new borrowers from this development) - £48.02 per dwelling
- (9) Social Care £43,104 ((Towards cost of providing additional services for this proposed development, namely: accessibility improvements to a Community Building local to the development where social care services are delivered by KCC or a third party - £53.88 per dwelling;
- (10) Provision of a travel plan, public transport incentives, including free taster tickets for local buses and a contribution towards monitoring of the travel plan;
- (11) Landscape and Ecological Management Plan; and

- (12) Appropriate contributions for highways mitigation as finalised under delegated authority.
- (13) Annual monitoring of any displaced traffic on highway routes (rat running) and necessary mitigation
- (14) Establishment of a development monitoring committee prior to the submission of the first reserved matters planning application.

2.2.2 As can be seen from the criteria above, there are substantial requirements that need to be secured before planning permission can formally be granted. In this regard, requirement 12 seeks apportionment of highways mitigation works across the draft strategic site allocations in South East Maidstone in order to provide a comprehensive package of highways mitigation measures. This in itself is a substantial piece of work and therefore the legal agreement is likely to be a complex piece of work and it is not therefore envisaged to be completed until early 2017.

2.3 Q5.12 Update regarding H1(8)

2.3.1 No comment to make.

2.4 Q5.13 Impacts of the allocation of land beyond that already approved

2.4.1 Countryside Properties have consistently taken the view that the proposed development should not be restricted to land to the west of the PROW – as set out within the draft policy. In submitting the outline planning application, they sought to demonstrate that development could be accommodated to the east of the PROW without coalescence taking place, and without harm to the existing heritage assets and settlement pattern. This stance has been confirmed by Historic England, who support the outline application on this basis and consider that such proposals would ‘reinforce’ the key views and setting of the listed building and its context.

2.4.2 It is considered that low-density development of appropriate layout, storey height, design and quality could be successfully accommodated within this location and would also enable positive surveillance of the large area of proposed area of public open space. Storey height and density could be fixed within agreed parameter plans to ensure the heritage setting and key views are both retained and enhanced. The detail of these proposals including a full landscape and visual assessment was included within the submitted outline planning application and formed part of detailed discussions with Historic England and other stakeholders including the Local Authority.

This additional residential area would also allow the gradual reduction and ‘feathering’ of residential density towards the development edge rather than a hard edge of residential development along the PROW.

2.4.3 Whilst Countryside Properties are seeking to deliver up to 800 houses, which is consistent with the local authority’s requirement for this site, should the development be restricted to the west of the PROW it is likely that features such as retail facilities, open space and transport links will be heavily compromised, or indeed not economically viable.. We therefore take the view

that this would undermine the robustness of the policy, either in terms of housing numbers, or the delivery of key infrastructure.

2.4.4 It is considered that by allocating this additional area of land for appropriate residential development, the H1 (10) draft allocation would be able to deliver additional housing numbers towards the Council's housing land supply and would ensure that the site's residential capacity was being maximised.

2.4.5 It is for this reason that we believe the policy should be reworded, to enable development within this eastern parcel of land, which will help the authority deliver the housing numbers, and the necessary strategic infrastructure required.

2.5 Q5.14 Suitability of the Council's changes

2.5.1 No comment

3 Conclusions and Suggested Modifications

3.1 Summary

- 3.1.1 The Council's planning strategy for South East Maidstone and the growth envisaged is currently sound. Furthermore, given additional sites must be identified to meet housing need and maintain a five year supply of housing land, we consider that the full 800 unit allocation of housing should be sought for delivery as the proposal progresses to the agreement of reserved matters.