

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

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

SESSION 6A –MAIDSTONE AND ‘OTHER URBAN AREA’ HOUSING

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 (i) Whether specified Maidstone and other urban area housing allocations and broad locations are sound or require modification.

1. Maidstone

H1(2) East of Hermitage Lane

- 1.1. An outline application Ref MA/13/1749 for 500 dwellings was allowed on appeal on 19 October 2015 (Appeal Ref APP/U2235/A/14/2226326 & 226327). Two further applications have been submitted, also in outline (Refs 14/503735/OUT and 14/503786/OUT).

- 1.2. Cllr James Willis (R19289) seeks an amendment to the access criteria at H1(2)(6-8) to amend the access location.

Qn6.1 What is the up-to-date position in respect of the planning applications and permissions and has the access already been determined or could it be changed?

Qn6.2 What change to the access criteria does Cllr Willis seek and why would the Local Plan be unsound if that change is not made?

Qn6.3 Would that change affect the viability or deliverability of the site?

H1(11) Springfield, Royal Engineers Road and Mill Lane

- 1.3. This allocation is for 500 dwellings at 'an average density of 132 dwellings per hectare' including a reduced 20% affordable housing to reflect viability considerations. The site is in 2 separate ownerships. There is a pending outline application on part of the site for 130 dwellings (Ref 14/505741/OUT).
- 1.4. GE Healthcare (R19183/R19184 & R19186) seek amendments to the open space criteria at H1(11) (8) and (9) to remove the requirement for 4.8ha of on-site open space and to rely only on the Policy DM22 requirement which may include off-site provision. The site shown green as open space would be incorporated into the housing site shown in blue.

Qn6.4 What is the total site area and is the average density figure correct?

Qn6.5 Why does the Policy specify 4.8ha of open space and is that intended to be additional to the Policy DM22 requirement or part of that requirement?

Qn6.6 Would the Council comment on the proposed modifications?

Qn6.7 What would be the effect on the numbers of dwellings to be provided?

Qn6.8 How would the change affect viability and deliverability?

Qn6... Why would the proposed modification be necessary for the Plan to be sound?

- 1.5. U+I Group Plc (R19602) consider that the site has a greater capacity for housing development at densities of up to 170dph but leave it to the Council officers to arrive at a satisfactory target figure.

Qn6.9 What is the Council's view on density and site capacity?

Qn6.10 Is a change necessary and justified in order for the for the plan to be sound?

H1(30) West of Eclipse, Sittingbourne Road

- 1.6. The Council has proposed a minor change to amend the site address from 'Old Sittingbourne Road' to 'Sittingbourne Road'.

- 1.7. Persimmon Homes South East (R19603) is preparing a planning application and seeks to increase the number of dwellings by enlarging the site towards the M20 and reducing the extent of a noise buffer which is referred to at H1(30)(1) but is not shown as such on the site plan. The Representor says that there is no evidence to justify the extent of the buffer. Neither has any technical evidence been supplied with the representations.

Qn6.11 Would the proposed change increase the extent of the allocation and require the modification of the settlement boundary?

Qn6.12 Should the buffer be defined as part of the allocation?

Qn6.13 Is a buffer necessary for air quality reasons as well as noise?

Qn6.14 What evidence supports the extent of the buffer or should the matter be left to development management ?

Qn6.15 What change is sought to the developable site area and the number of dwellings?

Qn6.16 Why would the requested change be necessary for the plan to be sound?

H2(1) Maidstone Town Centre Broad Location

H2(2) Invicta Park Barracks Broad Location

- 1.8. The H2(1) allocation provides for 700 dwellings to be developed on unidentified sites but within the defined town centre. A masterplan is proposed to develop the visions and to guide development proposals. Development is required to comply with Policy SP4 which sets out objectives for the regeneration of the town centre.
- 1.9. Baltic Wharf (Maidstone) Ltd (R19143) own a site within the town centre which includes a listed building. In 2014 they were successful at appeal in respect of a retail-led development proposal and seek amendments to other town centre policies in that regard including an allocation for mixed retail led development.
- 1.10. They nevertheless object to what they see as the narrow focus of paragraph 9.2 on residential development by change of use from offices which they consider has informed the 'approximately 700' dwellings figure in Policy H2(1). They seek rewording to encourage development of more than 700 dwellings in the town centre as windfall sites.

Qn6.17 Does Baltic Wharf suggest that their site is suitable for residential development notwithstanding that are seeking an allocation for other uses and, if not, what other non-office sites would be potentially suitable ?

- 1.11. Crest Nicholson (R19164) and Cyster (R19165) do not consider that the reliance on broad locations is justified consider that there is a lack of evidence to justify 700 dwellings in the town centre when specific opportunities have already been identified. They also consider that the plan is unsound to rely on 7% of housing from the Invicta Park Barracks Broad Location as its delivery is considered to be uncertain.

- 1.12. The Housing Topic Paper [Document SUB 005] at paragraph 3.15 refers to an increase in the potential yield from town centre sites to 990 dwellings. They also consider that there is a risk of double counting with the windfall allowance.

Qn6.18 Is the Council proposing a modification to Policy H2(1) to provide for the increased yield from 700 to 990 dwellings and is that adequately justified?

Qn6.19 Is the town centre included in the Plan's windfall allowance or excluded to avoid double counting?

Qn6.20 What is the up-to-date position on the availability of Invicta Park Barracks?

2. Barming

H1(23) Bell Farm, North Street, Barming

- 2.1. A planning application for 35 dwellings on this site has been refused by the Council prior to the submission of the Local Plan for examination (Ref 14/506419/FULL). The reasons for refusal relate to character, location in the countryside, habitat loss and harm to the setting of a listed building. The refusal is the subject of an appeal that is currently in temporary abeyance until 16 September 2016 (Appeal Ref APP/U2235/W/16/3146036).
- 2.2. Taylor Wimpey (R19167) support the allocation but consider that the policy requirement for 0.77ha of open space is an error. The Council has proposed a change to correct the figure.

Qn6.21 Is the site still deliverable given the refusal of planning permission by the Council?

Qn6.22 Has the impact of the proposed allocation on character, wildlife and the setting of a listed building been appropriately assessed and justified?

3. Bearsted

H1(21) Barty Farm, Roundwell, Thurnham

H1(31) Bearsted Station Goods Yard

- 3.1. Bearsted Parish Council (R1983) and Capt Belson (R19594) object to these allocations on the grounds of insufficient school places and health services and traffic congestion.

Qn6.23 Would the Council please respond to the representations on these points?

H1(32) Cross Keys, Bearsted

- 3.2. This allocation is objected to by Bearsted Parish Council and others on land drainage and infrastructure grounds. However it is the subject of a full planning permission granted by the Council in 2015. Thus any modification of the allocation policy is unlikely to have any practical effect.