

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

SESSION 5A – HOUSING SUPPLY

This statement is made by Henny Shotter (R1934) and Nick Osborne of Lenham and supported by the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Group

Qn5.4 Is it realistic to expect the H2 (3) Lenham Broad Location for 1,500 dwellings to be delivered within a 5 year period?

Answer: It is not realistic to expect the H2 (3) Lenham Broad Allocation for 1500 dwellings to be delivered within a 5 year period.

Evidence:

1. Unavailability of land

Some of the land which has been identified by MBC Lenham Broad Location Allocation Study 2016 (STR002) is not available. (Withdrawn by the owner or never put forward - evidence can be provided)

2. NPF requires for development to be sustainable in three dimensions. The delivery time schedule affects these dimensions:-

Economically

Environmentally

Socially

Economically: It is unrealistic that in this period of 5 years 300 dwellings p.a. can be completed and sold. There are at the moment new-builds in Lenham village which would be out of the price range for local people.

Infrastructure Delivery is uncertain. We were told that infrastructure provision comes after development has taken place. We cannot imagine how the existing infrastructure can support the trebling of the population in Lenham village over 5 years and how new infrastructure could be phased in. There will be social and environmental consequences.

In respect to Lenham the Infrastructure Delivery plan (DEL 003) makes the following references:

‘The County Council has identified a need for an additional one form of entry at either Harrietsham Primary School or Lenham Primary School however, the timing and location of this scheme is currently under review pending the outcome of feasibility studies.’

(p.1 1)

Issue unresolved

‘Southern Water has confirmed that growth proposed in the Local Plan would not generate the need for new Environmental Permits for any of its waste water treatment works, other than in Lenham alongside the broad location later in the Local Plan period.

Issue unresolved

Secondary Schools (p.11) no mention of Lenham, an underachieving school, in buildings which need urgent upgrading. The presence of this school however is the main aspect why Lenham was chosen as a broad location.

Issue unresolved

Environmentally: The Lenham Neighbourhood Team is of the opinion that several sites identified by MBC within the Broad Location are environmentally not sustainable. The LA from 2015 states: “Further studies are likely to be required to assess the impact of development on the environment and to identify the mitigation measures necessary for any proposals to proceed.” (p. 96). These studies should have been carried out well in advance of the plan inspection, as in our opinion there are impacts which cannot be mitigated and some are likely to increase due to climate change.

Such impacts are:

- Groundwater flooding which will quite likely worsen in the next 10 years as a consequence of climate change. See: CC001 Maidstone Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, May 2008 (figure 4.1) groundwater flooding in an area of Lenham which has been marked as one of the possible H2 (3) allocations. With respect to development in areas at risk of groundwater flooding the assessment concludes:

‘Locating development in areas where groundwater flooding occurs will increase the impact caused by this source of flooding’.

To our knowledge there is no method of mitigating against Groundwater Flooding. SUDDS is frequently cited as a mitigation against Surface Water Flooding but does not act to prevent Groundwater Flooding.

- It can be claimed that the Upper Stour is a water body too ‘insubstantial’ to support sewage works for a population of more than 3000 people and local industries. This cannot, in our opinion, be mitigated. Southern Water has so far obtained no environmental permit for Lenham Sewage Works. The wetland, which stabilizes flow

rates, has been designated to be built upon . Stable flow rates, which are less likely due to climate change, are fundamental in order for sewage treatment plants not to have catastrophic effects on the river. Southern Water has the statutory duty to provide sewage facilities and there is no evidence that there was any consultation with the EA on the impact on the Stour. Landscape implications (see Landscape Studies) ENV 001, ENV 014 (A), ENV 014 (B) .

Socially: Trebling the population of a village in the time frame of 5 years is socially unsustainable. If primary school infrastructure is put into place after development, children from Lenham will have had either inadequate provision for the whole of their primary school years or will have to travel somewhere else.

Even if infrastructure such as extending the primary school, improving facilities in the secondary school or expanding the Doctor's surgery could be phased in, in line with housing development. There are social structures in a village such as clubs and societies which are independent of infrastructure provision and are largely carried by volunteers. How can a community be expected to be able to absorb that many newcomers in such a short time?

The idea of 1500 new dwellings in 5 years is socially unsustainable and shows complete disregard for the existing population.

Dated 13th September 2016

