



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Planning Inspector
c/o Louise St John Howe
Programme Officer, PO Services
PO Box 10965,
Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 3BF

October 2016

Dear Sir

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Protocol usually steers me away from matters under the auspices of local and regional government but during my eight years working in Maidstone & The Weald it has become increasingly difficult to stand aside from local planning issues.

In the course of the last 18 months, during the finalisation of Maidstone's draft Local Plan, a great deal of contention has arisen about the number of new homes allocated for the Borough. In short it seems that the provision within the NPPF for the use of constraints to lower the housing requirement has not been effectively applied in Maidstone's draft Local Plan. By way of one example the levels of congestion are an undeniable constraint right across the borough. Another constraint would be the serious shortcomings within the sewage and drainage infrastructure in certain areas.

Further, the knock-on effect of such large new pockets of housing upon road traffic, especially in the South of the Borough, does not appear to have been adequately mitigated in the Local Plan. A long mooted solution is the construction of a relief road in the Leeds/Langley area which could bring significant mitigation to the south and south eastern parts of the town. Whilst MBC and KCC have discussed this on a number of occasions during their Joint Transport Board meetings the scheme has been omitted from the Local Plan entirely.

Detailed provisions may not be necessary at this stage but surely it would be pragmatic to at least mention the Leeds-Langley scheme for inclusion in future scheduled reviews of the plan. This may not only assist in securing funding when needed but also offer local people some assurance that longer term provisions are in play. The government are presently considering various ways to buoy the economy with large scale infrastructure projects and it is entirely possible that proposals such as the Leeds Langley relief road could receive the support needed within the life of this local plan.

In summary I believe that the proposed 18,560 houses should be reduced by way of legitimate constraints in this area and that the plan must incorporate a more bold, robust and sustainable approach to transport infrastructure, honed through better constructive co-operation between MBC and KCC.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Grant', written over a horizontal line.

HELEN GRANT MP