

***Voice of the Community***

To Maidstone Borough Council Neighbourhood Planning

(By email)

28/09/20

Dear Sir/Madam

As a neighbouring Neighbourhood Forum, with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan (NP) the North Loose Residents Association (NLRA) would like to generally support the regulation 16 consultation draft Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Development Plan (BMNP).

Boughton Monchelsea Parish and the North Loose area have a common boundary at the south eastern corner of our area and residents of both North Loose and Loose Parish regularly enjoy the recreational opportunities provided by the open space and indeed the land owned and controlled by the Boughton Monchelsea Trust.

These areas provide opportunity for the physical and social wellbeing of our residents. Most of the boundary between us falls into the Land of Local Landscape Value as designated in the adopted 2017 Maidstone Local Plan (MLP).

Part of the adjoining areas are included in the 2016 Maidstone Borough Council Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy as a “Green and Blue Corridor in the Urban Area to Protect and Improve” and provides an important ecological corridor into the heart of urban Maidstone as far as the Wheatsheaf roundabout.

1. Therefore, we strongly support the Vision on page 3 of the BMNP that states “A strong principle is that individual developments should be of a scale appropriate to the village and its surroundings”, and PWP4 and 5 on page 39.

Any “further large housing estates tacked onto the edge of Boughton Monchelsea village and onto the southern edge of Maidstone are not considered appropriate.” That chimes with the objectives of our own neighbourhood plan and its policies.

Further extension of the southern area of urban Maidstone towards the villages should be prevented.

2. We note that Boughton Mount is included in on pages 16-19 of the BMNP as a development site. This accords with its allocation in the MLP and was approved following a planning inspector’s inquiry into that plan. This site and only this site was approved along Boughton Lane as the inspector concluded that the small number of dwellings proposed would not have a significant impact on the already heavily congested Boughton Lane; congestion that cannot be mitigated.

Two other proposed larger sites were rejected because of their individual and overall congestion impact on Boughton Lane.

Restricting development which directly or indirectly affects the already overcrowded and congested Boughton Lane is a key objective for the NLRA. Undoubtedly some of the other sites in Boughton Monchelsea, which are already under construction, will have some increased impact on traffic levels as vehicles will percolate onto Boughton Lane heading for urban Maidstone.

Therefore the NLRA supports the sensitive development of the Boughton Mount site as proposed in RH5 A on page 52. As this site is almost adjacent to our area and the area well used by residents of both North Loose and Loose Parish developed areas (which are physically closer than Boughton Monchelsea village), we wish to be fully involved in the development and protection of this important historic and ecological site.

3. The NLRA supports in principle the proposals in PWP 6 and Map 11 on pages 40 and 41 for Sustainable Connections and Amenity and Access Improvements. We are particularly interested in proposals for new or improved footpaths/bridleways/cycleways immediately adjacent and connecting into our area.

This policy fits well with policy for pedestrian and cycleways in our own NP.

The NLRA would like to be fully involved in the detailed development of these routes in particular as there are some physical and traffic challenges that need to be overcome for the objective to be delivered.

In conclusion the NLRA welcomes and generally supports the BMNP and endorses its progression to a local referendum.

Sean Carter

Chair

North Loose Residents Association.