

Annex D

Workshop	MDE DPD Issues and Options: Councillor Workshop	
Date	17 July 2008	
Time	7:30 – 9:45pm	
Location	Committee Room, Gibson Building	
Attendees	Mark Worrall Matthew Balfour Christine Woodger Liz Simpson Vivian Branson Rodney Chartres Ann Kemp David Cure Peter Bolt Peter Homewood Roger Dalton Dave Davis John Balcombe Tony Sayer	Janet Sergison Christopher Brown Howard Rogers Mark Rhodes Andy Allison Brian Luker Sasha Luck Allan Sullivan Owen Baldock David Aikman Mike Dobson Anita Oakley Barry Stone

Introductory Section

Q1: Do you agree with the assessment of the Borough's locally unique features? If no, are there any other features that should be recognised as adding to local distinctiveness and character?

The top three unique features identified were:

1. The importance of the Green Belt and the AONB
2. The importance of the River Medway
3. The importance of external factors including through traffic (on the motorways), commuting to London and the interaction with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells.

Other comments

- Concerns that the A228 should not be encouraged to act as an outer M25 route.
- Mineral working creates few jobs locally and creates the brownfield sites of the future.

Q2: What are the key features of the places where you live/work that should be protected, changed or managed in other ways?

The top three key features identified were:

1. Open countryside, woodlands, water courses, Conservation Areas, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens and open spaces, all of which should be protected.
2. Residential areas should be protected from over-intensive development with communal green areas for residents' enjoyment

3. The changing character of villages due to unsympathetic infill development.

Q3 What should be the role of contemporary architecture in the historic environment? and

Q4: What key areas of improvement and change, if any, would you like to see in the historic environment?

- Support for the preservation of non-listed buildings.
- Recognition that we should not live in a museum and that modern architecture should be encouraged where it is of a high quality design built with high quality materials.
- Modern architecture can work well if it is sympathetic to the surrounding historic environment.
- Can not afford to stand still - concern that at present Tonbridge and Malling is not known for encouraging contemporary architecture.
- The focus needs to be on 'high quality' rather than 'good design' as our appreciation of design changes over time.
- Support for contemporary architecture should not be at the expense of historic buildings that could be rejuvenated and renovated rather than being cleared to make way for a modern building.
- Modern buildings have the ability to be more environmentally friendly.
- Uncertainty as to where 'local' building materials will come from as there is minimal brick making in the Borough.

Q5: What are the factors that influence the Quality of Life in your local area that are related to development and the local environment?

The highest ranked positive factor was

The natural environment provides an attractive place to live and work; opportunities for tourism and recreation; a healthier population; a catalyst for regeneration; a resource for cultural inspiration and expression; a sense of place; local distinctiveness; natural products; a resource for education; reductions in pollution; and better flood control and water quality.

The highest ranked negative factor was

Noise, pollution, traffic congestion, speeding traffic, too many HGVs on rural lanes and inadequate facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

Q8: Taking the approach to the DPD in the round, have we identified all of the relevant issues and options and are the options sufficient to deal with local circumstances?

- Recognition needed of the impact of rising fuel and energy prices.
- Need to consider the impacts of the e-world.
- There was support for further guidance on Development Contributions.
- A balance needs to be struck between the provision of local employment opportunities in the countryside and the traffic implications associated with such development.

Q10: Do you agree that the objectives for the Managing Development and the Environment DPD are appropriate? If no, should any additional objectives be added?

- Increase the Public Rights of Way network
- Provision of art in new developments, eg 1% of development costs should be spent on public art provision
- Encourage local food production
- Recognition of the economic importance of agriculture

Climate Change

The majority of respondents seek Code Level 4 for housing development and the application of similarly higher environmental standards for non- residential development

Majority support for Code Level 4 and similar non-residential standards.

Refer to the general responses set out on page 8 in relation to achieving higher environmental standard in design and construction.

- Some concerns over the additional costs that such standards may imply (15-20% on top of build cost)
- Concern expressed about exceeding government timetable in case they change their mind.
- Need to reach a balanced view – don't need to accommodate all extreme views
- Energy efficiency is particularly important in affordable housing in order to reduce the household bills for people on lower incomes – affordable housing and energy efficiency are not mutually exclusive
- Need to use discretion, particularly the technologies used in Conservation Areas
- We should not specify the types of technologies to be used, but should specify the outcome.
- Not sure how we would address existing buildings
- Solar panels do not meet Code Level 3 requirements, and the technologies that do are expensive.
- Wind turbines have a down wind climatic impact and tidal power systems can alter flow regimes.

Q14: Under what circumstances should the need for harnessing a significant amount of energy from renewable sources take precedence over landscape protection?

- Need to consider the cumulative impact of small scale renewable technologies on the landscape.

There is general public support for waste minimisation, the encouragement of SUDS, the application of Code Level 4 for water conservation and for the encouragement of winter storage of water.

Development in the Countryside

Q17: Are there any other topic areas that need to be addressed that are not covered by the existing policies?

- Support for current policy list.
- There is a need to recognise that the countryside is not just a pretty view, but is an economy, a working environment. Poly tunnels should be allowed.
- Land should be used for food production, not biofuels or Set-Aside. Need to bring farms back into active use.
- Need to consider the potential role of large scale green houses.
- We must not forget that the Borough has an abundance of trees!
- Concern over the impacts of over grazing in the AONB.
- Enhancement of the countryside should be supported.

Q18: Should policies to control all types of development in the countryside be based on character areas or topic based (as at present) or a combination of both?

- Support for topic based approach with character appraisals.
- Need local definition of local character.
- Need local focus in different areas.
- Need to look at enhancing some areas, eg need to make green corridors through sports grounds at Tonbridge less sterile.
- Should consider how Parish and Village Plans could be utilised.
- Should assess the need and potential for joint working with neighbouring authorities because character areas may not necessarily stop at the Borough boundary.
- Concern that ability to affect change may be restricted by EU policies such as Set-Aside.
- Concern that work on Character Appraisals may take resources away from Conservation Area Appraisals.

Natural Environment

- Support for ecological and green corridors.
- Support for current policy list.
- Concern raised that nature conservation designations are not overridden in favour of corridors.
- Desire to see those Priority Habitats and Species within Tonbridge and Malling specifically referred to.

Local Character / Quality of Life / Historic Environment

Additional policy topics to be considered:

- Transport (lack of, eg park-and-ride)
- Community
- Park and Ride
- Flood control

- Overconcentration of micro renewables can detract from the character of an area – concern over how much they are controllable
- Sewage
- Local names – it is important to reflect and keep them

Open Space

Q40: Which, if any, of the low quality and low value open spaces (see Annex H in the Issues and Options Report) should be released for non-recreational purposes?

Unanimous support for protecting all allotments and the creation of more allotments where they are connected to the community they serve.

Possibly consider increasing the number of allotments through their relocation and amalgamation.

Heath Farm proposal – need to recognise and protect multi-functional role.

The Freehold, Hadlow – would like to see it allocated for formal open space because there is a shortage of provision in the Parish.

Need to revisit assessment of Long Mede.

Q44: Do you think it is a good idea to try to link open spaces up where possible and to aim to provide a connection with the countryside? and

Q45: How important is access to and along the River Medway to you? What do you perceive to be its primary role and do you think we should be seeking opportunities to secure a strategic Riverside Walk along the Medway?

Unanimous support for the protection and creation of green corridors.

Support for linking open spaces and access to the riverside.

Q46: Does anything need to be added to the option of requiring all open spaces to be accessible by a wide choice of transport modes, in particular by foot, by cycle and by people with disabilities?

Nothing further required.

Q48: Should the option focus on maintaining and enhancing a particular function of the urban rural fringe in Tonbridge and Malling and if so, what should that function be?

- Urban sprawl should be restricted.
- The fringe area provides a valuable connection to the countryside.
- Tonbridge + Hadlow fringe needs to be vigorously defended.
- The Character Appraisal work should help to identify the boundaries of such areas.

- Recognition that as population increases, and in order to provide the homes, jobs, sport and informal recreation facilities and services needed to support this, settlements will either have to expand upwards or outwards.
- Needs to be a quality environment - need to reduce the amount of fly-tipping and dumping.