

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

27 February 2006

Report of the Director of Planning & Transportation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 PROTECTION OF PRIVATE GARDENS (HOUSING DEVELOPMENT) – PRIVATE MEMBER’S BILL

Summary

To alert Members to a Private Member’s Bill laid in Parliament by Greg Clarke MP (Tunbridge Wells) to remove back and front gardens from the definition of “brownfield” sites and thereby remove the presumption that such areas have priority for redevelopment in planning policy terms.

- 1.1.1 Under the current guidance in PPG 3: Housing and the emerging policy in draft PPS 3: Housing, the Government has required Local Planning Authorities to review the opportunities for re-use of “previously developed land” (PDL), known colloquially as “brownfield” land to increase the supply of housing land within urban areas.
- 1.1.2 The current definition of PDL encourages the potential re-use of back and front gardens. However, there are certainly circumstances where to utilise front and back gardens, for instance by seeking to combine parts of house gardens to form a developable site, can cause deterioration of the street scene and the character of the locality.
- 1.1.3 In this context, there is some merit in seeking an amendment to the definition of PDL as currently set out in PPG 3, and as in its modified form in draft PPS 3, to exclude house front and rear gardens (whether singly or in combination). This would not exclude properly assembled sites dealt with on a comprehensive basis coming forward, but would reduce the pressure and priority for Councils to agree to changes that would be detrimental to the character of important areas of towns and villages. I do not think that it would be appropriate to exclude the development in substantial grounds by such a redefinition as in many cases these can provide an appropriate opportunity to cater for good quality development.

1.2 Recommendation

- 1.2.1 I Recommend that the Members of Parliament who represent Tonbridge and Malling **BE INVITED** to consider supporting the removal of gardens from the definition of Previously Developed Land in the next reading of the Private Members Bill.

Background papers:

Nil

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File ref: B4

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning & Transportation