

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

18 November 2009

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – PROGRESS REPORT

Summary

The preparation of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD (MDE DPD) has now reached the stage of Public Hearing. Work is progressing on the preparation of the Character Area Appraisals SPD.

1.1 Managing Development and the Environment DPD

- 1.1.1 As Members will be aware the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy was adopted in September 2007 and the Development Land Allocations DPD and Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan were both adopted in April 2008. These were amongst the first of the new-style Local Development Framework (LDF) documents to be adopted in the Country for which the Council was rewarded with a substantial Housing and Planning Delivery Grant settlement last year.
- 1.1.2 The Managing Development and Environment DPD is a relatively innovative document dealing with topical views of sustainability and climate change as well as addressing the new 'Development Management' agenda. In particular it deals with some essential matters to do with development character and in particular development in the countryside.
- 1.1.3 We are now progressing towards the adoption of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD which will ensure a comprehensive suite of Development Plan Documents in the LDF. It was published for public comment on 18 March 2009 for a 7 week period within which representations could be made. Partly in response to representations a number of minor technical amendments were identified mainly on the proposed changes to the Proposals Map. An Addendum to the plan was subsequently published as a result of which a number of representations have been withdrawn. The plan, as amended, was then submitted to the Secretary of State on 31 July 2009.
- 1.1.4 In response to consultation, and having regard to comments on the Addendum, a total of 160 representations have been received, 46 of which are in support of the plan and 4 confirming "no comment". Importantly, the Regional Planning Body has

confirmed that the plan is in general conformity with the South East Plan. The majority of representations support the thrust of the plan but have suggested some minor word changes some of which we are prepared to recommend to the Inspector. The only substantive issues relate to the justification for, and appropriateness of, some of the policies, and the soundness of the evidence base for the Local Wildlife Sites and sites of local geological importance. There is a specific challenge to these designations at Oaken Wood, Aylesford, and the Clubbs site at Hale Street.

- 1.1.5 All these matters are to be considered at a Public Hearing which is due to start on Wednesday 25 November and is currently programmed to go on for 4 days, though we are optimistic that many of the matters will be dealt with by Written Representations. We would expect the Inspector's report to be received by March next year which should enable the Plan to be adopted by the Council in April.

1.2 Character Area Appraisals Supplementary Planning Document

- 1.2.1 The interpretation and application of many of the policies in the MDE DPD is linked to the Character Area Appraisals SPD which is currently in the course of preparation. I reported in detail to your last meeting on progress with this project. The work on Tonbridge and Hildenborough (including a Conservation Area Appraisal for Hildenborough) is being undertaken in conjunction with consultants Tony Fullwood and Associates. This work is nearing completion and I would hope to be able to report on the results in the new year. The importance of this work to the future of development control and development quality in the Borough has now been recognised by Members.
- 1.2.2 The appraisal of the main urban areas in the north of the Borough is being undertaken in-house, but needless to say, priority is currently being given to work leading up to the Examination of the MDE DPD. Nevertheless, survey work and engagement with local community representatives has been undertaken for Snodland and as soon as the MDE DPD Hearing is finished we will be progressing with work on the Medway Gap, Walderslade and Kings Hill. The appraisal of Hadlow, West Malling, East Peckham and Borough Green will be progressed during the course of next year. The aim is still to finalise the SPD by the autumn of 2010. However, as reported to your last meeting, work on the Landscape Character Area Appraisal of the countryside has been deferred until the officer responsible returns from maternity leave later next year.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 The preparation of the LDF is a statutory requirement. A sound Development Plan is an essential tool for Development Control.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 The cost of preparing the LDF is funded from the LDF Reserve augmented by PDG/HPDG.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 A sound and up-to-date Development Plan is essential to the Council's performance in development control, appeals and in achieving the quality of development it desires.

Background papers: Nil

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