

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

4 June 2014

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATIONS (REGULATION 18)

This report advises Members of the recent consultations by Maidstone Borough Council and seeks endorsement of the officer level comments sent by the deadline in May.

1.1 Introduction and Background

1.1.1 Maidstone Borough Council has recently invited comments on a draft Local Plan under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) Regulations 2012 and also on a draft charging schedule for a Community Infrastructure Levy. Comments were invited up to 2 May and officer level responses were made by the deadline.

1.1.2 This report highlights some of the key issues arising from Maidstone's Local Plan and seeks endorsement of the Officer level responses, copies of which are appended to this report.

1.2 Key Issues

1.2.1 Members will recall that in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, we have been working closely with colleagues in Maidstone as we prepare our respective Local Plans and in particular in jointly commissioning new Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) with consultants GL Hearn and Partners. The SHMA reports have now been finalised and reflect the Government's priority that Objectively Assessed Needs for future housing and other land uses are the starting point for Local Plans.

1.2.2 The draft Local Plan for Maidstone acknowledges the Objectively Assessed Need for new housing for the plan period as 19,600 additional units and the officer comments in response recognise the integrity of the approach.

- 1.2.3 The draft Local Plan goes on to identify a lower housing target of 17,100 new dwellings. The officer comments reserve a position on this approach pending the results of additional work that the Maidstone Borough Council has yet to complete, for example in respect of the latest Call for Sites exercise they have promoted. However, the importance of presenting a robust case for planning to meet a lower figure has been highlighted.
- 1.2.4 In previous consultation exercises the potential impacts arising from strategic housing allocations in the vicinity of Hermitage Lane and how these might be mitigated have been identified, particularly those affecting the junction of Hermitage Lane and the A26 and on air quality in Watlington. These have been reiterated in the latest responses and a future opportunity to respond to the anticipated revision of the Integrated Transport Strategy (prepared jointly with KCC) highlighted.
- 1.2.5 Parts of the draft Local Plan that could now be updated in the light of the finalised Planning Practice Guidance (published in March) have also been identified in the comments.
- 1.2.6 An opportunity was also taken to make similar points in respect of the draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in respect of using the most up to date evidence base and Government advice and guidance.

1.3 Conclusions

- 1.3.1 This report summarises and seeks endorsement of the officer level responses to the Maidstone Borough Council draft Local Plan and CIL Charging Schedule consultations that concluded in May. Further reports will be made to update Members of Maidstone Borough Council's progress towards a new Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy in due course.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 There are no legal implications arising from these comments in respect of Maidstone Borough Council's recent consultations although the responses will help to demonstrate the two Council's ongoing constructive liaison over strategic planning matters in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 There are no direct financial and value for money considerations arising from this report.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 Not taking the opportunity to respond could present a risk that the Borough Council's concerns are not taken into consideration and that the Duty to Cooperate has not been adhered to.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.8 Policy Considerations

1.8.1 Strategic Planning issues will be addressed in the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan and these will be informed by the emerging Maidstone Local Plan.

1.9 Recommendations

1.9.1 That the officer level responses appended to this report are **ENDORSED**.

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Ian Bailey

Nil

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Services

| Screening for equality impacts: | | |
|---|--------|---|
| Question | Answer | Explanation of impacts |
| a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? | No | The comments made in respect of Maidstone's emerging Local Plan seek to ensure that any potential impacts on communities in Tonbridge & Malling are taken fully into account. |
| b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? | No | The comments relate to a neighbouring authority's Local Plan. |
| c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above? | | |

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.