

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council Local Plan: The Way Forward

Regulation 18: Issues and Options September 2016

Response from Aylesford Parish Council

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Q1. Do you agree or disagree with this set of objectives for the new Local Plan?

Response

The Council fully supports the objectives as set out in the document as it reflects the means for taking forward government policies and initiatives whilst reflecting local needs and requirements.

Q2. Do you agree or disagree with this set of building blocks for the Local Plan strategy?

Response

The council accepts the interpretation of National Planning Policy that has led to the identification of the three building blocks. The land previously safeguarded including the area of opportunity were considered as part of the last Development Plan and therefore should form the initial block of development going ahead in this local plan. The consideration to be given in this Plan is the extent and size of the development in the area of opportunity and the infrastructure investment to be provided alongside the development which benefits the whole community.

Q3. Do you agree or disagree with this set of guiding principles?

Response

The Council supports the guiding principles set out in the Plan and in particular principle 6 which is fundamental because without this level of development at key locations it would not be possible to have the infrastructure improvements which are required to resolve a number of key problems in the Aylesford parish area and beyond.

Q4. Do you agree or disagree that this potential approach to a development strategy could provide a sound direction for the new Local Plan to take?

Response

The Council generally supports the approach being outlined in the development strategy as a sound direction in which the Local Plan can move forward. However the Council would wish to comment on the 3 specific proposals for the Parish as follows:-

The East Bank of the Medway

This proposal for development is in the current development plan and was earmarked as an Area of Opportunity for future development. Therefore the Council accepts that the development will take place but that consideration must be given to the size and extent of the development particularly in relation to the delivery of the much needed infrastructure investment for this area.

The Council would expect the infrastructure investment to deliver much needed improvements to the village. Firstly the removal of the Southern Water traffic off Bull Lane making this road, in effect, a road for local traffic only. Improvements to the road infrastructure such as are required at the Bull Lane/Pilgrims Way/Rochester Road junction and for improved access to the A229 and the new bridge and A228.

The Council would also expect investment for increased school provision either at the existing site or at a new location as well as improved medical facilities.

The proposed development area also covers the area of the Eccles Football Club and the allotments and the Council would look to the retention of these very popular facilities either at their existing locations or at suitable alternative sites adjacent to the village together with new and improved facilities. The new development will also need to look to the provision of new recreational facilities to serve the whole community and which links up to the current facilities already provided by the Parish Council.

Aylesford Quarry

The Council believes that the quarry site provides a great opportunity for the provision of leisure and community use. It is not appropriate that housing is provided at this site unless it is considered necessary as the only means of delivering a leisure and community project which provides significant and much needed community benefit. Housing can never be considered or provided in isolation. Any development at this site will have to give serious consideration to road infrastructure improvements.

South Aylesford and Ditton

The Council is aware that there are significant road infrastructure problems in this area both along Hermitage Lane and the A20 which will only be made worse by the new housing developments along Hermitage Lane approved by Maidstone Borough Council. The suggested proposal with the new road does appear to go a long way to dealing with the significant road congestion problems in this area. However to deliver this new road improvement a large amount of housing development is required and for the Council to support this proposal it is vital that the whole development proceeds together and not in the piecemeal fashion which was allowed to happen in the Maidstone Borough Council section of Hermitage Lane. It is also absolutely vital that the road is built early in the provision of this development. Additionally in respect of this road that careful consideration is given as to how it accesses the A20 so the problem is not just transferred elsewhere which will cause an impact back on the roads in the Aylesford parish area.

Q5. Should the new Local Plan continue to support and focus new economic development at and around existing economic hubs such as the Tonbridge Industrial Estate, New Hythe Lane, Kings Hill, Hermitage Lane and Quarry Wood or should an alternative strategy be considered?

Response

The council supports the strategy of focussing new economic development at and around existing economic hubs such as the Tonbridge Industrial Estate, New Hythe Lane, Kings Hill, Hermitage Lane and Quarry Wood though the development should be in keeping with the types of development at these existing sites. No new hubs are needed as the shortfall is minimal and can be picked up by minor expansion at these sites and other small windfall sites around the borough. However any expansion of the Quarry Wood site must be linked to the new road improvement proposal proposed with the housing allocation at South Aylesford and Ditton. The Council is also firmly of the view that the economic hub at New Hythe Lane including the Aylesford Newsprint site should remain an economic hub only and should not include housing as this would then require additional industrial capacity to be found elsewhere which could require the identification of additional economic hubs.

Q6. Should we consider a wide range of employment generating uses within existing economic hubs in the borough?

Response

The Council would not oppose having a wide range of employment as long as they were in keeping with the existing usage within these hubs.

Q7. Should the Local Plan be supportive of more mixed-use developments, including start-up units within residential schemes?

Response

The Council would be supportive of this idea in principle but would wish to see the detail on how this would work in practice, because the Council has some concerns about the impact of increased car parking in these residential areas including any commercial vehicles being used as part of this business.

Q8. What should be the main role of Tonbridge Town Centre moving forward? Should the priority be for shopping or for social and cultural uses or a balance of these or other approaches?

Response

In view of the fact that the Tonbridge Town Centre is some distance from this parish the Council felt it was inappropriate to comment.

Q9. Should the Local Plan include a more flexible policy framework for Tonbridge to allow the Town to respond to future market investment opportunities for a range of land uses and developments?

Response

In view of the fact that the Tonbridge Town Centre is some distance from this parish the Council felt it was inappropriate to comment.

Q10. Do you have other thoughts about how planning policy should guide development in and around the town centre? Please explain:

Response

In view of the fact that the Tonbridge Town Centre is some distance from this parish the Council felt it was inappropriate to comment.

Q11. Do you agree or disagree that the Local Plan should put land into the Green Belt east of West Malling?

Response

This particular parcel of land is outside the Council's area but this proposal does appear to be a positive step forward.

Q12. Are there any other parcels of land in the borough that you think could be justifiably (as measured against the five purposes) put in, or alternatively removed from the Green Belt, without putting at risk the requirement for the Local Plan to positively address assessed needs in a sustainable way?

Response

The Council has no suggestions in this respect but once the level of development has been fixed arising out of this Plan including looking towards future Plans that Aylesford Parish would expect that there would be no significant future development within the Parish area and if that would require a green belt to be created the Council would expect that to happen.

Q13. In delivering new development, what features are important to you locally? Please can you rank the following in order of importance, giving 1 for the most important down to 7 for the least important

[4] Providing affordable housing (not full market housing)

[2] Providing publicly accessible open space

- [3] Stipulating car parking standards**
- [1] Controlling housing densities**
- [6] Applying internal space standards**
- [5] Achieving greater accessibility standards**
- [7] Applying water efficiency standards**

Are there any other priorities that you think should be considered when delivering new development?

Response

Infrastructure improvements including school provision both primary and secondary, medical facilities such as doctor's surgeries, open space and recreational facilities, flood risk prevention and water supply. This would be the Council's top priority

Q14. Do you think the Borough Council should assess the viability of including the nationally describes space standards in the new Local Plan?

Response

No comment

Q15. Do you think the Borough Council should assess the viability of exceeding the minimum standards required by Building Regulations in respect of access and water?

Response

No comment

