

MATTER 4

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Representor ID: 1015844

LP Ref: LP 1336

Modification Number: 158

POLICY AX5

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Matter 4 – IWADE EXPANSION

1.1 SUMMARY OF OBJECTION:

1.1.1 We support the principle of development outlined in Proposed MM policy AX5. However, we object to policy's 'blanket' approach of including North Iwade within the policy requirements for the bulk of the expansion area, which lies to the east of the village. We believe this to be unnecessary and risks serious delays to implementation and delivery.

1.1.2 However, whilst we confirm our view that the AX5 allocation makes the Plan sound, as outlined in our formal objection (**Appendix MD-IWADE1**), we continue our objection to MM158. This objection responds to the Council's continuing insistence that 'North' Iwade (that is the land north of Sanderling Way), should be subject to the comprehensive resolution of the 'strategic issues', which need to be addressed as listed in paragraph 6.5.98 of the Main Modification.

1.1.3 The North Iwade land is capable of being developed on a stand-alone basis without prejudice to the delivery of the strategic concerns. In so doing, it would contribute to the soundness of the Plan by delivering houses within the next 2 years and helping to make up the current shortfall in a five-year supply.

Matter 4 Inspector's Questions:

Is the (AX5) Allocation:

4.1 *Justified by robust evidence, including landscape character assessment, sustainability appraisal and consideration of countryside gaps?*

4.1.1 Landscape: Yes. In preparing a planning application for the objection land, we have assessed existing landscape character and the potential changes likely to occur post-development. In summary, the established development running along Sanderling Way and forming the northern edge of the built-up area of Iwade presents an uncompromisingly harsh suburban interface with the open character of the surrounding countryside. The existing large and high-roofed homes including some apartment buildings at 3-storeys high are clearly visible from wide areas to the north including from Raspberry Hill, the Sheppey Bridge and even from some of the higher land on the Isle of Sheppey towards Thistle Hill and Minster.

- 4.12** Despite the shallow slope of the objection land to north, development of the objection land offers an opportunity to soften these impacts both by careful design and layout and by forming a substantial landscape tree and hedgerow screen along the site's northern boundary. The landscape impacts and this mitigation are visually separate and distinct from the wider views towards the village from the Northeast and East, where the bulk of the allocation land lies. Moreover, the established hedgerow and trees running along both sides of Sheppey Way, accentuate this separation with neither area impinging on the other in landscape character or visual impact assessment terms.
- 4.13 Sustainability Appraisal:** The Councils SA, addendum (and Erratum) is supported by our own assessments. All impacts with potential harm are capable of mitigation as part of the planning process by planning conditions or obligations. The ability of development at the allocation site, to mitigate existing harm to landscape and to enhance ecology and biodiversity reinforces the site's sustainable characteristics. All village services as well as public transport to Sittingbourne and Sheppey are available within a short walking distance.
- 4.14 Countryside Gaps:** Development of the objection allocation site to the north of Iwade would not impinge on any Gap between settlements or conflict with the Countryside Gap policy objectives.

4.2 Deliverable within the Plan period?

- 4.2.1** Yes. A planning application is in preparation to be submitted early in 2017. This remains as identified in the delivery timetable supplied to the Council in August 2016. **(Appendix MD-IWADE2)** We envisage outline approval being obtained during the summer of 2017, with reserved matters approvals in place by the end of the year. With commencement on-site by early 2018, delivery of the first homes would begin during summer 2018. On this basis, the development can easily be completed in less than 2 years with completion at the end of 2019.

4.3 Supported by robust infrastructure planning? Have all the infrastructure implications been identified and addressed in appropriate detail?

- 4.3.1 Highways:** Yes. Sanderling Way together with Stangate Drive and Chetney Way was designed and built as a through route connecting The Street/Sheppey Way with School Lane. In so doing, it forms an arc through the Northwest village quadrant. It is the route taken by waste collection, service vehicles and emergency vehicles. This route and its junctions are adequate to take the additional traffic generated by development of the allocation site.

4.3.2 Public Service Vehicles: A regular bus service linking Iwade to Sittingbourne and Sheppey, stops at the eastern end of the objection site. In addition, an efficient and low-cost commuter bus service runs from Iwade to London to a regular timetable during peak-hours. All parts of the site are within easy walking distance from the bus stop. In addition, the village centre shops and post-office, Village Hall, Church, Public House and Primary School are all within a short walking distance from the objection site.

4.3.3 Drainage: Due to the clay soils, topography and lack of significant water-courses, surface water drainage relies on balancing ponds or Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to manage any surge in flows from non-porous surfaces within development areas in times of heavy or persistent rainfall. The development of this site offers an opportunity to reinforce the existing balancing pond in the development allocation area and couple this with a water-management scheme along the seasonal drainage ditch running along the northern boundary to the site. This would connect directly to the culvert under Old Ferry Road leading to the marshland drainage network running northwards to the Swale. The objectors have undertaken a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to inform the planning application process. None of the development lies within an identified flood risk zone.

4.3.2 Services and Utilities: The village Primary School has recently undergone a major expansion and is capable of accommodating additional pupils arising from this development allocation. The village Medical Centre is also capable of expansion to cater for a larger population. All water, electricity, gas, foul drainage and telecom/broadband services are equipped to accommodate the proposed allocation.

4.4 *Supported by clear and deliverable measures to address transport implications of the proposed development?*

4.4.1 As outlined in item 4.3, traffic arising from this relatively small site can be accommodated within the existing local highway networks. However, we recognise the need for a comprehensive review of junction capacities along the A249 corridor. Here, transport generated by the additional Main Modification developments on the Isle of Sheppey, at Iwade and at SW Sittingbourne, together with those development sites comprised in the original submitted Local Plan (including at NW Sittingbourne) all need to be subject to cumulative Transport Impact Assessment (TIA).

We are aware that this work is progressing and are willing to contribute any proportionate financial contributions towards meeting mitigation measures. In this way, the development would meet the item 6 Requirements comprised in paragraph 6.5.98 of the Main Modification document.

4.5 *Have the heritage, wildlife and biodiversity aspects of the site been taken into consideration?*

4.5.1 Yes. Our Heritage and Ecological consultants have reviewed the Council's assessments and the results of these are supported. There are no known heritage assets, which would be impacted by the development of the objection site. As for wildlife and ecology, the site offers an opportunity to form a semi aquatic habitat corridor to protect and enhance the prospects for reptiles, amphibians and insects. In addition, the formation of an indigenous hedgerow and tree-planted corridor will enhance biodiversity, including for that for birds and bats.

4.5.2 The site's relationship with the nearby environmental designations at the North Kent Marshes Area of High Landscape Value, the Swale and Medway Special Protection Area (SPA), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) has been taken into consideration by the Council's assessments and our own consultants corroborate the findings of these. We are willing to make appropriate financial contributions towards the strategic wardening and educational enhancements and mitigation to managing access to these sensitive areas.

5.0 Conclusion:

- This relatively small site is physically and functionally separated from the large eastern expansion of Iwade area.
- It does not rely on significant new infrastructure for delivery, but can make an appropriate financial contribution towards any such works.
- The site can be developed without prejudice to the strategic concerns raised in paragraph 6.5.98 of Main Modification 158.
- The site can be developed quickly and will deliver houses over the next three years to help meet the Borough's five-year housing shortfall.