

Ms. Turner,
Planning Inspector,
C/O Programme Officer,
Swale Borough Council,
Swale House,
East Street,
Sittingbourne,
ME10 3HT.

Gladman House, Alexandria Way
Congleton Business Park
Congleton, Cheshire
CW12 1LB

T: 01260 288800
F: 01260 288801

www.gladman.co.uk

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EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms Turner,

Re: Swale Examination in Public – Additional Document and Closing Comments

At the end of the examination hearings on the 8th February you requested that any final comments on the documents added by the Council on the 7th February be made in writing to yourself by the 17th February. This letter sets out our brief comments on those documents as well as a clarifying a point with regard a potential modification for the review mechanism for the plan.

With regard to the Inspectors reports under references PS/113a to PS/113h we would comment that these Inspectors reports are representative of a range of authorities which have materially different circumstances to those of Swale. What is imperative to consider is, as set out in the hearings, the direction of travel of the government as outlined in the Housing White Paper and the location of Swale and its principal settlement of Sittingbourne. The district is surrounded by areas of extreme demand in housing terms, and whilst traditionally the market for housing in Swale may have been somewhat lower fundamental shifts have occurred which now make many parts of the district a desirable place to live; chiefly the location of Sittingbourne an hour by HS1 from London St. Pancras. It is therefore important that to deliver the needs of the plan the right housing is released, in the right locations to meet that demand. Putting off decisions for the future will build up problems for the future.

Gladman would also wish to reiterate a point made at the hearings about the proposed review mechanism for the plan. It now seems apparent that, should the plan be found sound, a review of it will need to be adopted within 5 years to satisfy the demands of Kent County Council. Whilst the Council seem of the view that the timeline in the Local Development Scheme is sufficient for this we do not consider that such a document is a reliable mechanism for ensuring review. LDS documents are often out of date, and quite regularly only updated to allow change for missed deadlines and as such be 'up to date' for the purpose of the examination of a local plan. Their original purpose was to track delivery of development plan documents for the purposes of the Planning Delivery Grant, with punitive financial penalties for missing targets, no such mechanism now exists.

Gladman feel strongly that to ensure that a review is delivered in the timelines required it is fundamental that the wording of a review and the timelines associated are inserted within policy to add the necessary weight to what is a crucial issue to the soundness of the plan.

Yours sincerely

Mathieu Evans
Planning Policy Manager
Gladman Developments