

Last chance to comment on Sevenoaks Local Plan

Peter Fleming, Leader of Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) said in November last year “We knew that the only way for us to properly challenge the Government’s assumption that the District could take a scale of development we believed undeliverable was to have an evidence based, robust and consistent plan.” Having consulted and gathered evidence SDC now believes it has succeeded in this aim.

It is therefore important that everyone now responds to the consultation on the Submission version (Regulation 19) of the Sevenoaks Local Plan, stating that they believe the Local Plan is sound. All comments must be submitted by 3 February. MX52 and MX53 have been removed from this version of the Local Plan following the consultation in the summer of last year (Regulation 18 comments). However, in this Reg 19 Plan SDC is only able to meet 70% of the housing target set by Government so the Planning Inspector may ask the Council to reconsider some of the sites which have been excluded from the Plan. That could include MX52/53.

Until the Inspector approves the Plan there is no guarantee that these sites will be safe. Please therefore also say in your responses that you support the removal of sites MX52 and MX53.

Please see the advice in our recent leaflet delivered to the local community to help you with your responses, and also available on this website.

It is also important that everyone in the area responds to the separate consultation on MX61, following the guidance in leaflets prepared by NAG Village Association, Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council, Hartley Parish Council and No Hartley Expansion. As with MX52/53, the impact of this new site on the community would be significant.

Please note that SDC have revised their definition of “exceptional circumstances”. In the first draft Local Plan these were defined as “greenfield Green Belt sites which provide social and community infrastructure benefits that addresses genuine needs in the area”. In the latest version SDC says “as part of the new Local Plan it is suggested that [exceptional circumstances] may occur, for example, where new housing development:

achieves the sustainable reuse of brownfield land;

ensures the delivery of new and needed key infrastructure (meaning infrastructure that is over and above that which the developer would be required to provide in any event in order to mitigate the impact of the development ...;

is needed to achieve regeneration and helps achieve significant compensatory improvements in the Green Belt.”

Policy ST1 also says:

“Where development will result in a significant improvement in the sustainability of settlements through the provision of social and community infrastructure, in areas currently lacking such facilities, we will alter Green Belt boundaries to enable sites to be removed from the Green Belt and to be allocated for development”.

We need to continue to fight for our greenbelt in this area and remind SDC and the Inspector that none of the above definitions would apply to development on greenbelt land at MX52, 53 or 61.

THE CONSULTATION PERIOD ENDS AT MIDNIGHT ON 3 FEBRUARY 2019

When submitting comments, use the title “Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan” and refer to MX52, MX53, MX61 and other relevant site numbers

SDC gives guidance for submitting comments; links to further information on the Submission version of the Local Plan and to a form which you can use to submit your comments at:

https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069128/new_local_plan/413/guidance_for_submitting_comments

You can also email comments to: planning.policy@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Finally you can also write to: Planning Policy, Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1HG

NHE have appointed a Planning Consultant to represent the views of the community and will prepare an evidence based report to support the case for no development on our green belt land.

Once this consultation has ended, a schedule of possible improvements to the Reg 19 Plan will then go to the SDC Council meeting on 26 March 2019 for approval (previously planned for 26 February), and will then be published and submitted to the Secretary of State with the Reg 19 Plan.

The current, Reg 19, Plan will not be altered as a result of the consultation and MX61 will not be added to the Plan.

However, all representations made during both consultations (Reg 18&19) will be submitted to the Secretary of State together with, we understand, details of all sites submitted to SDC by developers/landowners, whether or not they have been included in the Plan.

The Secretary of State will ask the Planning Inspectorate to appoint an Inspector later this year to chair an Examination in Public (EiP). The Inspector will review the SDC documents and all the evidence and provide an indicator of the key issues that are likely to be raised during the EiP. The Planning Inspector will consider the Reg 19 Plan and the schedule of possible improvements. He/she will hear representations from the developers and/or their representatives, the local community and interested parties. NHE propose to submit a detailed response at the EiP, based on advice received from the planning

consultant engaged by NHE. This will, however, depend on further funds being raised to prepare more detailed, evidence based reports. NHE will register an interest to speak at the EiP. To do this we will need to engage the further services of our planning consultant and possibly other specialists to help support our case. We also plan to work with other supportive groups, e.g. parish councils, to ensure these areas remain undeveloped.

Subject to the Planning Inspector finding the Plan sound, sites MX52/53 will not be reinstated and MX61 will not be added to the Local Plan. All these sites will remain protected from development for at least the next 5 years. To ensure this, you need to respond to the consultation by 3 February.

The Local Plan will be adopted after the EiP has been completed and the Inspector considers the Plan to be sound (SDC are expecting this to be in Autumn 2019). It will then form SDC's policy on planning until 2035. However, the Local Plan will be reviewed periodically and the first review is due between 2020 and 2025.

Adoption of the Local Plan does not stop any developer and/or their representatives submitting a planning application for development, but it is unlikely that it would receive consent from SDC. People can still comment/object to any planning application made. The developers may go to appeal if planning permission is refused but it is unlikely they would succeed.

NO  **Hartley Expansion**