

APPENDIX B

If calling please ask for David Ford
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Our ref: TED51

Date: 21 January 2022

Dear Inspector,

Tandridge District Council: Local Plan – Council response to ID16 and ID19

Further to our previous correspondence (TED50) dated 6 January 2022, we are writing to advise you of the Options considered to be before the Council and to seek your views on whether any of these options could be pursued in a justified, sound and effective way; these Options are set out in greater detail in the attached Options Profile appendix.

You will be aware that the Council has been preparing its Local Plan since 2014 and invested significant resources in trying to secure a Local Plan which balances the significant constraints and challenges faced by the District, including 94% Green Belt.

Our letter and associated attachments of 6 January 2022 (TED50) provided you with the technical detail regarding the capacity of Junction 6 of the M25 and a solution which would need to be implemented by 2030.

The Council's primary objective is to reach a favourable outcome with its Local Plan and we would value a decision from you as to how you feel the Council should progress based on the Options set out below.

Option 1: Withdraw and prepare a new Local Plan

This option would result in the withdrawal of the Local Plan and require the Council to commence the preparation of a new Local Plan as per current national planning policy. You have recognised this option in paragraph 63 of ID16 and at paragraph 22 of ID19.

The following timescale is an indication of what the Council would need to work towards in preparing a new Local Plan.

Stage	Estimated Date
Regulation 18 (possible development options)	Q4 22/23
Regulation 19 (consultation on new draft Local Plan)	Q1 24/25
Submission	Q3 24/25
Examination	Q1 25/26
Regulation 19 - Main Modifications	Q4 25/26
Adoption	Q1 26/27

To withdraw the Local Plan and commence a new one, would result in substantial costs to the Council at a time when there is a strain on financial resources. Further, it significantly increases the risks to the Council regarding speculative planning applications and appeals while a new Local Plan is being prepared, the resource implications of which cannot be determined.

Option 2: Continue with the current Local Plan and modifications process

Option 2 accords with paragraph 63 of ID16 and alongside pausing the examination would require the Council to undertake further work on matters including, the OAN, housing requirement and supply, provision for Gypsies and Travellers, all to an agreed timescale.

The following timescale would be an indication of what the Council could work towards, should it be determined that this is the course to be taken.

Stage	Estimated Date
Re-Open hearings (M25, J6)	Q2 22/23
Further hearings (Housing need)	Q4 22/23
Regulation 19 – Main modifications	Q2 23/24
Adoption	Q4 23/24

We note your concerns raised at paragraphs 12, 15, 64 of ID16 regarding timescales and further comments in ID19 regarding the time that would need to be taken to get the Local Plan to a point where the examination could continue. However, we ask that you consider if this option is effective, justified and deliverable as a way forward.

Pursuing this option does mean that the Council will not have lost the financial investment in the Local Plan to date and would also enable the Council to demonstrate that it was seeking to get a plan in place at the earliest.

Option 3 – Continue with the current Local Plan and modifications process securing a 5-year Plan

Option 3 is identical to Option 2 with the fundamental difference that there would be a shorter adoption period and the Plan would be substantively reviewed after 5 years. This option focuses on the delivery of the allocated sites as a way of meeting housing needs.

The prospect of seeking the adoption of a 5-year plan is not a new one and there are precedents across the country where Inspectors have sought to permit shorter term plans for authorities where it has been sound and appropriate to do so. In the cases of Bedford, Swale and Oadby and Wigston, shorter plans were permitted by Planning Inspectors. We ask that you consider this as an alternative for this Council.

Under this option the elements of work that would be required are essentially the same as those in Option 2, including the preparatory work for the Garden Community Area Action Plan as this would need to be undertaken to ensure timely delivery of the AAP. This option would also necessitate that the work you have requested in ID16 was undertaken.

The following timescale is an indication of what the Council could seek to work towards, should you determine that a 5-year plan was appropriate:

Stage	Estimated Date
Re-Open hearings (M25, J6)	Q2 22/23
Further hearings (Housing need)	Q4 22/23
Regulation 19 – Main modifications	Q2 23/24
Adoption	Q4 23/24

Once again, the Council notes the time that would be needed to get the Local Plan to a position where the examination could conclude. However, the benefits of this option are that, while it would not cover the intended plan period, an adopted Local Plan would initially be in place for the shorter term and be able to provide policy guidance for development and provide much needed support for the Council in its development management function.

Option 4: Continue with a plan as set out in TED48

The Council has previously presented this option to you in TED48 as a without prejudice alternative approach to progressing the Local Plan. The proposal is a revised Local Plan period over fifteen years from 2013-2028 in accordance with paragraph 157 of the NPPF 2012 under which this Local Plan is being prepared. Under this option, the Local Plan would include amended site policies that would make as many of the currently proposed allocated sites sound in accordance with your comments. It would also include amended infrastructure policies which would take into account the recently completed findings of the M25 junction 6 transport modelling making maximum use of the remaining capacity in junction 6. Option 4 places no reliance on the Garden Community and recognises that a full review of the Local Plan would be necessary within 5 years from adoption, potentially requiring a new spatial strategy to be determined. The timescale for review of the Local Plan under this Option may help facilitate joint working with other authorities on an alternative Spatial Strategy.

Stage	Estimated Date
Re-Open hearings (M25, J6)	Q2 22/23
Further hearings (Housing need)	Q4 22/23
Regulation 19 – Main modifications	Q2 23/24
Adoption	Q4 23/24

As with Option 3, there are precedents for a shortened plan period and Option 4 would also be able to provide policy guidance for development and provide much needed support for the Council in its development management function. This option requires that significant new plan-preparation would be needed within the 5-year Local Plan timescale but would provide an interim planning policy framework within that timescale.

The Council recognises that you must be satisfied that the Council's Local Plan accords with policy and legislation. We also note that you must be confident that, if the Council is to proceed with its Local Plan, a sound outcome can be achieved. As such, we ask that you consider the Options presented to you, as further detailed in the Profile Options sent with this letter and advise us how you wish us to proceed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

David Ford
Chief Executive