

Mr K Ward and Mr P Mileham
Inspectors

C/o Caroline Williams
Programme Officer
Civic Centre
Castle Hill Avenue
Folkestone
Kent CT20 2QY

FHDC EX012

9 June 2020

Dear Mr Ward and Mr Mileham,

Examination of the Folkestone & Hythe District Core Strategy Review

Thank you for your letter dated of 21 May 2020 (reference PINS/L2250/429/7) with your further questions.

A copy of the BPS Report undertaken for the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule Review (June 2019) is provided with this letter.

Viability

We note your questions on the viability of the existing allocations brought forward from the adopted 2013 Core Strategy, particularly regarding the question of water efficiency.

The council has instructed Gerald Eve to assist in preparation for the examination of the Core Strategy Review in relation to the wider financial viability of the developments. Key activities to be undertaken involve the generation of responses to your further questions and Main Matters, to include a review the existing and available viability work that has already been carried out to provide an updated financial appraisal for each individual site allocation, modelling on the basis of previously agreed financial inputs and assumptions, applying updated policy information, where necessary.

In undertaking the Core Strategy Review the council has had regard to national planning practice guidance which states:

“Under regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) local planning authorities must review local plans, and Statements of Community Involvement at least once every 5 years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community. Most plans are likely to require updating

in whole or in part at least every 5 years. Reviews should be proportionate to the issues in hand.”¹

National planning practice guidance adds:

“Policies age at different rates according to local circumstances and a plan does not become out-of-date automatically after 5 years. The review process is a method to ensure that a plan and the policies within remains effective.”²

“A local planning authority may need to gather new evidence to inform their review. Proportionate, relevant and up-to-date evidence should be used to justify a decision not to update policies.”³

Given that requirements for water efficiency levels of 90 litres per person per day were found sound by the Inspector examining the 2013 Core Strategy and that planning permissions have been granted for those sites allocated in the adopted plan, with development progressing on several, the council considered it a proportionate approach to continue with this requirement to guide remaining phases of development.

Policies guiding development of the proposed new garden settlement were developed from the framework provided by ‘A Charter for Otterpool Park’ (November 2017). This sets out the council’s aspirations for the new settlement and was the subject of stakeholder consultation before being finalised. A key ambition is that the settlement “will be a beacon of best practice that embraces new technologies and designs to achieve a low carbon, low waste and low water usage environment” (Core Strategy Review, green box, page 85).

The ambition to create an exemplar highly sustainable development was a key element of the council’s proposals from the start, and the council’s Expression of Interest to government (‘Otterpool Park – A Garden Town of the Future’, March 2016) had environmental sustainability at its heart.

The government’s original prospectus ‘Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities’ (DCLG, March 2016)⁴ stressed that the government wanted to see “local areas adopt innovative approaches and solutions to creating great places, rather than following a set of rules” (paragraph 10). The government stressed that it would not support proposals that used ‘garden’ as a convenient label, but was looking for bidders to develop communities that stand out from the ordinary (paragraph 11).

Given this ambition, the council considered it justified to set a high standard of water efficiency for the new development, to match developments coming forward on sites allocated in the adopted 2013 Core Strategy, particularly given that the district is within an area of ‘serious water stress’.

¹ Paragraph: 062 Reference ID: 61-062-20190315

² Paragraph: 064 Reference ID: 61-064-20190315

³ Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 61-068-20190723

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733047/Locally-led_garden_villages_towns_and_cities_archived.pdf

As you will be aware from our response to your previous letter, the council is now a major landowner and recently set up a local delivery company to act as a steward of design quality, control delivery and create a positive legacy for the local community. This will help ensure that high standards of sustainability, including water efficiency, are carried through to the completion of the development.

Sustainability Appraisal

We note your request to undertake further sustainability appraisal work on policies SS5, SS10, SS11, CSD3, CSD4, CSD6, CSD7 and CSD8 in addition to that work done for the previous stages of the plan.

The council's consultants LUC have been instructed to undertake this work as a matter of urgency and we will let you have this work as soon as it is completed.

I hope that the attached documents answer your questions but if you would like any further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Adrian Tofts
Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist