

## **Matter 1 – Procedural/legal requirements**

**Issue:** Whether the Council has complied with relevant procedural and legal requirements.

Whether Policies CSD3, CSD4, CSD5 and SS5 are justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

---

### *Sustainability Appraisal*

#### **Question 4: How has the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) informed the preparation of the Core Strategy Review at each stage and how were options considered? How was the revised housing requirement assessed?**

CPRE Kent contends that there are three main constraints to development of the scale envisaged for the new garden settlement which should cause the Council to reconsider its housing targets: shortage of land (SA3); shortage of water (SA11) and shortage of transport capacity (SA13) as set out in the sustainability objectives of the SA Addendum (EB.02.10).

In Matter 7 we point out that the Council has not demonstrated that a 10,000 home stand-alone settlement can be fitted into the space between Westenhanger, Lympe and Sellindge while embracing 'garden city principles'. Without the relatively low overall density implied by garden city principles a new settlement in this location would have a totally unacceptable impact on the setting of the AONB. There is therefore no other basis on which to plan the settlement. In our view, more needs to be done to separate the new settlement from existing settlements to comply with government policy on new towns.

The outline planning application, which was made available after the Regulation 19 consultation closed, demonstrates the potential impact of up to 10,000 homes on the countryside, including the setting of the AONB. It appears that substantial areas of the site could be 4-5 stories high.

CPRE Kent doubts that such buildings can be built in this location without an unacceptable impact on views from outside the site. We have not yet found an example of a modern housing development in similar topography that has been successfully absorbed into rural surroundings and we remain unconvinced that it can be done with the scale and number of buildings proposed. We understand our colleagues at the Kent Downs AONB unit will address this issue at Matters 4 and 7 and we support their position, as set out in the AONB Regulation 19 consultation response

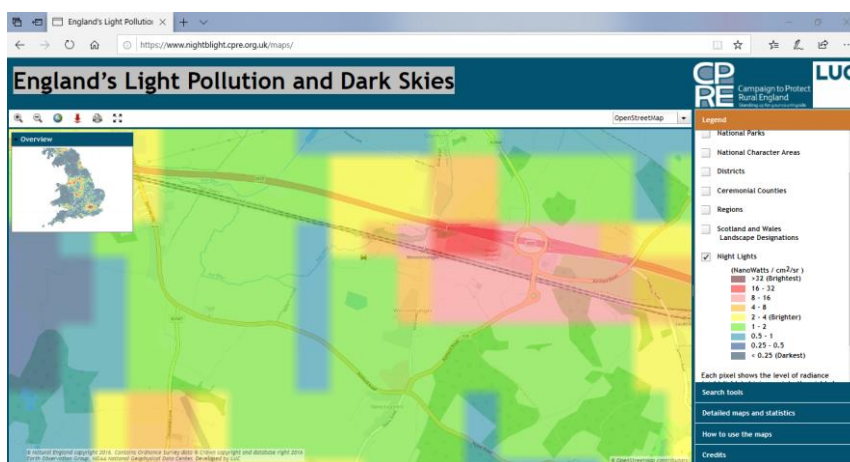
We think that for development at this location to be at all acceptable the ultimate number of homes to be built must be reduced. At the very least, the date when the whole area is 'filled up' with housing (if that should ever be found necessary) should be delayed as much as possible. Before that happens and in any case within the plan period, coalescence of existing communities must be avoided and the balance of development (homes, recreation, community facilities, employment, infrastructure) must be maintained in each phase to encourage the new settlement's self-sufficiency.

---

SA3 (EB.02.10) - conserve, and where relevant enhance, the quality, character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and townscape - gives new garden settlement yellow with +/-, stating: "Overall, it is considered that the close proximity of the garden settlement to the AONB and the area's historic landscapes may result in adverse impacts on their settings, although it is recognised that this land has not been identified as having high landscape sensitivity." We disagree with this assessment. The area proposed to be developed is essentially rural with scattered settlements of low-rise buildings. Much of the land is productive farmland. The loss of this character will be evident from nearby and more remote viewpoints.

It's not clear whether there has been any SA assessment of impact of lighting from the new settlement on AONB.

The CPRE dark skies map shows it is an area of darker skies. Paragraph 180(c) of the NPPF states that planning policies should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location and should "limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."



Source: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

CPRE Kent applauds the aspiration for low energy and water use in future developments. This is essential for new building if the country is to have any hope of meeting its statutory carbon reduction commitments.

However, Affinity Water who supply the area have stated that even with these efficiencies there will not be enough water in the catchment to supply more than 1,500 homes. An early draft of their Water Resources Management Plan (2019) stated "further abstraction would result in an unsustainable impact on the environment". This wording does not appear in the final version of the Plan but the principle remains. Affinity Water is not proposing further abstraction licences in the Folkestone catchment.

We understand that the infrastructure proposed in Appendix 1 to EB.13.60 is so that they can transfer (more) water from their adjacent Dover catchment, but even that will not be enough and they will have to import from other catchments not under their control later (*Final Water Resources Management Plan 2020 to 2080*<sup>1</sup> p129). It is not clear that these resources will be available. In fact, Water Resources in the South East confirm that “In 2007 most of the south east was officially designated by the Environment Agency as being in serious water stress” (*From Source to Tap*, 2018<sup>2</sup>, p7). They have set out three alternative scenarios for water supply in the wider region and all involve desalination as part of the supply (*ibid*, p21).

There is clearly a limit to the number of homes that can be sustainably supplied with water in the region – and as such it is difficult to reconcile this with the conclusions at SA11 (EB. 02.10) - Use Water Resources Efficiently - which gives the New Garden Settlement green with ++, stating: “A significant positive effect is therefore expected on this SA objective.”

There should be a re-think about the number of homes planned for this and other districts.

In our submission on Matter 10, we note that more than a third of the working-age population (ages 16-64, but noting that retirement ages are increasing) will not have jobs in the District, even if all of the employment space in the plan is built and occupied. The Council are keen to have high-speed trains stop at Westenhanger Station, but even now it is difficult to get a seat on London-bound trains from Ashford in the rush-hour. A strategy based on out-commuting, especially attracting commuters to London into the District is unsustainable and at odds with the ‘garden city principles’. The housing numbers should reflect the number of jobs available.

SA13 (EB 02.10) - reduce the need to travel, increase opportunities to choose sustainable transport modes and avoid development that will result in significant traffic congestion and poor air quality - gives the New Garden Settlement green with ++. However, as set out in our statement on Matter 7, it is difficult to equate this positive outcome with the reality.

In terms of sustainable travel, EB.13.10 documents that the KCC and Council view is that upgrades will be needed to the frequency of bus services at Otterpool (paragraph 2.24) to mitigate the impact of development. Such provision is to be funded by developer contributions, in agreement with KCC and in consultation with Stagecoach East Kent and other bus service providers. Provision of bus services “up to 6 times an hour” is a huge commitment – but this doesn’t explicitly appear to have been costed, or have the agreement of the bus service providers themselves.

Transport for Homes has recently published research into garden villages and in terms of public transport concluded it was “very popular but unfunded. Nearly every garden town

---

1 <https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/corporate/plans/water-resources-plan>

2 [https://www.wrse.org.uk/media/ruymzrt0/from\\_source\\_to\\_tap.pdf](https://www.wrse.org.uk/media/ruymzrt0/from_source_to_tap.pdf)

---

wanted excellent public transport. Equally the vast majority of garden villages put sustainable transport at the heart of their vision. Funding was however, very uncertain and pushed a long way into the future - there was little definite. We could find no garden community where the sustainable transport elements were costed and funded with delivery dates." [<https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/garden-village-visions.pdf>, June 2020]

EB.02.10 Sustainability Appraisal Addendum - Proposed Changes to the Proposed Submission Folkestone & Hythe Core Strategy Review Updated SA matrices only assess Policies SS6, SS7, SS8 and SS9: Guiding Development within a New Garden Settlement (pages 20 to26).

Windfall sites will now provide 10.5% of all dwellings. EB.02.10 paragraph 1.6 sets out that this is because the definition of windfall developments has changed from four to nine dwellings and as a consequence the number has risen from 935 net dwellings to 1,425 (+490). There is no knowing where these windfalls will be located and there is no guarantee that they will meet the SA Objectives, for example:

- SA7 Use land efficiently and safeguard soils etc. Will all windfall sites achieve this?
- SA13 Reduce the need to travel. Will windfall sites be located in sustainable locations supporting public transport and active travel; and be well located to local service centres etc?