Dear Ms Jackson

Examination of the Tandridge District Council Our Local Plan: 2033

Thank you for the note by Wayne Beglan on behalf of the Council in respect of my letter of 28 April 2020.

I think that it would be helpful to start by explaining briefly my concerns about the soundness of the Plan relating to the provision of transport infrastructure and development which have become evident following the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid decision, so as to provide further context for your discussions with Highways England (HE) and Surrey County Council (SCC).

Paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) (the Framework) sets out that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe. The position of HE as set out in the SOCG dated October 2019 is clear that the impact of the development proposals of the Plan as a whole on the strategic route network would be in terms of the Framework ‘severe’ and that mitigation is required at Junction 6 of the M25 by 2024/25 unless further evidence indicates a later date is appropriate. Details of the mitigation measures for J6 of the M25 have been provided and this matter was discussed at the Hearings. The HIF Bid sought to deliver this mitigation along with other transport improvements to the A22 by 2024/25 and it is noted in Examination document TED24 that the HIF funding was considered to be the only realistic option to funding the improvements. A successful HIF bid and implementation of the mitigation should have meant that the impact of the development proposals of the Plan on the strategic route network should not be ‘severe’ in Framework terms.

However, in the absence of HIF funding and the early provision of the required transport infrastructure mitigation this would have provided, it is unclear as to how much new development, if any, could come forward in Tandridge before ‘severe’ conditions would occur at J6 of the M25, or indeed other places in the transport network. It is also unclear as to how the necessary transport infrastructure improvements would now be funded, particularly given the statements contained in TED25 and that the IDP is now effectively out of date. Consequently, as there is a lack of clarity as to how and when the required transport mitigation would now come forward, this raises the question of can the proposed allocations in the Plan be considered to be deliverable or developable in terms of footnotes 11 and 12 of the Framework? That is to say, would the development of any of these
allocations trigger the severe conditions and the need for transport mitigation and how would the necessary mitigation be provided to make the development acceptable in planning terms?

I suggest that initially, I should determine whether my concerns about the soundness of the Plan specifically arising from the HIF bid decision can be addressed through revisiting the evidence already before me. The starting point for this is to obtain the views of the transport consultees, HE and SCC, as to what their respective positions are following the HIF bid decision. This can be expressed in the proposed statement of common ground (SOCG) in the usual way identifying matters agreed and not agreed.

The SOCG should also address the following:

- **How critical is the infrastructure that was subject of the HIF bid and does the absence of that funding constrain development?**
- **Does the Plan make adequate provision for necessary transport infrastructure to be delivered to make the proposed development in the Plan acceptable in planning terms?**
- **How could necessary transport infrastructure be realistically funded and delivered through the plan period to ensure development can be delivered in a timely way?**
  Would it be realistic that it is funded via S106 or S278 agreements? If not, what changes should be made to the Plan?
- **Whether the existing evidence base is sufficient to determine if there is a quantum of new development which could be delivered before the Framework ‘severe’ conditions occur on the transport network?**
- **Does HE and SCC consider that the existing evidence base is proportionate and adequate in regards to transport infrastructure needs, or whether additional detailed transport modelling is required to assess the capacity of infrastructure to meet forecast demands arising from the development proposed in the Plan?** If additional modelling is considered necessary, what is required and why?

The completed SOCG would enable me to determine how best the examination should proceed. There are broadly two approaches.

Firstly, it may be possible to determine that there is sufficient capacity in the transport network to allow some further housing provision in the short term, sufficient to secure an adequate supply of deliverable housing sites, prior to the necessary transport mitigation being put into place and that the necessary mitigation can be realistically provided through the plan period. If that is the case, I would then wish to consider how the Plan could be modified to ensure the delivery of the necessary transport infrastructure through the Plan period. This would involve the preparation of Main Modifications to the Plan potentially alongside the IDP being revisited, an updated Viability Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal to ensure that such an approach would be sound.

Alternatively, if the existing transport evidence is not considered to be adequate for such conclusions to be drawn and for the Plan to be made sound in this regard as outlined above, or if HE or SCC consider that it is necessary to determine the level of development when the transport effects would become severe, then it would appear that further transport modelling work would be required.

These, I am afraid are significant questions which go to the heart of the implementation of the spatial strategy proposed in the Plan. Please provide your realistic estimate of when you should complete the SOCG. After receipt of the SOCG, I should in any event be able to complete and issue my post hearing findings.
On receipt of this letter, the Council should make it available to all interested parties by adding it to the Examination website along with Mr Beglan’s note. However, I am not seeking, nor envisage accepting, any responses to this letter from any other parties to the examination at this stage.

Yours sincerely

*Philip Lewis*

INSPECTOR