Tandridge District Council. Examination of ‘Our Local Plan: 2033’

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Elaine Jackson
Acting Chief Executive
Tandridge District Council

28 April 2020

Dear Ms Jackson

Examination of the Tandridge District Council Our Local Plan: 2033

As I indicated at the conclusion of the examination hearings on 28 November 2019, I intend to set out my thoughts on the Tandridge District Council Our Local Plan: 2033 (the Plan) and outline my thoughts on the way forward for the examination. Before I do so however, I have a number of questions arising from the recent decision by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in regard to the unsuccessful bid made to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Forward Funding: Unlocking Strategic Development Sites (HIF/FF/577).

By way of background, the Statement of Common Ground with Highways England (SDTCE23) is clear that the impacts of the development proposed through the Plan as a whole on the Strategic Route Network would be in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework ‘severe’. It is the view of Highways England that mitigation is required at Junction 6 of the M25 by 2024/25, unless a later date is justified. This strategic infrastructure is considered necessary prior to any delivery of dwellings at the proposed South Godstone Garden Community (Policy SGC01).

Given the outcome of the HIF bid, I would welcome your views on what the implications are for the delivery of the housing supply as proposed in the Local Plan including the proposed South Godstone Garden Community and for the soundness of the Plan.

In particular, I would welcome your comments on the implications of the HIF bid decision for the deliverability and developability of the proposed housing supply and for the housing trajectory. You may wish to consider whether there is a need to undertake further transport modelling to ascertain what is the level of development which may take place in advance of the necessary strategic infrastructure works which were to be funded through the HIF bid and delivered by 2024/25? It would be helpful if you could confirm your position through a statement of common ground with Surrey County Council as Highways Authority and Highways England.

I would also welcome your views on how, in the absence of HIF funding, any necessary strategic infrastructure would be secured and consider any implications for the viability of the proposals in the Plan, given that the HIF process has refined the infrastructure costs from those assumed in the viability assessment for the Plan.
The MHCLG letter also expresses a concern that the South Godstone Garden Community has the potential to create increased congestion on local roads, without clear mitigations. This appears at odds with the transport evidence submitted in support of the Plan where mitigation measures are proposed to address the transport effects. Could you explain the difference and what bearing does the conclusion reached in MHCLG letter have in relation to soundness?

Finally, we are at present working within the unique and difficult circumstances due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Please provide your realistic estimate as to when the Council will be able to respond to my questions given the present circumstances, with particular regard to the fact that answering my questions will require cooperation other bodies, including Surrey County Council and Highways England. Please advise my Programme Officer Mr Chris Banks accordingly and we can agree the way forward.

On receipt of this letter, the Council should make it available to all interested parties by adding it to the Examination website. However, I am not seeking, nor envisage accepting, any responses to this letter from any other parties to the examination at this stage.

Your sincerely

Philip Lewis

INSPECTOR