

Responses to questions from the Examiner: Headcorn Neighbourhood Development Plan

In her interim letter to Headcorn Parish Council, the Examiner of the Headcorn Neighbourhood Development Plan has asked for clarification on two matters from the Borough Council, below:

- The current position regarding the 5-year housing land supply

5 year housing supply position:

The Local Plan is scheduled for submission to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in late May 2016, with the examination expected to follow in September. The Plan allocates housing sites considered to be in the most appropriate locations for the Borough to meet the OAN figure, and will enable the Council to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites when it is submitted to the Inspectorate in May. Clearly the Local Plan is gathering weight as it moves forward, but it is not considered to have sufficient weight to rely solely on to refuse or approve a planning application.

Notwithstanding this, it remains the case the most recently calculated supply of housing, which assesses extant permissions and expected delivery, is from April 2015. This demonstrates a 3.3 year supply of housing assessed against the OAN of 18,560 dwellings. A desk based review of housing supply undertaken in January 2016 to support the Regulation 19 Local Plan housing trajectory suggests that there remains a clear and significant shortfall of supply against the five year requirements.

The Council's five year supply position will be formally reviewed in April/May 2016 in order to support the submission of the Local Plan to examination in late May. Before the Local Plan is submitted however, the Council will remain unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites.

- Which are the strategic policies of the emerging Local Plan and their general location in the document. Whether the Rural Service Centre policy comprises a strategic policy and whether the individual, designated Rural Service Centres, that include Headcorn comprise strategic policy?

Strategic policies are located toward the front of the plan in chapters 4 & 5 and number SS1; SP1 – SP17.

Policies SS1 (p15–22); SP5 (p41-43); SP7 (p45-47) are all strategic policies which relate specifically to Headcorn, and its inclusion in the settlement hierarchy as a Rural Service Centre. They can be viewed here:

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/docs/February%202016%20Regulation%2019%20Draft%20Local%20Plan.pdf>