

Issues 5.1, 5.3 and 5.8 / Belgar Residents Group

Ashford BC – Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD Further Submissions on behalf of Belgar Residents Group

1. The Belgar Residents Group (“the Group”) has taken careful account of the Matters & Issues for Examination prepared by the Inspector, and, in addition to the representations already made, wishes to make brief responses to three of the issues set out.

Issue 5.1 – Is the degree of reliance of the DPD’s housing strategy on one principal site (TENT1) sufficiently flexible?

2. This is a key question, since there is a significant risk that other less sustainably located sites in the town may be promoted – to the detriment of the setting and character of Tenterden, if the reliance on a single site is proven to be too great. The Group considers that this reliance is sufficient if the DPD is taken together as a whole.
3. There is every likelihood that TENT1 will be built out during the DPD Plan Period, and so it is only if there is a delay to commencement that an over-reliance would have been placed on this allocation. In this eventuality the potential for the rural housing needs to have been met through the delivery of sites in the lower tier settlements would be very likely to allow the housing delivery programme overall to be achieved over the entire period of the plan.

Issue 5.3 – Is there a need for a contingency strategy should delivery be delayed?

4. The Group would argue, for the reasons above, that the DPD already contains sufficient flexibility as a whole to allow for delays in delivery of TENT1 to be accommodated.
5. It can be argued that there is no logic to making a further contingency provision in Tenterden in a situation where TENT1 is clearly able to accommodate the whole quantum of housing that has been identified for the town. The identification of an additional contingency site would be very likely to lead to both an over-provision of housing in Tenterden and unacceptable pressure on the planning authority to accept both sites.

Issue 5.8 – Is TENT1 the best strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives?

6. The importance of ensuring that any housing allocation in Tenterden is closely associated with the existing local facilities and is immediately walkable to the High Street shops is important in terms of sustainability. Tenterden does not have a mainline railway station, and so trips out of the town are inevitably predominantly by car. Therefore, the Group would argue that only locations that maximise the accessibility to local facilities by walking and cycling will create the opportunity for a reduced reliance on the private car, as daily needs can predominantly be met by non-vehicle based travel modes.
7. The Group therefore considers that TENT1 represents the very best available option to achieve this objective.