

SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE TMBC DRAFT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN DIRECTLY AFFECTING EAST MALLING



Purpose of this summary

The draft plan as posted on the TMBC website runs to over 130 pages, including proposals for the whole borough. This summary identifies the main proposals directly affecting East Malling. The summary is intended to inform members of the East Malling Conservation Group and the wider East Malling community about the contents of the draft plan and to provide a basis for residents to make known their views on the proposals. Accordingly, this summary does not attempt to make value judgements, but simply to explain what is contained in the draft proposals.

Green Belt extension

The draft plan proposes to extend the Green Belt surrounding West Malling as far east as the Wateringbury Road and north to the A20, with the declared intention of retaining “the important separation between the new settlement of Kings Hill and the historic villages of West Malling and East Malling”. This enlargement of the Green Belt is said by TMBC to result from the many representations (which included those by the EMCG) made to the Council seeking an extension beyond the Ashton Way bypass.

New Housing in and around East Malling

The starting point of the plan is the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) of 6,828 new dwellings to be built in the period 2011-2031 within the borough: in effect 696 homes to be built each year for the next thirteen years. This figure is determined by central government. The draft plan proposes major housing developments, totalling 5,000 dwellings, at five strategic sites in Eccles, south Ayleford, Borough Green, Tonbridge, and East Malling: new developments being concentrated in non-Green Belt northern parts of the Borough.

The proposed major development at East Malling is for 900 dwellings at Broadwater Farm. This proposal would expand the Kings Hill settlement as far as Pikey Lane and the New Barns Conservation Area. The development may include a secondary school with sixth form entry and a two-form entry primary school.

The draft plan also proposes to allow the construction of 205 dwellings along the western side of the East Malling Research site, a “ribbon development” which would run along the eastern side of New Road from immediately north of the village green to a point south of the main entrance to Bradbourne House. A further 216 dwellings are proposed to be built on the north-eastern part of the Research station site, at Ditton, and 23 dwellings on a small parcel of Research Station land off Kiln Barn Road.

The draft plan includes a proposal to demolish Park House (112 Mill Street) and build 5 properties on the site. A previous application in 2004 was refused on appeal as the site is in the Conservation area and “would detract from visual amenities of the area, the character and appearance of which it is desired to preserve and enhance, contrary to TMBC policy 4/4 of the (then) Local Plan”.

Finally, a further 65 properties are proposed on what is called ‘Kings Hill Remainder’ which is on the boundary of both East Malling and Wateringbury. This site could potentially allow access to Kings Hill from the Wateringbury Road.

Finally, not within the confines of East Malling, nine properties are proposed on land adjacent to the Library at Larkfield.

Next steps in the planning process

There is a meeting of the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board of TMBC on Tuesday 24 July, when Councillors will be able to ask questions and discuss the plan. The plan will then be considered by the TMBC

Cabinet on 3 September and by the full Council on 12 September. All these meetings are open to the public. Between mid-September and early November (or possibly a little later), there will be a period of public consultation to enable formal responses to the draft plan to be submitted. After these consultations, the plan will be finalised and submitted to central government by the deadline of 28 December 2018.

Future action by EMCG

We hope to hear from the community your reactions to the above, starting with the Annual General Meeting and the subsequent open meeting on 20 July and to make representations to TMBC accordingly. A summary of the initial reactions of the EMCG Committee to the proposals in the draft plan is set out below in the hope that this may focus discussion at the AGM.

INITIAL REACTION OF THE EMCG COMMITTEE TO THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN AS IT AFFECTS EAST MALLING

1. We welcome the proposal to extend the Green Belt as far as Wateringbury Road/the A20. We argued for the Green Belt to be extended in our November 2016 submission to TMBC on the first draft of the plan, and although we would ideally have liked the extension to be larger, we consider the proposal – which has yet to be endorsed by central government – to be of very significant benefit to East Malling.

2. We reluctantly accept that there is no realistic prospect of blocking the proposed construction of 900 homes on Broadwater Farm but we will argue strongly against the current outline proposals for an access road to join the A228 opposite the junction for access to West Malling station. We will also press for appropriate landscaping on the southern edge of the proposed development, and for a commitment that this development marks the end of the expansion of Kings Hill, which has always been stated to be a separate community, originally within the confines of West Malling airfield. We will also strongly oppose any proposal to access the new development and/or Kings Hill via Pikey Lane or any of the “quiet lanes” in the area.

3. We oppose the proposed “Park Side” development along the eastern side of New Road. We consider the 205 dwellings proposed for the site to be a wholly excessive number for this very important site, within the park which was landscaped three hundred years ago as the setting for the Grade 1 listed Bradbourne House, an Elizabethan house re-built 1713-1715. Certainly, if these proposals are taken forward, there will need to be extensive attention paid to landscaping and layout of the development. Furthermore, we believe that the Mill Street/High Street/New Road crossroads could not cope with the additional traffic which 200-odd new households would undoubtedly generate.

4. We regret the loss of green field land following on from the proposed development in Ditton and Kiln Barn Road. But, given that the new dwellings will access the A20 via Ditton, we consider that there will be little impact on East Malling and therefore that these proposals are not a matter for the EMCG.

5. We oppose the proposed development of Park House, Mill Street Please refer to the detail on the previous page. Nothing in this area has changed since 2004 and the proposal should be withdrawn.

6. We accept that the Kings Hill Remainder is a viable plot for development, but under no circumstances should access be allowed onto Teston Road as this could allow a possible through route via Clearheart Lane to the rest of Kings Hill. The impact of the resulting vastly increased traffic flows on the Wateringbury Road and on East Malling High Street and New Road (and Teston village) would be catastrophic.

7. The draft plan does not stipulate the proportion of the proposed new dwellings which will be required to be “affordable homes”, and we believe that the EMCG should press for a significant proportion of these new homes to be affordable to local people.

8. We regret the loss of green space and the loss of the public conveniences at Martins Square, but we consider that since this is outside East Malling this is not a matter for EMCG.

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