



Bearsted  
Parish  
Council

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL  
FAO Mr R Jarman  
Planning & Development  
King Street  
Maidstone  
Kent ME15 6JQ

Dear Mr Jarman,

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL (MBC) LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION (REGULATION 19)<sup>12</sup>

### RESPONSE FROM BEARSTED PARISH COUNCIL (BPC)

1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above consultation. BPC believes that the LPR is legally compliant, sound and that it complies with the duty to cooperate.
2. BPC wishes to raise the comments, observations and objections set out below.

### HOUSING - OBJECTION

3. The overall housing position regarding Bearsted is welcomed especially as the Plan does not propose further expansion into the attractive, often protected, adjacent countryside. We emphasise this as Bearsted is, to all intents and purposes, 'built out'. The physical and social infrastructure of Bearsted Parish is already under severe pressure.
4. **Emerging Pressures.** BPC requests that MBC recognises that Bearsted has yet to feel the full impact of developments such as: The Sycamores, Lilk Meadow and, potentially, the former coal yard at Bearsted Station. Similarly, the Parish will be forced to absorb the increased burdens arising from approved developments in Otham, Thurnham and Hollingbourne, all of which will add further stresses to Bearsted's infrastructure.
5. **Objection to LPRSA266.** Release of land under allocation at LPRSA266, land north of Ware Street within Thurnham Parish, is not acceptable. This proposal would impact Thurnham and Bearsted adversely, particularly along Bearsted Road and Ware Street, including Bearsted's Conservation Area. A site for 67 dwellings is entirely out of keeping with the setting and will blight the foreground of the AONB. In BPC's view, the development is not sustainable in terms of existing infrastructure, particularly in terms of traffic.
6. **BPC therefore makes a strong formal objection** to the recommended release of LPRSA266 and requests that it is removed. BPC sees no case for this development, especially as two smaller sites north of Ware Street have recently been rejected at appeal. Removal would help preserve the AONB and mitigate some of the already inevitable strains upon Bearsted and adjacent parishes.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://localplan.maidstone.gov.uk/home/documents/local-plan-review-documents/regulation-19/LPR-Regulation-19-Documents-25.10.21-Final-Copy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Consultation ends 2359 Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2021

#### Bearsted Parish Council

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## MINERALS - OBJECTION

7. The Kent Minerals and Waste Plan 2013-30<sup>3</sup> sets out 'Maidstone Mineral Safeguarding Areas'. These cover tracts of the countryside and much of Maidstone's built-up area. To safeguard countryside areas makes sense, but to safeguard or reserve land under existing dwellings and built-up areas does not. Much of Bearsted's built-up housing area north of the A20 and a small area to the south of the A20 are identified for safeguarding. The Plan suggests that mineral extraction should or could take place in these built-up areas. Therefore, if that is correct, our parish, our homes, our conservation area and our significant listed buildings, such as the Grade 1 Holy Cross Church Bearsted, could be compromised to enable commercial access to mineral reserves. The MBC LPR states explicitly that heritage is a strategic priority. The designation as proposed does not safeguard our community and seems to safeguard commercial interest above that of residents.
8. This issue has the potential to impact Bearsted, surrounding Kent villages and much of Maidstone. The impact upon residents could be considerable. If not revised, this element of the Plan could blight properties in the region and cause unnecessary and costly delays to conveyancing and planning.
9. **Formal Objection: BPC Objects, most strongly, to the Minerals element of the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan 2013-30<sup>4</sup> and its linkage to the MBC LPR.** Maidstone's mineral safeguarding areas, as designated, must be amended to protect existing dwellings and to preserve public confidence. This must take place in the Maidstone area, to protect existing defined urban boundaries and those of affected surrounding villages.
10. **BPC insists** that MBC approaches Kent County Council, as the Mineral Authority, to ensure that the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 is adjusted. The outcome must be to protect our residents, our heritage, existing properties and local housing.

## LEEDS LANGLEY RELIEF ROAD - SUPPORT (LPRSP5(A))

11. BPC remains firmly in support of development of a Leeds Langley Relief Road (LLRR) to ease the strain of traffic upon the local road network to support local businesses and improve access to the motorway network.
12. The current LPR draft keeps the option for a LLRR open but fails to account for housing and associated funding that would almost certainly be associated with the project. BPC requests that the LPR draft is revisited to include these figures and to articulate the potential social, financial and infrastructure benefits.

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<sup>3</sup> Page 165

<sup>4</sup> Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (adopted 2020) esp **Page** 165



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### **PROPOSALS MAP - ERROR**

13. The key for the Adopted Local Plan 2017 Designations shows District and Local Retail Centre Designations as 'cross-hatched'. The hatching is absent from the map pages.

### **ATTENDANCE AT EXAMINATION**

14. At this stage, BPC does not wish to attend the examination. However, BPC reserves its position should any issue arise regarding any potential housing sites which directly or indirectly affect Bearsted Parish.

Kind Regards

Erin Sugden  
Parish Clerk

### **Bearsted Parish Council**

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