

REPORT TO WOULDHAM PARISH COUNCIL 5th July 2022

**By the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councillors for
Burham and Wouldham Ward Councillors Dave Davis and Roger Dalton**

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

1.The Local Plan preparation is now very back on track. The time table for this key document is attached. There is one typo error on Page 2 of the attachment. There are two years “2024” and the second should be deleted and 2025 inserted. If we can keep to this plan then we will have the new Local Plan in place by 1st August 2025.

2.The importance of this document cannot be overstated. It will provide considerable protection against the mass of speculative building that is taking place in the Borough at present and ensure that key infrastructure to support the development is planned and in place.

3.In July a new head of planning will be in post to direct operations of this key process. However, at present the staff in the planning team needs little direction as they work through the mass of detail that needs processing prior to Regulation 18 consultation.

4.Since July last year TMBC have made the calculation of the “Objectively Assessed Need” for dwellings following the government formula to work out our housing need until 2040. This arrived at the figure of 15940 dwellings in the plan period or 839 homes per year until 2040. Any planner following this process would have arrived at the same figure.

5.The last key public event was the “Call for Sites” which closed in March this year. This was the search for sites on which to build the 15940 dwellings required until 2040. The sites are now being assessed. Some will be rejected totally as unsuitable for building on after Regulation 18. Others will go into a pool from which TMBC can select the best places for building home to minimise the corresponding disruption.

6.The next major event is the “Regulation 18 Consultation” required by the central government planning process. This is planned to start in mid September and run to November (slight slippage on the attached programme). This consultation will not deal with details but with the overall strategy. As well as explaining and asking for comments on the major strategic planning objectives, it will contain a list of every single site submitted in the “Call for Sites” and those sites will be scored by a computer program. About of third of those sites will be rejected totally later in the planning process as unsuitable for development. The remainder will form the main pool of building sites from which those required by the Local Plan will be selected.

7.Your Council are very much encouraged to take part in this key part of the development of our Local Plan.

BELL LANE BURHAM AND SOUTERN EXETENSION APPLICATION

8. Both these applications are now at an advanced stage and both will be determined by our planning officers as there were no legal planning reasons for them being called in by us. Both these sites are speculative sites in that neither were in our 2007 Local Plan. They have both had a tortuous passage through the process to date. In the case of Bell Lane in Burham, it looks as if all the planning gain Burham Parish Council has asked for will be delivered within the approved application along with 40% affordable housing. In the case of the Southern Extension approval will enable the developer to finish moving all the chalk from the upper levels of Peters Village and at last the end is in sight for the completion of the village with in 20 years of it being approved. It also enables the unsightly mound of chalk to be used for its proper engineering process of raising the ground levels above tidal flood levels and getting a look of normality back to New Court Road.