



Examination Statement – Matter 3
The Strategy for Tudeley Village
Tunbridge Wells Local Plan Examination
Stage 3

Representations on behalf of Crest Nicholson

May 2024

On behalf of **Crest Nicholson**

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Registered Office: Buckingham Court Kingsmead Business Park, London Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 1JU
Office Address: 2 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4AQ
T: +44 (0)1732 792428

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	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Jane Piper	Planning Director		29/05/2024
Reviewed by:				
Approved by:				
For and on behalf of Stantec UK Limited				

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Stantec on behalf of our Client, Crest Nicholson, who has an interest in the land to the north west of Paddock Wood that forms a significant part of the housing allocation STR/SS1: The Strategy for Paddock Wood, including land east of Capel. This Statement is prepared in response to the Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions.
- 1.2 These representations have been prepared in recognition of prevailing planning policy and guidance, particularly the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 1.3 This Statement does not respond to all questions raised under this Matter but focuses on those questions of particular relevance to our Client's interests.
- 1.4 These representations have been considered in the context of the tests of 'soundness' as set out at paragraph 35 of the NPPF. This requires that a Local Plan be:
- **Positively Prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - **Consistent with National Policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

2 Response to Matter 3 – The Strategy for Tudeley Village

Issue 2 – Five Oak Green Bypass

Q1. The Council's position (as set out in paragraph 3.39 of Examination Document PS_054) is that "...the bypass would be necessary to accommodate the traffic generated by the new settlement, when developed alongside the major expansion of Paddock Wood." What evidence is there to demonstrate that the expansion of Paddock Wood would therefore remain acceptable without a bypass of Five Oak Green?

- 2.1 As set out in Crest's Hearing Statement on Matter 6 Strategic Sites, Issue 1 Tudeley Village, Q16 and Q17 regarding the justification for Five Oaks Green Bypass, we stated that the rationale for this link road is described at paragraph 6.33 of the Strategic Sites Masterplanning and Infrastructure Study (February 2021) as being related to constraints in the following location:

"In the centre of the village for traffic flows and the growth at Tudeley Village (and to a more limited extent that at Paddock Wood and east Capel) [which] would increase traffic along the B2160 through the village."

- 2.2 The above suggests that the impact of the Tudeley Village development triggered the requirement for this infrastructure. The paragraph continues:

"The Transport Assessment (SWECO) underpinning the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan pinpoints the need for a bypass of the village to alleviate issues caused by strategic development at Tudeley Village." (Para 6.33).

- 2.3 Conversely, the increases in traffic along the B2160 resulting from the original (larger) developments identified for Paddock Wood and east Capel would not be significant, based on the anticipated traffic distribution.

- 2.4 Further paragraph 5.228 of the Submission Local Plan states, *"The Five Oak Green bypass is largely required to alleviate issues caused by strategic development at*

Tudeley Village and the viability assessment shows that this can be delivered wholly by the Tudeley Village Garden Settlement.”

- 2.5 As such, Crest agreed that the bypass should form part of Submission Policy STR/SS3 Strategy for Tudeley village but objected to the reference to the inclusion of the Five Oaks Green Bypass in Submission Policy STR/SS1. Crest stated in those initial Hearing Statements that the Local Plan should make it clear that the Five Oaks Green Bypass relates **only to Policy STR/SS3 Strategy for Tudeley Village** and not new development at Paddock Wood.
- 2.6 Since then, the Council’s Revised Spatial Strategy has significantly reduced the number of homes at North West Paddock Wood and has deleted Tudeley Village in its totality.
- 2.7 The Transport and Movement section of the Paddock Wood Strategic Sites Masterplanning Addendum (PS_046, October 2023) sets out how the change in allocations and reduction in potential capacity on sites at Paddock Wood have an effect on the required level of transport infrastructure provision which is primarily focused on a reduction in the need for new highways construction.
- 2.8 Off-site highways provision has been re-examined as part of TWBC’s Stage 3 Highways Modelling (undertaken by SWECO) in November 2023. This considers the updated development capacity figures of the sites and tests off-site vehicle traffic mitigation measures across the local highways network.
- 2.9 Within PS_059, Tunbridge Wells Local Plan Stage 3 Part 2 Outcomes, November 2023, updated traffic modelling has been undertaken to determine the traffic impact of the revised allocations and removal of Tudeley Village. This provides technical recommendations for infrastructure with the following being noted:
- “Although the data analysis shows that congestion rises along the B2017 through Five Oak Green link in the Local Plan scenario, the demand is not seen as being of a level to justify a major expansion in link capacity or a new link road such as the Five Oak Green bypass that was previously considered.”*
- 2.10 As paragraph 2.29 of the Paddock Wood Strategic Sites Masterplanning Addendum states,

“The previous Scenario 2 infrastructure schedule excluded the Five Oak Green bypass, on the basis that it was primarily needed to support development at Tudeley Village. “

- 2.11 Paragraph 2.30 goes on to explain that the Tunbridge Wells LCWIP (Part 2) has developed detailed proposals for Paddock Wood and was published after the February 2021 report. These broadly relate to the existing built up area and where connections can be made to the growth areas. As part of the previous study, liaison was undertaken with the LCWIP team to ensure that inter-urban routes and Paddock Wood infrastructure was aligned.
- 2.12 This fits in with the proposed changes to major infrastructure such as the proposed secondary school which is now being proposed to be located in Paddock Wood; thereby no longer creating any significant impact on Five Oaks Green of vehicles travelling westward to Tudeley Village. Further, the sports provision proposals have changed and again will be to support the reduced development at Paddock Wood and not the initial Tudeley Village new settlement and a larger development at Paddock Wood; therefore there will be no impact on Five Oak Green coming eastwards towards Paddock Wood from Tudeley.

Q5. Is the Five Oak Green bypass and associated works justified in the location proposed having regard to the matters identified in the questions above? If not, does this mean that the allocation is unsound?

- 2.13 As set out above there is no need for the Five Oak Green bypass as that was primarily needed to support development at Tudeley and that allocation is proposed to be deleted.

Issue 3 – Wider Infrastructure Provision

Q1. If the Plan is modified to delete Tudeley Village, can the necessary infrastructure be provided elsewhere? For example, the provision of sports and education facilities.

2.14 The TWBC Revised Spatial Strategy not only deletes Tudeley Village but also reduces strategic development around Paddock Wood; reducing housing provision by 2,600 dwellings. Any infrastructure provision therefore has to provide for significantly less development. This has allowed for the reconsideration of:

- offsite road infrastructure requirements (discussed above)
- the size and location of secondary school provision
- the number and location of primary school provision, and
- the location and type of sports provision for Paddock Wood.

Secondary School Provision

2.15 The reduction in housing numbers has reduced the need for secondary school provision from a 6FE standalone secondary school at Tudeley Village plus a 2FE expansion of Mascalls Academy to a requirement for:

“secondary school provision equivalent to 3 Forms of Entry (3FE) within the North-Western development parcel, unless it is demonstrated that through feasibility studies that the provision can be delivered through other means such as expansion of existing secondary school provision.”

[Revised Policy Wording STR/SS1 h]

2.16 There is a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, KCC Education, Crest Nicholson, Persimmon Homes South East and Redrow Homes Limited, in conjunction with the Leigh Academy Trust which runs Mascalls, regarding secondary school provision in Paddock Wood. This will be discussed under Matter 4 Issue 2 – Education Provision at Paddock Wood. It sets out that there has been extensive work undertaken, since the publication of the Council’s Revised Spatial Strategy, on the feasibility of expanding Mascalls Academy on its **existing** site by 3FE to a 11FE school. This would be instead of requiring a new safeguarded site for a 4FE secondary school that has land available to expand to 6FE should it be required on NW Paddock Wood (Policy STR/SS1A vii) or an expansion to Mascalls School in the South East as shown as alternative safeguarded sites on Revised Map 28 Paddock Wood and East Capel Structure Plan.

2.17 The feasibility study clearly demonstrates that there is sufficient room to facilitate a 3FE expansion to Mascalls Academy by way of a combination of demolition and rebuild and repurposing of existing buildings on its existing site plus a significant qualitative improvement in outdoor sports facilities. The SoCG also explains the phasing and delivery of the proposed works and how these can be arranged to minimise any disruption, and how the expansion works would greatly enhance the school's academic offer for the town. There is, therefore, no requirement for either of the safeguarded sites as shown on the Revised Map 28.

2.18 This offers up an efficiency of use of s106 contributions from the developments in Paddock Wood as well as other existing funding mechanisms for the school (e.g. for general wear and maintenance, etc.). It also means the school can provide a modern and up-to-date facility and curriculum and be a place of learning the town, and county, can be proud of, rather than being in competition with a small new school in the north west of the town.

Primary School Provision

2.19 The Council's Revised Spatial Strategy also reduces the need for primary school provision from 2no 2FE primary schools, one in the NW and one to the east of paddock Wood plus a 3FE primary school at Tudeley to the 2no 2FE schools at Paddock Wood only.

Sports Provision for Paddock Wood

2.20 In the context of the above Feasibility Study for Mascalls, the SoCG explains how the changes to the 'soft outdoor PE' areas could provide new all-weather facilities, including new sports pitches and a full size athletics track, which would add to that already available at the school. As the school's existing facilities are made available to outside organisations outside of school hours, the new enhanced facilities would also be made available and could form part of the overall sports provision in the town, helping to create a bespoke and high quality sports offer alongside the improvements to the existing sites at Putlands and Green Lanes and new provision in the SW of the town.

2.21 To this end we note that section 4 of the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum explains that whilst the scale of growth proposed within the Submission Local Plan facilitated a new sports and leisure hub, which could incorporate an indoor 25m swimming pool and indoor and outdoor sports facilities including around 10 hectares of land within the western parcel; because of the revised approach to growth it would be reasonable to expect a proportionate reduction in sports and leisure provision. As a result, and following an assessment of existing facilities, it was concluded that an appropriate level of sport and leisure

facilities could be accommodated within existing facilities, with some new pitch provision being delivered within the SW development parcel.

2.22 The TWBC Proposed Modifications state:

- Policy SS/STR1, 2(5) 'Sports and leisure provision to include an upgrade to existing indoor and outdoor sports facilities (which may include a 25m swimming pool)'
- Policy SS/STR 1 (B) (iii) 'A scheme designed with a landscape led approach; 4.54 hectares of land for sport and leisure provision including outdoor pitches, changing facilities, and car parking'.

Whilst para 4.61 of Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum suggests that this approach satisfies the vast majority of provision set out in the original Structure Plan, and that further intensification of use could occur, for example by the replacement of the grass football pitch with an artificial surface (which can be used for more hours each week, supporting greater levels of participation and provision); the proposed enhancement to the sports facilities at Mascalls would also help complement that now proposed and could allow for a review of what sports provision can and should be accommodated at each of the existing and proposed sites to optimise the quality and quantum of provision.

Q2. If Tudeley Village is deleted from the Plan, what highways infrastructure would be needed in Tudeley and along the B2017 from the remaining growth proposed around Paddock Wood? Is this deliverable and viable?

2.23 The Transport and Movement section of the Paddock Wood Strategic Sites Masterplanning Addendum sets out how the change in allocations and reduction in potential capacity on sites at Paddock Wood have an effect on the required level of transport infrastructure provision which is primarily focused on a reduction in the need for new highways construction.

2.24 Off-site highways provision has been re-examined as part of TWBC's Stage 3 Highways Modelling (undertaken by SWECO) in November 2023. This considers the updated capacity figures of the sites and tests off-site vehicle traffic mitigation measures across the local highways network.

2.25 As paragraph 2.29 of the Paddock Wood Strategic Sites Masterplanning Addendum states,

"The previous Scenario 2 infrastructure schedule excluded the Five Oak Green bypass, on the basis that it was primarily needed to support development at Tudeley Village. "

- 2.26 Following removal of Tudeley Garden Village and the Five Oaks Green Bypass, it is recognised within PS_059, Tunbridge Wells Local Plan Stage 3 Part 2 Outcomes, (November 2023) that some relatively minor traffic management intervention along the B2017 would be preferred over large-scale infrastructure interventions:

“it is recommended that consideration be given to the implementation of enhanced traffic management through the area to better support the flow of vehicles whilst also integrating this with enhanced infrastructure for people walking, wheeling and cycling in the area to enable them to safely travel along and across the link. More broadly the sustainable transport measures should be designed to maximise accessibility to Paddock Wood rail services to reduce the need for car travel on this link. The design and implementation of such measures would be expected to be linked to Travel Plans and Monitor and Manage agreements for all major Local Plan developments in the wider Paddock Wood area.”

- 2.27 The recommendation is therefore to support sustainable travel links, including links to Paddock Wood Railway Station, which would in turn reduce private car journeys. These can be delivered through both the creation of links within the NW Paddock site and the Tunbridge Wells LCWIP.
- 2.28 Paragraph 2.30 goes on to explain that the Tunbridge Wells LCWIP (Part 2) has developed detailed proposals for Paddock Wood and was published after the February 2021 report. These broadly relate to the existing built up area and where connections can be made to the growth areas. As part of the previous study, liaison was undertaken with the LCWIP team to ensure that inter-urban routes and Paddock Wood infrastructure was aligned.
- 2.29 This fits in with the proposed changes to major infrastructure such as the proposed secondary school which is now being proposed to be located in Paddock Wood; thereby no longer creating any significant impact on Five Oaks Green of vehicles travelling westward to Tudeley Village. Further, the sports provision proposals have changed and again will be to support the reduced development at Paddock Wood and not the initial Tudeley Village new settlement and a larger development at Paddock Wood; therefore there will be no impact on Five Oak Green coming eastwards towards Paddock Wood from Tudeley.
- 2.30 In Crest’s opinion, the transport strategy correctly focusses on sustainable modes of transport and as a result of that and the reduced housing provision at Tudeley and Paddock Wood has reduced the overall highway infrastructure requirements.

Q3. Without the allocation of Tudeley Village, can the Plan deliver the necessary wider upgrades the highway network, such as the Colts Hill Bypass?

- 2.31 Crest previously made representations about the Colts Hill Bypass to Issue 1 Tudeley Village Q16, questioning its legitimacy given it had been pursued by KCC for a number of years prior to the strategic allocations in the Submission Local Plan.
- 2.32 However, whilst also subject to the consideration of the wider issues of Matter 4: The Strategy for Paddock Wood, Crest is of the opinion that the highway infrastructure requirements now being sought by TWBC for the reduced number of dwellings in the Revised Spatial Strategy are appropriate. As such, the delivery of the Colts Hill Bypass and other identified highway upgrades in the Local Plan would be deliverable by the Paddock Wood developments.
- 2.33 It is noted that the 'A228 Colts Hill Bypass' and been renamed 'A228 Colts Hill Improvement Scheme' which may signify a change in the scope of the improvements and/or its footprint. This is encouraging if this would lead to a reduction in infrastructure costs which could help with its delivery.
- 2.34 Given the role that the scheme would play in addressing existing pressures on the A228 corridor, alongside serving as strategic infrastructure for the Local Plan, some form of supplementary policy may be required to secure financial contributions from all developments. This would ensure there's a clear understanding as to the means of apportioning any residual cost of the scheme, taking into account any funding mechanism. This would ensure that each development allocations in Paddock Wood are not overly burdened by the cost of strategic infrastructure.