

MATTER 4 – THE STRATEGY FOR PADDOCK WOOD

16th July 2024

MATTER STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF CHRIS SUTTON

I moved to my current home at 2 Eastlands Cottages, Paddock Wood in 1993. Shortly afterwards there was a TWBC Local Plan which sought to surround my home with new developments, thankfully the local community response was a factor in the decision by the Inspector at the time to reject the TWBC planning proposals.

In 2019 the TWBC planning team again cast its eyes over the local area, and in a planning map presented by TWBC to the local community at Mascalls School in October 2019, my home was to be an isolated island, ringfenced in red on the map, in a sea of new development. Naturally I was concerned, and the planning team on the evening introduced me to Mr Baughen who said that he understood my natural concern that the new developments would impair my family's living conditions in our home, and encouraged me to protect the value of my home by submitting my house and land in the "Call for Sites" process.

I took Mr Baughen's advice and submitted the relevant documentation to TWBC. In the version of the planning maps which were presented to the Inspector in the 2021/22 inspection, the red island on the map around my home was removed and my home was therefore confirmed as part of the development area, with Compulsory Purchase Order protection which was intimated to me by Mr Baughen.

Whilst I continued (and still continue) to object to the development of the East Capel site on the grounds of the potential destruction of North Paddock Wood's primary community recreational asset and landscape, the Council through Mr Baughen had at least protected for me the future ability to sell my home and relocate away from Paddock Wood without financial loss.

In the time since you last examined the plans for East Capel, the TWBC proposition has significantly changed. In the fields immediately surrounding my home there is no longer any proposed housing development, but there is a major new road proposed directly along the north edge of my home and a potential new school in close proximity. As you are aware, there is an existing lane running along the south edge of my home.

Without any consultation with me by Mr Hone and the TWBC planning team, the red ring around my home has been reinstated in the version of the plan now before you.

My home is therefore once again a ring-fenced non-development enclave within the East Capel planning area, and has essentially become an unprotected traffic island within the development. I understand this to be unacceptable in planning terms, given the impacts TWBC's proposed developments will have on my property and family life.

I have had helpful correspondence with Charlotte Glancy who suggested it would be good (and would save yourself time at the Enquiry) if I could engage with Mr Hone at TWBC and try to sort all this before the Enquiry. I attach in the appendix my email correspondence with TWBC Planning and their response. Since the TWBC response does not actually answer the questions I posed to them, it is not clear to me that any further emails to them would be worthwhile.

It is not a surprise to anyone involved in this Enquiry, that TWBC has stepped back from developments due to flood risk, but that in itself does not answer the issues I raised in my email.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Councillor Don Kent in getting Mr Hone's team to answer my email to them, since I was struggling to get any response.

My take on TWBC's response is that they are ignoring Mr Baughen's advice to me, on which I acted in good faith by submitting my home and land in the Call for Sites, and that TWBC have taken the opportunity to redraw the red lines on the map so as to minimize the financial implications to the Council, landowner and developer. This is clearly to my detriment.

I argue that this is against natural justice. The road and the proposed new secondary school do impact my family's living conditions and I should be protected against this, in the spirit of Mr Baughen's original advice to me in 2019.

I wonder how many other residents in East Capel have made livelihood and financial decisions based on advice given by TWBC and Mr Baughen, which at face value the TWBC planning team would appear now to disavow.

You might have thought that TWBC, in its recent response to me, might have asked for my suggestions on how to resolve the issues that the current map has created for my home. Upgrading Eastlands Lane, to the south of my home, could be one possibility. Another possibility, if the new road needs to be to the north of my home, is to build it 100m to the north of my home and garden rather than directly adjacent. This would require a sufficient parcel of land between my home and the new road to make it viable for arable cultivation. I am sure the developer and the farmer / landowner could make relevant modifications to the route of the proposed new road to achieve this.

You might reasonably state that all of my points above are more related to a planning application than to a local masterplan. I do hope that you can make some judgements on the points I have raised. I think it is also important to make these points to you now so that there is a clear audit trail of my concerns that can be reflected in any future planning application.

Sincerely

Chris Sutton



Appendix

• From [REDACTED]
Date: 11 June 2024 at 12:25:03 BST
To: Chris Sutton
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: TWBC Local Plan - 2 Eastlands Cottages

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your initial email below, which we have had an opportunity to consider, and we respond as follows: -

The property and immediate area surrounding the property in question (2 Eastlands Cottages) is shown with a red line around it on the Mastplanning Framework Plan for Paddock Wood and East Capel (attached for reference). This essentially shows that it is not in the control of the developers who have land interests here and therefore, it does not form part of the envisaged area for proposed masterplanned development. This position was the same for the Submission Local Plan 2021 Framework Plan, which you have referred to below (link to Submission Local Plan also added below - page 150). However, the 2021 version of the Framework Plan included a much greater extent of residential development within the vicinity of the property in question.

https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/403587/CD_3.128_Local-Plan_Submission-accessible_reduced.pdf

A key matter here is the updated flood modelling which the Council has undertaken. This was considered necessary following the points raised by the Inspector in the Initial finding's response regarding the extent of development within flood zones 2/3. The extent of development has changed in this area as a result (reduction in residential development and the land safeguarded for a potential new secondary school) in the current version of the Framework Plan.


It is understood that at the time of the Submission Local Plan, there were discussions regarding the status of your property and whether this could form part of future development opportunities. Given the extent of development around the property within this plan, it is possible that further land may have been required for access arrangements, road improvements etc and this may involve acquisition by the developers, or the Council utilising CPO powers. The context is different here within the current Framework Plan due to less development now being proposed in this location, and as such, it is less likely that additional land would be necessary to facilitate access arrangements/road improvements etc. However, should this be necessary or additional land required for a similar purpose in the future during the more detailed phases of the development process, the same applies and acquisition powers could be utilised at that time if required.

I hope this explains the current position regarding the land, although please do contact me if this isn't clear.

Regards
Kevin

Kevin Hope



E: 
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1RS

Access planning services online at: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk or submit an application via www.planningportal.gov.uk

From: Kevin Hope
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 1:40 PM
To: Chris Sutton
Cc: Charlotte Glancy <bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com>
Subject: RE: Request for meeting or call re TWBC Local Plan

Dear Chris,

Thank you for the email below.

We are reviewing the position regarding the points you have raised and will respond fully as soon as possible.

Kind regards
Kevin

<image003.jpg>

Kevin Hope

Strategic Sites & Delivery Team Leader



Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1RS

Access planning services online at: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk or submit an application via www.planningportal.gov.uk

From: Charlotte Glancy <bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 11:03 AM
To: Chris Sutton
Cc: Local Plan (TWBC) <LocalPlan@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Request for meeting or call re TWBC Local Plan

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Chris,

Whilst it would be helpful if the Council clarifies the situation in response to your issues (copying me in), the Inspector is still happy for you to appear at the hearings as required, and I have placed you in the programme for discussion on Paddock Wood-Tuesday 16th July.

Kind Regards

Charlotte Glancy

Programme Officer

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Planning Inspectorate Guidance on the Coronavirus can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-inspectorate-guidance>

On 5 Jun 2024, at 10:21, Chris Sutton wrote:

Hi TWBC planning team

I would be grateful for an acknowledgment of my email below, sent to you on 15 May.

Regards

Chris Sutton

On 15 May 2024, at 14:20, Chris Sutton wrote:

Dear TWBC planning team

I believe you have had an exchange with Charlotte Glancy in the last 24 hours following a call I had with her yesterday.

This is regarding the treatment of my home, 2 Eastlands Cottages, TN12 6BU in the context of the East Capel development area, and the concern that it has been removed from the development area (in a tiny circle inside the development area on the map) in the latest version of the plan currently being considered by the Inspector.

A similar situation on the map existed on the 2019 version, which I raised with Mr Baughen at a meeting at Mascalls School on 3 October 2019, where he advised me that it was in my interest to submit my house and land under the call for land, as it would then be likely to be the subject of a CPO and thus the value of my home would be protected. I followed up with an email to Mr Baughen (sent to this email address) on 14 October 2019 confirming that I would submit my house and land under the call for land. The planning team then asked me to submit a copy of the land registry which I did, and in the version of the plan which the inspector reviewed in 2021/2022 my house was duly included in the development area.

Whilst I appreciate that 2 Eastlands Cottages will not be surrounded by new houses in the latest version of the plan, it will now be directly adjacent to a major new road and the site of a proposed new secondary school. Both of these significantly impair the value of my home, to the same extent that the previous proposal for new housing would have done, and so I believe the CPO is still very much warranted to protect the value of my home - even if the school does not go ahead, the value of the home is significantly impaired for as long as it takes to make that decision.

I referred to this in my submission to the latest version of the plan - you will find my submission as the first submission in the East Capel section. I do not feel that TWBC's response to the issue that I raised actually addressed the issue. I have duly applied to speak at the hearing on 16 July on this topic, and will be submitting a hearing statement before the June deadline.

As I am sure you are aware, you have at no point during the development of the latest map for East Capel reached out to me to discuss why you are now proposing to remove my house from the development area, despite the context of Mr Baughen's advice to me in 2019. Charlotte Glancy has suggested to me is that it would be sensible for TWBC and myself to speak on this topic before the date of the hearing, and I look forward to your call. I can be reached on this email or on [*I have redacted the phone number for privacy*]. Please note that I will be out of the country between 25 May and 4 June.

Regards

Chris Sutton
