



Matter 7 – Residential Site Allocations

Issue 7 – Cranbrook and Sissinghurst

AL/CRS1 – Land at Brick Kiln Farm and AL/CRS2 – Land South of Corn Hall

Q3. How will the Council ensure that both sites come forward in a coherent and comprehensive manner?

Despite the allocation in the Site Allocations DPD Local Plan (2016) requiring a Master Plan for these two sites, by granting outline planning permission for Brick Kiln Farm (16/502860/OUT), the Council lost any power it might otherwise have had to ensure that both Brick Kiln Farm and Corn Hall would come forward in a coherent and comprehensive manner. Indeed, there is no certainty that an application for planning permission for Corn Hall will be made, as none has (to the best of our knowledge) been submitted since the site was allocated in 2016.

Policy AL/CRS2 provides (in paragraph 3) as follows, “The main vehicular access shall be taken from the A229 Hartley Road through land to the west, Land at Brick Kiln Farm (Policy AL/CRS 1). The development of Corn Hall will require vehicular access over Brick Kiln Farm, the grant of which, and the terms thereof, will be a matter for the owner of that site. So far as we are aware, no other main vehicular access to Corn Hall has been identified.

Q5. How has the proposed area of residential development been established? What is it based on and is it justified?

As we and others pointed out in the course of the Inquiry into the called-in application (APP/M2270/V/21/3273015) for Turnden Phase 2, the area of residential development on Brick Kiln Farm runs flush with the south-west boundary of the site. This prevents adequate (or any) screening of the development, in order to mitigate its adverse impact on the AONB landscape and remains a particularly unsatisfactory feature of this proposed development.

The development of Turnden Phase 1, for which planning permission has been granted, will provide 38 new homes and Brick Kiln Farm will provide a further 180 new homes, all in the Crane Valley. Should the Inspector grant permission for Turnden Phase 2, that development will provide a further 165 new homes in the Crane Valley.

Having regard to these factors, as well as other permitted developments in Cranbrook and Sissinghurst and adjoining parishes, the justification for any residential development at Corn Hall, to meet local housing need or demand, is highly questionable. Consistent with the position we have taken, that the Local Plan over-allocates sites for residential development in the AONB, we propose that Policy AL/CRS2 be removed from the Local Plan. This would retain that element of the rural setting of the Cranbrook Conservation Area which is represented by the Corn Hall site and avoid adding to the harm to the Cranbrook Conservation Area, which will be caused by other developments in the Crane Valley.

Should Policy AL/CRS2 be retained, however, we suggest that the number of homes be limited to 35 or less, to be built at a density of at least 40dph, within part of the area currently proposed for residential development.

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Q6. Do sites AL/CRS1 and AL/CRS2 (either individually, or cumulatively) represent major development in the AONB, and if so, are they justified? How have the potential impacts of development on the character and appearance of the area, including the AONB, been considered as part of the plan-making process?

It has, so far as we are aware, been accepted by all parties that Policy AL/CRS1 will represent major development in the AONB and there is therefore no question that the two policies cumulatively represent such major development.

We also take the view that Policy AL/CRS2, of itself, would represent major development in the AONB, having regard to its size (35-45 homes) and the context of it adjoining Brick Kiln Farm; the contiguity of the areas for residential development on these two adjoining sites; and the impact of development at Corn Hall on the Cranbrook Conservation Area. Development at Corn Hall would, if it's to be included in the Local Plan, form an integral part of one or more major developments in the AONB.

AL/CRS3 – Turnden Farm, Hartley Road

Q7. What is the current position regarding planning application Ref 20/00815/FULL?

At the date of this statement, we understand that the Inspector has completed his report and delivered it to the Secretary of State, whose decision will be announced no later than 4 July 2022. It is therefore likely that application reference 20/00815/FULL will be determined in the course of the examination.

The Inspector's Inquiry was conducted in great detail over a period of almost seven months. The parties' submissions filled many files. No less than 18 witnesses were examined, most of whom provided lengthy evidence and the Hearing occupied 18 full days. It will not be possible for the Inspector in the present examination to consider the merits of Policy AL/CRS3 in anything approaching a comparable level of detail.

If the Secretary of State were to grant permission for application 20/00815/FULL, that would in all material respects represent an implementation of Policy AL/CRS3 and render moot the question of whether it should be included in the Local Plan. If the Secretary of State were to refuse permission for that application, we submit that the Inspector in the present examination should treat that decision, having regard to the detailed body of evidence on which it is based, as a sufficient reason to exclude Policy AL/CRS3 from the Local Plan. There will be no justification for the Council or the developer to re-argue the merits of development on the Turnden Phase 2 site in the present examination.

Q8. How has the proposed area of residential development been established? What is it based on and is it justified?

By way of background, for the reasons set out in our comments on the Pre-Submission Local Plan and, in more detail, in our submissions in the course of the Inquiry into the called-in application 20/00815/FULL, we do not consider that residential development on the area defined by this policy is justified. Contrary to the evidence advanced by the applicant's experts in this Inquiry, the area of

residential development harms the AONB by, inter alia, its impact on the protected landscape and on the historic pattern of development in this area. The separation of the historically distinct settlements of Cranbrook and Hartley would, to any rational observer, be eliminated by development of this area.

For ease of reference our statement of case and closing statement to the Inquiry can be found here:

- [CPRE Kent - Rule 6 Statement](#)
- [CPRE Kent - Closing Statement](#)

Q9. How has the scale of proposed development been determined and is it appropriate and justified in this location, having particular regard to the scale of development proposed for Cranbrook in the existing Site Allocations Development Plan Document?

The scale of the proposed development is neither appropriate nor justified. It is not in accordance with the NPPF, for the reasons given in our comments on the Pre-Submission Local Plan and, in more detail, in our submissions to the Inquiry.

Q10. Does site allocation AL/CRS3 represent major development in the AONB, and if so, is it justified? How have the potential impacts of development on the character and appearance of the area, including the AONB, been considered as part of the plan-making process?

So far as we are aware, it has been accepted by all parties from the outset that this site allocation would represent major development in the AONB. That is our clear view. The potential impacts of the development on the character and appearance of the area have in our view, been understated, in particular as respects impacts on the historic landscape and on heritage assets.

AL/CRS6 – Land south of The Street, Sissinghurst

Q11. Can approximately 20 dwellings and a replacement community hall (with associated infrastructure, open space and car parking etc.) be provided on site AL/CRS6? Is the allocation developable?

The site is in our view capable of accommodating these elements, if the housing is designed to a suitably high density in an architectural style consistent with Sissinghurst High Street. The outstanding planning application for this site (21/03914/FULL) fails in this respect.