

Local Plan Review response

Boxley Parish Council would like to comment on the following aspects of the Local Plan Review.

1. Call For Sites

Creation of a New Garden Community at Lidsing

Boxley Parish Council strongly object to this proposal for the following reasons:

1. It obliterates the 'protected' strategic gap between Medway and Maidstone and will join Lordswood/Princes Park/Walderslade and Hempstead into one big urban sprawl. The strategic gap was designed to prevent this occurrence. It provides a vital green lung between dense housing areas and as such should not be built on. Boxley Parish Council cannot see that joining Medway and Maidstone together has any advantages that would justify the removal of the 'protected' strategic gap.
2. This development would result in a substantial loss of greenfield land that forms part of the setting to the Kent Downs Area of Natural Beauty and contributes to the area's open space needs.
3. The development will have a major impact on the flora and fauna in the area, contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF.
4. It would put considerable strain on Bredhurst Village and its services.
5. It would put additional strain on already oversubscribed secondary schools.
6. It would put additional strain on Medway and Maidstone's overstretched Health services.
7. *'Discussions have been held with Medway Council's Education Advisor and provision is made within the masterplan vision plan for a 2-form entry primary school with capacity to increase to a 3-form entry school in the future if required.'*
' What consultation has taken place with Maidstone Borough Council. As this development is wholly in Maidstone, surely their educational requirements are more relevant.
8. *'Discussions have also taken place with the Housing Manager at Medway Council where a lower percentage and alternative tenure split is normally requested. We propose to involve Medway's Housing Manager in further discussions on the housing mix.'* Again, why no consultation with the borough in which the proposed development sits.
9. The development requires built infrastructure directly in the AONB. The planting of woodland does not mitigate the incursion as the proposed road will alter the appearance of the AONB.
10. 'The suitability of this location for employment was identified in Medway's evidence base to the local plan review also being recognised as a general location for employment at the Future Medway Development Strategy Consultation Stage of the Local Plan which was consulted on in March 2018. 2.3 The development team has previously engaged with Medway Council's Economic Development team after identifying the potential suitability of this location as a business park as part of a wider development masterplan'. Again, where is the consultation from the

Maidstone side. There is already a large industrial park in Lordswood. Is another one that close really necessary.

11. There is plenty of provision for East/West traffic movements towards Medway but none for North/South to Maidstone. The only route from North to South would be through Boxley Village which already has severe traffic problems. BPC understands residents may use the new link road to access the M20, M2 and Bluebell Hill junctions but even the Developer agreed vehicles would still use Boxley as a cut through. There is no provision in the plans for a Boxley bypass to alleviate potential problems.
12. Boxley Parish Council questions whether this Lidsing development is being proposed to facilitate access to the Gibraltar Farm development which is currently on hold due to issues with access. The Gibraltar Farm proposal is directly adjacent to the Lidsing one and would make the total combined development size 2,450 houses.
13. Boxley Parish Council has questions about the number of cars per household the traffic assessments would be based on. The Developer has confirmed that 2 spaces per household would be allocated and anticipated that there would be 1,100 car movements during peak hours with 10-12,000 vehicle movements in a 24-hour period. If even part of this traffic feeds through to Boxley village or Walderslade Woods it would cause enormous problems with already congested roads. Walderslade Woods would take vehicles onto the already over capacity Junction 3 of the M2.
14. BPC notes that all the improvements seem to be of an advantage to Medway with none for Maidstone even though the development is in Maidstone Borough.
15. This development would destroy Capstone Valley and the beautiful rural landscape enjoyed by residents of Kent and Medway for leisure activities.
16. Boxley Parish Council have struggled to find detailed information on this Development even after a presentation by the Developer. We believe more information should be made available to the public on what is a massive rural development which so impacts the environment and wellbeing of residents. There is also a need for much more consultation, particularly what benefits there are for Maidstone and the potential traffic issues it will cause for Boxley Parish.
17. It is stated throughout the proposal that the whole development has one landowner. This is not true. Part of the land is owned by a local farmer who has no intention of selling his land. The area of land designated for the new road link to Junction 4 is owned by 2 Bredhurst residents. Part of the land is owned by Medway Council. Until it can be established that these other landowners wish to sell and support the development, the proposal should go no further.
18. The proposal includes provision to make Bredhurst school a full form entry instead of its current half form entry. Presumably, the additional pupils will come from the new development. Bredhurst school has no parking and the current pupil numbers cause traffic chaos at the beginning and the end of the school day. Where does the developer propose that these additional vehicles will park?
19. It is also noted that the landowner intends to retain ownership of all community areas. These should be managed by MBC or Boxley Parish Council for the benefit of the community.

In conclusion, Boxley Parish strongly objects to this development. The loss of the 'protected' strategic gap and incursion into the AONB are unacceptable and not mitigated by any potential benefits of the proposed development. Any potential benefits would be for Medway and not Maidstone in which the development would sit. As Maidstone already has a 5 year housing supply, is this development necessary or needed.