



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Alison Broom
Maidstone Borough Council
Maidstone House, King Street,
Maidstone, ME15 6JQ

Reference No. HW43880

12 December 2022

Dear Alison

Maidstone's Design and Sustainability Plan: Regulation 18

I would like to commend the council for conducting this consultation as I agree that it is important to involve as many local residents as possible in shaping the future of the borough. From the many letters and emails that I receive I know just how important good design is to my constituents. I think it is important to stress that people see good design not only as attractive that complements both the built and natural environment, but design that promotes good transport links and promotes health and wellbeing by reducing crime and isolation and allows for local employment where appropriate.

I would like to build on the comments I made in the Regulation 19 last year and emphasise the following in particular:

Placemaking

I fully support the council's ambition to ensure Maidstone, its villages and countryside is an attractive place to live, work and spend time. I would like to stress that I think the residents of Shepway in particular would benefit from improved quality green spaces and high quality place-making to contribute towards positive health and wellbeing, and promoting a feeling of safety, security, inclusion and belonging.

Streets and buildings

My constituents are rightly very proud of where they live and it is vital that any new development contributes towards the strong heritage of existing buildings and open spaces, particularly complementing our historic and listed buildings in the villages of my constituency. Any change that is able to reduce reliance on cars would be a positive development, both for peoples' health and the environment.

Open space and nature

I fully support the council's aim to integrate green spaces and infrastructure at every scale of design, making a genuine and significant contribution to the net gain of biodiversity. This is important to many people who write to me about the environment and biodiversity on a regular basis.

Movement

I have always been a supporter of integrated public transport systems and think it is important that people can travel around the borough by public transport. I would like to see better bus services for my constituents, which could in turn reduce reliance on private cars particularly for school journeys. I will do whatever I can to support the

council with this aim.

Electric vehicles are not only better for the environment but will help improve air quality. While this is important for everyone it's particularly a concern for anyone suffering a respiratory health condition such as asthma. I also want to see more charging points for electric vehicles.

Sustainable buildings

People regularly contact me about making new and existing buildings more sustainable, so I fully support the council's goal of ensuring all new developments achieve high standards of sustainable design and construction. This will minimise carbon emissions and help use resources efficiently, while enhancing resilience to a changing climate.

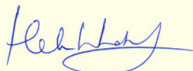
Design quality

Development needs to be seen as positive for local people, which means building homes that meet the housing needs of people already living in this area e.g., 'starter homes' and retirement properties, as well as homes for families with children. A proportion of properties should be adaptable to meet the needs of people with disabilities, for example, with doorways wide enough for wheelchairs.

I am often contacted by people who need home adaptations that cannot be made due to the original design of their home. They are then either forced to move from their familiar environment at a time of increased vulnerability or live in a home that does not meet their needs.

I am looking forward to reading the more detailed Regulation 18B consultation document, based on peoples' responses to this consultation, in the spring. I am sure together we will be able to shape the borough for the better going forward.

Yours sincerely



Helen Whately MP
Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid Kent

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