

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING POLICY & LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

08 June 2026

Update to report A.1 TENDRING DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: OVERVIEW OF MAIN MATTERS RAISED THROUGH PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PREFERRED OPTIONS DRAFT

Elmstead Market

Since publication of the agenda, an additional outline planning application has been submitted at Land at Bromley Road, Elmstead Market (Ref: 26/00810/OUT) for up to 160 dwellings, together with associated infrastructure including access, open space, drainage (including a pumping station), and landscaping.

This represents a further example of the increasing number of speculative planning applications coming forward across the District, reflecting the Council's current vulnerability in respect of its five-year housing land supply position. As set out in the main committee report, the Council is presently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, which in turn engages the presumption in favour of sustainable development and requires applications to be considered in the context of the 'tilted balance'.

The submission of this application therefore adds further to the cumulative development pressure in villages such as Elmstead Market and reinforces the concerns identified in the report regarding the pace and distribution of growth, along with the wider risk of unplanned, speculative development ahead of the adoption of an up-to-date Local Plan. It also highlights the importance of progressing the Local Plan review at pace to regain control over the location and form of development and reduce exposure to appeal-led decisions.

Sladburys Lane

A recent appeal decision relating to land west of Sladburys Lane, Clacton-on-Sea (application 25/01011/OUT for up to 30 dwellings) has been allowed, with planning permission granted on appeal.

Whilst this is a disappointing outcome for the Council, particularly given the associated application for costs, it is important to note that the Inspector's decision does not fundamentally undermine the purpose or justification of the Strategic Green Gap designation. The Inspector explicitly recognises that the Strategic Green Gap performs an important role in maintaining settlement separation and contributes positively to landscape character.

The decision confirms that the proposal would result in harm to the Strategic Green Gap through the loss of openness, which the Inspector identifies as a defining characteristic of the designation, albeit concluding that the extent of harm would be moderate given that the vast majority of the gap would remain intact and continue to perform its strategic function.

However, in the overall planning balance, the appeal has been allowed primarily due to the Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (identified by the Inspector as 3.22 years), which triggers the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In these circumstances, the

Inspector concluded that the benefits of housing delivery, including up to 30 dwellings and associated economic and social benefits, outweighed the identified harm.

Whilst the loss of the appeal is disappointing, the decision provides helpful commentary that may assist the Council in the determination of future applications, including the larger adjoining site, in that:

- the principle and function of Strategic Green Gaps are clearly acknowledged and afforded weight;
- harm arising from loss of openness is explicitly recognised; and
- the decision-making outcome is driven primarily by the housing land supply position rather than any fundamental deficiency in the policy itself.

Overall, the decision underlines the extent to which Inspectors are currently applying national policy on housing land supply and reinforces the urgency of progressing the Local Plan to address the Council's housing supply position and reduce the risk of similar appeal outcomes in the future.

Update to report A.2 TENDRING DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: EMERGING THOUGHTS AND PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS

Wix – MSA27 Abbey Bottom Farm (20 dwellings)

Officers have been informed by the family of the current freehold owner of the eastern section of the site (approximately 40%) that they acquired the land in December 2025. They have advised that they only became aware of the proposed allocation through the Regulation 18 consultation and do not intend to proceed with any residential development on their land. Evidence of ownership and site extent has been provided to officers.

This represents a significant change in circumstances, resulting in the site now being in multiple ownership. The proposed access arrangements are similarly affected, with ownership effectively split and a physical boundary wall erected along the division, as illustrated in Map 1 below. The implications of this new information were put to the site promoters for comment; however, at the time of writing, no response has been received.

As a consequence, the land within the control of the site promoters is substantially reduced, with corresponding implications for the capacity and layout of the scheme. More critically, the change introduces a high degree of uncertainty regarding the deliverability of the site, particularly in respect of achieving a comprehensive form of development and securing a suitable and viable access arrangement.

In the context of the Local Plan process, and the need to demonstrate that allocated sites are available, suitable and deliverable, this new information raises significant concerns regarding the soundness of retaining the site as a proposed allocation.

On a provisional basis, and as a working assumption to inform the continued preparation of the Regulation 19 Submission Version of the Local Plan, officers consider that allocation MSA27 (Abbey Bottom Farm, Wix) should be removed, with consequential adjustments made to the overall housing numbers as necessary.

Map 1 – Red outline shows the full extent of MSA27. Blue hatching indicates the portion of the site under separate third-party ownership, where an objection to the proposed allocation has been raised.

