

LEEDS PARISH COUNCIL

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6th November 2015

Dear Leaders of Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and Kent County Council (KCC).

REF: Leeds-Langley Relief Road as part of the MBC Local plan to build 18,600 new homes

Leeds Parish Council call on both of your Councils to work together to ensure that within the MBC Local Plan (that MBC have just finished consulting on) for 18,600 new homes in Maidstone, that a Leeds-Langley relief road is formally agreed as a priority and also costed as core infrastructure required within your Local Plan and then built with utmost urgency by KCC, in order to support the future development of the 18,600 homes.

This is not about KCC paying for the relief road alone, as we know the monies can be found from a mix of sources for the projected £50m cost to build a Leeds-Langley relief road.

KCC has its own scarce capital funds but we also look to both your Councils to then work together with EU and LEP (Local Enterprise funding) funding/ to apply for Regional Growth Fund (RGF) bids for capital items to support a relief road for housing development / allocate funding from land uplift value to this priority /ensure that the equivalent of "106" funds (as they used to be called) and ensure that other developer contributions are imposed by MBC on the 18,600 homes developers, to help KCC fund the Leeds-Langley relief road.

At £50m that is only a charge on the developer, per property, of c £2,700 extra for every house in the 18,600 plan (given most new homes will exceed c £200,000 that's a small impact on their profits) and if that was achieved alone you would then have the £50m needed. So we require MBC to focus too on supporting infrastructure too not just the homes themselves, and as such to help access the monies for KCC to build the Leeds-Langley relief road to keep the local economy flowing and maintain the integrity of local communities and rural villages.

Without a Leeds-Langley relief road both the Leeds, Langley, Otham, Sutton Valence and Willington Street etc communities are about to become the east-west arterial roads to South Maidstone to join up the north to south roads (i.e. Sutton Road/A20 and M20). We must have a proper east-west road (equivalent in broad terms to Crossrail in London) that removes the need for 18,600 extra homes (and the existing residents) to use both the current B2163 & Willington Street as core run ways for HGVs and speeding cars in order to move east to west & west to east, to the south of Maidstone.

We have a window into the future already when "Operation Stack" happens and the extra cars/HGVs that then brings Maidstone to a halt. As I say, could that be a window into the future if we don't get a relief road for the South of Maidstone, given some extra 30,000 cars that will come with 18,600 new homes. It could be a mini version of operation stack each day, every day and bring Maidstone and its local businesses and economy to a grinding halt.

At a recent meeting where the local Parish Council Chairman/representatives met together to discuss a Leeds-Langley relief road, a formal vote was taken and recorded at the end of the meeting where; Leeds, Otham, Broomfield & Kingswood and Sutton Valence Parish Councils all voted in favour of the principle of a Leeds-Langley relief road i.e. no Parish was against it.

We have also been in contact with the Willington Street resident representatives and they too are very supportive of a Leeds-Langley relief road.

As you know Leeds is a small rural village and yet we have on our e-petition that we put on the KCC website already garnered 237 e-petition signatures (within only a week of starting the petition) and we aim to have hundreds more hand written ones to add to this. The petition reads as follows:

“We the undersigned petition the Kent County council to collaborate with Maidstone Borough Council to provide and build a Leeds-Langley relief road as a matter of urgency”

Therefore, we call on both KCC and MBC to work together and formally confirm as part of the housing Local Plan (that will soon go to Government) that the Leeds-Langley relief road is in fact formally going to happen and as a matter of urgency.

Finally, we request that the KCC and MBC also show how the increased traffic will be catered for more widely around Maidstone, how the increased water, sewage, gas and electricity supplies will be made available notwithstanding medical and school facilities with 18,600 extra homes in Maidstone as a result of the MBC Local Plan.

Yours faithfully

John Govett

Chairman Leeds Parish Council

COPIES to:

Local MP: Rt Hon Helen Whately MP

KCC local Councillor: Gary Cooke

MBC local Councillor: Gill Fort

Parish Chairman of: Otham, Broomfield & Kingswood and also Sutton Valence

Willington Street residents representative: Jenny Sutton

Kent Messenger : Claire McWethy