

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Thursday 28 March 2024
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), Cleator, Conyard, Mrs Grigg (Vice-Chairman), Jones, Kimmance, McKenna, Spooner and Trzebinski

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies of Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Urgent Items
4. Notification of Visiting Members
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers
6. Disclosures of Lobbying
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information
8. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 March (to follow)
9. Forward Plan Relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference 1 - 7
10. Consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan - Vision 2040 (regulation 18 - stage 1) 8 - 17
11. Consultation on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's response to the Inspector's initial findings letter on the examination of their new Local Plan 18 - 33

Issued on 20 March 2024

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on 26 March 2024). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899**.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit the [Council's Website](#).

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 MARCH 2024 TO 30 JUNE 2024

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key and non-key decisions which the Cabinet or Cabinet Members expect to take during the next four-month period.

A Key Decision is defined as one which:

1. Results in the Council incurring expenditure, or making savings, of more than £250,000; or
2. Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards in the Borough

The current Cabinet Members are:

 <p>Councillor David Burton Leader of the Council DavidBurton@maidstone.gov.uk 07590 229910</p>	 <p>Councillor Paul Cooper Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PaulCooper@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 244070</p>	 <p>Councillor John Perry Cabinet Member for Corporate Services JohnPerry@Maidstone.gov.uk 07770 734741</p>
 <p>Councillor Claudine Russell Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts ClaudineRussell@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>	 <p>Councillor Patrik Garten Cabinet Member for Environmental Services PatrikGarten@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 807907</p>	 <p>Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid Cabinet Member for Housing and Health LottieParfittReid@Maidstone.gov.uk 07919 360000</p>

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision or a Part II decision may not be taken, unless it has been published on the forward plan for 28 days or it is classified as urgent:

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key and part II decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan.

Copies of the Council's constitution, forward plan, reports and decisions may be inspected at Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ or accessed from the [Council's website](#).

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet which are normally held at the Town Hall, High St, Maidstone, ME14 1SY. The dates and times of the meetings are published on the [Council's Website](#), or you may contact the Democratic Services Team on telephone number **01622 602899** for further details.

David Burton
Leader of the Council

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Cabinet Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>Over-arching Conservation Management Plan</p> <p>To seek approval for the Over-arching Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan being publicly consulted on, and for this to be facilitated by the Head of Development Management via delegated powers.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 6 Mar 2024	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Mar 2024	Over-arching Conservation Management Plan	<p>Janice Gooch</p> <p>JaniceGooch@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Bearsted Road Improvements MBC Contribution</p> <p>To seek approval of the Bearsted Road Improvements Maidstone Borough Council Contribution.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 8 Mar 2024	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Mar 2024	Bearsted Road Improvements MBC Contribution Report, Exempt Appendix 1	<p>Chris Inwood</p> <p>chrisinwood@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report</p> <p>4</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	19 Mar 2024	No	No Open	<p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Mar 2024</p> <p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Mar 2024</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Mar 2024</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Mar 2024</p>	3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	<p>Adrian Lovegrove, Paul Holland</p> <p>Head of Finance,</p> <p>adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk, paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p> <p>Key performance indicators are reviewed annually. This report proposes the KPIs for</p>	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	19 Mar 2024	No	No Open	<p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Mar 2024</p> <p>Planning,</p>	Key Performance Indicators	<p>Carly Benville, Anna Collier</p> <p>Head of Insight, Communities & Governance Policies,</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
the period 2024/25. 5						Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Mar 2024 Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Mar 2024 Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Mar 2024		Communities and Engagement carlybenville@maidstone.gov.uk, annacollier@maidstone.gov.uk
Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2021-38 Adoption	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	19 Mar 2024	Yes	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 18 March 2024	Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review 2021-38 Adoption	Mark Egerton, Tom Gilbert markegerton@maidstone.gov.uk, tomgilbert@maidstone.gov.uk
Town Centre Greening and Lighting UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure	19 Mar 2024	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Proposed Greening and Lighting Strategies	Jennifer Stevens, Katie Exon, Angela Woodhouse

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
		e and Economic Development				Policy Advisory Committee 6 Mar 2024		jenniferstevens@maidstone.gov.uk, katieexon@maidstone.gov.uk, angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk
<p>Consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040 (regulation 18 – stage 1)</p> <p>☞ This report sets out the scope of the consultation and provides a summary overview of the content of the draft plan. Maidstone Borough Council's proposed consultation response is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	29 Mar 2024	No	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 28 Mar 2024	Consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040 (regulation 18 – stage 1)	Helen Smith helensmith@maidstone.gov.uk
Consultation on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's response to the Inspector's initial findings letter on the examination	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic	29 Mar 2024	No	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	Consultation on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's response to the Inspector's	Helen Smith helensmith@maidstone.gov.uk

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>of their new Local Plan</p> <p>This report sets out the scope of the consultation and the key matters arising from the proposed changes that have the potential to impact upon Maidstone borough.</p>		Development				28 Mar 2024	initial findings letter on the examination of their new Local Plan	

Agenda Item 10

Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee

28 March 2024

Consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040 (regulation 18 – stage 1)

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	28 March 2024
Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	2 April 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development
Lead Head of Service	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Lead Officer and Report Author	Helen Smith (Principal Planning Officer)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

A public consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040 is underway. This report sets out the scope of the consultation and provides a summary overview of the content of the draft plan. Maidstone Borough Council's proposed consultation response is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

This report and associated appendix is to be considered by Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee (PIED PAC) before being passed to the PIED Cabinet Member for agreement and submission to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 15th April 2024 consultation response deadline.

Purpose of Report

Recommendation to Cabinet Member.

This report asks the Committee to consider the following recommendation to the PIED Cabinet Member:

1. That the current consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040 is noted; and
2. That the draft response to the consultation (as appended to this report) is recommended to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development for agreement and submission to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 15th April 2024 consultation response deadline.

Consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040 (regulation 18 – stage 1)

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will enable the Council to ensure that plans in a neighbouring authority do not materially harm its ability to achieve each of the corporate priorities.</p>	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of the four cross-cutting objectives by ensuring that plans from a neighbouring authority do not materially harm the council's ability to achieve these objectives.</p>	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Risk Management	Covered in the 'risk' section of this report.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Financial	There are no financial implications to note. Any cost of participating in the consultation will be accommodated within existing	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	budgets.	
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Legal	Accepting the recommendations will help fulfil the Council's duties under Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) as amended and the National planning Policy Framework (NPPF).	Russell Fitzpatrick (MKLS - Planning)
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Information Governance Officer.
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications to Crime and Disorder.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Procurement	The recommendation has no identified impact on procurement.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) are in the early stages of preparing a new Plan titled 'Draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040'.

2.2 The consultation commenced on 23rd February and runs until midnight on Monday 15th April 2024. During this time, TWBC are seeking views on the content of the draft plan, posing a series of 15 questions dispersed throughout the main consultation document. All materials including the draft plan and supporting documents are available to view on the TWBC website: <https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/rtw-town-centre-plan/consultation-on-the-draft-royal-tunbridge-wells-town-centre-plan-vision-2040>

Planning status of the draft plan

2.3 TWBC are preparing their Town Centre plan as a Development Plan Document. Within the planning legislation framework, this Town Centre Plan will have the same status and carry the same 'weight' as the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan – both being DPDs.

2.4 This consultation represents the first stage in the process of producing a DPD – the 'Regulation 18' stage (Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) as amended). It must therefore, as a minimum, undergo two public consultations: one at Regulation 18 and one at Regulation 19 (pre-submission); before being submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. Subject to being found 'sound' and legally compliant, the DPD can then be adopted. Under the current planning framework, the authority must also fulfil the 'duty to cooperate' on matters of a strategic, cross-boundary nature.

2.5 A key benefit of producing the town centre plan as a DPD is that it carries greater weight in the decision making process than, for example, a Supplementary Planning Document or Area Action Plan. However, the production process and regulatory framework mean that this approach takes more time to get something in place.

Draft plan – content overview

2.6 First and foremost, the draft plan contains a proposed Vision for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre by 2040, focused on: creating an attractive town centre; harnessing opportunities for change; and enabling sustainable transport choices. It also sets out a series of seven principles and ambitions as follows:

- A distinct place
- Town centre living
- Connected landscapes
- Active streets and nodes
- A low carbon future
- A sustainable and resilient economy
- A creative destination

2.7 The plan goes on to describe the town centre as it is today, sets out the planning policy basis for the plan; and includes a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the centre focused around

four key themes: Built environment; Economics and viability; Decarbonisation; and Transportation and movement.

2.8 The plan then includes a draft Town Centre Masterplan Framework, which sees the centre divided into four 'quarters' (North, East, South, West). The framework highlights primary streets, parks and greenspaces, green link connections, existing nodes/gateways, opportunities for redevelopment, and other opportunities for improvements.

2.9 Next, the plan looks in more detail at 22 key sites and project opportunities – summarising the potential project/site in bullet point form. Some are considered to be significant sites for change such as the development of the former Cinema site and the possible re-purposing of Royal Victoria Place, whilst others are interventions at a smaller scale such as improved connections between the different parts of the town and improvements to the streetscape. There is also a further 'call for sites' whereby TWBC is inviting submissions of potential sites for development/redevelopment during the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan period (up to 2040).

Proposed response to the draft plan consultation

2.10 The proposed response to TWBC's current regulation 18 consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2.11 In summary, Maidstone Borough Council is supportive of the production of a long-term town centre plan and broadly agrees with the draft Vision and seven principles identified in the plan. Officers consider the draft vision for Tunbridge Wells Town Centre to be appropriately balanced in terms of ambition and achievability. Some of the points noted in the SWOT analysis appeared contradictory to one another, so clarity is sought in that regard.

2.12 In terms of the sites listed within the draft plan, officers have not identified any site-specific comments to make at this stage. However, it is suggested that the preparation of the plan and the sites identified therein represent an opportunity to further explore the potential for additional development capacity (both residential and employment uses) – given the significant reductions in homes and employment floorspace now proposed within the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan as a result of the Inspector's findings (see separate report presented to this PAC). Allocating additional development within this Town Centre Development Plan Document may go some way towards meeting the full identified needs as set out in the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan.

2.13 A final point is in relation to the timetabling and next steps of production of the DPD. The expected submission date is June 2025 - in line with the NPPF transition cut-off date ahead of the 'new style' plans. It is assumed that this DPD is predicated on having the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan adopted in accordance with the current LDS timetable. However, if for any reason, this is not achieved, Maidstone Borough Council are keen to understand if there are implications of progressing this Town Centre DPD without the Local Plan and relative policy STR/RTW2 – Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre in place.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option 1:** That this Policy Advisory Committee recommends the draft response (at Appendix 1 of this report) be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, and submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 15th April 2024 consultation deadline.
- 3.2 This option ensures that the Maidstone Borough Council complies with its duty to co-operate and has taken the opportunity to engage in the plan making process at an early stage. It also reiterates Maidstone’s position with regard to the Local Plan Review and the emerging Town Centre Strategy and seeks to ensure that wherever possible, TWBC maximise the development potential within the town centre to help meet their identified needs over the plan period. This option is recommended.
- 3.3 **Option 2:** That this Policy Advisory Committee recommends amendments to the draft response (at Appendix 1 of this report) to be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, and submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 15th April 2024 consultation deadline.
- 3.4 If Members are minded to make amendments to the proposed response at Appendix 1 then this option would be suitable, as per recommended option 1.
- 3.5 **Option 3:** That this Policy Advisory Committee recommends not submitting a response to the current public consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040.
- 3.6 This option would mean Maidstone Borough Council not complying with its duty to co-operate and missing an opportunity to input into and help shape the content of the TWBC Town Centre DPD as it progresses. There are only limited occasions to have comments formally noted and considered throughout the plan making process. This option is therefore not recommended.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is preferred, whereby this Policy Advisory Committee recommends the draft response (at Appendix 1 of this report) be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, and submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 15th April 2024 consultation deadline.
- 4.2 This ensures that the Maidstone Borough Council complies with its duty to co-operate and has taken the opportunity to engage in the plan making process at an early stage. It also reiterates Maidstone’s position with regard to the Local Plan Review and the emerging Town Centre Strategy and seeks to ensure that wherever possible, TWBC maximise the development potential within the town centre to help meet their identified needs over the plan period.

- 4.3 If Members are minded to make amendments to the proposed response at Appendix 1 then Option 2 would also be suitable.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 This is the first formal public consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040. It is a regulation 18 (stage 1) consultation in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended. As such, there is no previous committee feedback.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 If Members opt to recommend the draft response to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development (with or without amendments), it is expected that the Cabinet Member will agree the consultation response and ensure it is submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the consultation deadline of midnight, 15th April 2024.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- **Appendix 1:** Draft response to the public consultation on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040.
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Planning Policy,
Planning Services,
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Royal Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN1 1RS

Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone House,
King Street ME15 6JQ

 maidstone.gov.uk

 [maidstonebc](https://twitter.com/maidstonebc)

 [maidstoneboroughcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/maidstoneboroughcouncil)

By email only: RTWTownCentrePlan@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk

Date: X March 2024

Dear Ms Gilbert,

Draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040 (Regulation 18 (Part 1) consultation)

Thank you for consulting Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) on the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040. Maidstone Borough Council's comments on the draft plan are detailed below.

Overall, MBC broadly agrees with the draft Vision for the Town Centre and supports the seven principles identified in the plan. MBC considers the draft vision for Tunbridge Wells Town Centre to be appropriately balanced in terms of ambition and achievability.

The SWOT analysis is comprehensive in identifying the main Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats under the four separate headings. However, as currently worded, the analysis appears contradictory in some places. For example, under Economics and Viability, a strength is the 'limited competition – dominant centre in the region' yet a weakness is that it 'punches below its weight as a town centre'. Under Decarbonisation, a strength is 'carbon emissions are reduced by around 17% from all sources', yet a weakness is that 'overall energy/carbon emissions remained static' over the same time frame.

In terms of the sites listed within the draft plan, MBC has no site specific comments to make. However, MBC would suggest that the preparation of this plan and the sites identified therein represent an opportunity to further explore the potential for additional development capacity in this location (both residential and employment uses) – given the significant reductions in homes and employment floorspace now proposed within the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (response to Inspector's initial findings). Allocating additional development within this Development Plan Document may go some way towards meeting the full identified needs as set out in the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan. Further, whilst it may be set out in the supporting evidence, it is not clear what the distinction is in the tables between the terms 'residential' and 'town centre living' or whether these phrases are used interchangeably across the listed sites? Clarification in this regard would aid the reader.

MBC notes that the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan is being produced as a Development Plan Document – this being a Regulation 18 (stage 1) consultation. I note the

Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone House,
King Street ME15 6JQ

 maidstone.gov.uk

 [maidstonebc](https://twitter.com/maidstonebc)

 [maidstoneboroughcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/maidstoneboroughcouncil)

expected submission date of June 2025 within the Local Development Scheme, in line with the NPPF transition cut-off date ahead of the 'new style' plans. It is assumed that this DPD is predicated on having the Local Plan adopted in accordance with the current LDS timetable. However, if for any reason, this is not achieved, MBC are keen to understand if there are implications of progressing this DPD without the Local Plan and relative policy STR/RTW2 – Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre in place?

I trust these comments are helpful in the context of preparing the next stage of the draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan. MBC look forward to continued engagement with TWBC as the plan progresses.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Paul Cooper

Deputy Leader of the Council

Cabinet Member, Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development

Chairman, Democracy & General Purposes Committee

Maidstone Borough Council, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ

Shepway North Ward

 07452 903034  www.maidstone.gov.uk

Agenda Item 11

Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee

28 March 2024

Consultation on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's response to the Inspector's initial findings letter on the examination of their new Local Plan

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	28 March 2024
Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	2 April 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development
Lead Head of Service	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Lead Officer and Report Author	Helen Smith (Principal Planning Officer)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

A public consultation on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's response to the Inspector's initial findings letter on the Examination of their new Local Plan is underway. This report sets out the scope of the consultation and the key matters arising from the proposed changes that have the potential to impact upon Maidstone borough. Crucially, this includes a reduction in proposed levels of housing and employment development, in order to meet the identified needs of the borough for only the first ten years of the plan, with an expectation of immediate plan review upon

adoption. Maidstone Borough Council's proposed consultation response is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

This report and associated appendix is to be considered by Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee (PIED PAC) before being passed to the PIED Cabinet Member for agreement and submission to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 12th April 2024 consultation response deadline.

Purpose of Report

Recommendation to Cabinet Member.

This report asks the Committee to consider the following recommendation to the PIED Cabinet Member:

1. That the current consultation on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's response to the Inspector's initial findings letter on the Examination of their new Local Plan is noted; and
2. That the draft response to the consultation (as appended to this report) is recommended to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development for agreement and submission to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 12th April 2024 consultation response deadline.

Consultation on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's response to the Inspector's initial findings letter on the Examination of their new Local Plan

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will enable the Council to ensure that plans in a neighbouring authority do not materially harm its ability to achieve each of the corporate priorities.</p>	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of the four cross-cutting objectives by ensuring that plans from a neighbouring authority do not materially harm the council's ability to achieve these objectives.</p>	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Risk Management	Covered in the 'risk' section of this report.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)

Financial	Any cost of participating in the consultation will be accommodated within existing budgets. The report notes the wider strategic implications of a neighbouring authority's plans.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Legal	Accepting the recommendations will help fulfil the Council's duties under Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) as amended and comply with its duty to co-operate under the National planning Policy Framework.	Russell Fitzpatrick (MKLS – Planning)
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Information Governance Officer
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no significant implications to Crime and Disorder.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Procurement	The recommendation has no identified impact on procurement.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no significant implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development)

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) are in the latter stages of preparing a new Local Plan to guide sustainable development and growth in the borough over the plan period 2020-2038.
- 2.2 Public consultations took place on Issues and Options for the new Local Plan in 2017, on a draft Local Plan in autumn 2019, and on the pre-submission plan (Regulation 19) in summer 2021. Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) responded to all three consultations. At the Regulation 19 consultation, the scope of MBC's response was limited to matters of legal compliance, soundness and compliance with the 'duty-to-cooperate'. The response was agreed by Strategic Planning and Infrastructure committee on 8th June 2021 and raised no objections to the plan on these grounds.
- 2.3 The pre-submission (Regulation 19) version of the TWBC Local Plan made provisions for the identified housing and employment needs to be met within Tunbridge Wells borough over the plan period. The Plan was submitted on this basis to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 1 November 2021. Hearing sessions took place between March and July 2022 and the Inspector issued his Initial Findings Letter in November 2022. In this letter, the Inspector raised three main issues to be addressed:
- consistency of the assessment of sites in the Green Belt;
 - a range of issues relating to the proposed new settlement at Tudeley Village (namely location and accessibility; provision of necessary infrastructure; and deliverability of the site in the manner envisaged); and
 - concerns around flood risk relating to proposed strategic housing and employment growth at Paddock Wood and land at east Capel (PWeC).
- 2.4 As a result of these initial findings, TWBC are now proposing a number of revisions to the submission Local Plan. These changes are summarised as follows:
- Removal of the strategic policy STR/SS 3: The Strategy for Tudeley Village from the Local Plan.
 - Revision of the strategic policy STR/SS 1: The Strategy for Paddock Wood and land at east Capel, including a reduction in the amount of residential housing growth by approximately 1,000 dwellings, with all housing being within Flood Zone 1 and employment land within Flood Zone 2, along with a reduction of employment provision, and reconfigured sport and recreation provision and secondary school education provision.
 - A revision to Hawkhurst site allocation policy number AL/HA 5: Land to the north of Birchfield Grove, to include housing, and land

safeguarded for primary school expansion (in accordance with application reference 22/02664/HYBRID).

- Also at Hawkhurst, the removal of site allocation policy number AL/HA 8: Limes Grove (March's Field) from the Local Plan. This site was proposed for employment use in the TWBC Submission Local Plan.
- Progression of a 10 year housing land supply position including the requirement for an immediate review of the plan.

2.5 A public consultation is now underway on the proposed changes as outlined above. It is part of the Examination process and is being held at the request of the Inspector. The consultation began on 15th January 2024 and runs until midnight on 12th April 2024. All information pertaining to the consultation is available to view online:

<https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/consultation-on-councils-response-to-inspectors-initial-findings>

2.6 In terms of providing a consultation response, representations are limited in scope to those changes to the submission plan as proposed by TWBC, and whether those changes meet the National Planning Policy Framework tests of soundness and legal compliance only. Namely, whether the revised plan is:

- **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

Implication of proposed changes on Maidstone Borough

2.7 Of the proposed changes to the submission plan, the two with the potential to impact Maidstone borough are the removal of Tudeley Village and the reduction in proposed development at Paddock Wood/land east of Capel (PWeC). Both of these proposals contribute to a reduced housing and employment land supply of just 10 years, with the suggestion of a requirement for an immediate review of the plan as a result.

- 2.8 The removal of Tudeley Village in its entirety and the reduction in housing and employment development at PWeC equates to the delivery of approximately 3,100 fewer new homes over the plan period to 2038. It would also result in a reduction in net developable employment land at PWeC from 11.2 hectares to 8.4 hectares – sufficient only to ‘meet likely needs over the first ten years post-adoption’ (para 4.33 of the TWBC Topic Paper – Addendum, January 2024 https://forms.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/455132/P_S_054-Development-Strategy-Topic-Paper-Addendum.pdf).
- 2.9 For Maidstone, there is a potential risk that the proposed reduction in development in Tunbridge Wells borough may place additional pressure on TWBC to ask adjoining authorities such as Maidstone borough to accommodate some or all of the unmet housing and employment land needs over the plan period. MBC, through the preparation of its own Local Plan Review, have already sought to accommodate Maidstone borough’s identified housing and employment needs within the borough boundary and are not at a stage in plan-making to be able to consider accommodating any additional unmet housing or employment needs from neighbouring authorities.
- 2.10 Conversely, although of minor benefit compared to the risk, the reduced level of growth planned for PWeC may lessen any potential pressure on services and facilities located to the south of Maidstone Borough as fewer people are expected to reside or work in the locality.

Matters of Soundness and Legal Compliance

- 2.11 In his November 2022 letter, the Inspector presents the removal of Tudeley Village as one of three potential options and suggests that this approach ‘may negate the need for significant further work and potentially avoid lengthy delays to the examination process’. The reasons for the removal of Tudeley Village from the submission plan are therefore understood by MBC. Similarly, the reduced development capacity at PWeC due to flood risk is also understood, based on the content of the Inspector’s letter. It is commendable that TWBC are seeking to progress the plan in order to ensure the certainty of a plan-led system and the wider benefits that this brings.
- 2.12 However, the Inspector goes on to state that ‘the Council will therefore need to give further consideration to how best the Plan can still meet housing needs, having particular regard to the requirements in paragraph 68 of the [National Planning Policy] Framework’¹. There is concern that the proposals put forward by TWBC to meet development needs over the next ten years only are not positively prepared as the plan would no longer, as a minimum, seek to meet the identified needs over the plan period. On this basis, MBC officers do not consider the TWBC Local Plan to be ‘sound’. This position is reflected in the proposed consultation response at Appendix 1 of this report.

¹ Now paragraph 67: "Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period."

- 2.13 In order to be found 'sound', the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan needs to be positively prepared in that it must set out how it plans to meet identified needs in full over the plan period. It is the opinion of MBC officers that the development expected in the final third of the TWBC local plan period should not be left to a subsequent – albeit immediate – review of the plan. The risks associated with this approach, e.g. potential timetable slippages or change in political direction may delay review progress and place additional development pressures on neighbouring authorities where they should have been addressed fully as part of this Local Plan.
- 2.14 That being said, if the Inspector considers TWBC's approach to be sound in his final report – be that subject to any caveats of immediate plan review or otherwise; MBC would not seek to dispute this conclusion.
- 2.15 MBC raises no concerns or objections on the grounds of legal compliance.
-

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option 1:** That this Policy Advisory Committee recommends the draft response (at Appendix 1 of this report) be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, and submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 12th April 2024 consultation deadline.
- 3.2 This option ensures that Maidstone Borough Council have taken the opportunity to raise concerns relating to the plan's soundness based on the proposed changes to the TWBC local plan; and that these concerns are duly considered by the Inspector when examining the plan and drafting his final report. It also set out that Maidstone borough is not currently in a position to accommodate any unmet development needs from Tunbridge Wells due to the stage of plan-making we have reached. This option is recommended.
- 3.3 **Option 2:** That this Policy Advisory Committee recommends amendments to the draft response (at Appendix 1 of this report) to be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, and submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 12th April 2024 consultation deadline.
- 3.4 If Members are minded to make amendments to the proposed response at Appendix 1 – relating to matters of soundness and/or legal compliance only – then this option would be suitable, as per recommended option 1.
- 3.5 **Option 3:** That this Policy Advisory Committee recommends not submitting a response to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council current public consultation on proposed amendment to their draft local plan.
- 3.6 This option could be viewed by TWBC and the Inspector that the proposal to meet development needs only over the first ten years of the plan period is fundamentally acceptable to MBC. As explained in this report, this has potential implications for Maidstone borough should TWBC formally request

help from neighbouring authorities to accommodate some or all of the identified unmet needs in the future. This would also run countenance to the spirit of the duty to co-operate. This option is not recommended.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is preferred, whereby this Policy Advisory Committee recommends the draft response (at Appendix 1 of this report) be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, and submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the 12th April 2024 consultation deadline.
- 4.2 This ensures that the Maidstone Borough Council have taken the opportunity to raise concerns relating to the plan's soundness based on the proposed changes to the TWBC local plan; and that these concerns are duly considered by the Inspector when examining the plan and drafting his final report. It also reiterates Maidstone borough's current position of being unable to accommodate any unmet needs from TWBC as a result of their revised plan and reduced development capacity.
- 4.3 If Members are minded to make amendments to the proposed response at Appendix 1 – relating to matters of soundness and/or legal compliance only – then Option 2 would also be appropriate.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 As set out in section 2 of this report, public consultations on the TWBC local plan took place in 2017 (issues and options), in autumn 2019 (draft plan), and on the pre-submission plan (Regulation 19) in summer 2021. MBC responded to all three consultations. At the Regulation 19 consultation, the scope of MBC's response was limited to matters of legal compliance, soundness and compliance with the 'duty-to-cooperate'. The response was agreed by Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SPI) committee on 8th June 2021 and raised no objections to the plan on these grounds.
- 6.2 For ease of reference, a link to the June 2021 SPI report and appended consultation response is provided in section 9 of this report.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 If Members opt to recommend the draft response to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development (with or without amendments), it is expected that the Cabinet Member will agree the consultation response and ensure it is submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ahead of the consultation deadline of midnight, 12th April 2024.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- **Appendix 1:** Draft response to the public consultation on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's response to the Inspector's initial findings letter on the Examination of the new Local Plan.
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee report 8th June 2021: Consultation on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Plan
https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/council-and-democracy/primary-areas/your-councillors?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPWh0dHBzJTnBJTJGJTJGJbWVldGluZ3MubWFpZHN0b25lLmdvdi51ayUyRmRvY3VtZW50cyUyRnM3NzMxNSUyRkNvbnN1bHRhdGlvbiUyMG9uJTIwdGhJTlIwVHVuYnJpZGdlJTlIwV2VsbHMIMjBCb3JvdWdoJTlIwQ291bmNpbCUyMFBYzS1TdWJtaXNzaW9uJTlIwUmVndWxhdGlvbiUyMDE5JTlIwUGxhbi5wZGYmYWxsPTE%3D
- Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee report 8th June 2021: Consultation on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Plan. Appendix 1:
https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/council-and-democracy/primary-areas/your-councillors?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPWh0dHBzJTnBJTJGJTJGJbWVldGluZ3MubWFpZHN0b25lLmdvdi51ayUyRmRvY3VtZW50cyUyRnM3NzMxNiUyRkFwcGVuZGI4JTlIwQSUyMERyYWZ0JTlIwcmVzcG9uc2UIMjB0byUyMHRoZSUyMFRXQkMIMjBSZWcuMTkIMjBsb2NhbCUyMHBsYW4lMjBjb25zdWx0YXRpb24ucGRmJmFsbD0x
- Inspector's Initial Findings Letter on the submitted Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (November 2022):
https://forms.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/434392/ID-012-Inspectors-Initial-Findings.pdf



**Tunbridge Wells
Borough Local Plan (2020 – 2038)**

Representation Form

Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Ref:

(For official use only)

Name of the Local Plan to which this representation relates:	Proposed Changes to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (2020 - 2038): Response to Examination Inspector's Initial Findings, Received November 2022 and Supporting Documents, including Sustainability Appraisal
---	--

Completed forms must be received at our offices by **midnight Monday 26 February 2024**

We encourage you to respond online using the consultation portal. Please note you do not have to sign in to respond via the portal: <https://consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/kse/>

Alternatively, you may email or scan forms to: LocalPlan@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk or send them by post to: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, PLANNING POLICY, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS

Please note that representations must be attributable to named individuals or organisations. They will be available for public inspection and cannot be treated as confidential. Please also note that all comments received will be available for the public to view and cannot be treated as confidential. Data will be processed and held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

	1. Personal Details	2. Agent Details (if applicable)
Title	Councillor	
First Name	Paul	
Last Name	Cooper	
Job title (where relevant)	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	
Organisation (where relevant)	Maidstone Borough Council	
Address Line 1	Maidstone House	

Address Line 2	King Street	
Address Line 3	Maidstone	
Address Line 4	Kent	
Postcode	ME15 6JQ	
Telephone number		
Email address (where relevant)		

PART B – YOUR REPRESENTATION
(Please use a separate sheet for each representation)

Name or Organisation	Maidstone Borough Council
----------------------	---------------------------

3.	To which part of the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) as set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum?	
Chapter and (if applicable) sub heading	Housing Need and Supply 2020-2038	
Policy	Policies STR1 – The Development Strategy; STR/SS1 – The Strategy for Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel; STR/SS3 – The Strategy for Tudeley Village	
Paragraph number or appendix		

4.	Do you consider the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) would make it: (please tick as appropriate)				
4.1	Legally Compliant	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Sound	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5.	Please give details of why you consider the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 - 2038) (as set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum) are not legally compliant or are unsound. Please be as precise as possible.	
	If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) (as set	

out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum) please also use this box to set out your comments.

The text box will automatically expand if necessary.

Of the proposed changes to the submission plan, the two with the potential to impact Maidstone borough are the removal of Tudeley Village and the reduction in proposed development at Paddock Wood/land east of Capel (PWeC). Both of these proposals contribute to a reduced housing and employment land supply of just 10 years, with the suggestion of a requirement for an immediate review of the plan as a result.

The removal of Tudeley Village in its entirety and the reduction in housing and employment development at PWeC equates to the delivery of approximately 3,100 fewer new homes over the plan period to 2038. It would also result in a reduction in net developable employment land at PWeC from 11.2 hectares to 8.4 hectares – sufficient only to ‘meet likely needs over the first ten years post-adoption’ (para 4.33 of the TWBC Topic Paper – Addendum, January 2024

https://forms.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/455132/PS_054-Development-Strategy-Topic-Paper-Addendum.pdf).

MBC, through the preparation of its own Local Plan Review, have already sought to accommodate Maidstone borough’s significantly increased identified housing and employment needs within the borough boundary and are not at a stage in plan-making to be able to consider accommodating any additional unmet housing or employment needs from neighbouring authorities.

The reasons for the removal of Tudeley Village from the submission plan are understood and appreciated by MBC. Similarly, the reduced development capacity at PWeC due to flood risk is also understood, based on the content of the Inspector’s letter. It is commendable that TWBC are seeking to progress the plan in order to ensure the certainty of a plan-led system and the wider benefits that this brings.

However, the Inspector goes on to state that ‘the Council will therefore need to give further consideration to how best the Plan can still meet housing needs, having particular regard to the requirements in paragraph 68 of the Framework’.

MBC is concerned that the proposals put forward by TWBC to meet development needs over the next ten years only are not positively prepared as the plan would no longer, as a minimum, seek to meet the identified needs over the plan period to 2038. On this basis, MBC does not consider the TWBC Local Plan to be ‘sound’.

MBC raises no concerns or objections on the grounds of legal compliance.

6.	<p>Please set out what modification(s) you consider necessary to the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) Incorporating the Proposed Changes set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum, legally compliant or sound, having regard to the Matter you have identified at Section 5 (above) where this relates to legal compliance or soundness.</p> <p>You will need to say why this modification will make the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.</p> <p>The text box will automatically expand if necessary.</p>
-----------	--

In order to be found 'sound', the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan needs to be positively prepared in that it must set out how it plans to meet identified needs in full over the plan period. The development expected in the final third of the plan period should not be left to a subsequent – albeit immediate – review of the plan. The risks associated with this approach, e.g. potential timetable slippages or change in political direction may place additional development pressures on TWBC at a later date.

That being said, if the Inspector considers TWBC's approach to be sound in his final report – be that subject to any caveats of immediate plan review or otherwise; MBC would not seek to dispute this conclusion.

7.	<p>Please use this box for any other comments you wish to make.</p> <p>The text box will automatically expand if necessary.</p>
	N/A

8.	<p>If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the examination hearings stage when it resumes?</p>
-----------	--

No, I do not wish to participate at the examination hearings

Yes, I wish to participate at the examination hearings

9.	If you wish to participate at the examination hearings stage once it resumes, please outline why you consider this to be necessary:
N/A	

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate at the examination hearings stage once it resumes.

Sustainability Appraisal

10.	To which part of the Sustainability Appraisal does this representation relate?	
Chapter and (if applicable) sub heading	N/A	
Policy	N/A	
Paragraph number or appendix	N/A	

11.	Please use this box for any comments you wish to make about the Sustainability Appraisal. The text box will automatically expand if necessary	
N/A		

Please note your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested modification, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations based on the original representation at later stages.

After this stage, further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he identifies for examination.

Signature		Date	X March 2024
-----------	--	------	--------------