

Tunbridge Wells Borough



Issues and Options

Consultation

2 May to 12 June 2017

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Foreword

Our borough is a great place to live, work and visit and the Council is committed to encouraging investment and sustainable growth and to enhance quality of life for all.

Preparing a new Local Plan provides an opportunity to look afresh at what sort of place we want the borough to be in the future, recognising that it will be difficult to achieve a balance between seeking growth to meet the needs of current and future generations and safeguarding the natural, built and historic environments that are so special. We want the borough to continue to be prosperous, for there to be opportunities to support the wellbeing of our residents and to ensure that every resident is able to access the opportunities that the borough provides.

Much has changed since 2010 when the current Plan, known as the Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy, was finalised. The new Local Plan must provide a clear vision of what is to be achieved over the period to 2033 having regard to changed circumstances of recent years and in particular increased levels of housing and economic development need.

We want to positively plan for our borough's future, providing for needed development and associated infrastructure while retaining the quality of our local environment.

Reconciling differing opinions, particularly about where housing and other development should take place, will not be easy; however, we are keen to hear everyone's views on the issues and options explained in this document and would like to thank you for taking an interest in the future of the borough.

Councillor Alan McDermott

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation

Section 1: Introduction

About this consultation

1.1 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has embarked on the production of a new Local Plan for the borough. This consultation document sets out our initial thoughts about what the scope of the new Local Plan should be and the planning issues that we think it should address.

1.2 The following existing Plan documents are being reviewed and it is intended that they will be replaced by a new Local Plan:

- Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (June 2006) Saved Policies
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy DPD (June 2010)
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Site Allocations Local Plan (July 2016)

1.3 Where policies in the existing adopted Plans remain up to date and relevant, it is intended that these will be carried forward unchanged into the new Local Plan. There may also be a need to combine policies or reconsider them in response to any issues raised through the consultation process.

1.4 Where sites already allocated for development under the Site Allocations Local Plan (2016) remain available and deliverable they will be included in the new Local Plan unless circumstances have materially changed.

1.5 The new Local Plan, when finalised, will set out the policies and plans to guide the future development of Tunbridge Wells borough in the period up to 2033. It will identify the scale of development required during this period and the key locations to meet this need.

1.6 This document, however, focuses primarily on the identified issues relevant to preparing a new Plan for Tunbridge Wells borough and on possible new options to deliver the scale and distribution of new development throughout the borough for the period up to 2033.

1.7 The following are included in this consultation document:

1. A set of draft objectives for the new Local Plan that give an indication of the expected scope of the Strategy.
2. Our view of the main issues and options relevant to future development in the borough and which will be addressed within the new Local Plan.
3. Five potential strategy options for the distribution of new development within the borough, together with the implications of each for all the issues identified.

1.8 Although the Council has still to determine whether it can meet its full development needs in a sustainable way, it considers that, at this early stage, it should invite comments on potential strategy options for delivering new homes, employment space, retail and leisure facilities in Tunbridge Wells borough. In presenting these options for comment it is recognised that there are significant constraints within the borough and the ability to accommodate sustainable new growth at whatever defined level will need to have proper regard to these considerations. This consultation will also provide the opportunity for those responding to identify any alternative scenarios that they think the Council should be considering.

Consultation Process

Public consultation: how to get involved

1.9 This is an opportunity for you to have a say, at an early stage, in the preparation of a new Local Plan. The Issues and Options document sets out some questions and identifies a number of possible options for where and how the future growth of the borough might be located.

1.10 The consultation on this document runs for six weeks from Tuesday 02 May to Monday 12 June 2017.

1.11 For comments to be considered they must be submitted to the Council by **5pm on Monday 12 June 2017**.

1.12 Comments can be made in a number of ways, as set out below.

Via the consultation portal

1.13 The consultation document and supporting studies/information can be viewed, and comments made directly online, using the Council's consultation portal at <http://consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk>. If using the portal for the first time you will need to register first and then log in to make comments on the document. If you experience any problems or have any queries please email planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk. We will contact you and provide help.

Using a response form

1.14 Alternatively, a response form (for filling in electronically or printing out) can be downloaded from the Council's website at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan or you can request a paper copy by phoning 01892 554056.

1.15 This form can be returned in the following ways:

- by email to planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
- by post to Planning Policy, Planning Services, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RS

1.16 All responses received electronically (directly in the consultation portal or by email) will receive an electronic acknowledgement. Response forms or letters received by post will not be acknowledged. Please note that if you respond electronically (directly in the consultation portal or by email) we do not require you to send in a paper copy as well.

Venue	Date and opening times
Matfield Pavilion, Matfield	Wednesday 10 May from 4pm to 7pm
Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre (Unit 9 in Ely Court)	Thursday 11 May from 4pm to 7pm
Vestry Hall, Cranbrook	Friday 12 May from 4pm to 7pm
Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre (Unit 9 in Ely Court)	Saturday 13 May from 10am to 2pm

Consultation documents

1.17 This consultation includes the following documents:

- Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan: Issues and Options
- Response form for Issues and Options document
- Interim Sustainability Appraisal
- Response form for Interim Sustainability Appraisal

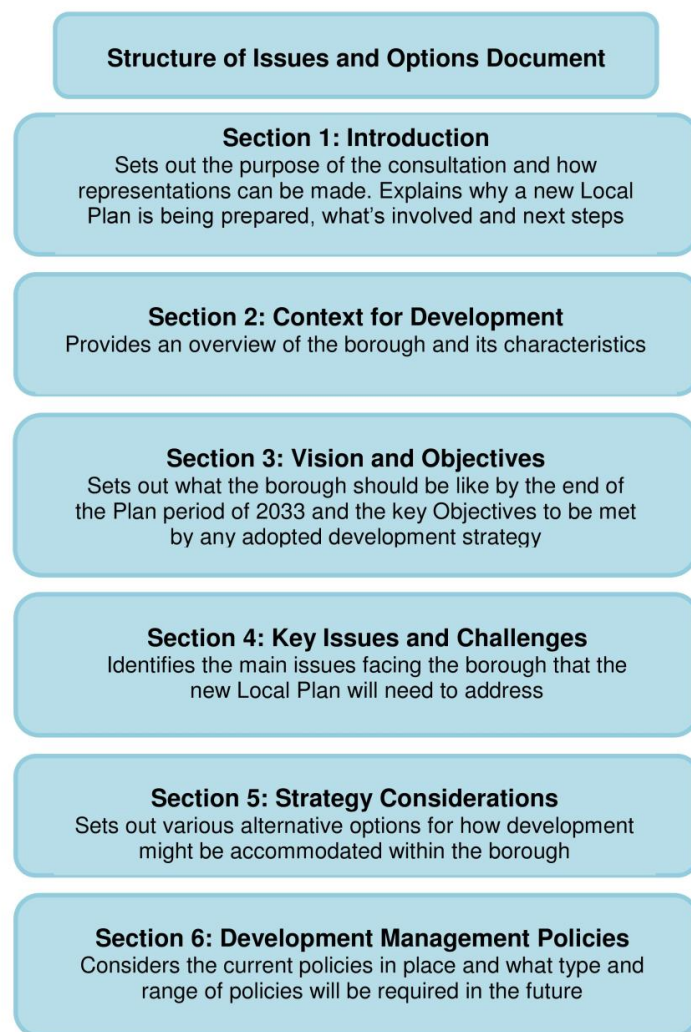
1.18 The documents can also be viewed at the following locations for those without access to a computer:

- Tunbridge Wells Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2AB, open from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday
- Weald Information Centre, The Old Fire Station, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3HF, open from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday
- All libraries in the Tunbridge Wells borough area. Please check with the particular library for opening times

Exhibitions

1.19 A number of public exhibitions are planned as part of the consultation and details of these are set out below. Borough Council staff will be available at these events to provide further details and answer questions. Please check for any updated details of these events on our web page at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan.

1.20 The diagram below sets out the structure of the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation document.



1.21 The results of this consultation, along with ongoing evidence studies, will be taken into account in the preparation of the new Local Plan. Subject to the outcome of this consultation it is intended that a full draft Plan will be published for further public consultation in spring 2018. The timetable for the new Local Plan can be viewed on the Council's website⁽¹⁾. It will be reviewed and updated as the draft Plan progresses through the various stages.

1.22 The draft Local Plan will be submitted in due course for public examination by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Government. If the Local Plan is found sound it will be adopted by the Council. Once adopted it will be the legal basis for deciding whether to approve future planning applications for development.

1.23 Thank you for taking the time to participate in the production of the new Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan. If you have any queries about this consultation, require any additional information or assistance regarding the new Local Plan, or require copies in alternative format and/or language, please contact the Planning Policy Team.

Planning Policy email: planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
Telephone: 01892 554056

Producing a new Local Plan

Why is a new Local Plan needed?

1.24 The planning system has undergone extensive reform in recent years, with two of the most significant changes to planning policy being the abolition of previous regional planning policies and the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012.

1.25 A central aim of the NPPF is to achieve a significant change in housing delivery and to meet housing and other development needs in full, unless it is demonstrably unsustainable to do so. There is a stronger emphasis on the significant social and economic benefits of providing for

¹ <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/local-development-scheme>

an area's full development needs, to be weighed in the balance with environmental and landscape considerations to achieve sustainable development.

1.26 Against this background of change there are a number of reasons for reviewing the Council's current planning policy documents:

- to adopt a new up to date Plan that reflects the new issues that have arisen since adoption of the Council's current Plan documents
- to provide for the additional new housing, employment and other development that will be required to meet future identified needs
- to extend the existing Plan period to 2033 in order to ensure that there will be a 15 year time horizon as recommended in the NPPF
- to reflect changes to national planning policy and guidance
- to combine the existing Plan documents into a single Local Plan as recommended in the NPPF

1.27 It is intended that the new Local Plan will cover the period up to 2033 and replace the following current planning policy documents: Core Strategy 2010, Site Allocations Local Plan 2016, and 'saved policies' of the 2006 Local Plan.

1.28 The consequences of not having an up to date, national policy compliant plan for the borough are serious and far reaching. It is for this reason that the production of a new Local Plan for the borough is so important in order to guide the location of appropriate development, as without such a plan in place, development could come forward on an ad hoc basis, through planning applications, and with the risk that it would put the borough in a situation of 'planning by appeal'.

What sort of document will the new Local Plan be?

1.29 The Local Plan will provide:

- a spatial **vision** for the borough and strategic **objectives** to achieve that vision
- a **development strategy** to provide:

- a framework for the allocation of sites for specific uses (for example, housing and business use)
- the context for designating areas where specific policies will apply, either encouraging development to meet economic and/or social objectives or constraining development in the interests of environmental protection

- **Site-specific allocations and policies for development** of identified sites

1.30 The Plan will also contain more detailed development management policies and guidance against which future planning applications and proposed development will be considered, as well as a monitoring and implementation framework to secure its success.

1.31 Many of the general development management policies will apply throughout the borough and may reflect a number of the current general policies saved from the 2006 Local Plan, such as the need to ensure that development meets a high standard of design and access. Section 6 of this consultation document comments on the possible suite of policies and invites comments.

What will the Local Plan look like?

1.32 The Local Plan will be a single document containing policies, proposals and a map. More specifically it will include:

- a portrait of the borough as it is now, its development needs and challenges, a vision of what it could be like in the future, and a set of objectives to achieve this
- a list of proposed development sites (known as 'allocations') for new housing, employment and other development to meet the needs of the borough
- a set of policies that will guide development and investment decisions across the borough and will be the starting point for decisions on future planning applications and
- a proposals map of the borough that will show the location of the development site allocations and define the boundaries of towns and

villages, existing residential and employment areas, town and district centres, Green Belt and other countryside, green spaces, conservation areas, wildlife sites, etc

Relationship to Neighbourhood Plans

1.33 The Local Plan will provide the framework for those local communities who are preparing a neighbourhood plan, responsibility for which rests with the local town or parish council. These neighbourhood plans will need to set out a specific local vision for the relevant area and will include planning policies for the use and development of land.

1.34 Neighbourhood plans do, however, need to conform with national planning policies and the strategic policies of the Borough Council's Local Plan. The Borough Council is working closely with a number of town and parish councils to support them in the neighbourhood plan process and it will be important to ensure this collaborative working continues into the future⁽²⁾.

Evidence Studies

1.35 As set out in the NPPF, each local planning authority should ensure that their Local Plan is based on adequate, up to date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. The Council has therefore been commissioning and producing various pieces of supporting evidence.

1.36 This evidence base, comprising studies, research reports, technical papers and other information, will inform the preparation of the Local Plan. The specific pieces of work that comprise the current evidence base, together with those to be undertaken, are listed in Appendix 1⁽³⁾.

Call for Sites

1.37 The Council carried out a 'Call for Sites' consultation between February and September 2016. This provided an early opportunity for developers, landowners, town and parish councils and other interested parties to put forward land to the Council for consideration as potential sites to be allocated in the new Local Plan.

1.38 A number of sites were put forward to the Council in response to this consultation in a range of locations across the borough. Further details can be viewed on the Council's website (see Local Plan web link at footnote 3).

1.39 Any additional sites, or changes to sites submitted through the previous 'Call for Sites' consultation, may now be submitted to the Council through a further Call for Sites linked to this Issues and Options consultation. There is no need to resubmit sites submitted through the previous Call for Sites unless there are any changes to them. Further information is available on the Council's website (see Local Plan web link at footnote 3).

1.40 The Council will combine all land and sites suggested for development into a single database to produce a comprehensive Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The purpose of carrying out a SHELAA is to identify a future supply of land that is suitable, available and achievable for all housing and economic development needs. We will also aim to identify sites that are suitable for other uses (for example, as open space, for community facilities, etc). The sites will be assessed for their suitability for development; however, it is not the purpose of the SHELAA to confirm whether a site will be allocated for development in the new Local Plan. In the meantime, an interim SHELAA⁽⁴⁾ is included within the evidence studies that accompany this document. Any comments can be made as a response to this consultation (at Question 19).

2 More information regarding neighbourhood planning in the borough is available on the Council's website at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans.

3 Completed evidence studies can be viewed on the Council's website at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan.

4 <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/new-local-plan/interim-strategic-housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment>

Constraints

1.41 There is likely to be no single way or option to deliver the development needed in Tunbridge Wells borough. In terms of physical space, a number of locations throughout the borough could potentially accommodate some, or all, of the development required. As the issues presented in this document show, however, the potential of some areas is constrained by factors such as highway capacity and congestion, landscape sensitivity, flooding and the nature of the existing built environment.

1.42 In preparing the new Local Plan evidence base, the Council has reviewed all the main constraints likely to impact on delivery of development in the borough. A Development Constraints Study (2016)⁽⁵⁾ has been prepared, which comments on the main constraints and identifies those areas of the borough where development might be more difficult to achieve, as well as helping to identify possible areas of opportunity.

1.43 There is also a wider issue regarding the capacity of the borough's community infrastructure, such as schools and health-care facilities, to accommodate growth. The Council has been in early contact with service providers to inform them of the preparation of a new Local Plan and the likely levels of growth to ensure that the capacity of existing infrastructure, together with the need for new infrastructure, is fully understood before any decisions are taken.

1.44 It is also to be recognised that, while some of the borough's natural and built assets are seen traditionally as constraining to development, they do perform valuable roles in providing for and attracting tourism, contributing to the rural economy and being a source of recreation and leisure.

1.45 Overlaying the identified planning constraints with issues of congestion and infrastructure capacity highlights the challenges facing the Council in preparing a new strategy for accommodating the development needs of the borough in a sustainable way.

The Duty to Cooperate

1.46 The duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011 and places a legal duty on local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation relating to strategic matters. The duty to cooperate applies to strategic issues that have significant impacts affecting two or more local authority areas.

1.47 The Council continues to participate in cross-boundary planning and this early initial consultation stage provides an opportunity for adjacent local authorities and other stakeholders, including the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England and others, to provide their views and identify any strategic issues that they consider ought to be addressed.

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.48 A Sustainability Appraisal is an appraisal of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of a Local Plan. It plays a key part in its preparation, not only in terms of the final Plan and its policies, but also throughout its preparation, including informing the assessment of alternatives.

1.49 An Interim Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared to accompany this Issues and Options document and has been published for consultation at the same time⁽⁶⁾.

1.50 A Habitats Regulations Assessment forms part of a European Directive that requires an 'appropriate assessment' of plans and projects that are, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, likely to have a significant impact on certain designated habitats. For the purposes of this consultation, an initial assessment has been carried out on the potential impacts of different options for the distribution of development across the borough⁽⁷⁾.

5 [http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/Development Constraints Study 2016](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/Development%20Constraints%20Study%202016)

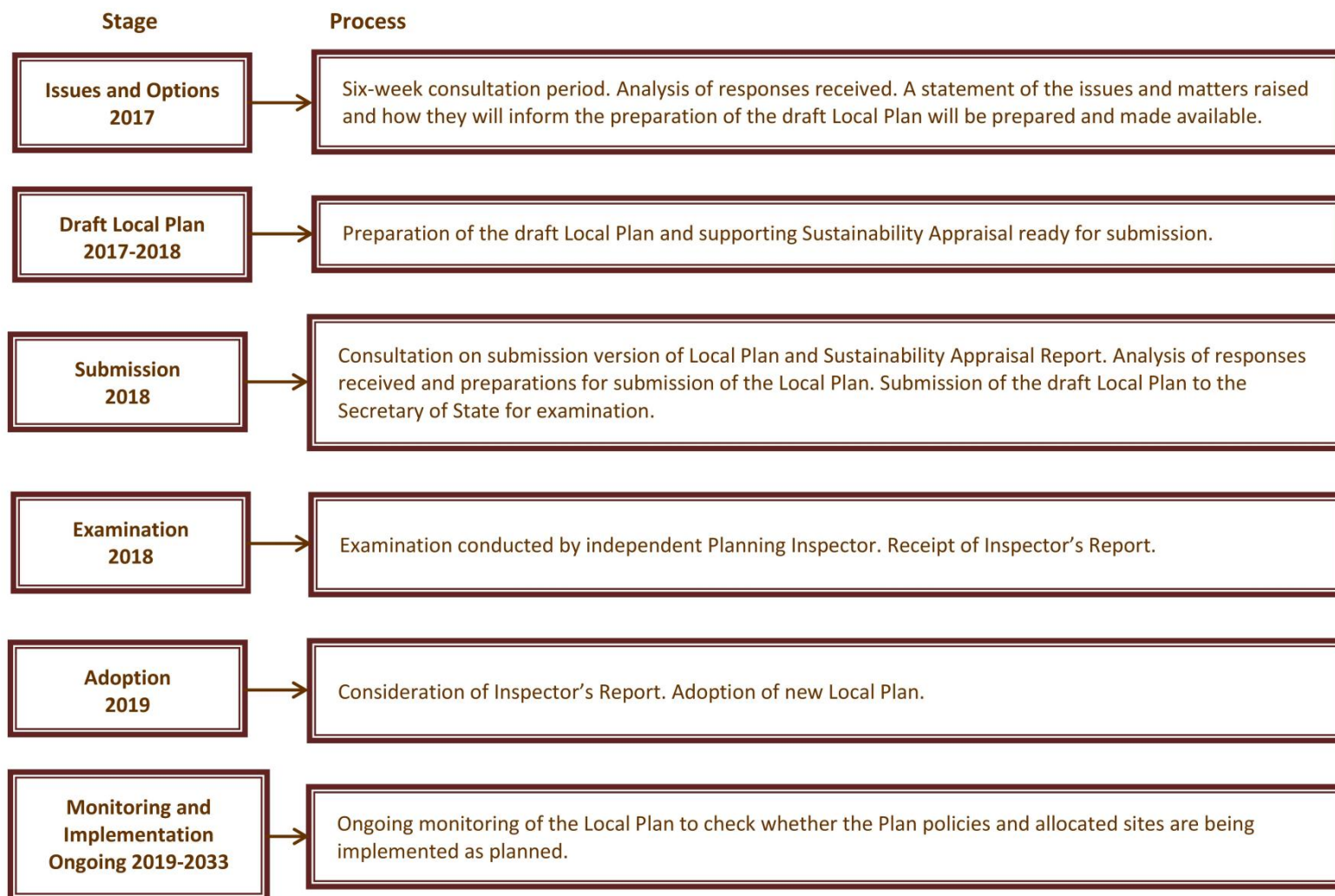
6 the Interim Sustainability Appraisal for consultation can be found on the Local Plan web page at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan

7 <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/Interim-HRA>

Next Steps

1.51 The diagram below sets out in more detail the future stages for producing the new Local Plan.

Production Stages



Section 2: Context for Development

Borough Setting

2.1 Tunbridge Wells borough lies in the south west of Kent, bordering East Sussex. It covers an area of 326 square kilometres. The borough borders the authorities of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone and Ashford in Kent; and Rother and Wealden in East Sussex.

Figure 1 Borough Location



Settlements

2.2 Royal Tunbridge Wells forms the majority of the main urban area and provides a large proportion of the social, cultural and economic opportunities available in the borough. In addition to being the borough's principal retail centre, the town provides a wide variety of services, including primary and secondary schools, sports and community facilities and train stations.

2.3 Historical and architectural features of the town, such as the Pantiles, also provide a high quality environment that attracts a significant amount of tourism to the borough. There are also a number of parks and commons that are integral to the character of the town.

2.4 Southborough also lies within the main urban area with Royal Tunbridge Wells, but has a separate smaller town centre and local 'Neighbourhood Centre' at High Brooms within its parish. As well as providing its own independent shopping facilities, Southborough also has a number of local and community services such as primary schools and specialist education facilities and a good range of recreational facilities.

2.5 Both Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough lie within the western part of the borough that is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt and/or the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

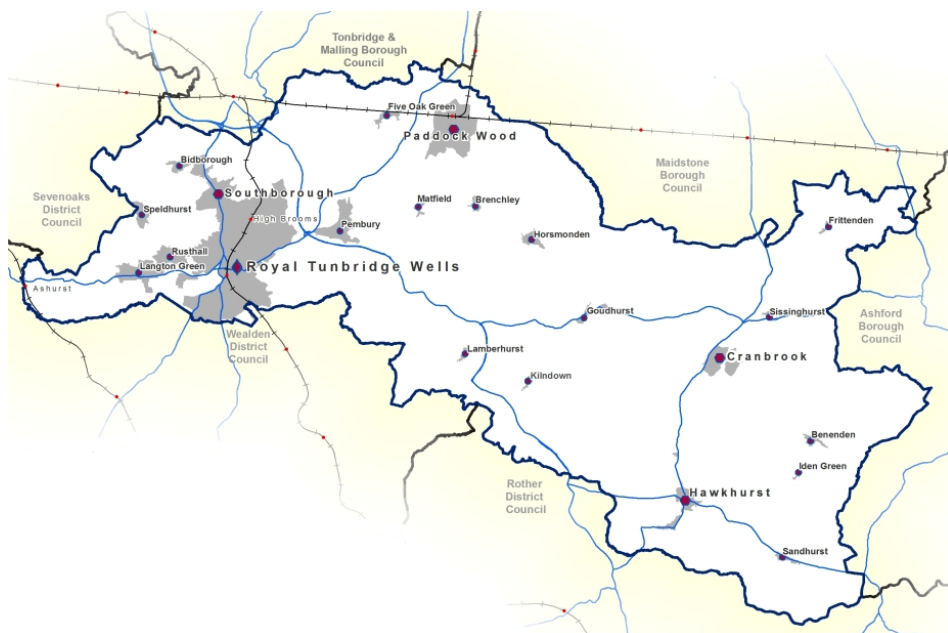
2.6 Paddock Wood benefits from good transport links and higher-order facilities, such as a secondary school and sports centre. There is a large employment area to the north of the railway line, which supports the town, the rural hinterland and beyond. In addition to a supermarket, existing retail is mainly devoted to the provision of local services. The western edge of the town abuts the Green Belt and the results of the previous Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2009)⁽⁸⁾, currently being updated, show that areas, particularly to the north of the town, are at risk of flooding.

8 <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/SFRA-Level-2-Report-Sep-2009>

2.7 Cranbrook is an attractive, vibrant rural town located within the High Weald AONB. The local architecture and features give it a distinctive character. Cranbrook also benefits from a range of comparison shopping facilities, a supermarket, secondary schools, a sports centre and the Weald Information Centre.

2.8 Hawkhurst features local architecture that is distinctive to the area and is located within the High Weald AONB. It supports a wide rural hinterland and benefits from a primary school, small independent cinema and two supermarkets.

Figure 2 Borough Overview Map



2.9 The borough is also home to a variety of village settlements, each with its own character. Most villages are in the High Weald AONB and some in the western part of the borough are also in the Green Belt. All provide some facilities, such as a primary school, shop, public house or church. In addition, there are a number of hamlets and other more remote

clusters of buildings and farmsteads dispersed across the borough, many of which are located within the High Weald AONB and/or Green Belt and provide important features of the landscape.

Demographics and Housing

2.10 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2015)⁽⁹⁾ concludes that an appropriate trend-based demographic projection would see population growth of 19,200 (16.6%) in Tunbridge Wells borough over the 2013-33 period.

2.11 The average house price in Tunbridge Wells borough was £351,000 at the time of the 2015 assessment and therefore above those across the wider housing market area (£324,000) and Kent (where the average is £253,000). The mapping of house prices shows that prices are similar to other areas close to London. While house price increases over the period since 2008 have been modest, particularly in real terms (taking account of inflation), growth in rents has been above inflation.

2.12 Evidence from the SHMA indicates notable affordability pressures for market house purchases, with entry level house prices 11 times earnings of households in the borough. This compares to a ratio of 6.5 nationally and an average of 10 within Kent as a whole. The analysis also suggests some real impacts arising from high housing costs. Over the 2001-11 period, home ownership fell (with increasing numbers of households renting privately). Levels of over-occupied households and those in shared housing increased, albeit that levels of both remain below the Kent and national average.

2.13 The SHMA draws together the above factors to identify the full objectively assessed need (OAN) for market and affordable housing. It identifies a need for 648 homes per year in Tunbridge Wells borough over the 2013-33 period (12,960 over 20 years). The Housing White Paper published in February 2017 refers to the development of a nationally

9 <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/SHMA September 2015>

recognised methodology for calculating the OAN, the details of which have not yet been released. It is likely, therefore, that the OAN for the borough will be reviewed in due course.

2.14 The rising household numbers, coupled with an ageing population, mean that the borough will continue to need to provide a mix of housing types and sizes, including specialist forms of housing. This presents a challenge for the new Local Plan, as it will need to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing and a range of housing types to meet identified needs, including those of older people, within both the market and affordable sectors.

Economy

2.15 It is considered that Tunbridge Wells is an attractive business location. The availability of a highly skilled workforce and the high quality of the area as a place to live are key influences on Tunbridge Wells as a business location. There are opportunities for growth across a range of sectors, including professional and business services and also the creative industries, information and communication technologies. The Economic Needs Study (2016)⁽¹⁰⁾ considers that the Council should plan positively for economic growth and should provide for the growth of approximately 10,000 new jobs over the Plan period, equating to 11-15 hectares of new business floorspace within the borough.

2.16 Over the period from 2009-2014 evidence suggests that levels of employment growth equated to 2,120 employees on average per year and over this period change was apparent in a number of sectors. In 2014, the key business sectors in Tunbridge Wells included: distribution, hotels and restaurants; banking, finance and insurance; and public administration, education and health sectors, accounting for 81.9% of employees. Tunbridge Wells has a particular specialism in the financial and insurance industry, with this representing a larger proportion of all employment than seen in other South East areas. It also has a higher than average proportion of micro businesses employing nine or fewer people.

2.17 Over the period from 1997-2013 there has also been growth in the value of goods and services produced in the area. A substantial proportion of this growth has been in the information and communication sector. There has also been growth in the contribution of both professional and other services and accommodation, food services and recreation.

2.18 While the area remains an attractive business location with good prospects for growth, it is considered that opportunities need to be provided to actively facilitate business growth and expansion. A key issue is the lack of available land and premises, as well as an ageing stock of employment floorspace and improvements required to transport and infrastructure. There has also been a significant loss of office floorspace in recent years, with little significant new development. Further losses are expected to continue, which represents a significant threat to the supply of office floorspace across Tunbridge Wells.

2.19 In terms of retailing, Royal Tunbridge Wells itself is a vibrant and viable town centre, which draws considerable trade from a wide surrounding area. It is ranked 52 in the Javelin Venuescore UK Retail Rankings 2014/15 and has very high levels of containment of retail spending, reducing the need for residents to travel elsewhere to meet their shopping needs. The Retail and Leisure Study 2017⁽¹¹⁾ identifies a need for both new convenience and comparison retail floorspace over the Plan period. As well as the diverse retail offer, it is also a significant leisure and cultural centre with a number of theatres, a museum and art gallery and a lively local music scene. A number of other smaller town and rural service centres also provide for residents across the wider borough.

2.20 Additionally, the high quality open space and historical areas, including the Pantiles within Royal Tunbridge Wells and the historic buildings and gardens, as well as the landscapes of the rural areas, attract a significant amount of investment in the form of tourism to the wider area.

¹⁰ <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/EconomicNeedsStudyAugust2016>

¹¹ The Retail and Leisure Study 2017 can be viewed under the heading Evidence Studies on the Local Plan web page at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan

Environment

2.21 The quality of the landscape across the borough is generally high or very high, with 70% designated as High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is described in the Borough Landscape Character Assessment. The AONB is of national importance but many local features and views inside and outside the AONB are valued by residents, with Commons, village greens and parks providing important spaces and links to the countryside. The Commons within Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough are a particularly distinctive feature that have statutory protection. Within the urban landscape, valued landscape features, including Areas of Landscape Importance and Important Landscape Approaches have been identified. The rural landscape is rich in designated Historic Parks and Gardens, extensive areas of Ancient Woodland, ancient field patterns and hedgerows, rural lanes and scattered medieval farmsteads. Around 22% of the western part of the borough surrounding Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough and Pembury is Metropolitan Green Belt, which is a significant constraint to development.

2.22 Urban trees, including street trees and commemorative planting, have always formed an important part of the character of views into and within the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The stone towers and spires of the many churches in the town, most dating from the 19th century, complement and blend with the green spires of the historic green infrastructure and together they create a townscape of visually pleasing tall features that is evolving but consistent, and special to Tunbridge Wells.

2.23 The borough supports a wide network of biodiversity sites, including 10 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 59 Local Wildlife Sites, 17 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Value and four Local Nature Reserves. There are also a number of key species and habitats that require protecting.

2.24 In terms of the borough's heritage, there are 25 Conservation Areas, approximately 3,000 listed buildings, 11 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 45 Historic Parks and Gardens, as well as many other additional sites that feature on the Kent Historic Environment Record and within Heritage Counts. The borough also features many distinct archaeological features.

2.25 The borough also has in excess of 650 Tree Preservation Orders, which vary from protecting single trees, to protecting areas of substantial woodland.

2.26 The existence of these features across the borough acts not only as a constraint on development, but also as an opportunity. A challenge for the new Local Plan will therefore be providing for and balancing the competing pressures of housing, employment and retail need with the preservation and enhancement of local character and distinctiveness.

Section 3: Vision and Objectives

Vision

3.1 Preparing a new Local Plan provides an opportunity to look afresh at what sort of place we want the borough to be in the future. The new Local Plan will include a Vision of what the borough will be like in 2033, as well as objectives, proposals and policies, all designed to achieve the Vision.

3.2 The Borough Council is also in the process of producing a new Corporate Five Year Strategic Plan for the borough that will cover the period 2017 to 2022. Setting out the Council's aims and objectives for the next few years, the Corporate Plan will play an important role in informing the longer term spatial vision⁽¹²⁾.

3.3 The current Core Strategy Vision and Objectives were drawn up in 2009 and subject to extensive consultation and examination as part of that process. The Objectives were subsequently updated through the Site Allocations Local Plan, which was adopted more recently in 2016.

3.4 The new Local Plan must provide a clear vision of what is to be achieved in the borough over the extended Plan period to 2033 having due regard to changed circumstances since the adoption of the Core Strategy and in particular increased levels of housing and economic development need.

3.5 The existing Vision and Objectives provide a useful starting point, but need to be reviewed and updated.

3.6 Accordingly, we would like to hear your views about the new draft Vision and Objectives.

Draft Vision

In 2033 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council will have delivered development to meet its local needs in a sustainable way. This includes the development of housing, economic, leisure and recreation uses identified within the new Local Plan. New development will seek to protect and enhance the exceptional quality of the built, natural and historic environment while promoting economic prosperity to ensure the borough remains a special place. It will be a place where people want to live, work and visit and where they have easy access to the services and facilities that they require on a day to day basis.

Question 1

Do you agree with the new draft Vision for the borough?

Question 2

What suggestions do you have for improving or updating the draft Vision and relating it to 2033?

¹² <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/Our Five Year Plan>

Question 3

What should we be aiming and aspiring to achieve and why?

3.7 It is important that all development is carried out in a sustainable way, which is an overarching requirement of the government's national planning policies contained in the NPPF and set out in the Council's draft Vision above.

3.8 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is referred to as a 'golden thread' running through both local plan making and decision taking. The NPPF sets out three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The Glossary at Appendix 3 provides an explanation of what is meant by 'sustainable development'.

3.9 In preparing a new Local Plan for the borough, the Council is required to positively seek opportunities to meet the identified development needs of the area. In order to be found 'sound' through the independent examination process, all local plans are required to demonstrate that they are consistent with the principles and policies of national planning policy, including contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

Objectives

3.10 To realise the Vision, it is considered that the new Local Plan should make clear that future development in the borough will need to focus on meeting a number of specific challenges, which are summarised in the following eight draft Strategic Objectives. In addition, the Interim Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies this document sets out a number of Sustainable Development Objectives that support the development proposed through this Local Plan.

Draft Strategic Objectives

1. **Meeting development needs:** to provide sufficient, developable and deliverable land for a mix of uses in order to meet the borough's Local Plan development requirements to 2033.
2. **The borough's distinctive environment:** all new development will seek to protect and enhance both the natural, built and historic environment to ensure that its special character is maintained.
3. **Delivering sufficient infrastructure:** to ensure the provision of existing and future sufficient infrastructure to support the delivery of new development.
4. **To provide high quality housing:** to deliver the Local Plan's housing requirements, to include a range of housing types to meet local needs.
5. **Provision of economic growth:** to deliver the Local Plan's economic requirements in relation to employment and retail growth in order to deliver jobs and long term economic prosperity.
6. **Ensuring adequate leisure and recreational facilities:** ensuring the provision of high quality sports, recreation, community and cultural facilities that are accessible to all the borough's residents.
7. **Delivering sustainable development:** taking into account the economic, social and environmental impacts of all new development in light of local circumstances and opportunities.
8. **Delivering adequate transport and parking capacity:** in order to fulfil the transport needs of the borough and its residents and businesses, and provide easy access to services and facilities.

Question 4

Do you think these are the right Objectives?

Question 4a

If you answered No, please explain why you don't think these are the right Objectives.

Question 5

Are there any amendments required or other Objectives that you think should be included?

Section 4: Key Issues and Challenges

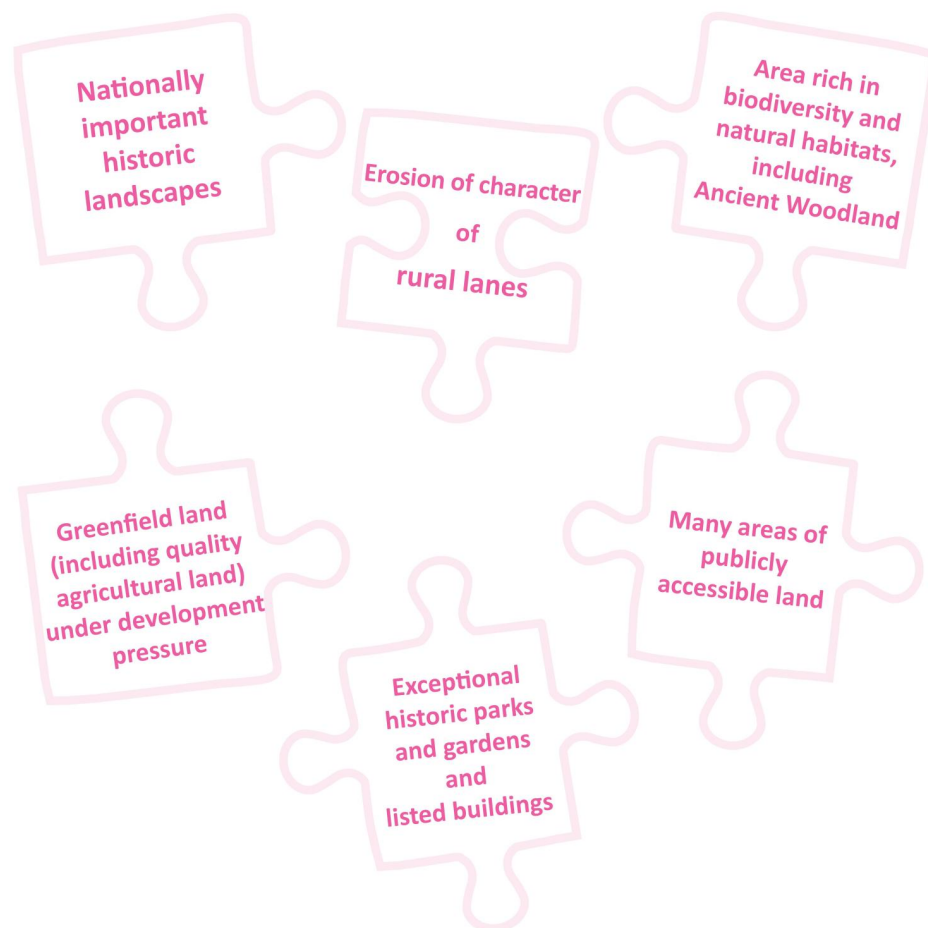
4.1 Based on the Council's work to date, including the various studies undertaken, it has been possible to identify key issues that the Local Plan will need to consider and address when putting forward a strategy and policies for delivery of growth.

4.2 The detailed issues have been grouped under the following themes, and are explained in greater detail in the following pages:

Natural and Built Environment
Infrastructure
Housing
Economy
Transport and Parking
Leisure and Recreation
Sustainability



Natural and Built Environment



4.3 Both the natural and built environment of the borough are highly prized by residents. 70% of the borough is designated as the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), of national significance, being one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in Northern Europe, and all areas have distinct landscape and environmental characteristics. There is extensive tree cover in the area, with many trees being protected by reason of Tree Preservation Orders, or by virtue of being in conservation areas. The Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons and Southborough Common are particularly distinctive and important features that link the countryside with the towns.

4.4 The borough is also rich in historic features, with many designated and non-designated heritage assets, as well as buildings of architectural interest. These include listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, commons, agricultural buildings and farmsteads, historic routeways, medieval field patterns and ancient woodland. An extensive network of public rights of way provides public access to many parts of the borough, supporting the natural and built environment as an important public recreation and amenity resource, and with potential to enhance health and wellbeing.

The Natural Environment

4.5 Pressure for new built development across the borough, including on greenfield land, could have direct impacts on landscape and environmental assets and their settings. The impact on farming activities and the possible loss of valuable agricultural land also needs to be considered.

4.6 The new Local Plan needs to ensure that, in facilitating development, proposals take full account of and reflect each site's landscape, treescape and environmental sensitivities. This includes development proposals outside the High Weald AONB and on other non-designated land. Protected and scarce species and habitats should not be adversely affected by development and there should be no net loss in biodiversity.

4.7 Intensive water management to prevent flooding and some farm practices can both lead to a loss of ecological value. This issue needs to be considered when assessing development proposals.

4.8 Small-scale development has the potential to be more easily accommodated within the existing local environment. The possible cumulative impact, however, of multiple developments on the natural environment, including rural lanes, and on the character and settlement pattern within and adjacent to the High Weald AONB needs to be considered. These issues need to be recognised and the Local Plan produced in a way that will ensure that, where opportunities exist, development proposals respect the local distinctiveness of the natural environment and provide for enhancements.

4.9 The new Local Plan will ensure that, whether through site allocation or provision of development management policy, due regard is given to the need to protect locally important views and the consideration of possible development impact on these views, especially when taller buildings are involved.

The Built Environment

4.10 The new Local Plan needs to ensure that development proposals take account of and reflect each site's sensitivities in terms of historic buildings and their setting, including areas designated as Conservation Areas. Designated heritage assets, including their settings, should be preserved or enhanced.

4.11 The new Local Plan should ensure that development proposals take account of and reflect each site's landscape and environmental sensitivities and any impact there may be on the surrounding built environment. Within the built up areas, new development will need to contribute to and add to the specific identity of the place and its surrounding urban realm. All opportunities for making and improving linkages between different parts of an urban area should be identified and included within proposals for development.

4.12 The cumulative impact of small piecemeal developments is not limited to natural environment situations. Such impacts can equally have a bearing on sensitive built environments. The new Local Plan should ensure that, where opportunities exist for development in principle, detailed proposals provide safeguards where necessary and opportunities for enhancements to the built environment.

4.13 Taking all of the above issues and considerations together, it is apparent just how much of the borough benefits from, but at the same time is constrained by, natural and built characteristics, all of which contribute to providing the high quality environment that is valued.

Supporting Documents

[Landscape Character Assessment \(2017\)](#), [Historic Landscape Characterisation](#), [Interim Habitat Regulations Assessment \(2017\)](#)

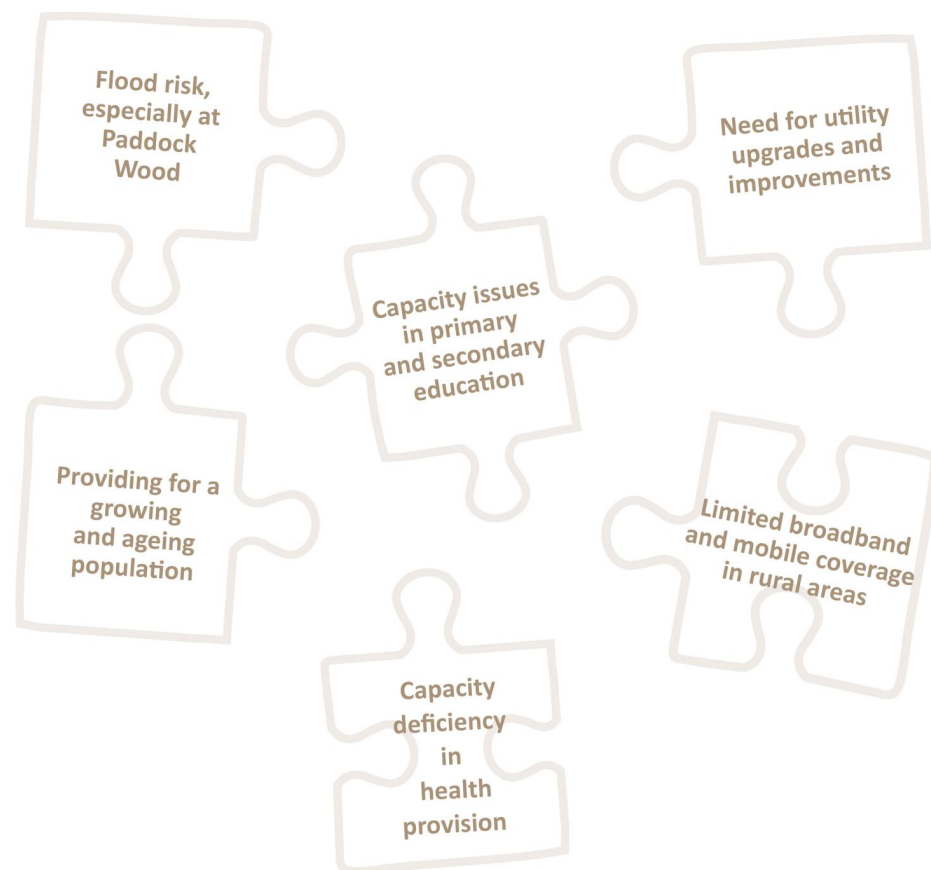
Question 6a

Have we identified the main environmental issues facing the borough?

Question 6b

If No, what environmental issues do you think are missing?

Infrastructure



4.14 Infrastructure planning is the process of planning to meet all requirements for infrastructure in line with proposed development. This process involves planning for many forms of infrastructure, which can be defined as physical, green and community. It is important that the new Local Plan addresses the infrastructure requirements created by new development and plans for infrastructure improvements to support increased housing provision and economic growth. The Plan will also need to address mitigation and adapting to climate change, provide for a growing and ageing population, and the creation of sustainable communities.

4.15 Frequently, when responding to consultations on planning proposals, residents and businesses raise concerns regarding a lack of infrastructure provision in the borough, including capacity issues in primary and secondary schools and in health provision, the need for utility upgrades and improvements, limited broadband and mobile coverage in the rural areas and the need to address flood risk, especially in Paddock Wood.

4.16 The current Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 2015 supports the level of growth set out within the adopted Core Strategy to 2026. A new IDP, however, will need to identify all infrastructure requirements as a result of the new development proposed, as well as any current deficiencies, and will enable the service providers (for example, energy and water companies and health and education providers) to target areas of need and support the level of growth set out within the new Local Plan. It is also important to recognise that a series of small piecemeal developments within an area can create similar pressures on the infrastructure of a local area as one larger development.

4.17 The Borough Council, together with landowners and developers, will therefore need to work closely with infrastructure providers, Kent County Council and neighbouring authorities to deliver adequate infrastructure and services in the most efficient ways, through the use of developer contributions and other funding mechanisms where available. This work has already commenced through early engagement with the relevant infrastructure providers to ascertain any areas of significant concern or capacity issues. This early engagement will then feed into the strategy options that will be developed following this early Issues and Options consultation.

4.18 The Council will need to ensure that any existing capacity issues are documented and that adequate management and mitigation measures are delivered where needed as part of facilitating new development. This will require ongoing cooperation between a number of levels of local government, national agencies and infrastructure providers.

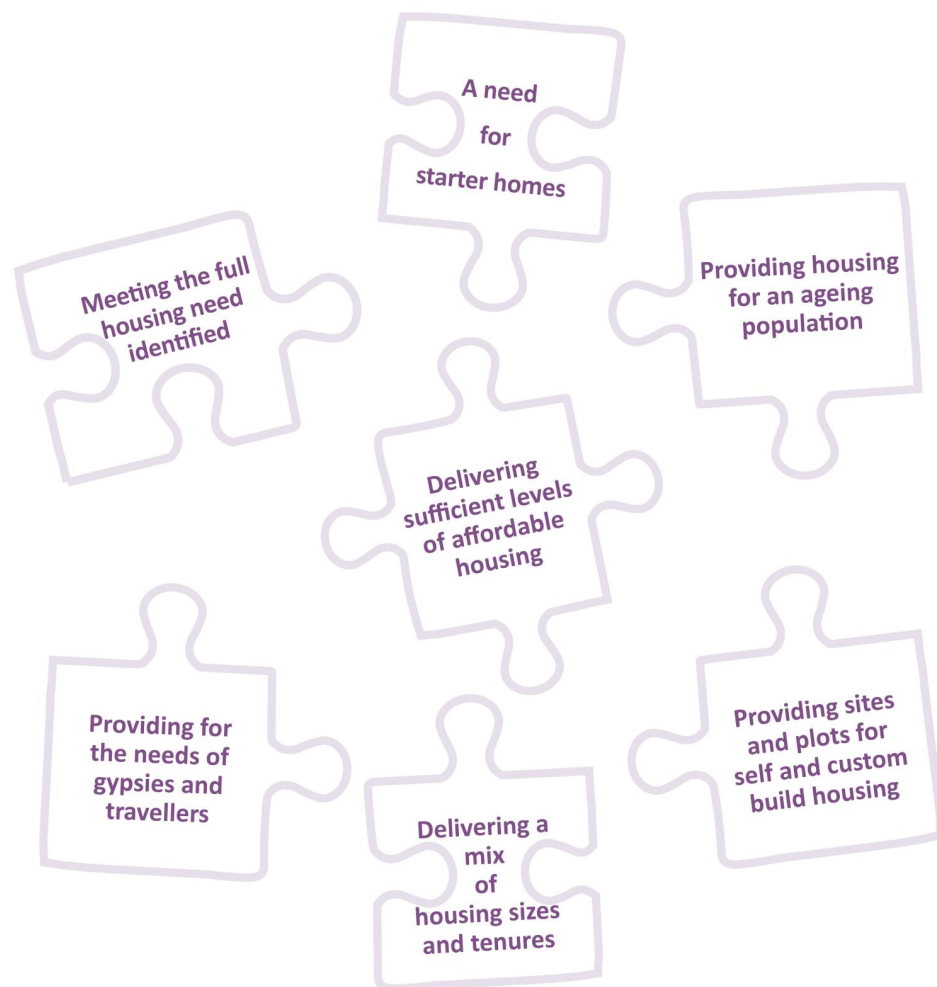
Question 6c

Have we identified the main infrastructure issues facing the borough?

Question 6d

If No, what infrastructure issues do you think are missing?

Housing



4.19 The Local Plan is required to meet the borough's full objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing (unless there are good planning reasons why this is not possible) and to identify specific deliverable sites or locations for growth to meet this need.

4.20 Previously, the adopted Core Strategy and associated Site Allocations Local Plan allocated sites for new housing based on a plan period of 2006-2026 and a housing target set by the former South East Regional Development Plan. In contrast, the new Local Plan will need to consider and provide for new levels of housing need as identified by the Borough Council's own evidence studies and, having regard to planning constraints, establish a new housing target for delivery.

4.21 In accordance with national planning policy and guidance, the Council commissioned and has published the Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015. This considers future housing needs for the borough over the period 2013 to 2033, the objectively assessed need (OAN) being calculated as 12,960 dwellings for the 20-year period (648 per annum). A proposed standardised methodology for calculating the OAN is proposed in the Housing White Paper and, once details are released by the government, the Borough Council will review the situation.

4.22 Housing developments will need to deliver a mix of housing types and tenures to reflect the needs of the community, including for both specialist housing (for example, housing for the elderly), starter homes and affordable housing. Sites and plots for self and custom build housing will also need to be identified.

4.23 The affordability ratio for housing in the borough (that is the ratio of house prices to earnings) is high and well above both county and national averages. Demographic analysis indicates that levels of household formation, particularly for younger households, have fallen. Within the rural villages a lack of affordable housing remains a pressing issue facing local residents, those on lower incomes finding it difficult to remain in, or move back to, the community in which they already live or work or with which they have strong local connections.

4.24 The Borough Council needs to maintain a five-year housing land supply to meet national planning policy requirements and to ensure a plan-led delivery of housing in the most suitable and sustainable locations. At the same time, however, the Local Plan is also required to consider the demands from other land uses as well as housing and take account of any constraints to development.

4.25 Given the environmental constraints within the borough, it is important that new development makes the most efficient use of land while also ensuring that development is of a high quality and does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and setting of the borough's natural, built and historic environment.

Supporting Documents

[Strategic Housing Market Assessment \(2015\)](#)

Question 6e

Have we identified the main housing issues facing the borough?

Question 6f

If No, what housing issues do you think are missing?

Economy



4.26 The Local Plan is required to meet the borough's full objectively assessed need for employment land (Business Use Classes, including B1 - Business, B2 - General Industrial and B8 - Storage and Distribution), as well as housing. Previously, the Core Strategy and associated Site Allocations Local Plan allocated limited sites for new employment in accordance with the approach to employment development set out within the previous Employment Land Studies (2006 and 2010), which was to maintain the existing position, i.e. not significant new growth but maintaining the current level of employment.

4.27 The Council has recently carried out a new Economic Needs Study (2016), which has assessed the need for employment land (Business Use Classes B1 - Business (Office), B2 - General Industrial and B8 - Storage and Distribution) within the borough over the next 20 years. The Economic Needs Study concludes that existing employment areas should be retained (and where appropriate, enhanced and expanded) and also estimates a need for approximately 11-15ha of new employment land that should be allocated to meet future growth. Policies in the new Local Plan will need to reflect these findings.

4.28 The new Local Plan should therefore seek to provide appropriate employment sites, including within both the urban and rural areas, to meet identified needs and deliver a range of employment types and opportunities without having an unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the borough's natural, built and historic environment. There may be opportunities for the enhancement of the historic environment, including the re-use and conversion of historic buildings, that will contribute towards economic growth. These initiatives will help to ensure the borough is a key destination for businesses.

4.29 It is considered that existing, well located employment sites and premises will need to be retained and protected from change of use/redevelopment to alternative uses, maintaining the existing policy approach. Out of date accommodation, including office stock, and infrastructure will need to be replaced or upgraded to ensure that these areas continue to function as modern and appropriate employment locations and attract future investment. Good broadband connectivity is essential within all parts of the borough.

4.30 Changes to permitted development legislation allows, in certain circumstances, for the change of use from commercial to residential development. Coupled with high residential land values, this has resulted in a loss of employment land and opportunities for future commercial developments within the borough. This will need to be monitored by the Council to understand the impact this is having on the employment stock, particularly within Tunbridge Wells Town Centre. It is also important to support rural businesses and the contribution that they make to the local economy, particularly through the re-use of redundant rural and agricultural premises to provide new business space where appropriate, adding value to the rural economy.

4.31 In relation to retail development, the Council's previous approach was to provide for a certain level of growth mostly to be directed to Royal Tunbridge Wells as the regional centre within the borough in line with the previous Retail and Leisure Studies 2010 and 2014.

4.32 The Council has carried out a new Retail and Leisure Study, which considers the vitality and viability of existing defined centres within the borough and assesses the borough's requirement for new retail development and leisure facilities over the Plan period. This study concludes that a range of new retail floorspace should be provided in the region of 7,500-9,500sqm of convenience retail floorspace (i.e. new food and convenience stores) and 20,500-32,500sqm of comparison retail floorspace (i.e. new clothes, shoes, electrical goods and homewares) over the Plan period to 2033 as well as improvements to leisure provision. Again, the majority of this development should be directed to Royal Tunbridge Wells as the primary regional centre.

4.33 The new Local Plan will need to provide retail and leisure growth opportunities to enhance the existing centres (Royal Tunbridge Wells in the main, but also limited improvements to the smaller centres) in order to maintain their vitality and viability for investors and their attractiveness to residents and visitors over the longer term.

4.34 Provision for tourism in the borough includes accommodation and visitor attractions, offering opportunities for leisure, shopping and access to cultural facilities. Combined with the location between London and the

south coast and transport connections, this has made the borough a valued destination for visitors and with the associated economic benefits. The tourist industry is significant in terms of the investment and employment that it generates in both the urban and rural areas of the borough.

Supporting documents

[Economic Needs Study \(2016\)](#), [Retail and Leisure Study \(2017\)](#)

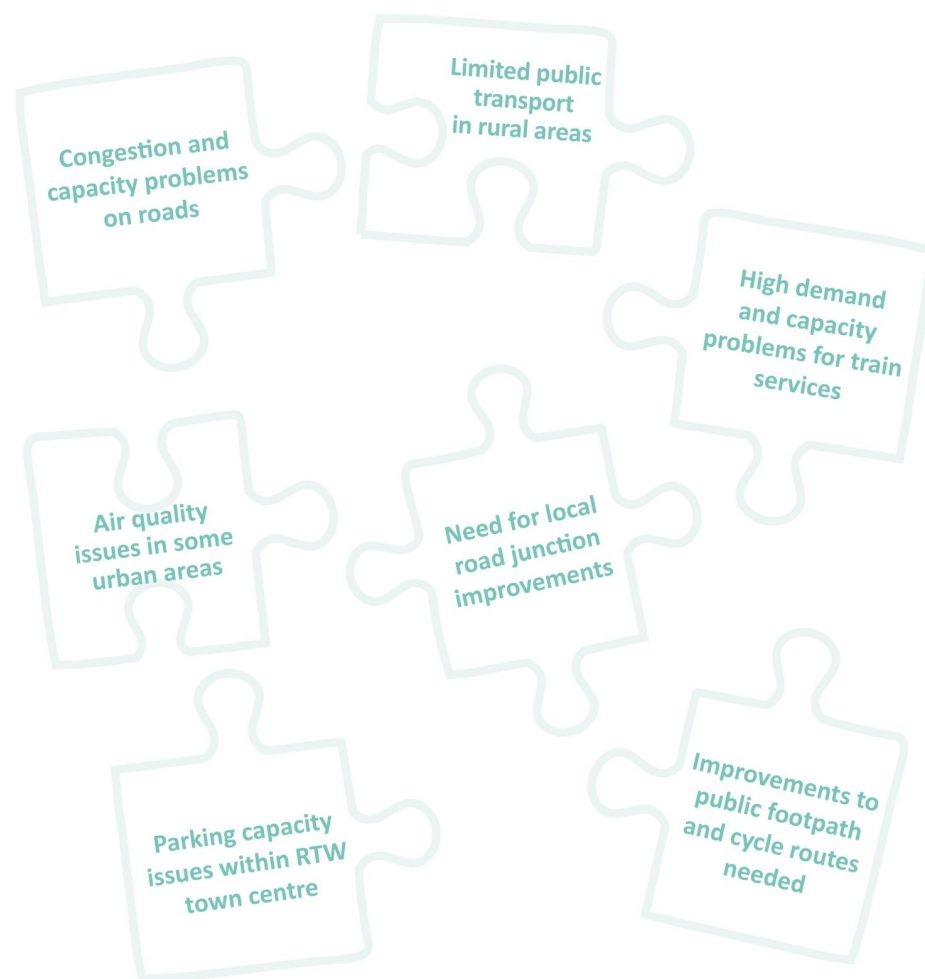
Question 6g

Have we identified the main economic issues facing the borough?

Question 6h

If No, what economic issues do you think are missing?

Transport and Parking



4.35 Tunbridge Wells borough faces significant transport challenges, particularly in terms of managing existing congestion and future growth, as well as needing to respond to the impacts of air quality and climate change. The borough has an extensive highway network, with several A roads converging in the urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells, including the A21, A26, A264 and A267. There have been recent improvements to the strategic road network at North Farm and current dualling of the A21, but congestion on the A21 at Kippings Cross and the A228/A264 Pembury Road remain unresolved. There are also further congestion, capacity and air quality issues on the A26, A264 and A228 Colts Hill.

4.36 The Council has prepared a Borough Transport Strategy, which sets out the vision for transport infrastructure for the period from 2015 to 2026. The objective of this document is not only to address existing transport problems but also to support the level of growth set out within the adopted Core Strategy. It seeks to strike a balance between the management of travel demand and provision of attractive transport choices, alongside any necessary highway capacity improvements, including key junction and road improvements.

4.37 Updated transport modelling work, as well as a refresh of the Borough Transport Strategy, will need to be carried out as the Council progresses with the new Local Plan to cover the period to 2033. Additional work will also need to be carried out in order to assess potential strategy and growth options. The Council must also keep abreast of new technology advances over the Plan period, including the possibility of new modes of transport.

4.38 There is a need to meet nitrogen dioxide reduction targets along the A26 in Royal Tunbridge Wells, which is identified as an Air Quality Management Area. The new Local Plan should be supportive of opportunities for improving air quality within these areas as well as borough-wide; for example, by promoting non-motorised forms of travel (for example, walking and cycling) through the improvement and additional provision of footpaths and cycle routes.

4.39 Outside of the main built up areas of the borough, there is limited public transport provision, particularly at certain times of the day. Additionally, there is a high demand for train services serving the borough, especially at peak travel times.

4.40 New development proposals will need to include parking solutions to ensure that additional parking pressures upon the surrounding area are not created. In those urban areas served by public transport and with nearby local services accessible on foot, it may be appropriate to provide a lower amount of parking within new developments than in relatively more isolated locations. It is important, however, to recognise that the provision of insufficient public parking spaces to serve commercial developments could deter visitors into an area, with a resulting detrimental impact upon the local economy. Reducing the dependency on private cars and achieving more sustainable travel options remains a challenge, especially in more rural areas.

4.41 The Borough Council's Parking Strategy identifies four key objectives that recognise opportunities for change and the challenges there are in providing for current and future public parking needs. The aim of the Parking Strategy is to reduce congestion and make it easier for visitors to the main urban area and larger rural centres to access facilities, navigate around and find places to park. It is certainly the case that a shortage of parking spaces combined with poor and illegal parking can add to traffic congestion and the free flow of traffic, and could be a deterrent to future development. It may be the case that in certain areas (for example, the centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells) there will always be a higher demand for parking than is being provided, particularly at peak periods during certain times of the year.

4.42 Transport issues in the wider rural area are very different from those in the urban area. Public transport coverage is poorer in the rural towns and villages. With a much smaller range of services and fewer local employment opportunities, local residents must travel much further and often these journeys are undertaken by car. While it is recognised that the car will remain the dominant mode of transport, the Local Plan must encourage and promote the uptake of sustainable transport where possible.

Supporting documents

[Borough Transport Strategy 2015-2026](#), [Cycling Strategy 2016-2020](#), [Borough Parking Strategy 2016-2026](#)

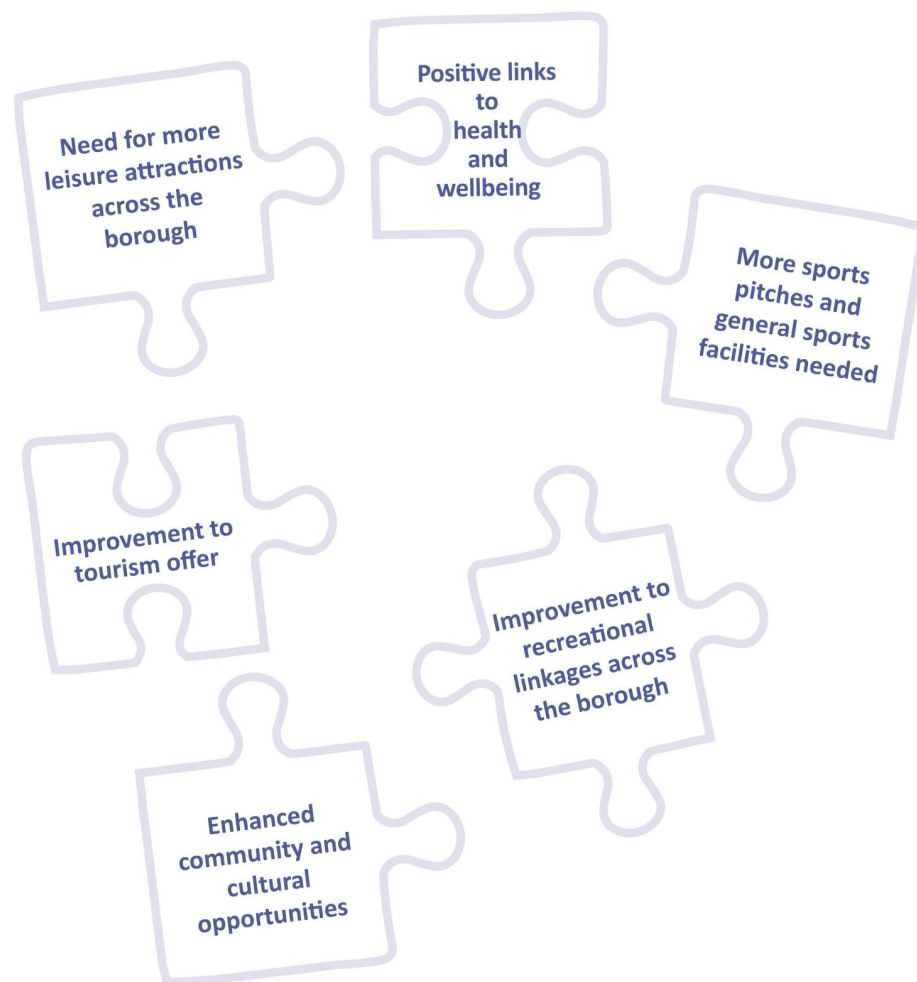
Question 6i

Have we identified the main transport and parking issues facing the borough?

Question 6j

If No, what transport and parking issues do you think are missing?

Leisure and Recreation



4.43 Leisure and recreation refers to a wide range of land uses, including social, community and cultural facilities, as well as sports and recreation provision. The provision of these facilities, which can be delivered either commercially or by a local authority, have been shown to have positive links to the public's overall health and wellbeing. The new Local Plan will need to ensure that sports and leisure facilities, including parks and green spaces, cultural and community facilities are accessible and that provision is either increased and/or existing provision is enhanced where necessary, depending on the localised requirement. It is important to ensure that playing pitches and outdoor facilities are functional all year round and therefore consideration needs to be given to the type of facility, not just the number.

4.44 Policies in the adopted Core Strategy relating to the provision of leisure and recreation were informed by the Sport, Recreation and Open Space Study 2006. It recommended that, within the borough overall, the existing provision should be retained and it highlighted a number of areas where additional playing pitches and equipped play spaces were required. In relation to natural open space, the 2006 study concluded that the borough has a wealth of such resources and that any issues of provision related primarily to access and ease of use. Access difficulties may include the physical distance to facilities combined with limited public transport or certain features of a specific site.

4.45 The Council has recently commissioned a new Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, the findings of which will inform the approach and policies for the new Local Plan in relation to the provision of open space, sport and recreation. As part of this study, a comprehensive audit of existing spaces and facilities will be carried out. The study findings will provide an analysis of existing provision and deficiencies and will identify where additional facilities are required, making recommendations for future standards of provision. This will include any recommendations to meet Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards.

4.46 At the local community level, the provision of leisure and recreation and also cultural facilities will enhance the sustainability of communities and, at a wider borough level, will create a more vibrant economy that will

attract visitors and tourists to the area. It is important that contributions from development are secured to facilitate the delivery of new and/or improved leisure and recreation provision where these are required.

4.47 It is important to ensure that playing pitches and outdoor facilities are, wherever possible, functional all year round in order to achieve maximum availability and meet demand. Evidence available indicates that the condition and standard of a significant proportion of existing provision is such to prevent all year round use.

4.48 A Settlement Role and Function Study has recently been undertaken by the Council to identify and document key services and facilities within identified settlements in the borough. The study includes a record of recreational and leisure facilities such as recreation open space, playing fields, equipped children's play areas, sports centres and other sporting and leisure facilities present in each settlement. It is anticipated that the findings of the study, amongst other factors, will give a theoretical indication of the level of sustainability and appropriateness of these settlements to accommodate further growth and help inform decisions on the need for the enhancement of, and increases to, recreation/leisure provision.

Supporting Documents

[Retail and Leisure Study \(2017\), Settlement Role and Function Study \(2017\)](#)

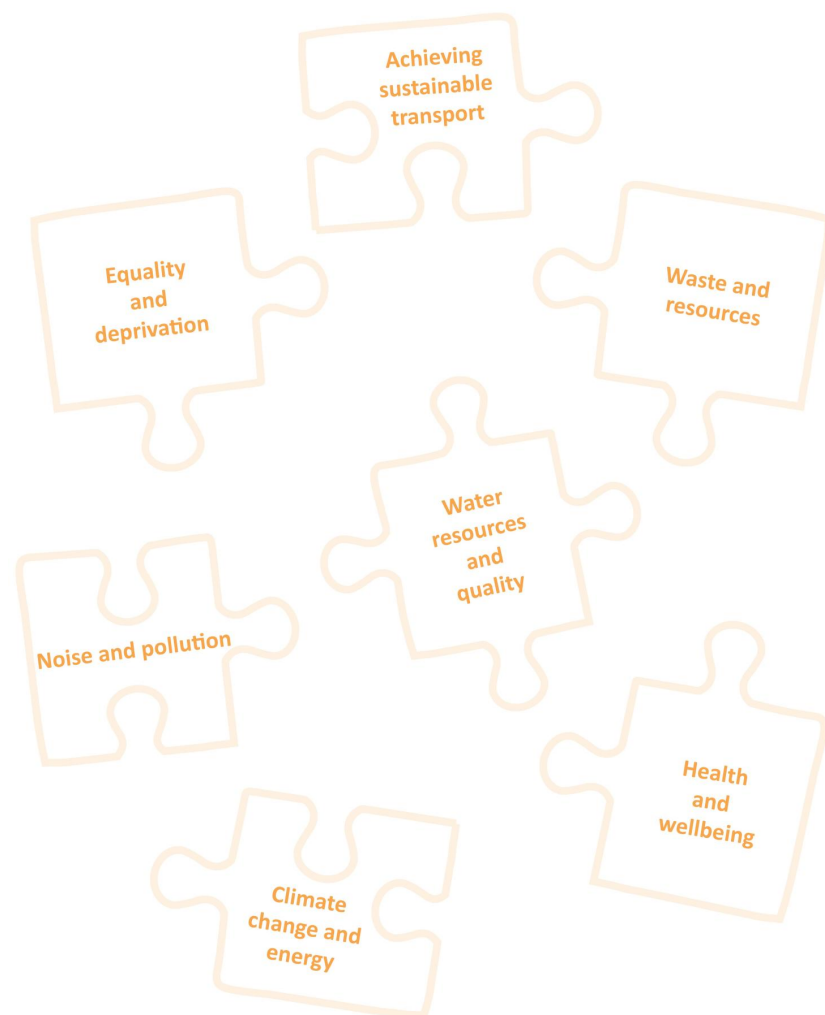
Question 6k

Have we identified the main leisure and recreation issues facing the borough?

Question 6l

If No, what leisure and recreation issues do you think are missing?

Sustainability



4.49 The delivery of sustainable development is a key theme that underpins national planning policy. This means that economic, social and environmental benefits will be sought jointly and simultaneously from all planning proposals and policies, and that a presumption in favour of sustainable development should be implemented. National planning policy also indicates that plans should take local circumstances and opportunities into account. The adopted Core Strategy contained five sustainable development objectives that were considered to be overarching objectives that development should take account of in order to achieve the aims of sustainable development.

4.50 To ensure that the national planning policy requirements are met by the new Local Plan, each stage in its preparation will be assessed by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This process will determine the direct and cumulative impact of individual policies on sustainable objectives. Where potential adverse impacts are identified, mitigation measures will be set out by the SA to remove or reduce the adverse effect and enhance beneficial effects.

4.51 Sustainability issues of relevance to the borough were determined during the scoping stage of the sustainability appraisal process (see the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and cover a wide range of economic, social and environmental topics including, but not limited to, business growth, education, services, employment, sustainable transport, landscape and biodiversity.

4.52 Climate change is a critical issue recognised by both national planning policy and legislation. The Climate Change Act (2008) established a target for the UK to reduce its carbon emissions by at least 80% between 1990 and 2050. This target represents an appropriate UK contribution to global emission reductions consistent with limiting global temperature rise to as little as possible above 2°C and is reflected in similar regional and local targets. The new Local Plan should support carbon reduction and the transition to a low carbon future through the delivery of renewable energy generation and biomass and community heating schemes. As a result of climate change there will also be a need for the borough to adapt to hotter,

drier summers and warmer, wetter winters. This should be reflected in the design of buildings, which will also be required to meet carbon and energy reduction targets.

4.53 With regard to noise and land pollution, the new Local Plan should consider potential noise pollution from both roads and aircraft. When assessing development of previously contaminated land, all remediation requirements need to be considered.

4.54 On the topic of water resources and quality, the new Local Plan will need to recognise that the borough is within an area of serious water stress. Ways of reducing water consumption need to be implemented as well as opportunities for improving groundwater quality.

4.55 In terms of waste and resources, it will be important, wherever possible, to prevent unsustainable demolition and rebuild projects. New development should seek to achieve sustainable construction objectives. To complement this approach, the Council will aim, through the policies of the new Local Plan, to encourage an increase in the use of responsibly sourced and low environmental impact building materials and support both an increase in recycling and a reduction in household waste. These approaches would help improve the rates of waste being diverted from landfill and reduce construction waste.

4.56 Under the social dimension of sustainability, the new Local Plan should aim to meet the demand for elderly and specialist healthcare services, as well as seeking to promote and help achieve improved physical activity rates, especially for low income population groups. The Council should address pockets of deprivation, including fuel poverty and ensure that communities have access to green open space and recreation facilities.

Supporting Documents

[Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report \(2016\)](#), [Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report](#) (this is a consultation document)

Question 6m

Having regard to the prepared [Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report](#), have we identified the main sustainability issues facing the borough?

Question 6n

If No, what sustainability issues do you think are missing?

Section 5: Strategy Considerations

Cross-boundary Strategic Planning and Duty to Cooperate

5.1 The Council is required to ensure that it has fully considered the implications of any cross-boundary strategic planning issues, including those relating to housing, infrastructure, employment and the environment. Examples of cross boundary issues might include:

- how the growth and development needs of the wider area can be accommodated
- the impact of London migration to the borough
- the impact of the A21 improvements
- ensuring adequate mitigation for the Ashdown Forest
- transport connections with Maidstone
- routing of heavy goods vehicles

5.2 The NPPF states that local plans should be based on a strategy that seeks to meet the identified objectively assessed development needs of an area but also, under the requirements of duty to cooperate, any unmet need from neighbouring local planning authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.

5.3 Therefore, if a local planning authority preparing a local plan provides robust evidence of an unmet requirement, such as unmet housing need, other local planning authorities in the housing market area will be required to consider the implications, including the need to review their own housing policies.

5.4 The studies carried out as part of the evidence base to support the preparation of a new Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells borough, along with the issues identified in this document, suggest that the Council may face significant challenges in seeking to provide for the borough's relevant level of development need in the light of very significant landscape, environmental and infrastructure constraints.

5.5 Accordingly, notwithstanding the different stages of plan preparation and differing housing market and functional economic areas, the Council will continue to communicate and engage with neighbouring local authorities, both in Kent and East Sussex, as part of the duty to cooperate. Such engagement will include discussion as necessary of the ability of other neighbouring authorities to accept any unmet need from Tunbridge Wells borough, recognising that the duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree.

Question 7

Cross-boundary Strategic Planning

Are there any specific cross-boundary planning issues that you think the Council should consider in preparing a new Local Plan?

Question 7a

If Yes, what are the specific cross-boundary planning issues that you think the Council should consider in preparing a new Local Plan?

Settlements in Tunbridge Wells Borough

5.6 The borough is made up of settlements of different sizes, ranging from the principal town of Royal Tunbridge Wells (as well as Southborough) to the smallest villages and hamlets. Rather than simply categorise the settlements in order of size, the settlements can be identified by grouping them in terms of their characteristics, focusing on the range of services and facilities available. This gives a theoretical indication of the level of sustainability and appropriateness of these settlements to accommodate further growth.

5.7 Given the challenge to deliver significantly more new homes than planned for in previous Local Plans, the Council will need to decide whether the villages could make a greater contribution to housing delivery. It may

be necessary to review the settlement groupings again in order to establish a new hierarchy for the location of future growth and potentially make adjustments to settlement boundaries.

5.8 Development in rural areas is important in supporting the broader sustainability of villages and in retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) advises that *"all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas – and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use can be supported by robust evidence."*

5.9 A Settlement Role and Function Study⁽¹³⁾ has been carried out by the Borough Council to assess the current level of services and facilities in each of the identified settlements within the borough. It is not an objective of the Settlement Role and Function Study to assign levels of development growth appropriate to each grouping of the settlements, particularly in advance of the determination of the overall housing requirement for the borough. Further detailed work is still required to confirm the groupings or 'hierarchy' of settlements and this will be undertaken as the new Local Plan is progressed.

5.10 The results of the Settlement Role and Function Study are only one of a number of factors in the selection of appropriate locations for new development. Traditionally it has been the case that the scale and distribution of housing sites directly follows from the settlement hierarchy. As commented in the study, however, there are many other factors to be taken into account when allocating land in the rural areas and settlements of the borough, such as transport, environmental considerations, landscape and flooding issues.

5.11 At this initial stage, based on the evidence collected, we have identified possible groupings of settlements in terms of the existing services and facilities that they currently provide.

5.12 For the purposes of this work, Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough are classified as the Main Urban Area, following the approach taken in previous Local Plans. Table 1 below sets out a suggested grouping of settlements. The listings of settlements within a group is not on the basis of any hierarchy

Table 1 Suggested Settlement Groupings

Grouping	Settlement
Main Urban Area	Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough
Group A	Cranbrook, Paddock Wood, Hawkhurst (Highgate and The Moor), Rusthall, Pembury
Group B	Goudhurst, Brenchley, Lamberhurst, Five Oak Green
Group C	Speldhurst, Sandhurst, Benenden, Langton Green, Horsmonden, Sissinghurst
Group D	Frittenden, Bidborough, Matfield
Group E	Iden Green, Kildown

Question 8

Settlement Groupings

Do you agree with the suggested groupings of settlements?

13 http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/Settlement-Role-and-Function-Study_Feb-2017

Question 8a

If No, what changes do you suggest to the groupings of settlements and why?

Development Boundaries

5.13 The Tunbridge Wells Borough (Western) Local Plan 1990 is the origin of the definition of a boundary, known as the Limits to Built Development (LBD), applied to a number of settlements and shown on the proposals map. These define the areas where specific planning policies apply that are included in the remaining saved Local Plan 2006 policies, the adopted Core Strategy 2010 and the Site Allocations Local Plan (2016). In very simple terms, the LBD marks the line between where development has previously been supported and development resisted.

5.14 The current LBDs were defined some time ago, but must now be reviewed to see if they remain appropriate to deliver the level of development need identified in a sustainable way and consistent with new national policy.

5.15 At present, in those villages with a defined LBD in the 2006 Local Plan, some development within the LBD, including housing, is supported subject to certain criteria being met. Outside the LBD, or in villages that do not have a defined LBD, new development is subject to the general policies of constraint and is normally only allowed in exceptional circumstances.

Question 9**Development Boundaries**

Should the policy approach of defining settlement 'Limits to Built Development' continue in principle?

Question 9a

Should the defined Limits to Built Development as currently drawn be retained in their current form in order to maintain settlement patterns, or be removed to enable the delivery of suitable sites?

Question 9b

If the currently defined limits are to be reviewed/redrawn, what criteria do you think should be applied in redrawing the boundaries?

Strategic Options

5.16 The new Local Plan will set out a long term vision for the borough, a set of objectives and a strategy, all to provide a framework for delivering development in the borough up to 2033. A key element of any final strategy will be how new development, particularly housing and economic development, will be provided for and distributed throughout the borough.

5.17 Having regard to the issues set out above and taking account of the evidence base to date, the Council has considered possible different ways that future development could be delivered. In accordance with the NPPF, the starting point is to meet the identified level of development needs in full, unless there are good planning reasons why this is not sustainable; for example, because of development constraints.

5.18 Through the existing adopted Core Strategy and Site Allocations Local Plan, an existing supply of allocated sites has been confirmed, which can make a contribution to accommodating the level of growth identified. Recognising the increased level of growth, however, the new Local Plan will need to set out a revised development strategy for the borough and identify sufficient additional land to seek to accommodate the new growth.

5.19 In addition to seeking to accommodate development to meet the overall levels of identified housing and economic need, the Council is required to maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. It is important therefore to ensure that a sufficiently robust number and range of sites can be allocated in order that a five-year housing supply can be achieved and maintained throughout the new Local Plan period.

5.20 The Council will continue to examine thoroughly whether it is able to meet the full level of identified development needs taking account of a range of factors, such as infrastructure availability and capacity and the potential impact on the environment and heritage assets.

5.21 At this early stage, however, five possible scenarios have been identified, including highly concentrated development in and around Royal Tunbridge Wells and dispersed development across the borough. Each has implications in terms of sustainability and best fit with the national planning policy context. A sustainability appraisal has been carried out for each Option and is presented in an Interim Sustainability Appraisal report⁽¹⁴⁾, which has been published for consultation at the same time as this Issues and Options document.

5.22 The land and sites that would be considered and possibly allocated within the new Local Plan under each of the possible strategic options, have not been decided upon at this stage of the Plan preparation. Detailed assessments of all sites drawn to the attention of the Council will take place and will be published in due course as part of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.

5.23 Alongside this Issues and Options consultation, the Council is carrying out a second 'Call for Sites' as set out in paragraph 1.39.

Although five possible options are presented within this consultation document, it could be that a combination of two or more of the options presented will form the final preferred strategy to meet the identified growth within the new Local Plan.

Please note that the following Options 1-5 are presented in no particular order. Colours and shape sizes used are for formatting purposes only and have no weighting significance.

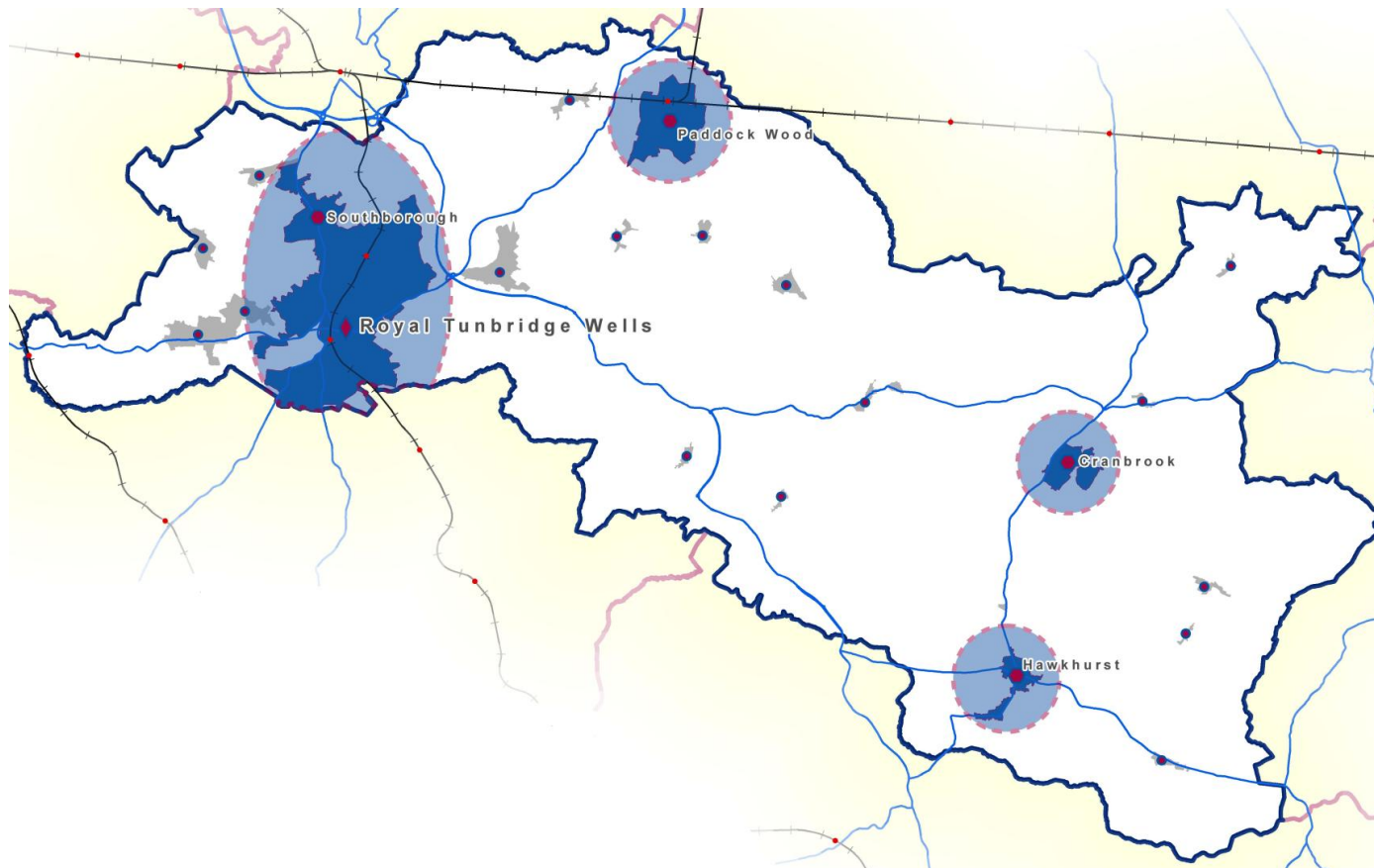
14 The Interim Sustainability Appraisal consultation document can be found on the Local Plan web page at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan

Option 1

Focused Growth

Development distribution focused as per existing Core Strategy, i.e. majority of new development directed to Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough, a smaller proportion to the other three main settlements of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst and limited development within the villages and rural areas.

Option 1



Option 1 Commentary

Option 1 is based on the development strategy and settlement hierarchy set out in the adopted Core Strategy (2010).

Some implications of continuing to follow this approach include:

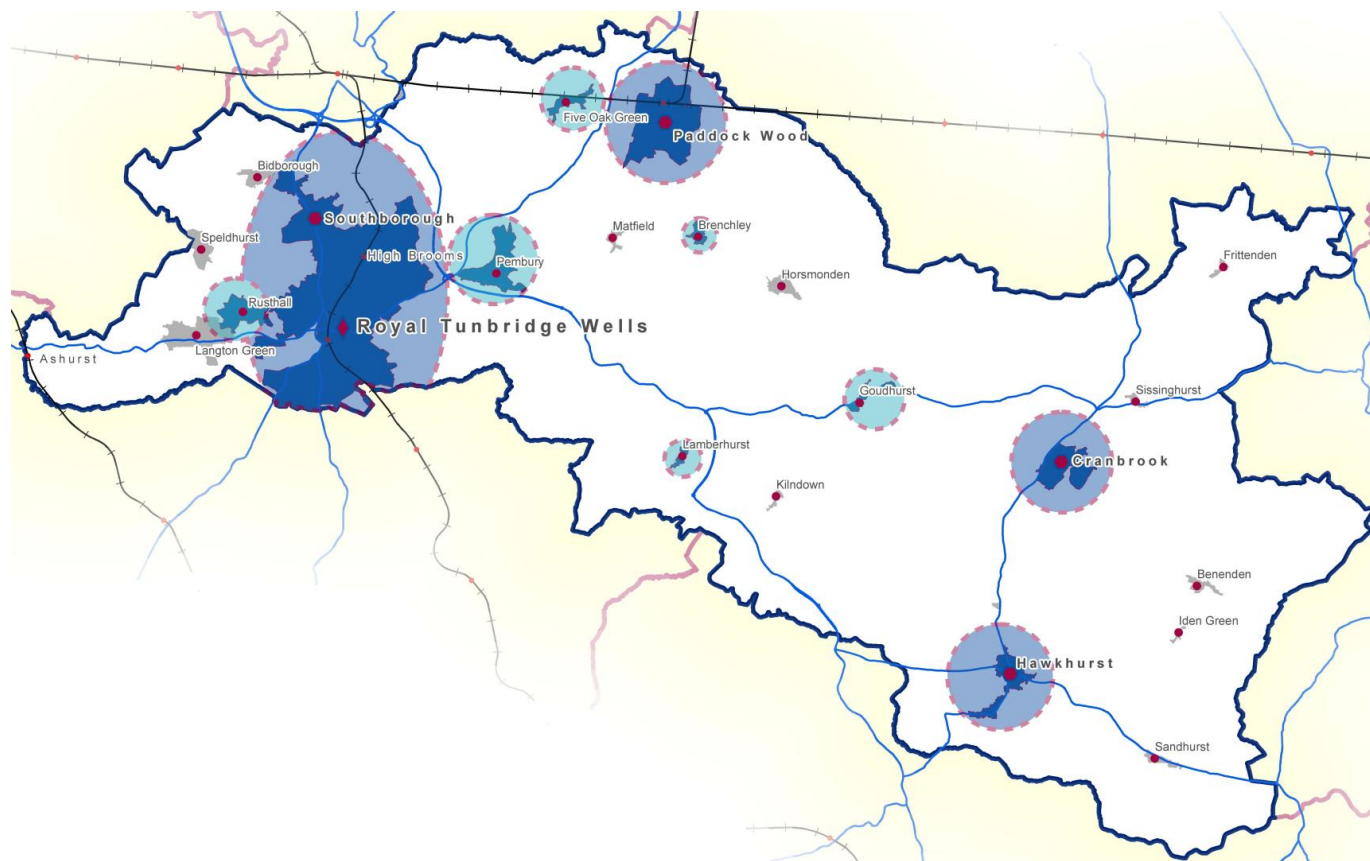
- accepting further significant development at and around Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough could, subject to the outcomes of the Green Belt review, involve development of Green Belt sites and/or development in the AONB surrounding the urban area
- further growth at Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst would necessitate some development within areas designated as AONB, Green Belt and/or areas prone to flood risk
- consideration needs to be given to avoid settlement coalescence
- limited development at the villages and rural areas may involve a missed opportunity to make best use of development potential in these locations, allowing villages to grow in a sustainable way and supporting local services
- focuses development on current most sustainable locations with access to services
- many brownfield land sites have already been built on, have planning permission for development or have been allocated for development. There is therefore a more limited supply of additional brownfield sites
- access to public transport facilities and opportunity to enhance provision
- possible opportunities for higher densities in urban area and larger town/village centre locations, especially where there is good access to public transport, services and jobs
- possible pressure on the historic environment and character of Royal Tunbridge Wells
- provides for limited rural housing development
- reduces the potential impact of development pressure over larger part of borough
- need to tackle existing congestion issues impacting on highway network

Option 2

Semi-dispersed Growth

Development distribution semi-dispersed, with the majority of new development directed to Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough and a proportion distributed to the other three main settlements of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst (as per Option 1), but additionally a percentage of development directed to some of the larger villages (taking account of the updated settlement hierarchy work). Limited development within the remaining villages and rural areas.

Option 2



Option 2 Commentary

Option 2 is partly based on the development strategy and settlement hierarchy set out in the adopted Core Strategy (2010) with the approach amended to reflect updated work on the borough's settlement hierarchy.

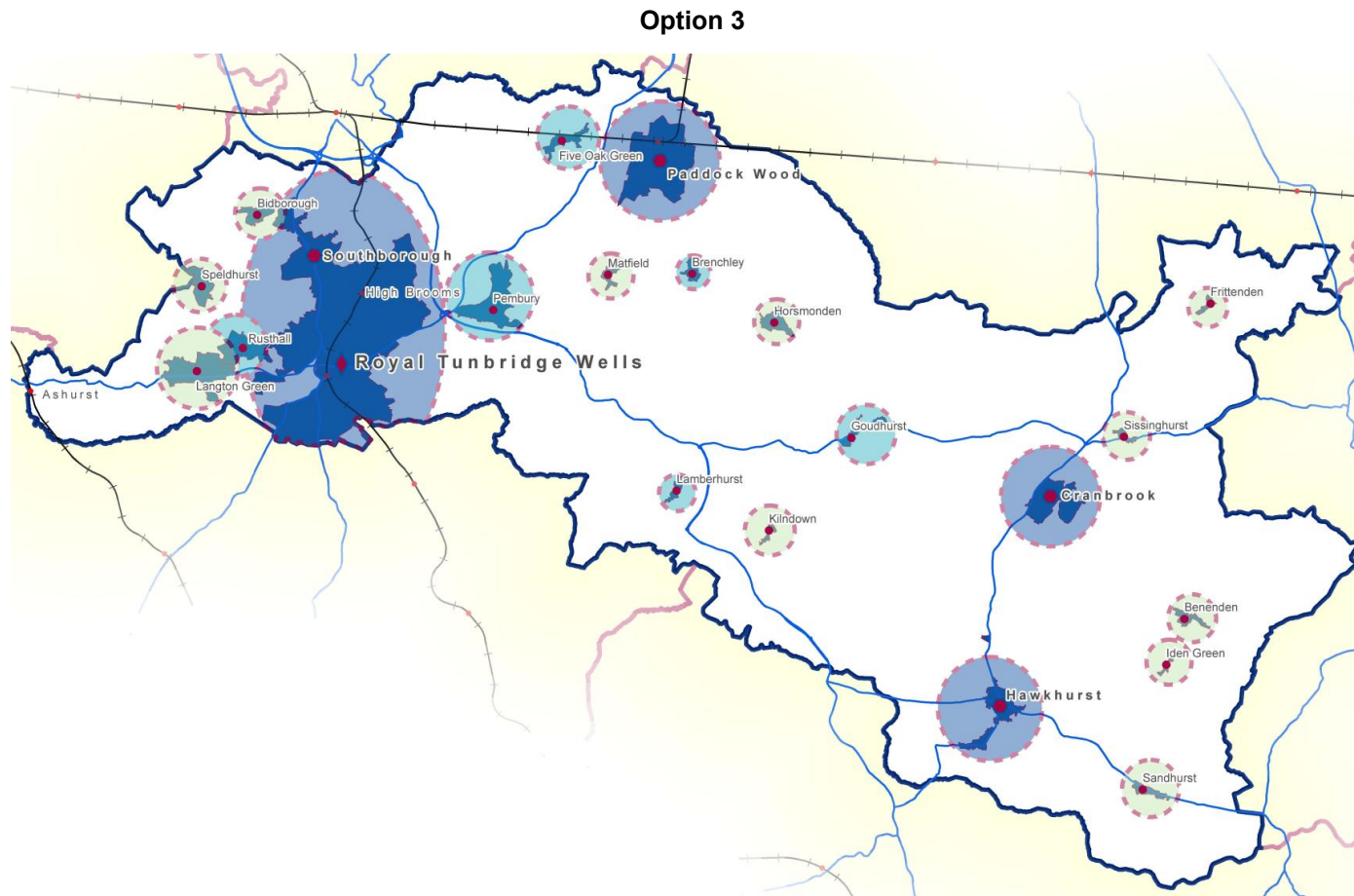
Some implications of following this approach include:

- accepting further significant development at and around Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough could, subject to the outcomes of the Green Belt review, involve development of Green Belt sites and/or development in the AONB surrounding the urban area
- further growth at Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst would necessitate some development within areas designated as AONB, Green Belt and/or areas prone to flood risk
- limited development at the smaller villages and rural areas
- this approach supports the established settlement hierarchy in the adopted Core Strategy while reflecting the role of some of the larger villages across the borough acting as rural service centres
- focuses majority of new development on current most sustainable locations
- many brownfield land sites have already been built on, have planning permission for development or have been allocated for development. There is therefore a more limited supply of additional brownfield sites
- possible opportunities for higher densities in urban area and larger town/village centre locations especially where there is good access to public transport, services and jobs
- opportunity to contribute to the viability of the rural economy
- potential to increase provision of affordable housing in rural areas
- need to tackle existing congestion issues impacting on highway network
- possible pressure on the historic environment and character of Royal Tunbridge Wells
- some villages are not well served by public transport with resulting increased reliance on car use
- need to prevent the possible coalescence of settlements
- does not provide for the full potential of rural housing development
- potential to enhance the sustainability of rural settlements by housing development supporting local services/facilities and enhanced public transport

Option 3

Dispersed Growth

Development distribution proportional across all of the borough's settlements.



Option 3 Commentary

Option 3 supports the established higher settlement hierarchy in the adopted Core Strategy, but makes changes to provide for development at all settlements across the borough. The amount of new development will be proportional to reflect the size of each settlement and existing facilities/services, as well as the potential to support enhanced facilities.

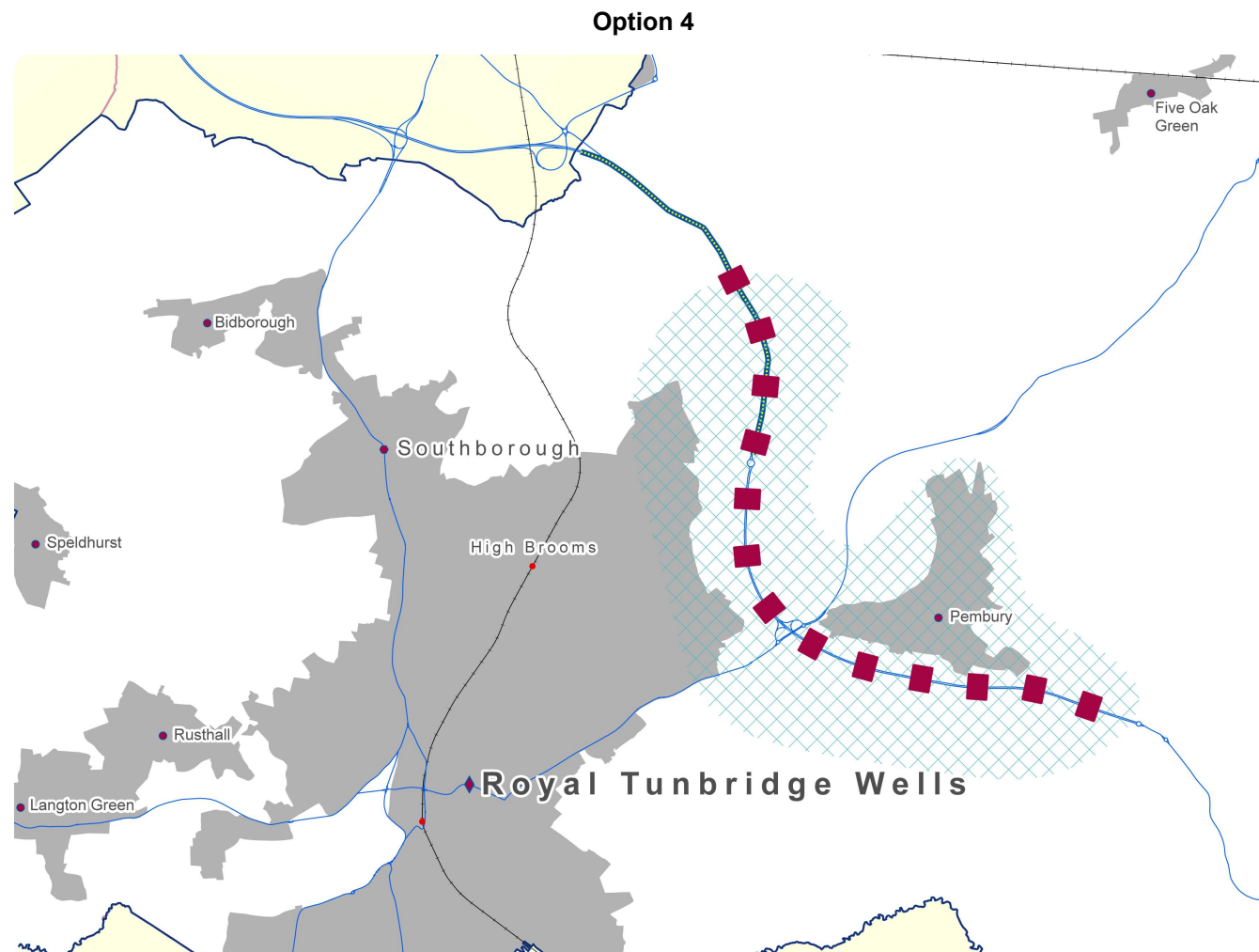
Some implications of following this approach include:

- accepting further significant development at and around Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough could, subject to the outcomes of the Green Belt review, involve development of Green Belt sites and/or development in the AONB
- further growth at Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst and all of the villages would necessitate some development within areas designated as AONB, Green Belt and/or areas prone to flood risk
- some villages are relatively remote from a comprehensive range of facilities and services
- many brownfield land sites have already been built on, have planning permission for development or have been allocated for development. There is therefore a more limited supply of additional brownfield sites
- possible opportunities for higher densities in larger town/village centre locations, especially where there is good access to public transport, services and jobs
- need to tackle existing congestion issues impacting on highway network
- opportunity to contribute to the viability of the rural economy
- potential to enhance the sustainability of rural settlements by housing development supporting local services/facilities and enhanced public transport
- potential to increase provision of affordable housing in rural areas
- some villages are not well served by public transport with resulting increased reliance on car use
- need to prevent the possible coalescence of settlements
- seeks to provide for the full potential of rural housing development
- the scale of development in some villages may not be sufficient to ensure services are viable

Option 4

Growth Corridor-led Approach

Development distribution focused around the A21, close to Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury, as a new 'growth corridor'.



Option 4 Commentary

Option 4 takes account of the A21 as a key route between London and Hastings, acting as a valuable access route to Royal Tunbridge Wells. The improved local infrastructure created by recent dualling of the A21 may provide the opportunity to stimulate a 'growth corridor' within this area. Such a growth corridor could facilitate both economic and housing growth and may help the borough to meet its wider development needs.

Some implications of following this approach include:

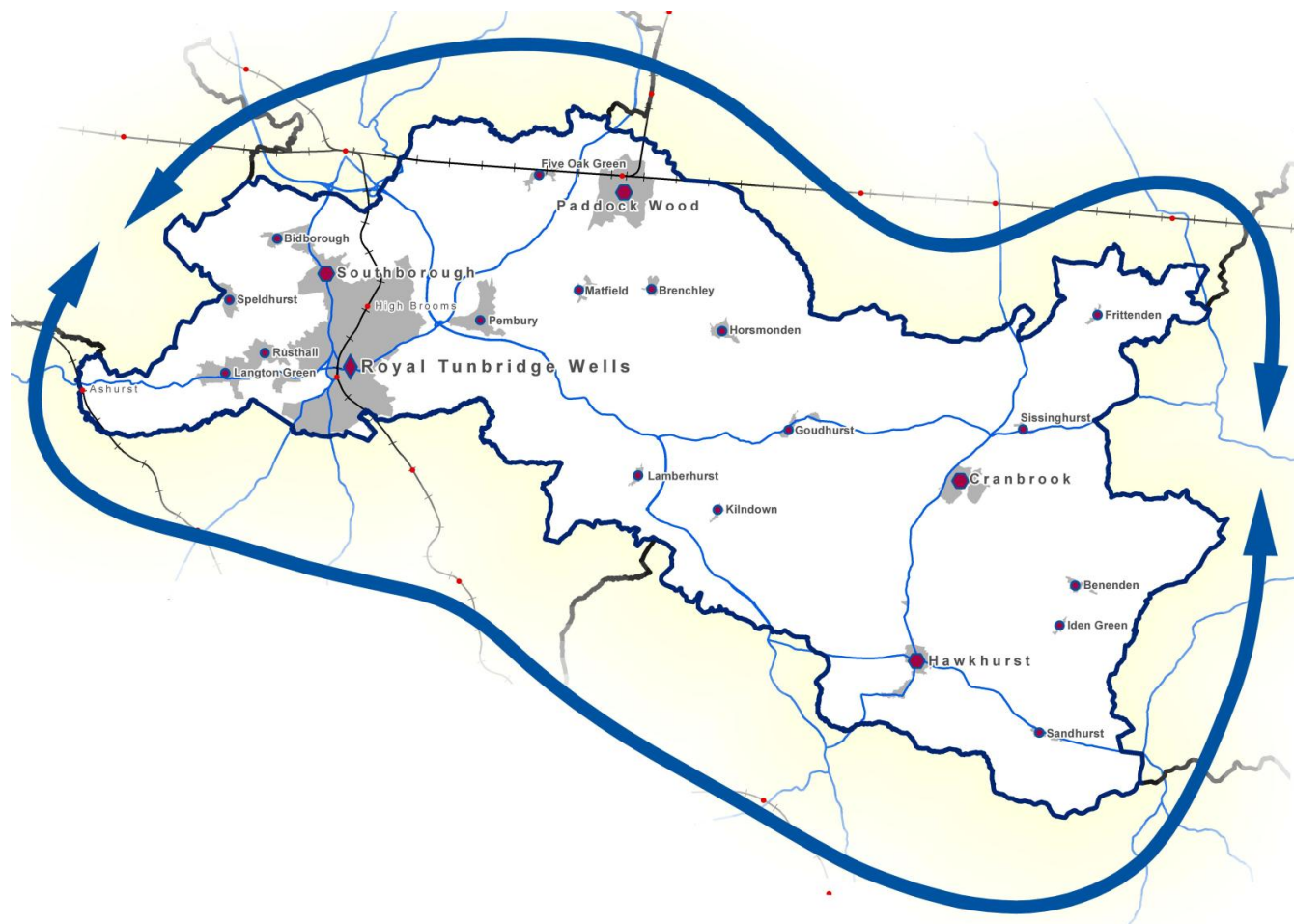
- accepting further significant development at and around Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury could, subject to the outcomes of the Green Belt review, involve development of Green Belt sites and/or development in the AONB
- limited allocated development at other parts of Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, Hawkhurst and any of the villages and rural areas apart from possible limited infill
- this approach directs significant development to the northern part of the borough around Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury
- many brownfield land sites have already been built on, have planning permission for development or have been allocated for development. There is therefore a more limited supply of additional brownfield sites
- reduces possible pressure on the historic environment and character of Royal Tunbridge Wells
- focuses on opportunities to reinforce economic base of the borough
- provides for limited rural housing development
- reduces the potential impact of development pressure over larger part of borough
- does not provide for the full potential of rural housing development
- supports existing upgrades to infrastructure with potential to secure additional infrastructure improvements
- locates growth close to established employment locations and services, helping to minimise need to travel

Option 5

New Settlement Growth

New freestanding 'Garden Village' settlement. There is no location identified with this option. A new settlement could be located anywhere within the borough (we are inviting views on the principle of a new settlement in providing for the future development needs of the borough).

Option 5



Option 5 Commentary

Option 5 provides for the development of a new settlement as a 'Garden Village' in line with guidance promoted within the NPPF, allowing for this approach to meet larger scale housing and other growth.

This option is based on a potential settlement of between 5,000 and 7,000 homes plus other business, community and leisure uses.

The Council would expect any development of a new settlement to be planned and delivered on the basis of established and accepted 'Garden City' principles⁽¹⁵⁾

Some implications of following this approach include:

- reliant on identifying a satisfactory sustainable location for new settlement
- the potential to plan holistically and enable comprehensive masterplanning, including provision of transport infrastructure, community facilities and green infrastructure
- the objective would be to achieve a well-designed separate settlement that respects the local landscape and provides a high quality place
- this approach will consider the whole of the borough and the intention would be that subsequent work would consider the availability of brownfield land and public sector land as part of any emerging options, including potential locations
- the infrastructure requirements will be considerable and may have implications for timely delivery, requiring other developments at other locations in the borough to meet ongoing development needs in the short term
- potential impacts on environmental constraints and Green Belt depending on any specific location pursued through this option
- consideration of development in other parts of the borough is likely still to be necessary to meet identified development needs in the short/medium term
- delivery timescales mean that contribution would be likely to be achieved in second half of Plan period
- the importance of capturing land values through the provision of community facilities and infrastructure in order to benefit the community
- may allow for greater delivery of affordable housing
- greater scope for opportunities for mixed use development and range of employments
- opportunity for strong vision, leadership and community engagement
- large greenfield land take likely to be required
- transport infrastructure in some areas may not be adequate or deliverable to support this scale of development

15 <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles>

Question 10

Please let us know your preferred option or combination of options in order of preference.

Question 10a

If you prefer a combination of options, please state which ones.

Question 11

What views do you have about the possibility of a new settlement somewhere in the borough providing for future development needs?

Question 11a

Where do you think a possible new settlement could be located?

Question 12

Do you think we have considered and identified all reasonable options for accommodating future development growth within the borough?

Question 12a

If No please set out what other options for accommodating future development growth within the borough you think should be considered.

Section 6: Development Management Policies

6.1 The development management policies currently used by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to assess planning applications and consider enforcement action came into effect with the adoption of the 2006 Local Plan.

6.2 A key issue to consider in preparing a new Local Plan is whether the existing 2006 Local Plan policies (known as 'saved policies') remain relevant in light of the introduction of the NPPF in 2012 and other central government guidance, as well as any updated local evidence.

6.3 This section considers the policies that are currently in place and identifies the key topics that might merit and necessitate new development management policies.

Existing policies

6.4 Appendix 2 sets out the saved development management policies that are still in use following the adoption of both the Core Strategy in 2010 and Site Allocations Local Plan in 2016. These will all be replaced upon adoption of the new Local Plan; however, policies that are still used, relevant and comply with national policy (NPPF) can be carried forward into the new Local Plan.

6.5 For the following three questions, consider the 'saved policies' of the Local Plan 2006 in Appendix 2.

Question 13

Which policies do you consider are suitable for continued use?

Question 14

Which policies do you think may be out of date or no longer necessary?

Question 15

Which policies do you think could be updated or amended, and how?

New topic areas and policies

6.6 The new Local Plan will contain detailed development management policies that fall within broad topic areas, as set out below. These broad headings reflect the chapters within the NPPF, followed by examples of policies that the headings could encompass.

Topic areas to consider for Development Management policies

- **Development Principles:** Sustainable Development, Parking, Resource Management, Design
- **Economy and Centres:** Town Centres, Retail and Leisure, Rural Economy, Key Employment Areas, Tourism
- **Housing and Healthy Communities:** Housing (including affordable and specialist housing, e.g. elderly, self build, starter homes), Community Facilities, Recreation, Leisure, Open Space, Health and Wellbeing
- **Natural, Built and Historic Environment:** Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Shop Fronts, Landscape, Treescape (or tree cover), Tree Preservation Orders, Climate Change, Flooding, Countryside Protection
- **Infrastructure:** Sustainable Transport, Telecommunications, Utilities, Health, Education, Green Infrastructure

Question 16

Considering the topic areas above, are there any other topics that you think the new Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan should include?

Question 17

Are there any topics that you consider do not require any further detailed development management policies because there is sufficient coverage already in place, i.e. in national guidance (the NPPF)?

Detailed policies**Question 18**

Are there any specific planning issues affecting the borough of Tunbridge Wells that you consider are not adequately covered by the NPPF or already referenced in this chapter and which you would like to see addressed in a policy?

Conclusion

This is the first stage in developing a new Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells borough and your opportunity to take an active part in shaping the future development of the borough. After the Issues and Options consultation we will analyse all the responses to the document and produce a consultation summary.

From the responses, and using our evidence, we will finalise the list of issues that the new Local Plan will cover and review the potential strategy options for dealing with these. From this work we will produce a new draft Local Plan setting out a development strategy for the borough, site allocations and policies against which planning applications will be considered.

The new draft Plan will be published for further consultation in 2018 before it is subsequently formally submitted to the Secretary of State.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the production of the new Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan. If you have any queries about this consultation, require any additional information or assistance regarding the new Local Plan, or require copies in alternative format and/or language, please contact the Planning Policy Team.

Planning Policy email: planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
Telephone: 01892 554056

Question 19

General Comments

Are there any other planning and development matters that you think the new Local Plan should consider or cover that have not been mentioned in this Issues and Options document? You can also make any general comments here.

Appendix 1: Evidence Studies and Documents List

Document Title	Publication Date	Author/Publisher
Transport Strategy 2015-2026	July 2015	TWBC/KCC
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	September 2015	G L Hearn
Cycling Strategy 2016-2020	January 2016	TWBC/KCC
Parking Strategy 2016-2026	2016	TWBC
Development Constraints Study	October 2016	TWBC
Economic Needs Study	November 2016	Turley Associates
Retail and Leisure Study	April 2017	Nexus
Settlement Role and Function Study	April 2017	TWBC
Interim Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	April 2017	TWBC
Landscape Character Assessment	May 2017	Land Use Consultants
Historic Landscape Characterisation	May 2017	Land Use Consultants
Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report	May 2017	TWBC
Interim Habitat Regulations Assessment	May 2017	TWBC
Landscape Sensitivity Study for Royal Tunbridge Wells and Adjoining Settlements	June 2017	Land Use Consultants

Document Title	Publication Date	Author/Publisher
Playing Pitch Assessment Study	June 2017	Strategic Leisure Ltd
Green Belt Study	tbc	Land Use Consultants
Historic Environment Study	tbc	tbc
Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study	tbc	tbc
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Stage 1)	tbc	JBA Consulting

All of the completed supporting studies can be found on the New Local Plan web page at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan. The remaining supporting studies will be published as they are completed.

Appendix 2: 2006 Local Plan Saved Development Management Policies

Policy Number	Policy Title
<u>Chapter 3: Rural Fringe, Green Belt and Limits to Built Development</u>	
MGB1	Metropolitan Green Belt
LBD1	Development outside the Limits to Built Development
<u>Chapter 4: Environment</u>	
EN1	Development Control Criteria
EN4	Demolition in Conservation Areas
EN5	Development within, or affecting the character of, a Conservation Area
EN6	Shop Fronts
EN8	Outdoor Lighting
EN10	Archaeological Sites
EN11	Historic Parks and Gardens
EN13	Tree and Woodland Protection
EN15	Statutory Local Nature Reserves and other non-statutory Nature Conservation Sites
EN16	Protection of groundwater and other watercourses
EN18	Flood Risk
EN20	Telecommunications
EN21	Areas of Important Open Space
EN22	Areas of Landscape Importance
EN23	Important Landscape Approaches
EN24	Arcadian Areas
EN25	Development control criteria for all development proposals affecting the rural landscape
<u>Chapter 5: Town, Neighbourhood and Village Centres (incorporating Retail Development)</u>	
CR1	Location of large-scale (500 sq metres or greater gross floorspace) A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1, D1 and D2 Uses within defined Primary Shopping Areas

Policy Number	Policy Title
CR2	Location of large-scale (500 sq metres or greater gross floorspace) A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1, D1 and D2 Uses outside defined Primary Shopping Areas
CR3	Location of proposals for small-scale (less than 500 sq metres gross floorspace) A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1, D1 and D2 Uses within defined Primary Shopping Areas, Neighbourhood Centres and Village Centres
CR5	Royal Tunbridge Wells Primary Shopping Area
CR7	Southborough Primary Shopping Area
CR9	Paddock Wood Primary Shopping Area
CR11	Cranbrook Primary Shopping Area
CR12	Hawkhurst Primary Shopping Area
CR13	Retention of community facilities in neighbourhood centres or villages
<u>Chapter 6: Housing</u>	
H1	Retention of the existing housing stock
H2	Small and intermediate sized dwellings
H4	Gypsy Sites
H5	Residential development within the Limits to Built Development
H8	Affordable housing outside the Limits to Built Development
H9	Key workers' dwellings in association with Rural Employment
H10	Replacement dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development
H11	Extensions to dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development
H13	Conversion of rural buildings to residential use outside the Limits to Built Development
<u>Chapter 7: Economic Development</u>	
ED1	Location of large-scale (500 sq metres or greater gross floorspace) or greater proposals for B1 light industrial development within Economic Development Areas
ED2	Location of small-scale (less than 500 sq metres gross floorspace) B1 development
ED3	Location of B2 and B8 Uses within Economic Development Areas
ED5	Conversion of rural buildings to Economic Development Use outside Limits to Built Development

Policy Number	Policy Title
<u>Chapter 8: Tourism</u>	
T1	Location for small-scale new or extended tourism accommodation
T2	Retention of tourist accommodation
T3	Tourism accommodation outside the Limits to Built Development
<u>Chapter 9: Recreation</u>	
R1	Retention of existing recreation open space
R2	Recreation open space in development of more than 15 bedspaces
R6	Retention of allotments
<u>Chapter 10: Community Services</u>	
CS4	Development contributions to school provision for developments over 15 bedspaces
CS6	Retention of community buildings
<u>Chapter 11: Transport and Parking</u>	
TP1	Major development requiring Transport Assessments and a Travel Plan
TP2	Multi-modal access for smaller-scale non-residential development
TP3	Multi-modal access for large-scale residential developments
TP4	Access to the road network
TP5	Vehicle Parking Standards
TP6	Tunbridge Wells Central Access Zone (residential) Vehicle Parking Standards
TP7	Tunbridge Wells Central Parking Zone (commercial)
TP8	Vehicle parking for small-scale changes of use to non-residential and development affecting Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas
TP9	Cycle Parking
TP10	A21: Tonbridge to Pembury Bypass
TP11	A21: Other Improvements
TP12	A228: Colts Hill Bypass
TP18	Cycle route network in Royal Tunbridge Wells
TP19	Highway improvements, Main Transport Routes, Royal Tunbridge Wells
TP20	Retention of public car parks in Royal Tunbridge Wells

Policy Number	Policy Title
TP22	Retention of Yew Tree Road public car park, Southborough
TP23	Retention of the Pennington Road car park, Southborough
TP24	Retention of Commercial Road public car parks, Paddock Wood
TP25	Retention of public car parks in Cranbrook
TP26	Retention of public car parks in Hawkhurst
TP27	Retention of public car parks in villages

Appendix 3: Glossary

For the purpose of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Adopted	There are a number of stages in the preparation of planning policy documents. 'Adoption' represents the final confirmation of a document's status by the local planning authority.
Affordable housing	Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1947) and, along with National Parks, represent the finest examples of countryside in England and Wales. Their primary purpose is to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural landscape beauty, including the protection of flora, fauna and geological interests. Development affecting such areas is restricted under the National Planning Policy Framework.
Biodiversity	The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.
Brownfield land	See 'Previously Developed Land'
Call for sites	A general request by the local planning authority to developers, landowners and the public to submit sites to be considered for development. These are then assessed by the local planning authority to see whether they should be included as allocations in a Local Plan.
Comparison retail	Retail items not bought on a frequent basis, for example electrical goods and clothing (i.e. not food).
Conservation Area	An area designated by the local planning authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character and interest of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. Conservation areas are a type of heritage asset.
Convenience retail	Everyday essential shopping items, such as food.
Core Strategy	The Core Strategy is a long-term strategy document, which sets the overarching agenda for future planning and decision making in the borough by defining how much development of each main type will take place and broadly where it will go. The Borough Council's Core Strategy was adopted in 2010, setting growth between 2006 and 2026.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)	National Government department responsible for planning and local government, sometimes also referred to as CLG.
Development Plan Document (DPD)	A policy-setting document that forms part of the statutory development plan, including the Core Strategy.
Functional floodplain	Land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood. Also known as Flood Zone 3b. Zones 1, 2 and 3a are assessed as having low, medium and high probability of flooding respectively. Guidance on development appropriate in each Zone is given in Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework.
Green Belt	Green Belt is open, largely undeveloped land that has been specifically designated for long-term protection. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. It is not a designation influenced by landscape quality. Development on Green Belt land is restricted under the National Planning Policy Framework.
Green infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green spaces, in urban and rural areas, which is capable of delivering a wide range of benefits for the environment and quality of life for local communities.
Heritage asset	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Includes nationally designated assets, as well as local assets identified by the local community and confirmed by the local planning authority. See also 'Conservation Area', 'Historic Park and Garden', and 'Listed Building'.
Historic Park and Garden	Designated by Historic England, Historic Parks and Gardens reflect the landscaping fashions of their time and are a type of heritage asset.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	Outlines the need for, delivery and implementation of, infrastructure necessary to support the growth strategy in the Local Plan and of specific locations within the plan period. This document is constantly reviewed as needs over time will change.
Limits to Built Development (LBD)	A line around settlements defining the area which is considered to be within the limits of the built area and that which is outside in order to restrict the encroachment of built form into the surrounding countryside.
Listed Building	A building included on a list of buildings of architectural or historic interest, compiled by the Secretary of State, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Listed Buildings are a type of heritage asset.
Long-term land reserve	See 'Rural Fringe/safeguarded land'.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	<p>The document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in decisions on planning applications. It replaces Government planning policies previously set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs).</p> <p>Further guidance on particular topics, entitled Planning Practice Guidance, is provided on the Department of Communities and Local Government website. This is intended to supplement the NPPF and be updated as necessary.</p>
Previously Developed Land (PDL)	Land which is, or was, occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This <u>excludes</u> : land occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal where provision for restoration has been made; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of structures have blended into the landscape.
Proposals Map	Shows on a map base all the site-specific policies and proposals set out in Development Plan Documents.
Rural Fringe/safeguarded land	<p>Land between built up areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough and the Green Belt that has been reserved to meet longer-term development needs.</p> <p>Areas of land designated as Rural Fringe by the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 have been removed from the Green Belt to provide a long term land reserve, safeguarded to meet future development needs.</p>
Saved	Certain planning policy documents or individual policies may be 'saved' pending their replacement by future documents or policies. A saved policy or document can still be used in making decisions on planning applications.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	The SHMA considers housing need within the borough; the overall housing need as well as the need for different types and sizes of homes, including provision for the elderly and Starter Homes.
Site Allocations Local Plan 2016	A development plan document prepared and adopted by the Council, which allocates land for development pursuant to the strategy set out in the adopted Core Strategy 2010.
Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment	A detailed assessment of any flood risk arising from specific development proposals, prepared in support of applications for planning permission in areas subject to flood risk.
Spatial planning	A system of integrating land use planning policies with the policies of other plans, programmes and strategies, which also influence the nature of places and how they function.

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	A document showing land at risk from flooding across the borough, prepared as part of the evidence base for Development Plan Documents such as the Site Allocations Local Plan.
Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)	The SHELAA identifies sites with potential for housing, employment and other uses and assesses both their potential for development and when they are likely to be developed. It is not an allocations document.
Sustainability Appraisal	An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process, to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.
Sustainable development	<p>International and national bodies have set out broad principles of sustainable development. Resolution 24/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>The UK Sustainable Development Strategy 'Securing the Future' sets out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living within the planet's environmental limits • ensuring a strong, healthy and just society • achieving a sustainable economy • promoting good governance • using sound science responsibly <p>The NPPF describes the purpose of the planning system as to contribute to sustainable development.</p>

If you require this document in another format, please contact:

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