



Mike Martin

Parliamentary Candidate for Tunbridge Wells Constituency

12th February 2024

Carlos Hone
Head of Planning Services
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Dear Carlos

Consultation on Council's Response following the Examination of the New Local Plan

I would like to write in strong support of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's response to the recent examination of the New Local Plan. I would like to also thank the Officers and Members for their diligent work in revising the local plan, in light of the Planning Inspector's findings.

Specifically, I would like to write in support of the removal of the Tudeley Garden Village from the plans due to a lack of necessary infrastructure, which made the site unsustainable. The weakness of the proposal for a Five Oak Green bypass, specifically mentioned by the Inspector, is a good example of this. The lack of Infrastructure and the impact on the existing infrastructure of Tonbridge jeopardised not only the consent of local residents but those of our neighbours in Tonbridge—the vast majority of whom either want or accept that new housing be built.

In addition, I would also strongly support the removal of the sites in East Capel/West Paddock Wood, which are in Flood Zones 2 and 3. As you will be aware, there are already a number of issues with increased surface run off and localised flooding in Paddock Wood as a result of the current developments. **There is also an issue of extensive surface water flooding in the East Capel part of the proposal.**

These issues must be recognised and resolved first, before more flood-risk housing development is considered. Again, I see this as a matter of consent from local residents – and if housing developments are seen to increase flood risk, then they will naturally be very concerned.

I note that with these changes to the Local Plan there are subsequent changes to the infrastructure provisions especially for Paddock Wood. Speaking recently to Paddock Wood Town Councillors, it is clear that there are a lot of decisions that need to be made to make sure that the Paddock Wood community gets the infrastructure that it requires—specifically primary healthcare provision, sports facilities and bus services.

I would urge TWBC to engage deeply with Paddock Wood Town Council and Capel Parish Council to make sure that their concerns are acted upon so that Paddock Wood and Capel residents are not reliant on services designed for another community like Tunbridge Wells or Tonbridge. I and my team have spoken to

hundreds of Paddock Wood and Capel residents over recent months and they all support the work of their Town and Parish Councillors in advocating for appropriate infrastructure delivery.

Finally, I would like to urge the Council to consider the provision of much greater local needs affordable housing within the overall scope of the plan. Alongside the provision of infrastructure, this is the key concern of local residents: they want to know that their children will be able to live nearby, should they choose to do so.

Some recent developments that start at over £650,000 per unit are simply pricing people out of their own areas. This is a national emergency and a local one, and I urge you to do everything in your power to address this problem.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Martin

Prospective Lib Dem MP for Tunbridge Wells