

Tunbridge Wells Borough

Local Plan

Issues and Options



Welcome to this exhibition

The Council has started work on preparing a new Local Plan, which will guide future development in the borough up to 2033.

This is an opportunity for you to have a say at an early stage in the new Local Plan's preparation.

We hope that coming to talk to us at this exhibition will help you to learn more about the new Local Plan for the borough. This consultation is about the first part of the Plan's preparation, known as the Issues and Options stage.

What is the Issues and Options consultation document?

As well as giving some useful background information, the Issues and Options document identifies the challenges and issues that we face in preparing a new Local Plan. Informed by these, the document also sets out some possible new strategic options to help deliver the amount of new development needed and guide where to locate it.

As part of this consultation we are asking questions to help us understand your thoughts on how we might plan for the future of the borough.

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

We are inviting comments on the identified draft potential options for delivering new homes, employment space, retail and leisure facilities in the borough.

We would also like you to tell us if you think there are any other issues that we haven't considered that could have an effect on future development and the decisions we have to make.

What is a Local Plan and why do we need a new one?

A Local Plan sets out proposals and policies to guide the future development of an area, including how much development there should be and where it should go. It also helps guide decisions on planning applications.

We need a new Local Plan because our existing policies are deemed out of date due to increased housing need and the extensive changes that the planning system has been through in recent years, in particular the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012.

The delivery of additional homes, jobs and key infrastructure over the Plan period is a critical requirement to ensure a successful local plan. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be produced alongside the new Local Plan to consider the new facilities such as schools, services, road and public transport improvements that will be needed.

Another key objective is to ensure that growth takes place in the most sustainable way. We want to plan positively for the borough's future, providing for needed development and services while retaining the quality of our natural and built environment.



What are the issues?

We have identified a number of issues based on the Council's work to date, including the various studies undertaken, that may affect potential future development and that the Local Plan will need to consider and address when putting forward a strategy and policies for the delivery of growth.

You can read more about these issues in Section 4 of the Issues and Options consultation document. They are grouped together under the following themes:

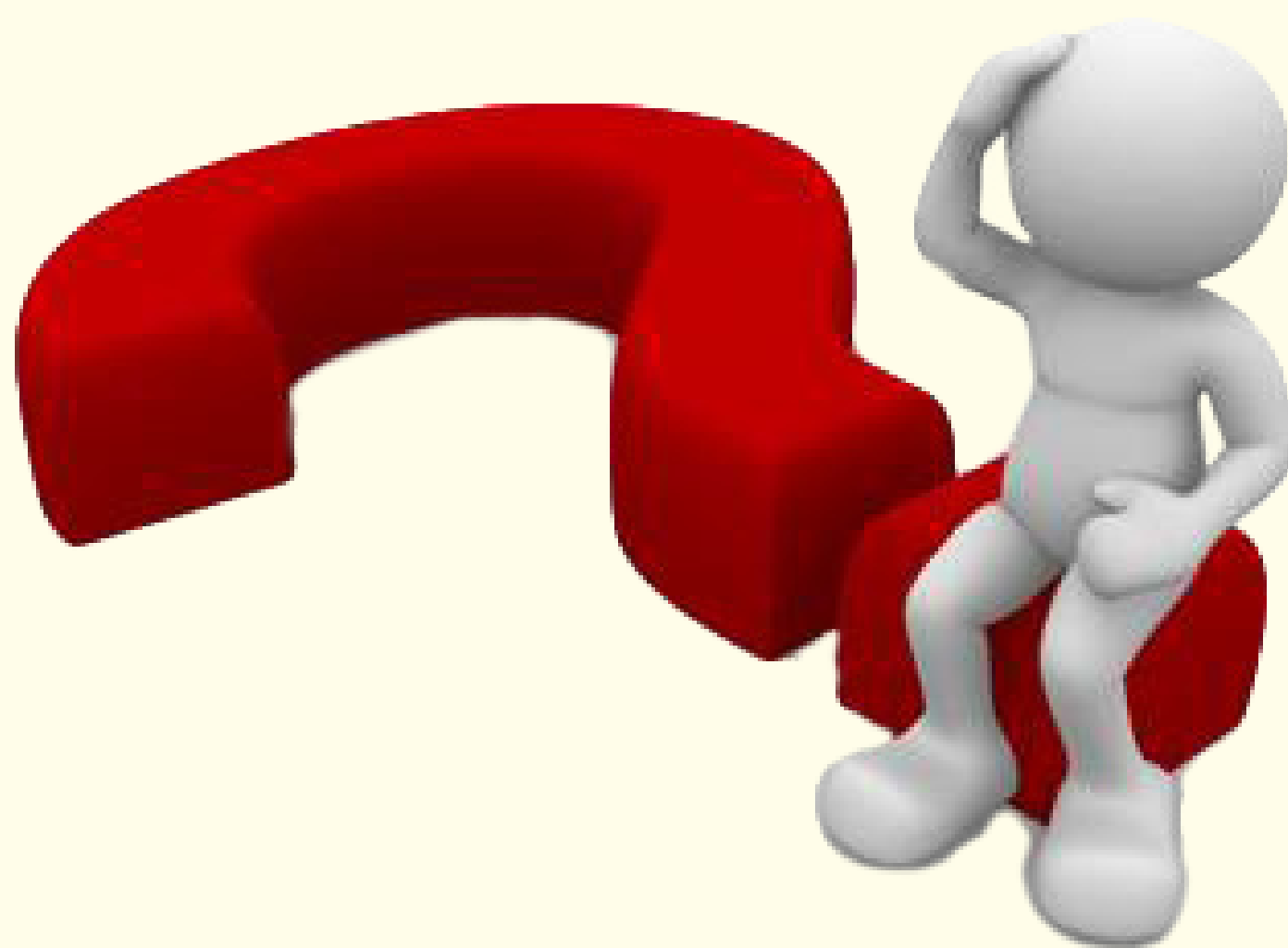


What are the options?

At this early stage in preparing a new Local Plan we have identified five possible ways of meeting the development needs of the borough up to the year 2033. Each is referred to as a Strategic Option.

The five draft options are presented on the following posters, along with some key implications for each option. You can read the full set of implications for each option in Section 5 of the consultation document.

We recognise that it could be that a combination of two or more options will form the final preferred strategy. Accordingly, the consultation document asks people what their preferred option is, and also invites suggestions as to a possible combination of options.

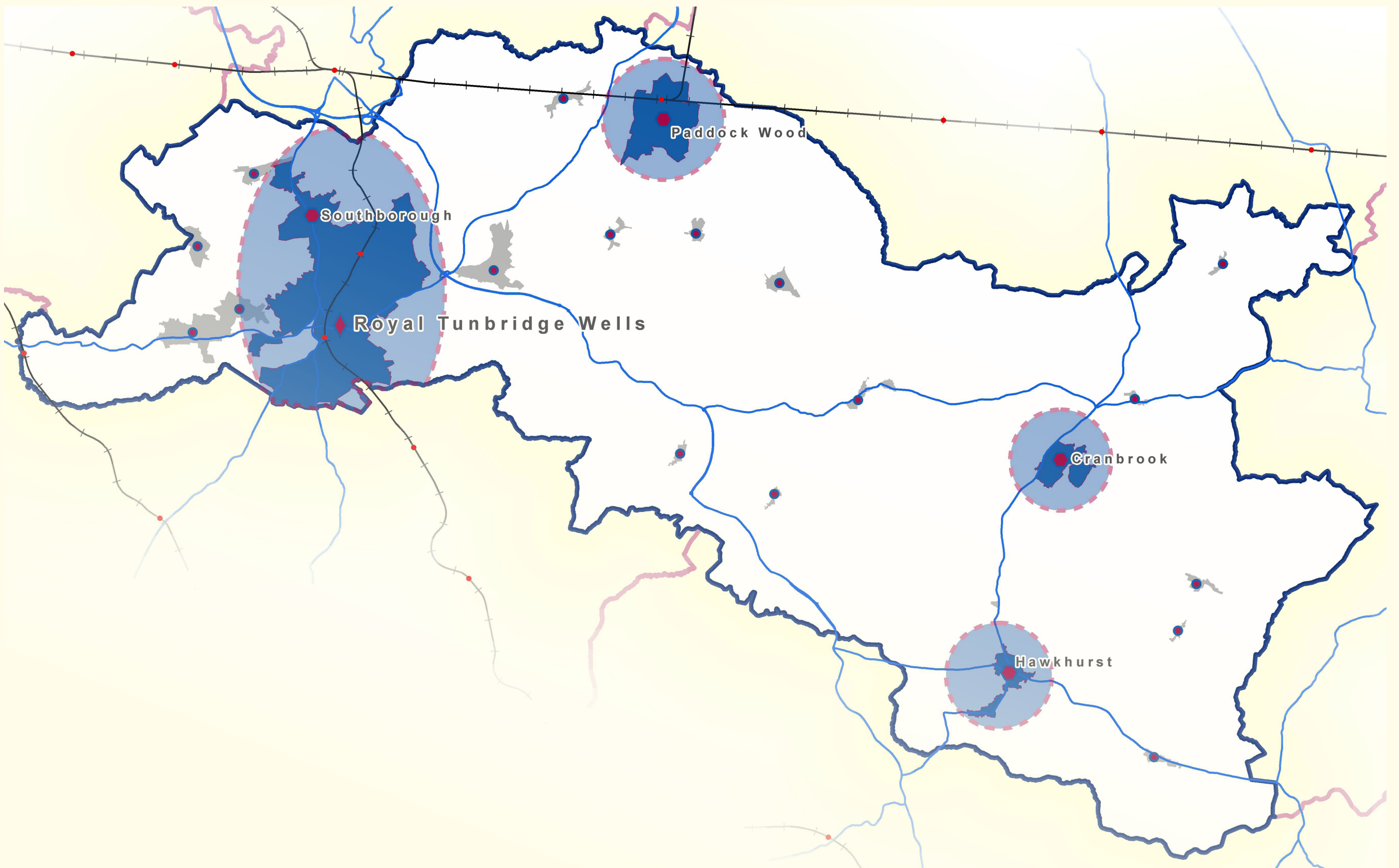


The Options

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 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:

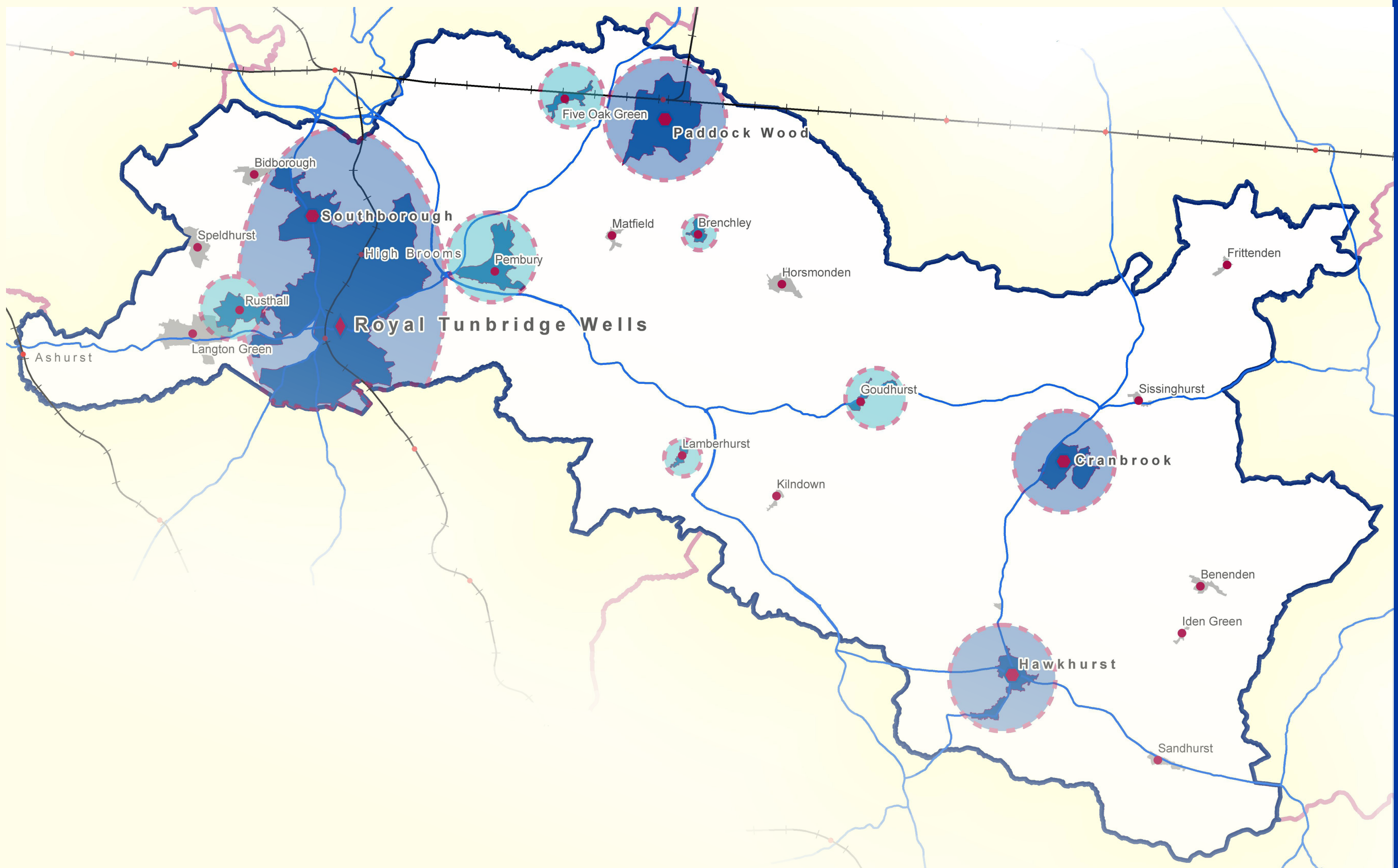
- focuses development on current most sustainable locations with access to services
- access to public transport facilities and opportunity to enhance provision
- possible pressure on the historic environment and character of Royal Tunbridge Wells
- provides for limited rural housing development
- need to tackle existing congestion issues impacting on highway network

The Options

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 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:

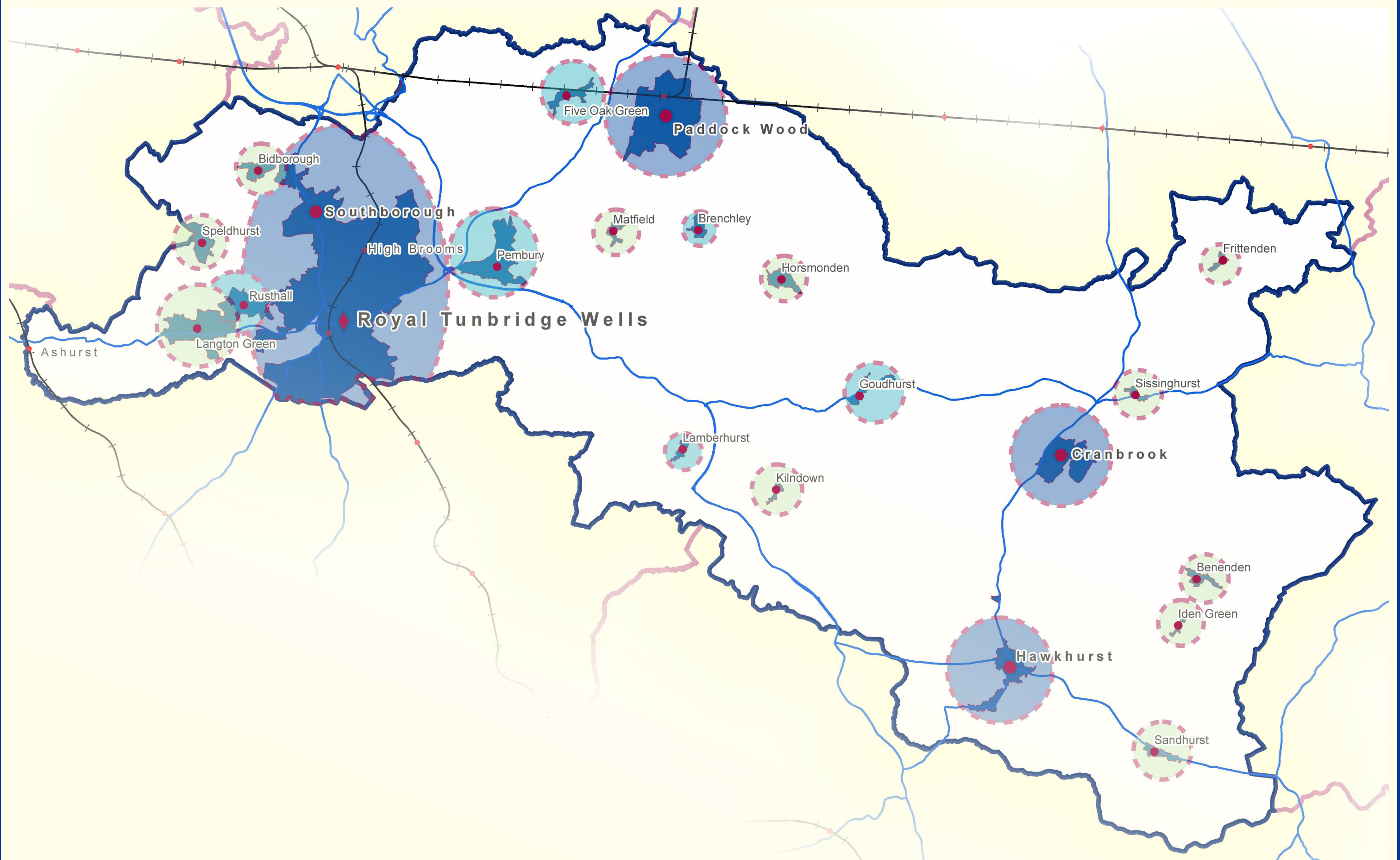
- limited development at the smaller villages and rural areas
- focuses majority of new development on current most sustainable locations
- opportunity to contribute to the viability of the rural economy
- does not provide for the full potential of rural housing development
- potential to enhance the sustainability of rural settlements by housing development supporting local services/facilities and enhanced public transport

The Options

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:

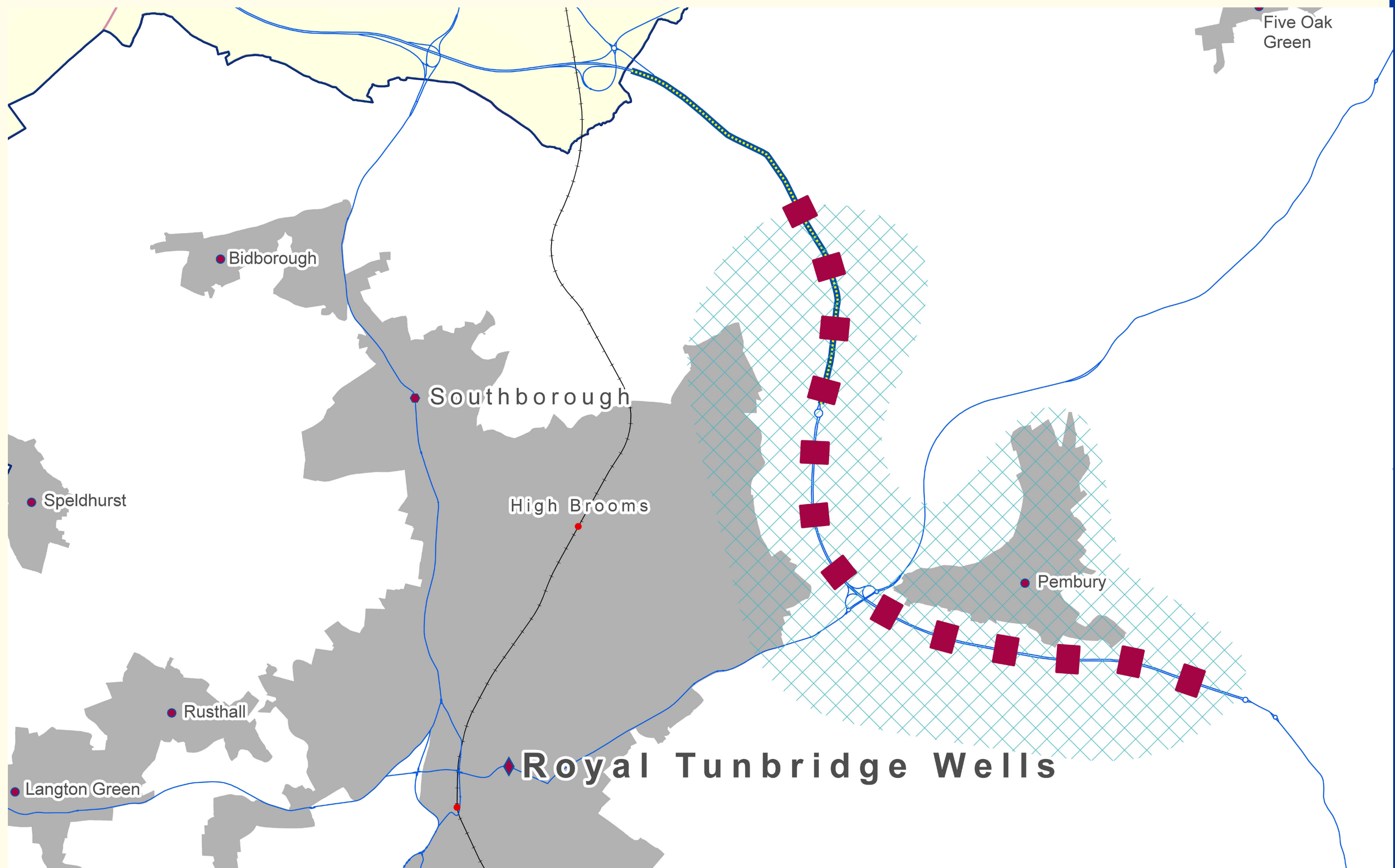
- some villages are relatively remote from a comprehensive range of facilities and services
- opportunity to contribute to the viability of the rural economy
- potential to increase provision of affordable housing in rural areas
- some villages are not well served by public transport with resulting increased reliance on car use
- need to prevent the possible coalescence of settlements

The Options

Option 4

Growth Corridor-led Approach

Development distributed 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:

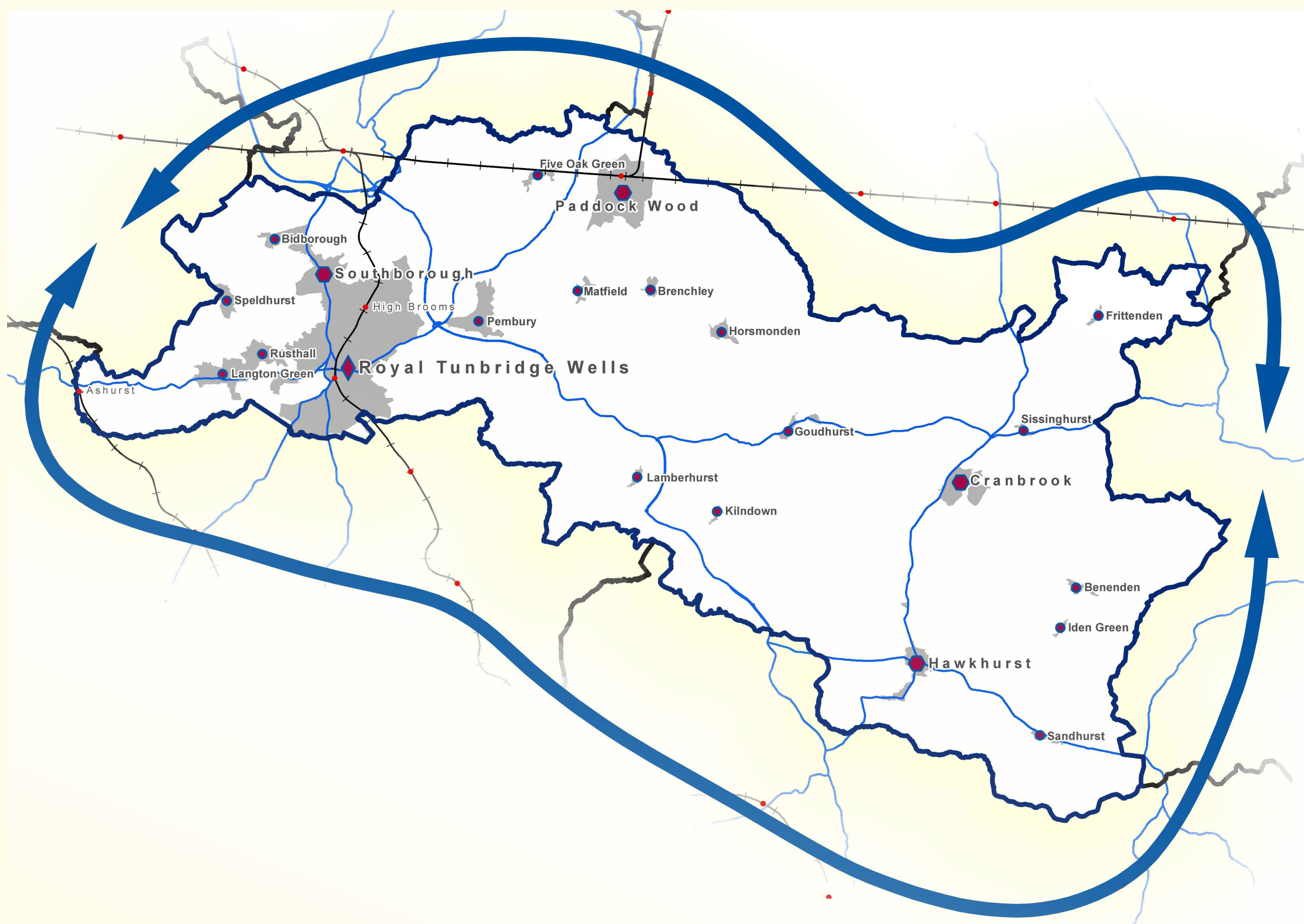
- this approach directs significant development to the northern part of the borough around Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury
- reduces possible pressure on the historic environment and character of Royal Tunbridge Wells
- does not provide for the full potential of rural housing development
- supports 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

The Options

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 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 www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles

Some implications of following this approach include:

- reliant on identifying a satisfactory sustainable location for new settlement
- 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
- greater scope for opportunities for mixed use development and range of employments
- large greenfield land take likely to be required

The stages involved in the preparation of the new Local Plan and when they will happen

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 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.

Local Plan Production Stages

Stage	Process	
Issues and Options	Six-week consultation period. Analysis of responses received. A statement of the issues and matters raised and how they will inform the preparation of the draft Local Plan will be prepared and made available.	2017
Draft Local Plan	Preparation of the draft Local Plan and supporting Sustainability Appraisal ready for submission.	2017-2018
Submission	Consultation on submission version of Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal Report. Analysis of responses received and preparations for submission of the Local Plan. Submission of the draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination.	2018
Examination	Examination conducted by independent Planning Inspector. Receipt of Inspector's Report.	2018
Adoption	Consideration of Inspector's Report. Adoption of new Local Plan.	2019
Monitoring and Implementation	Ongoing monitoring of the Local Plan to check whether the Plan policies and allocated sites are being implemented as planned.	Ongoing 2019–2033

Call for Sites

What is a Call for Sites?

A call for sites involves an invitation for people to submit sites and pieces of land for the Council to assess and consider for potential future development (for example, for housing or employment).

All sites that are submitted to the Council are assessed for their suitability for development (under a process known as the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment – SHELAA for short).

We have already undertaken one Call for Sites last year and are now running a second Call for Sites alongside this Issues and Options consultation.

If you have land that you would like to submit to us for consideration, you can find further details on our Local Plan web page:

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan

Please note:

- The fact that land is listed in the SHELAA document does not in any way indicate or confirm that it will be allocated for development in the new Local Plan.
- Future stages of consultation will invite comment on any sites that are proposed to be allocated in the draft Local Plan. If you wish to make comments at this stage, please use Question 19 of the Issues and Options document
- The locations of all of the sites submitted during the first Call for Sites can be viewed on an interactive map and a list of sites, sorted by parish has been produced and appears on the above web page under the heading 'Call for Sites'.

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.



Sustainability Appraisal

How Sustainable is the Local Plan?

- Sustainable development is the **key goal** of the planning system and is defined as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

(World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)

- To ensure the Local Plan options are sustainable, an appraisal has been carried out integrating social, economic and environmental aspects into the plan
- All the objectives and growth strategies in the plan were scored against the following 19 sustainability objectives:

1. Reduce **air** pollution

7. Facilitate and support **employment** opportunities

14. Reduce **noise** pollution

2. Protect and enhance **biodiversity** and the natural environment

8. Increase **social** mobility and inclusion

15. Reduce the impact of **resource** consumption

3. Encourage **business growth** and competitiveness

9. Improve health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities

16. Improve access and range of key **services and facilities**

4. Reduce **carbon** footprint and adapt to predicted changes

10. Protect and enhance **cultural heritage** assets

17. Improve **travel** choice and reduce the need to travel by private vehicle

5. Reduce **poverty** and assist with regeneration

11. Provide sufficient **housing** to meet identified needs

18. Reduce **waste** generate and disposal

6. Improve **education** attainment and enhance the skills base

12. Protect soils, and reuse previously developed **land** and buildings

19. Reduce flood risk and conserve, protect and enhance **water** resources

13. Protect and enhance **landscape** and townscape

Let us know your views on the Interim Sustainability Appraisal as part of this consultation stage on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the borough

Thank you for coming

We hope that you have found the information useful and have enjoyed talking with the planning officers today.

The consultation on the Issues and Options document runs for six weeks from 2 May to 12 June 2017.

If you find that you need some further information or help at any time during the six week consultation period, our phone number and email address will be on the Local Plan web page. Do please contact us – we're happy to help.

You will find the consultation document (plus other associated documents and information on the Call for Sites) on our web site, or you can go straight to the Council's consultation portal where you can read the document and make your comments and submit them to us at the press of a button.

Local Plan web page:
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/localplan

Consultation Portal:
<http://consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk>

Please take one of our summary leaflets with you for easy reference to all the information.