

Planning Policy Team
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Mount Pleasant Rd
Royal Tunbridge Wells
TN1 1RS

24 October 2023

FAO Carlos Hone
Head of Planning Services, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Inspector's Initial Findings on the Submitted Local Plan and Equality Impact Assessment

Dear Carlos,

Following the Council's Local Plan Examination hearing sessions which took place March - July 2022, it is noted that the Inspector's "[Initial findings](#)" raised some principal issues, relating to:

- Whether the assessment of sites in the Green Belt had been undertaken on a consistent basis ([Inspectors letter paragraphs 1 – 8](#)),
- the need for further consideration to be given to a range of issues in relation to the proposal for a new settlement at Tudeley Village (SLP allocation STR/SS 3), and to alternative ways forward ([Inspectors letter paragraphs 9 – 38](#)),
- the need to give further consideration to an option for strategic growth at Paddock Wood and land in east Capel that does not involve building on land within higher flood zones ([Inspectors letter paragraphs 39 – 52](#)).

In light of the above, the development strategy has been reconsidered in response to the Inspector's concerns, and as a result there have been some suggested policy changes. The most significant being the removal of the garden settlement proposed at Tudeley Village, reduced scale of development at Paddock Wood and the possible inclusion of additional residential development at Hawkhurst.

Having reviewed these suggested changes with the Council's Policy and Governance Team, we are confident that these do not have any negative effects on the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). While it is considered that the proposed changes are likely to have neutral effects, it is acknowledged that the EqIA previously anticipated that the original proposals set out within the SLP had positive effects.

Notwithstanding the above, we are of the view that the suggested changes to the development strategy in the Local Plan would not adversely affect the conclusions reached in the [Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Submission Version Equalities Impact Assessment – October 2021](#). The EqIA will be reviewed in full in light of the proposed Main Modifications to the Local Plan following further hearing sessions as agreed with the Local Plan Inspector.

Yours sincerely,



Planning Policy Manager