

1) Please confirm the evidence base document this comment relates to.

TWBC local housing supply plan for 5 years

4) Do you consider the evidence base document on which you are commenting, makes the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) (please tick or cross as appropriate):

Yes No

Legally Compliant Not Selected Not Selected

Sound Not Selected Selected

5) Please give details of why you consider the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) is not legally compliant or unsound. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan, please also use this box to set out your comments. The text box will automatically expand if necessary.

Not meeting current housing targets, and those in the pipeline by the new labour government.

6) Please set out what modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound, having regard to the Matter you have identified in question 5 above where this relates to legal compliance or soundness. You will need to say why this modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible. The text box will automatically expand if necessary.

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Consultation on Local Plan: Housing.

I have an interesting but fairly simple opinion to share with TWBC planning personnel. I understand that the new Local Plan has gone through extensive public consultations and examinations. As it has not met the housing targets, I understand their will be an early review. Additionally, the new Labour Government is not yet in full swing with securing their manifesto pledges of delivering 1,500,000 new homes. Maybe we might get a hint in their first budget on 30th October 2024, or a little later (or much more later after our Local Plan is adopted and in full swing).

As I see it, house prices in Tunbridge Wells in particular are sky high. It is the most expensive place to live in Kent. Only Sevenoaks is more expensive, but most people see Sevenoaks as a part of London these days. They are unaffordable even for well paid professionals within double income families. This is simply down to a total lack of housing supply in TWBC. Simple Supply and Demand elementary economics. Now some say this will lead to a Brain Drain from TWBC. What sort of local demographics will this shape and produce, and is this desirable or in the interests of local residents, businesses or officialdom?

With the current local lack of housing, shortfalls in current housing targets in the Local Plan, and a further greater shortfall from the new Labour governments imminent higher new housing targets and the directives they may place on TWBC, we could be sleepwalking into trouble. Not the one mentioned above regarding Brain Drain, but something far worse that is not anticipated or catered for. I strongly feel that the number one problem of the young and not so young locally, married or

otherwise, is housing and housing affordability. The main reason for exceptionally high house prices in Tunbridge Wells is that there is simply not enough supply of housing locally. Most people's children would prefer to live where they were born, brought up and have family and friends and a social structures around them. This is the same all over the country, and most local authorities are addressing this problem as though there is no urgent need. It is ok for people of our generation having worked when economic times have been relatively good and secured a decent place to live, and now we do not want others to have the same opportunities on our doorstep. But some of those other people are our children and grandchildren. Young husbands and wives both on professional salaries and savings of many years we could only dream of cannot bring up families. They will simply be forced to move away and out of expensive TWBC. What will happen when they uproot and go elsewhere? Who will take care of their elderly parents, the local authority is already over burdened not to mention the costs? And this is set to get worse if we don't address their needs for local housing nearby their elderly parents. Areas need to be set aside for example in the Pembury Neighbourhood Plan for the natural growth of the local population. This should be at the periphery of Pembury, adjoining existing garden fencing and similar infill areas, utilising local excellent infrastructure such as the new Pembury hospital etc, and using existing roads, rail and communications etc. The local adjacent long-established mature forests should be sacrificed as permanent green features as local green spaces. A case in point is Stone Court Farm as an example, both directly joining existing urban development in east Pembury (connected with Beagles way, Brickfields, The Gill, Stonecourt Lane etc) with Snipe Wood and other long-established woodlands as the local green space instead. That would also provide a natural boundary feature to urbanisation. You will note that a similar feature has evolved on the western side of Pembury as well with development in the 70's in the Ridgeway, Pembury primary school etc, developments contained by long established mature woodlands and then the A228 as a cap. Most property people talk about Location, Location, Location. Economic forecasters and strategists using ONS data on the other hand talk about Demographics, Demographics, Demographics. When children move away from elderly parents because of inability to secure local affordable housing, elderly parents are automatically left to the care and burden of the local authority at public expense, which is overstretched already and heading for an imminent disaster, along with widely publicised housing benefit payments which are combining and conspiring to crippling public local finances as we speak. Lord knows what will happen only in the next few years as the big batch of late baby boomer generation demographics enters into their tertiary life cycle stage which is widely anticipated by economists, demographers and statisticians to be between now and 2028. "Planning" our way through future problems may be more sound than throwing hard earned money at elderly care which is already sky rocketing and crippling local public finances. I hope you are able to convey our above feelings with the highest authorities in TWBC and its Planning Department in a permanent way, recorded for any policy development exercise whenever and however it is taken, and reflected upon as a matter of great concern for the future and stability continuance of TWBC. I should be grateful if you would acknowledge this request by return email, and thank you in advance for your assistance. Kind regards.

8) If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the examination hearing session when it takes place? (please tick or cross as appropriate)

Yes, I wish to participate at the examination hearing session

9) If you wish to participate at the examination hearing when it takes place, please outline why you consider this to be necessary.

Because not enough far sightedness is being displayed, and a lot of local public finances will be in difficulties.