

To which part of the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) as set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum does this representation relate?

12.0 Conclusions on preferred development strategy option

Which part of the plan does your comment relate?

Policy

Do you consider the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) would make it:

Yes No

Legally Compliant Selected Not Selected

Sound Selected Not Selected

Please use this box for any other comments you wish to make.

Thank you for consulting Sevenoaks District Council on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Response to the Inspector's Initial Findings Letter.

SDC officers observed the Local Plan examination hearing sessions (March to July 2022) for the Tunbridge Wells Submission Local Plan, and it is understood that the Inspector wrote to the Borough Council setting out his initial findings in November 2022.

Through our regular Duty to Co-operate meetings, either just with yourselves (Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells), or for the West Kent area (Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling), we have understood the main elements of the proposed changes, as set out below

<https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan>

Revised Development Strategy to the Tunbridge Wells Submission Local Plan (SLP), to include the following changes:

- Proposed removal of the strategic policy STR/SS 3: The Strategy for Tudeley Village from the Local Plan.
- Revision of the strategic policy STR/SS 1: The Strategy for Paddock Wood and land at east Capel, including a reduction in the amount of residential housing growth by approximately 1,000 dwellings, with all housing being on Flood Zone 1 and employment land on Flood Zone 2, along with a reduction of employment provision, and reconfigured sport and recreation provision and secondary school education provision (as set out at Appendix D of the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum).
- Progression of a 10 year housing land supply position including the requirement for an immediate review of the plan.

We last met, under the DTC, in December 2023, together with our respective cabinet members for Planning and it was outlined that members were considering a re-worked development strategy, which would respond to the inspector's initial findings on the Local Plan and remove the strategic allocation at Tudeley, and with reduced growth at Paddock Wood and Land at East Capel. This would

reduce the Housing Land Supply in the Plan to 10 years (to 2034) and necessitate an immediate review, and therefore TWBC would not be in a position to assist with any unmet need from SDC, due to difficulties meeting TWBCs own housing need.

This amended approach to strategic plan-making is fully understood, and the recommended development strategy now corresponds to the Inspector's 'Option 3 (Delete the (Tudeley Village)' option from his initial findings. It is also recognised that by reducing the plan period to ten years, this will be conditional upon immediate review. Since the national planning system is changing, it seems prudent to adopt this approach, which would provide the benefit of allowing plan-led development for the next ten years, in a sustainable manner and boosting housing delivery.

Sevenoaks District Council will continue to actively engage with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's under the Duty to Cooperate. This engagement to date has been positive and constructive as we move towards the adoption of our respective plans. It is likely that we will suggest that our Statement of Common Ground is re-visited and updated in the coming months. It is also understood that neither authority is likely to be a position to assist the other with meeting their housing needs, due to challenges with meeting our own needs, and again, we will write to confirm this position over the coming months.

If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the examination hearings stage when it resumes?

No, I do not wish to participate at the examination hearings