



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

1 June 2021

Local Plan  
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Civic Way  
Royal Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN1 1RS

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please accept this letter as my response to the consultation by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) on the Pre-Submission Local Plan. Though I do not represent any part of the borough of Tunbridge Wells in Parliament I am responding to this consultation, as I did during Regulation 18, as some of the proposals will have a clear and direct impact on Tonbridge, Golden Green, East Peckham and surrounding areas, which I am privileged to represent.

I am aware that the current, Regulation 19, consultation is separate from previous consultations undertaken by TWBC on this Local Plan. Therefore, for completeness I am enclosing a copy of my letter to TWBC dated 29 October 2019 as my response to the previous consultation. This is so it can be included in the submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

The reason I do this is because the fundamental shape of the Local Plan has not changed, and the vast majority of the impacts I describe in this letter remain; as do the concerns of residents across Tonbridge and Malling. Since 2019 I have spoken with hundreds of people who have reservations about the scale and location of development on the border with Tonbridge and Malling, which is why these concerns still stand.

The representations in question focus on STR/SS1, Strategy for Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel and STR/SS3, Strategy for Tudeley Village specifically. This includes around half of the proposed development within the period that the TWBC Local Plan runs for, allocated for such a small part of the borough against the Tonbridge and Malling borough boundary, where there are already severe infrastructure issues that residents have to contend with.

I am pleased that some minor changes have been made since the TWBC Regulation 18 consultation in 2019. For example, no longer allocating land directly adjoining Tonbridge for use as a Secondary School is very welcome; the concentration of excellent existing secondary schools in south Tonbridge leads to traffic issues every morning and afternoon with so many children already travelling from afar for their education. In addition, I know that the impact of the allocation of this site on Tonbridge, especially through increased drainage and flood risk, was causing severe concerns from residents immediately neighbouring the allocation.

However, this is not to suggest that the other issues mentioned in the letter of 29 October 2019 have been resolved and I would draw attention towards the detailed comments made

**Member of Parliament for Tonbridge and Malling**

130 Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1SP

01732 441 563 - [tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk) - [www.tomtugendhat.org.uk](http://www.tomtugendhat.org.uk)



then, since they remain relevant. It is the strong view of the majority of residents I have spoken to across Tonbridge and Malling that the proposed mitigations are considered to be insufficient, especially in relation to the impact on the road network. In addition, the concerns referenced regarding rail and bus capacity remain, all of which would place an unsustainable burden on infrastructure in Tonbridge.

Finally, in addition to the matters discussed I wanted to mention significant concerns which have been raised by residents in East Peckham and Golden Green especially around proposed road changes in Tunbridge Wells borough, which will have a detrimental impact on residents in Tonbridge and Malling. First, I understand that supplementary documents associated with this Local Plan propose the closure of part of Maidstone Road in Paddock Wood, resulting in longer journey times from the central area of Paddock Wood, where the majority of amenities are located, to the north. This would clearly have an impact on the ability of East Peckham residents to visit Paddock Wood, now the location of their nearest GP practice too, increasing the distance of any car journey.

The other road change which would have a severe impact on Tonbridge and Malling would be the closure of Hartlake Road near Golden Green, which is a well used route, especially at peak time, and risks diverting even more cars on to the already congested A26 Hadlow Road through Tonbridge. As with the proposed closure in Paddock Wood, I have not yet seen any modelling which identifies the impact of either of these closures on Tonbridge and Malling, which should be a pre-requisite before any changes are made.

I had hoped that my response to this consultation would be very different, and the vast majority of the concerns raised in 2019 would have been addressed. Sadly this isn't the case which is why I have no choice but to attach a copy of my letter of 29 October 2019 which details the key changes necessary to reduce the impact of the Local Plan on Tonbridge and Malling.

I have also copied this letter to The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP and Helen Grant MP, who represent Tunbridge Wells borough.

*Best wishes,*

*Tom Tugendhat*

**TOM TUGENDHAT**

CC:

The Rt Hon Greg Clark, Member of Parliament for Tunbridge Wells  
Helen Grant, Member of Parliament for Maidstone and The Weald