

General comments

With a very few exceptions, the vision for Tonbridge Town Centre and the broad aims of the spatial strategy are not contentious. Therefore, whilst my examination will consider all the tests of soundness, the hearings and written representations will focus mainly on tests 4, 6 and 7 (as set out in paragraph 4.24 of PPS12), with reference to the detailed policies and proposals of the Plan. To provide a structure for the hearings and written representations, these can be categorised into issues relating to development proposals, and those relating to traffic and transportation matters.

In addition I have a series of questions to raise with the Council in relation to test 8 (implementation and monitoring). I intend to deal with these matters initially through written exchanges. Depending on the outcome of those exchanges, a hearing session may be necessary. All correspondence will be open to view through the Programme Officer.

Matter 1 – Development-related issues:

1. Are the development proposals set out in Policy TCA11 (sites a – w) the most appropriate in all the circumstances?
2. Is the scale and form of proposed residential development appropriate and are the indicative figures a reasonable guide? Is the plan consistent with government guidance in PPS3?
3. Is the quantum and type of retail development proposed appropriate in all the circumstances?
4. Does the Plan adequately address the need for new and improved community facilities?
5. Has adequate account been taken of the risks of flooding?
6. Has adequate account been taken of infrastructure requirements to serve new development (notably water and sewerage), and of the impact of existing water treatment infrastructure on proposed new development?
7. Is the proposed Central Area Regeneration Fund in conformity with government guidance and appropriate in all other respects?

Matter 2 – Transport-related issues

1. Are proposals to reduce traffic in the High Street desirable, practical and achievable?

In particular:

- would these proposals have unacceptable consequences on the functioning of the highway network and environmental considerations (conservation interests, residential amenities, air quality etc.) elsewhere?
 - should the London Road – Hadlow Road Link be an essential part of the strategy?
 - would it preferable to divert traffic via Medway Wharf Road?
2. Should the AAP include a commitment to building a Hadlow Road Bypass?
 3. Will the additional traffic generated by the development proposals included in the Plan have an unacceptable impact on traffic congestion in the Town?
 4. Are there other highway schemes that should be included in the Plan, e.g. a one-way system at the northern end of the Town?
 5. Should the Plan seek to reduce traffic levels through greater demand management, such as a reduction in parking?
 6. Has proper account been taken of air quality considerations?
 7. Are the transport proposals based on a robust and credible evidence base?