

Examination of the Tunbridge Wells  
Borough Local Plan

**Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**  
**Hearing Statement**

**Matter 9: Other Matters and Main  
Modifications Necessary for  
Soundness**

**Issue 4: Main Modifications Necessary  
for Soundness**

**Document Reference: TWLP/148**



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# Matter 9 – Other Matters and Main Modifications Necessary for Soundness

## Issue 4 – Main Modifications Necessary for Soundness

**Inspector’s Question 1: [re. Main Modifications needed to make the Plan sound]**

**At the Stage 2 hearing sessions the Council suggested that other changes are necessary to the submitted Plan to make it sound. Except for those policies referred to above, what other Main Modifications do the Council consider are necessary to rectify any soundness matters?**

***In answering this question, it would assist the examination if the Council could produce a composite schedule of “suggested” Main Modifications for the upcoming Stage 3 hearing sessions. This should include the suggested changes proposed in response to the Inspector’s Initial Findings, and any other changes considered necessary by the Council, either as a result of discussions in previous hearings or changes in circumstances since Stage 2.***

### **TWBC response to Question 1**

#### **Introduction**

1. An integral element of the Local Plan examination process once it reaches an advanced stage, in the ‘Main Modifications’ process. Main Modifications are changes proposed to a Local Plan to address soundness issues.
2. As is usual in the examination process, a number of Main Modifications have been proposed and discussed at the Stage 2 hearing sessions and since at the Stage 3 hearings. In due course a comprehensive schedule of Main Modifications will be agreed

with the Inspector, and consulted upon before the Inspector issues the examination final report, marking the end of the examination.

3. The following response provides a Draft comprehensive suite of suggested Main Modifications. It is noted that this is an initial schedule, which will be discussed and refined ahead of the Main Modifications consultation, which will take place later this year.

## Consideration

4. Following the period when representations were invited on the soundness of the Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan, it was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent Examination on 1 November 2021. At that stage Main Modifications were not proposed to the Submission Local Plan [[CD 3.128](#)] which the Council considered to be sound.
5. Whilst the Council considered the Submission Local Plan to be sound without any Main Modifications, it did submit some minor modifications with the package of documents submitted for examination. These minor modifications were incorporated into the Submission Local Plan for ease of reading and a list of these Submission Local Plan modifications were submitted as [Core Document 3.127 Schedule of Minor Modifications](#).
6. The focus of the examination is on issues of soundness and Main Modifications have been and continue to be discussed as part of the ongoing examination, to address any concerns raised about soundness issues. Alongside the schedule of suggested Main Modifications the Council will prepare a list of other, 'additional' modifications (like CD 3.127 referred to above), and map changes proposed that are minor in nature and do not relate to matters of soundness. These additional/map modifications/changes are primarily intended to provide factual updates and amendments/additions primarily for reasons of improved clarity or consistency. These will be consulted upon alongside the Main Modifications schedule in due course.

## Main Modifications Since Stage 2

7. During examination, it has become apparent that some further actions and modifications (as raised by the Inspector) would be appropriate.

8. To assist with discussion about these the Council has prepared a Draft composite schedule of suggested Main Modifications. This is attached at **Appendix 1**.

### **Presentation of the Main Modifications Schedule**

9. The Schedule comprises the following sections:
  - i. Section 1: Main Modifications raised by the Inspector at the Stage 2 hearings, including any amendments proposed by the Council within its Stage 2 Hearing Statements and discussed at the hearing sessions (held 25<sup>th</sup> May to 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022) as well as Stage 2 Action Points.
  - ii. Section 2: Suggested modifications proposed in response to the Inspector's Initial Findings (as set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum document [PS\\_054](#)).
  - iii. Section 3: Main Modifications identified in the Council's Stage 3, Week 1 Hearing Statements.
  - iv. Section 4: Main Modifications considered necessary by the Council since the Stage 2 Hearing Sessions – Mapping and Significant Policy Changes. should be noted that the schedules below do not include any modifications which form part of the Stage 3 hearing statements under the Matters, Issues and Questions (as requested by the Inspector).
10. It should be noted that the Schedule is a working document of Main Modifications proposed by the Council from various stages of the Plan preparation process. It is an iterative process, with this first iteration being prepared to aid discussion at the forthcoming Stage 3 hearing session on Matter 9 Issue 4 – Main Modifications Necessary for Soundness. As such, the Council acknowledges that the Schedule as currently presented does include some modifications discussed/presented at earlier stages of the examination that over the course of the examination will now have been superseded. The Council will seek to refine the Schedule ahead of the hearing session on this matter.
11. At this stage, the Schedule does not include additional Main Modifications arising from the Stage 3 hearing discussions, which will be added to the Schedule in due course,

along with any Main Modifications presented within the Council's Stage 3 Hearing Statements for Week 2.

### Future Iterations of the Main Modifications Schedule

12. The Council's Hearing Statement on Matter 9, Issue 1 - Material Changes in Circumstances since Stage 2 Hearings [TWLP/144] has sought to identify material changes in circumstances since the Stage 2 hearings which result in the need for Main Modifications. The next iteration of the Draft Main Modifications Schedule will incorporate those suggestions as well as any changes that might be needed, pending a more detailed review of the sites set out in the table at Appendix 1 of the Matter 9, Issue 1 Hearing Statement. Where such additional changes are proposed, these will be clearly indicated.
13. Finally, it is recognised that there are other parts of the Plan that will require change, such as due to a name change, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty name change to National Landscape being one such example, and where reference to legislation requires an update being another. The Council will seek to capture these in the Schedule where necessary or alternatively in the 'additional' modifications schedule referred to previously.

### Conclusion

14. This response, at **Appendix 1** provides a working Draft Schedule of suggested Main Modifications. This is presented for discussion at the Stage 3 hearing session for Matter 9, Issue 4 – Main Modifications Necessary for Soundness. It is recognised this is an iterative process and that the Schedule will be subject to refinement/amendment ahead of the Main Modification public consultation later this year, including to ensure it captures all necessary Main Modifications required to ensure the Plan can be found sound at the end of the examination process.

# Appendices

# Appendix 1: Draft Schedule of Main Modifications for Discussion

Please see separate document TWLP\_148 Appendix 1 Draft Schedule of Main Modifications.pdf