

From the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Matthew Birkinshaw MRTPI
Tunbridge Wells Local Plan Examination Inspector

26 April 2024

Dear Mr Birkinshaw

I have been contacted by constituents in Hawkenbury, Tunbridge Wells, in connection with a matter communicated in a Note to you by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) in response to one of your questions about the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan which you are examining.

In the TWBC document "Local Plan Examination Note for Inspector in response to Action Point 13 regarding Policy AL/RTW19 (Land at Hawkenbury) and AL/RTW 22 (Land at Bayham West)" paragraph 4.7 makes reference to the highways implications of "*a full 3,000 seat stadium*" at Hawkenbury.

This is the first time that reference has been made to plans for a 3,000 seat stadium on that site, and it has caused surprise and consternation among local residents.

It has long been established that sports pitches were envisaged for the site - which I support. Indeed, this is referred to in the Submission Local Plan at paragraph 5.120, which refers to additional sports pitches, together with associated access, car parking provision, 'ball stop' fencing, changing rooms, and ground works and a 'new stadia sports hub'.

But the Submission Local Plan makes no mention of a 3,000 seater stadium - which is way beyond residents' expectation of what can be accommodated on the site.

The inclusion of a 3,000 seat stadium has not been consulted on locally and would lead to even more parking on already congested streets and would require new land to be turned into car parks - presumably through a compulsory purchase of the allotments or adjacent farmland.

The suggestion that the full 3,000 seat capacity would be achieved incrementally does not provide reassurance: a plan must consider the sustainability of the resulting total development, not just its initial stages.

I would be grateful if this matter could be included in the list of issues for consideration at a public hearing, where I can represent the views of my constituents, and residents of Hawkenbury and local organisations can attend to make their voices heard.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Clark'.

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP