

Examination of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan

Examination Guidance Note for Stage 3 – Additional Hearing Session

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Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Date: September 2024

Introduction

- 1) This Guidance Note has been prepared to assist participants attending the additional hearing session in response to evidence submitted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ('the Council').
- 2) Further information about the examination of the Local Plan can be found in previous guidance issued by the Inspector for Stages 1, 2 and 3, which is available on the examination website. The Planning Inspectorate's Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations also provides additional detail on the examination process (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-local-plans-procedural-practice/procedure-guide-for-local-plan-examinations>).

Background

- 3) At the Stage 3 hearing sessions, held in June and July 2024, the Council identified that further information was in preparation to support the suggested changes to the Local Plan. This included a new Infrastructure Delivery Plan ('IDP') and the updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment ('GTAA'). New evidence was also presented in relation to highways matters and secondary education provision at Paddock Wood.
- 4) The further information has now been made available by the Council and is subject to public consultation from **11 September 2024 to 23 October 2024**. An additional hearing session will be held to discuss the new material as required.
- 5) It is not the purpose of the additional hearing to repeat or re-run any sessions from earlier stages, for example where site allocations have already been heard. For the same reasons, it is not necessary for participants to re-submit representations or hearing statements on these matters, which the Inspector will take into account in considering the soundness of the Plan.

The Role of the Programme Officer

- 6) The appointed Programme Officer is Charlotte Glancy. The Programme Officer is an independent Officer who is responsible for receiving, recording and distributing the examination materials, maintaining the examination library and organising the hearing sessions. Communication between the Inspector and representors is also handled by the Programme Officer, who can be contacted at:

Charlotte Glancy
C/O Banks Solutions
80 Lavinia Way
East Preston
West Sussex
BN16 1DD
Telephone: 01903 776601 or 07519 628064
Email: bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com

Hearing Session Format and Location

- 7) As with previous stages of the examination, the additional Stage 3 hearing session will be informal, but structured. It will take place in the form of a roundtable discussion led by the Inspector. People may choose to be professionally represented on the day, but there will be no formal cross-examination of witnesses or any detailed presentation of evidence.

- 8) The hearing session will take place in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Mount Pleasant Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, on **Thursday 14 November 2024**. A reserve session is also planned for Friday 15 November 2024 and will be used as required.

Attending the Hearing Session

- 9) In order to plan appropriately for the session, it is important that participants confirm in writing with the Programme Officer if they wish to attend. The deadline for confirming your attendance is **Wednesday 23 October 2024**.
- 10) Unlike previous sessions, there will be no Matters, Issues and Questions for the additional session. Instead, the Inspector will issue an Agenda based on the new material and the main issues raised by representors. There will also be no requirement for hearing statements, and the Inspector will use the written submissions made in response to the public consultation.
- 11) No other written evidence can be submitted unless specifically requested by the Inspector.

Statements of Common Ground

- 12) Statements of Common Ground between participants are encouraged where they assist in identifying matters in agreement, and therefore allowing the hearing session to concentrate on the issues in dispute.
- 13) Where possible, Statements of Common Ground should be submitted in response to the public consultation. If representors are intending on submitting Statements of Common Ground, please make the Programme Officer aware.

Remaining Programme

- 14) Based on the above, the remaining examination timetable and relevant dates are as follows:
- **11 September 2024** – start of the public consultation on the further information prepared by the Council, and, notification of the additional hearing session for Stage 3.
 - **23 October 2024** – deadline for submitting comments in response to the Council's public consultation and for confirming with the Programme Officer if you wish to attend the additional Stage 3 hearing.
 - **14 November 2024** – Additional Stage 3 Hearing session.
 - **15 November 2024** – reserve session (if required).
- 15) Should representors have any questions about the additional Stage 3 hearing, please contact the Programme Officer.

Matthew Birkinshaw

Inspector