

Examination of the Tunbridge Wells
Borough Local Plan

**Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Hearing Statement**

**Matter 14: Sustainable Design
and Heritage and Conservation
(Policies STR2, STR4, STR7,
EN1, EN2, EN3, EN4, EN5 and
EN7)
Issue 4: Advertisements**

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Matter 14 – Sustainable Design and Heritage and Conservation (Policies STR2, STR4, STR7, EN1, EN2, EN3, EN4, EN5 and EN7)

Issue 4 – Advertisements

Inspector’s Question 1: [compliance with paragraph 136 of the NPPF]

Paragraph 136 of the Framework confirms that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. Is this adequately reflected in Policy EN7?

TWBC response to Question 1

Introduction

1. Paragraph 6.110 of the supporting text to Policy EN7 on page 351 of the Submission Local Plan (SLP) [[CD 3.128](#)] is clear that advertisements are controlled only in the interests of amenity and public safety:

“Advertisements are controlled with reference to their effect on amenity and public safety only. These will be assessed within the context of the general characteristics of a particular area, such as any features of historic, architectural, cultural, or other special interest, including those on shop fronts.”

Amenity

2. Other parts of the supporting text to the Policy also provide further advice on how such impacts will be considered in relation to amenity, such as in relation to:
 - Illumination, at paragraph 6.111, which states that:

“the Council will favour the use of restrained lighting from an indirect lighting source”;

- conservation areas and listed buildings, at paragraphs 6.113 to 6.116, with paragraph 6.113 stating that:

“The size, design, construction, materials, colouring, and any form of illumination should not detract from the character and appearance of the area”; and

- rural areas, at paragraph 6.117, which states that:

“In rural areas, factors that will be assessed include the position of the proposed advertisement relative to the land form and quality of the immediate surroundings, and whether its design respects natural contours, landscape character, and background features against which it will be seen”.

3. With regard to the policy wording itself on pages 352 and 353 of the SLP, criteria 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are considered to make adequate provision for the protection of visual and residential amenity, including any impact on heritage assets and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Highway/public safety

4. Paragraph 6.118 makes provision for highway safety, stating that:

“For advertisements located along, or visible from, the strategic road network (motorways or some A roads), National Highways advises that regard should be had to the Department for Transport's Circular 02/2013.”

5. This is reflected in the Policy at criterion 4, which states that:

“No advertisement should be so distracting or confusing that it would endanger highway or public safety.”

Cumulative impacts

6. With regard to cumulative impacts, paragraph 6.112 of the supporting text to Policy EN7 refers to signage clutter and that: *“excessive advertising defeats its own objective by creating a clutter of signs and destroying the common asset of an attractive urban, rural and/or historic environment.”*
7. This is reflected in criterion 1 of the policy wording states, inter alia, that new advertisements should not *“cause visual clutter or result in a proliferation of signs.”*

Conclusion

8. In summary, it is considered that Policy EN7 adequately reflects the advice set out in paragraph 136 of the NPPF, in that it is clear that advertisements should only be subject to control in the interests of amenity and public safety, and it clearly explains how such impacts will be considered. The policy also takes into account the cumulative impacts of advertisements by reference to the potential harmful impacts of visual clutter and the proliferation of signs.