



Core Strategy Review

Town Forum Meeting

26 May 2011



Agenda

1. Recap on the role of the Core Strategy
2. Why review the Core Strategy?
3. Purpose of this Consultation and Relationship to other Documents
4. Scope of the Review
5. Responding to the Consultation and Next Steps
6. Questions/Discussion

Purpose of the Core Strategy




- Adopted as part of Development Plan on 17 June 2010
- Overarching document in the Local Development Framework (LDF)
- Strategic policies and principles to guide development in the long term to 2026
- Framework for preparing focussed policies to deliver development on the ground in a planned and appropriate way

- Town Centres Area Action Plan (TCAAP) DPD
- Allocations DPD
- Development Management Policies DPD

You may have commented on these two site-specific documents last year

Core Strategy Policy



**6,000 homes; 26,500sqm comparison retail;
maintain employment floorspace**

An urban focus for development:

- to optimise the vitality of the town centres and the use of previously developed land
- to protect the distinctive character of the rural environment

- **Main Urban Area (Royal Tunbridge Wells & Southborough):** 75% of housing; 90% of retail
- **Small Rural Towns (Paddock Wood, Cranbrook & Hawkhurst):** 19% of housing; 10% of retail
- **Villages & Rural Areas:** 6% of housing + rural exceptions sites; retail to meet needs

Why Review the Core Strategy?



- Election of Coalition Government in May 2010 led to announcements about reforms to the planning system, particularly...
 - Changes to Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing in respect of garden grabbing and minimum density
 - The South East Plan (as RSS) would be revoked, along with the housing targets therein, i.e. 6,000 for 2006-2026 (SE Plan still exists, but is a material consideration that it will be revoked)
- Core Strategy was adopted, but the Council wished to be able to respond to any future changes
- Resolved also to commence an immediate Review of certain matters

Scope of the CS Review



Not a full review. Will consider:

- Reducing Housing Numbers
- Using minimum density targets
- Not “Garden Grabbing”
- Counting “windfalls” in the first ten years’ housing supply
- No changes to the inner Green Belt boundaries before 2026
- Reducing the number of Gypsy & Traveller Pitches
- Keeping the Special Landscape Area designation
- *The definition of Hawkhurst as a Small Rural Town*

Purpose of this Consultation



Consultation will run for six weeks from 16 May to 26 June

- To invite comments on each of the issues within the scope of the review
- To the extent that the consultation is about housing, it is about the quantity and distribution of development
- It is not about specific sites
- Comments made during consultation on the Town Centres Area Action Plan and Allocations DPD in June – September 2010 will inform further consultation on those documents in October this year

Settlement Hierarchy

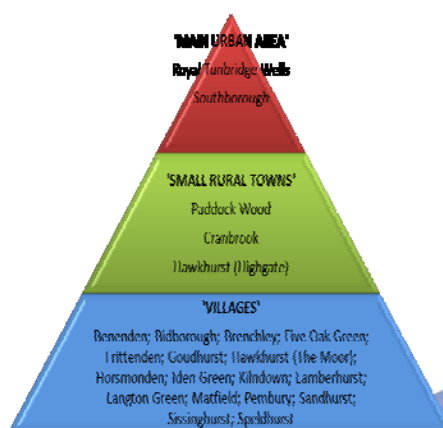


A ranking of the different settlements in the Borough to reflect the nature of the services and facilities they provide and the extent of the geographical area they serve


More development to settlements at the top of the hierarchy, i.e. Main Urban Area and Small Rural Towns

General development outside LBD of Main Urban Area and Small Rural Towns *if necessary*

The Core Strategy Review is considering whether Hawkhurst (Highgate) should be redefined as a 'Village' together with other parts of Hawkhurst




Reducing Housing Numbers



- **6,000** net additional dwelling target set in South East Plan as a result of changes made by the Secretary of State
- Council previously supported **5,000** target – best balance between meeting needs and respecting constraints
- Current national advice is that Councils can revert to the target they originally supported if this is the “**right level**” for the area
- We cannot therefore just pick any number – we must demonstrate with reference to evidence why it is the right number
- Have therefore considered both **housing needs** and **constraints** with a view to considering different ways of reaching a local housing target

Reducing Housing Numbers Housing Needs



- KCC zero net migration (ZNM) forecasts project that approximately **5,900** new households will form in the Borough from 2006-2026. By implication, therefore, less than 5,900 homes would not be sufficient

But...


- Almost **all** of the 5,900 households will comprise of just **one person**
- **5,500** of the 5,900 household will have a head of household **aged over 65 years**

Therefore...

- It may not be necessary or appropriate to seek to provide for one-person households on a one-for-one basis
- Provision for older people may take the form of accommodation not counted in ‘Use Class’ terms as dwelling houses, e.g. some care homes


Both these factors should be taken into account in setting the Borough’s housing target, which could be lower than 6,000


Reducing Housing Numbers Minimising Greenfield Land Take



- General concern about the amount of new greenfield land that would need to be allocated to meet the current housing target (including Green Belt)
- Have therefore assessed how much development can be delivered without allocating new greenfield land by considering:
 - Housing completions to 31 March 2010: 1,549
 - Outstanding planning permissions (factoring in a lapse rate): 807
 - Capacity of previously developed land (PDL) sites: 1,466
 - The likelihood of windfall development (NB - contrary to policy): 1,274
 - Rural Exception Sites: 359
- It is estimated that 5,455 houses could be built in the Borough without allocating new greenfield sites if windfalls are allowed for in RTW and Southborough, or 4,181 if they are not

Reducing Housing Numbers Density & 'Garden-Grabbing'





GARDENS ARE NOW
'GREENFIELD' LAND

NO MINIMUM DENSITY
TARGET (WAS 30-40
DWELLINGS PER HECTARE)

Communities and Local Government


Planning Policy Statement 3

Therefore...

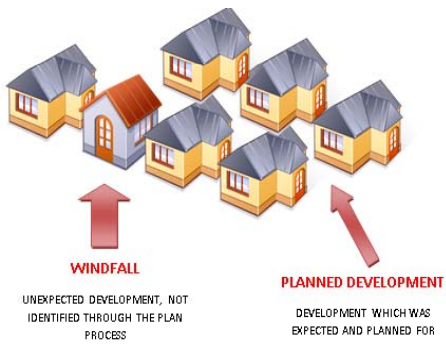
Have not included pure garden land in assessment of Previously Developed Land (PDL) capacity

Propose a more flexible density policy which takes account of local character


Reducing Housing Numbers Windfall Allowance



- 'Windfall' sites are sites not identified for development, but become available unexpectedly
- In this Borough, windfalls have accounted for 69% of all housing development in the last seven years – 247 homes a year
- National policy (PPS3) does not permit the Council to make an allowance for future windfall development in the first 10 years of its land supply, but the Council wishes to consider making a local case to do so
- It is expected that almost 100 per year will continue to come forward in Royal Tunbridge Wells & Southborough and it is proposed to make an allowance for this
- *Proposals which are contrary to national policy carry a strong risk of being found 'unsound' at examination*



Reducing Housing Numbers Options for a Local Housing Target



The Consultation Document presents four "Options" for setting a housing target, which either favour particular issues or seek to balance them:

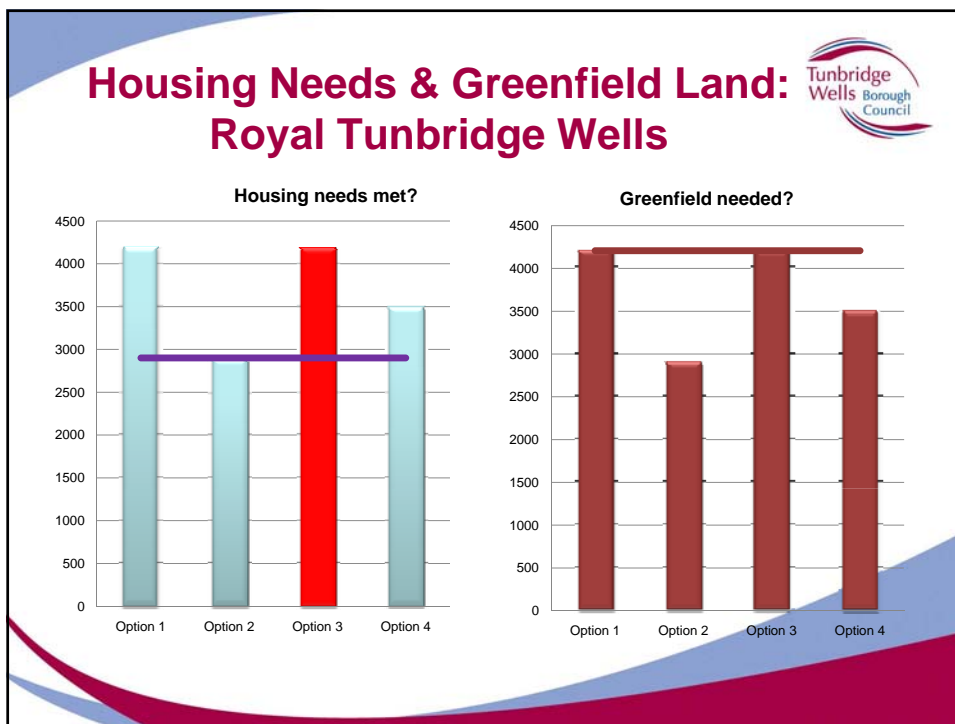
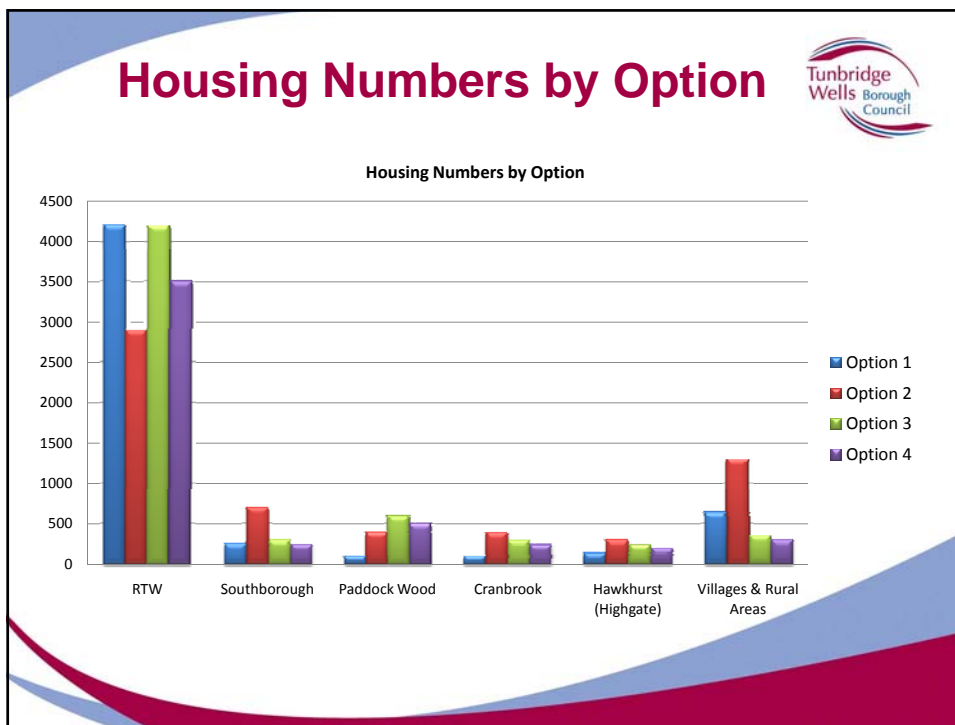
Option 1: Target of **5,455 homes**. Target and distribution determined without the need for future Greenfield allocations

Option 2: Target of **6,000 homes** distributed to meet housing needs where they arise

Option 3: Target of **6,000 homes** retaining the same distribution as the adopted Core Strategy (i.e. the no change option)

Option 4: Target of **5,000 homes** retaining the same proportional distribution as the adopted Core Strategy

It is likely that the 'preferred' option will be a hybrid of the above



Greenfield & Green Belt Land



Greenfield

- For each option, the consultation document indicates whether it is likely that greenfield land will be needed to achieve the housing target
- Note that if windfalls are not counted, the need for greenfield release will increase
- Previously developed land takes priority over greenfield land even in the existing Core Strategy

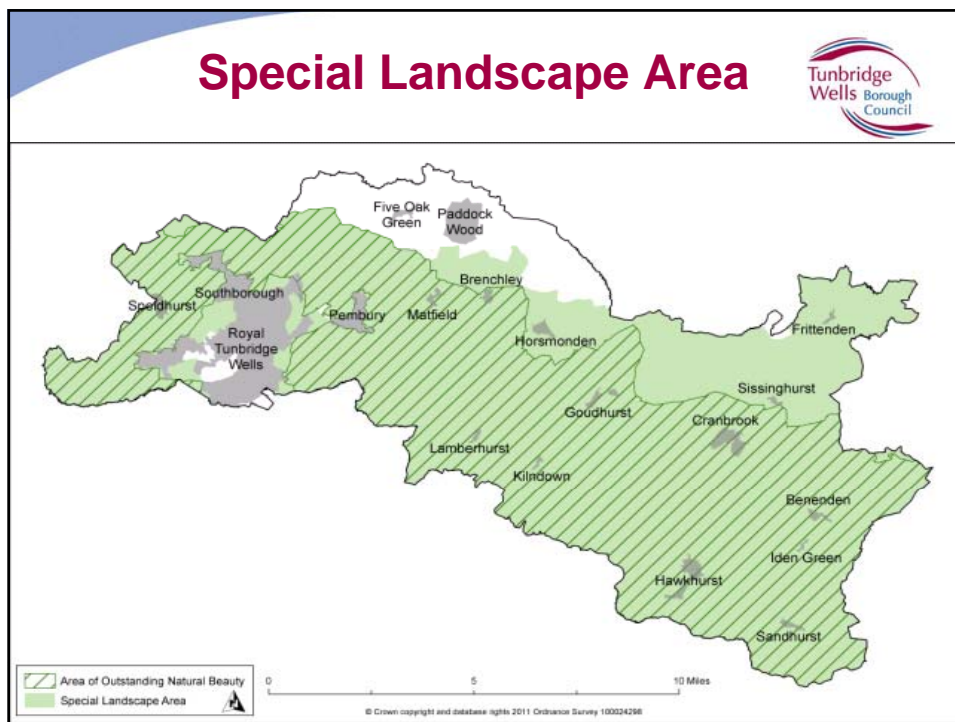
Green Belt

- Adopted Core Strategy requires a Green Belt Review to take place in parallel with the preparation of the Allocations DPD
- It is likely that this review will still be necessary even if housing target is reduced to 5,000 in order to provide a sufficient stock of safeguarded land

Gypsies & Travellers




- South East Plan was going to set a target number of “pitches” to be provided in the Borough, but now it will be the Council’s responsibility. The Council could seek to set this target in the Core Strategy Review. **However...**
 - Government has announced intention to revoke existing Circulars, describing them as “flawed”, and has (very recently) issued consultation on new policy. The Council will wish to respond
 - The intended revocation of the Circulars, and the current consultation, are material considerations which could affect the Council’s decisions
 - Not considered reasonable to set a target now. Wait for clearer statement of government policy post-consultation; hopefully by Allocations DPD
- Strengthen criteria for site identification and meeting unexpected demand (i.e. planning applications) in Core Strategy Review



Special Landscape Area

- The SLA was a local landscape designation employed in the Local Plan to protect important areas not covered by the statutory AONB
- National policy no longer allows for local landscape designations and, therefore, when TWBC attempted to retain the SLA in the Core Strategy, the Inspector struck it out
- The Council wished to reconsider this in the Core Strategy Review
- However, the Inspector's Report was very helpful in explaining that the SLA is still adequately, if not better, protected by the Landscape Character Area Assessment and ...
- National policy still precludes it
- **It is recommended that the Council should not pursue the reinstatement of the SLA any further**

Next Steps



Consultation from 16 May to 26 June 2011

- After 26 June, the Council will consider responses and take account of them to prepare its proposed final Core Strategy Review document
- This will be 'published' for you to comment on its 'soundness' in **late October 2011**
- Council will not react to your comments as such, but they will be sent to the Planning Inspector who will be appointed to examine the document from **February 2012**
- *At the same time the final proposed Core Strategy Review is published (late October 2011), the Council will consult you again on specific sites in the TCAAP & Allocations DPDs*
- *The Council will still be able to react to these comments as it will not publish its final proposed allocations until **September 2012***

Consultation



You can respond as follows:

- Online at <http://consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk>
- By email on comment forms at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/csr. Send them to planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
- By post to Planning Policy, Town Hall, TN1 1RS. Please write on the comment forms. Paper copies can be provided.
- *This event will be reflected in our statement of consultation*

**All comments must be made in writing
and received by midnight on 26 June**



Any Questions