



## QUESTIONNAIRE

### ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

#### DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The development needs in and around Royal Tunbridge Wells have been identified from an extensive evidence base. In some cases, policies in the Core Strategy state that specific types and quantities of development should be provided.

#### Question 1

**Do you consider that Royal Tunbridge Wells has any further development needs that should be added to the list (which you will find on pages 3-4 of the RTW consultation pack), or conversely, that any identified needs are incorrect and should be removed from the list? Please specify and provide evidence to support your answer in the comments box.**

#### Housing

Yes – there is further housing need if developers pursue as follows:-

Since the new Government came in the requirement to build affordable housing tied into a housing level of ten and above can be argued as this government has scrapped the imposition. Care is required to protect those who cannot afford to buy. It is therefore unsafe to rely upon previous thinking.

Yes – all sites that are GROT SPOTS, even if they are under 0.2 hectare in size MUST be included in this TCAAP. Grot spots must be cleared as a priority.

#### Leisure Recreation and Cultural Facilities

YES - there is need for further development when looking at the sites that are under review for development.

Reason:

In the list of sites under the TCAAP is included the Civic complex and other sites all physically linking or adjacent the overall civic complex area. Equally the cinema site is linked as the area needs to be planned on a “global basis”.

It is absurd to say that there are no development needs identified when there is a potential for the Assembly Halls theatre, the Library, the Museum and Art Gallery all to be demolished. The Police Station could also be demolished along with a loss of a democratic meeting venue.

As a result there is a need to develop and protect the Arts and Culture facilities for the town and its residents. If the entire civic site and adjacent sites are redeveloped then the facilities existing

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for Arts/Culture and democracy must be preserved within the town centre. At present the overall picture in the papers put forward does not portray this requirement/need.

A further concern is that there is no clear definition as to what development will be undertaken in order to provide entertainment for the youth of the town. Currently, the youth is not catered for and much needs to be done.

**Infrastructure**

Yes - There is no information relating to any infrastructure requirements. Should the town regeneration include such increase in retail, business and residential then there must be adequate infrastructure. Currently, the roads are grid-locked due to inadequate roads feeding the town and the fact traffic from Sussex has to pass through. To have park and ride only to the north of the town is somewhat unwise.

There is no mention of how the increased water and sewer needs will be met, the need for more refuse collections will be met, where refuse can be stored safely, what actions will be undertaken to feed electricity back into the National Grid from publicly owned buildings etc etc. It is essential for infrastructure to be thoroughly assessed and with due reference to green technologies available.

**TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY**

(see page 6 of RTW consultation pack)

Initial comments were sought on a draft boundary for Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre in April 2009. The boundary now proposed has been amended, where appropriate, to take account of those comments.

**Question 2**

**If you feel strongly about the boundary now proposed and wish to comment further, please do so in the comments box below.**

We are pleased to see that the town centre boundary now includes Camden Road. However, Woodbury Park Cemetery should come within the Town Centre boundary.

**Question 3**

**Do you think that Calverley Grounds should be included within the town centre boundary as an integral part of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**Yes**

**You may support your answer by providing additional comments in the box provided.**

YES – it is essential this area is included within the Town Centre.

## ISSUES FOR ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS, INCLUDING THE TOWN CENTRE

The Borough Council has identified a number of issues affecting Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre and the wider town (see page 7 of RTW consultation pack). Policies to be provided in the Town Centre Area Action Plan, the Allocations Development Plan Document and the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document can seek to address these issues.

### **Question 4**

**Have the main issues for Royal Tunbridge Wells and the town centre been identified correctly?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**No**

**If “no”, please use the comments box to explain what other issues you feel should be addressed.**

NO

1. The cinema site is not shown as a site for redevelopment.
2. All grot spot sites less than 0.2 hectares in size must be redeveloped & included in plan.

We ask how many residential dwellings are expected now that requirement to have to build so many properties has effectively been scrapped by the new government.

We are concerned that the Council, although it is early days, does not seem able to put forward what their overall ideas are. We would like to see this as soon as possible. Simply putting down a mix of xyz is not really showing any planning foresight.

## **TOWN QUARTERS**

### **Question 5**

**Do you agree with the defined town quarters which are identified on Map TW04 in the RTW consultation pack?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**No**

**Please comment and/or specify how you think they could be amended**

NO!!!!!!

This concept has no benefit whatsoever. The fact the quarters are shown as ovals and state a “quarter type” while that quarter includes residential and what the quarter is trying to represent is entitled another will simply lead to confusion. Business quarter is not appropriate as much of the area is residential.

We think there may be a need to identify particular areas but not this way. This needs further investigation.

The Town Forum would resist any “between the lines” modal shift.

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**Question 6**

**Do you think any of these quarters need particular improvement?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**No**

**Please specify which quarter(s) you think need(s) improvement and why.**

Comment as per above. This is a town and must be treated as a town. It is not felt the town is appropriate for splitting into quarters.

All areas need improving from grot spots to renewal of buildings. The centre of town needs to be pedestrian friendly, by way of example. At the same time the entire shopping spine needs to be joined up so all parts of town feel linked and inclusive. The High Street is shown as a quarter, but please do not forget we have a Conservation Area called the Village Area. This is not being looked at and should be regarded as an asset along with The Pantiles.

**MOVEMENT AND ACCESS**

**Vehicular**

**Question 7**

**What are your views on current parking provision in RTW? Please give your views and make any additional comments in the box.**

Car parking provision became a problem as soon as the Council allowed numerous "absentee landlords" to convert town houses into numerous flats. No thought was given to infrastructure, on street parking, facilities etc. Car Parking does need to be addressed. A review of how people who come to shop in Royal Tunbridge Wells also needs to be made.

**Question 8**

**Do you think park and ride would be well used if this was introduced in Royal Tunbridge Wells?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**Yes** - BUT, how will TWBC promote this to ensure?

**Question 9**

**Where do you think a park and ride scheme(s) would be best located? Please specify or make any additional comments you may have in the box provided.**

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Sainsburys (car park should be decked) to the south of town and Knights Park to the north.

**Question 10**

**What other transport and/or road improvements do you think could be made to ease congestion in Royal Tunbridge Wells? Please give details in the comments box.**

A rail link is required from the Tunbridge Wells West Station so that more people can come to Royal Tunbridge Wells without a car.

There needs to be a review into how to join The Pantiles at one end of town and the end of Camden Road at the other. The Pantiles is not well serviced for tourists and residents alike by buses. The Town Forum wishes to explore the installation of a bus stop at the end of The Pantiles near or where the coach stop is. This has the support of Targetfollow.

**MOVEMENT AND ACCESS**

**Pedestrian and cycle**

**Question 11**

**Do you think the town is adequately linked to the surrounding residential areas through good and well managed public footpaths and cycle routes?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**No**

**Please make any additional comments in the box provided.**

Well managed footpaths are those that are maintained with all appropriate materials. Currently we see many paths with tarmac where there should be bricks.

We see multi-coloured paths due to bad maintenance and we see paths falling in a bad state of repair.

Cycle ways are inadequate at present, although it is known there is the intention to improve when finances allow.

**Question 12**

**Do you think the pedestrian crossings are adequate within and around the town?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**No**

**If you answered “no”, where do you think improvements could be made?**

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The Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum has raised concerns concerning crossings in various powerpoints by Daniel Bech.

Please see:

Planning/LDF/Core Strategy including the latest ppt (March 2009)

[www.townforum.org.uk/planning/rtwmasterplan-rtwtf260309.pdf](http://www.townforum.org.uk/planning/rtwmasterplan-rtwtf260309.pdf)

and

the Transport ppt 'Getting around Tunbridge Wells' (April 2007)

[www.townforum.org.uk/transport/transport220307.pdf](http://www.townforum.org.uk/transport/transport220307.pdf)

The crossing opposite Tesco by Kenwood House is dangerous at present as pedestrians tend not to wait ages for lights to change.

Crossing by Hoopers Grove Hill Road needs reviewing. Note also shared space for overall pedestrian friendly crossings in town centre.

### **Question 13**

**Do you think the town could benefit from any public space improvements (for example, better and/or more seating, signage etc)?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**Yes**

**Please specify.**

Please see:

Survey of the Mount Pleasant Motorway Lampposts – March 2007 / Daniel Bech

<http://www.townforum.org.uk/focusgroup/kcchighwaysreport-lampposts-180307db.pdf>

An entire review of street clutter is also required. Where railings are in disrepair they should be repaired or even taken away.

The Town Forum firmly believes in a pedestrian friendly area in the centre of town.

Presently there is nothing celebrating our past as a Spa town. The town needs such features. There is also a total lack of interesting street art features.

Inner Town Centre – around the present Civic Centre – the streets have to have all the same type of lampposts. Why are the lampposts not matching to the style of Church Road/Crescent Road – Inner London Road?

i.e. Fiveways has one style, but looking from Fiveways Lime Hill does not.

Monson Road does, but York Road does not.

Newton Road does not, Dudley Road does not.

See also: Daniel Bech's powerpoints

<http://www.townforum.org.uk/community/twbc-rtwtfmeeting230909-slides.pdf>

- 23 Sept 2009 – ppt (217 photos on 24 slides)

<http://www.townforum.org.uk/community/khs-twbc-rtwtfmeeting04112009-ptdb.pdf>

- 4 Nov 2009 - ppt (219 photos)

demonstrating examples of issues concerning street scene and street clutter in Royal Tunbridge Wells

**LAND USES**

**Question 14**

**Do you think there are enough shops in the town centre?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**Yes**

**No**

**If you answered “no”, what type of shops would you like to see more of (for example, department stores, specialist shops)?**

No comment as all people will have a different view.

**Question 15**

**Would you like to see more cafés and/or restaurants in the Town Centre?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**Yes**

**No**

**If you answered “yes”, where would you like to see them?**

We cannot give a definitive statement as everyone has a different idea, but one thing is for sure that we have more than enough coffee shops in the town. Unfortunately, the town does not have a quality Tea Rooms, as the last disappeared many years ago. If the town increases its retail attraction then by definition more people would require such.

**Question 16**

**Do you think there should be more offices in the town centre?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**Yes**

**If you answered “yes”, where do you think these would be best located?**

In reply to this the Town Forum wishes to raise the issue of offices being based in houses, which should be used for residential. For example, relocate offices into purpose built buildings such as Europa House in Church Road. This must be looked into as a viable option as it frees up residential with little effort.

If the town centre is to provide employment opportunities, which include quality employers that provide employees with a decent salary, then new offices are required. Various office buildings in town are not appropriate to continue using as they are not fit for purpose and these could be redeveloped. Naturally it would be expected for office developments to be in areas such as the cinema site, but not the entire site.

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The Town Forum supports the promotion of Royal Tunbridge Wells as a place for companies operating within the health sector to relocate. The Town is very close to a flagship hospital, nearly completed in Pembury. The town should promote its past, which is that of a Spa town.

**Question 17**

**Do you think there should be more residential development within the town centre, or should it mostly be located on the outskirts of the town? Please specify where.**

While we support more residential development in the town centre we strongly object to squeezing residential property on small parcels of land and small car parks. This we say as it brings into play the unwanted issue of overlooking.

We would object strongly if no thought was given to providing adequate infrastructure to support such development. If there are small areas of land which cannot be used for such then thought must be given to creating small green areas.

**Question 18**

**What do you think should be the priority for the Longfield Road/North Farm area? Examples are: better transport links; more industrial and/or business uses, etc. Please specify.**

It is essential to sort out the traffic chaos caused through total lack of planning and control!!!!!!

**GREEN ASSETS**

**Question 19**

**Parks and areas of woodlands can provide different functions and are often used in different ways.**

**Do you use your local park and/or visit local woodland?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**Yes**

**If yes, which park and/or woodland do you use and for what reason do you visit? If no, please state which is your local park and/or woodland (if known) and give reasons why you do not use these areas.**

This answer is on behalf of the Town Forum so the generic answer is ALL sites are visited.

**Question 20**

**Do you think there are any areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells that are lacking in public open green spaces? If so, please specify.**

Trinity and its entire environs should be treated as a green space and regarded as a green space. Currently there is no indication that this is being acknowledged. It should be protected in its entirety from the edge of Church Road to the edge of York Road.

**Question 21**

**Do you think there should be more street trees and planting around the town? Please specify any particular areas that you think could benefit.**

This question lacks the need to also protect verges and to stop car owners from parking on the verges thus destroying them. e.g Farmcombe Road / Claremont School, Farmcombe Road – entrance to Farmcombe Recreation Ground, King George V Road close to allotments.

It is always of benefit to any town for trees to be planted, but care needs to be taken as to type i.e. due to roots from trees we see ghastly tarmac patches on Mount Pleasant.

Should the Civic complex be redeveloped then care is required as to type of vegetation/trees. It would be expected to see trees but care as to type.

If there is more planting of attractive flowering shrubs etc, which the Town Forum would support, then this needs maintaining and as such comes at a cost on a regular basis. The Town Forum would welcome further discussion on this important question.

**SITE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**

**Question 22**

**Please refer to pages 8-12 of the RTW consultation pack.**

**Do you agree with the process by which the Borough Council has filtered out those sites that either do not need to be allocated by virtue of their size; or should not be allocated because they are unsuitable for development?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**Disagree**

**Please make any additional comments you may have in the box provided.**

All grot spot sites less than 0.2 hectares should be included in the list of sites for development. It is also considered that all other sites are viewed the same under 0.2 hectares as this gives an overall planning perspective. In December 2009 the Town Forum put forward the following:-

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“ The RTW Town Forum questioned in the SHLAA consultation process the strong reliance of local planning on windfall sites and pointed out that ‘we strongly disagree with any site size threshold and a laissez-faire approach to windfall sites for the good reasons of uncertainty for communities, developers and planners alike, touched upon in Government advice’.”

**Question 23**

**Do you wish to make any comments about a specific site? If so, please write the site reference number and your comments in the box provided. Please comment, in particular, on the uses it is considered to be suitable for.**

Cinema site has not been included as a site and should be.

Please see Excel Spreadsheet attached for comments on all sites.

>>> <http://www.townforum.org.uk/planning/tcaap-rtwsites-rtwtf24082010.xls>

It is noted there are errors and omissions on the current list of sites and sometimes there is confusion.

We also question as to why the Pantiles, as an area is not adequately explained and why there is no reference to the Targetfollow Pantiles Rejuvenation Strategy.

For further explanations to the comments made in the Xcel Spreadsheet please refer to Daniel Bech's powerpoint 30 July 2009

<http://www.townforum.org.uk/community/rtwconservationareatrisk-rtwtfppt300709db.pdf>

(104 slides – photos)

which highlighted issues like

- Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area at Risk
- detractors in Royal Tunbridge Wells
- problems blighting Royal Tunbridge Wells
- grot spots

Many comments concerning the sites/allocations listed in the appendix stem from the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum Working Groups (2009 & 2010) and Daniel Bech's ppt "*Aspirations for the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Area Action Plan*" –

[www.townforum.org.uk/planning/rtwmasterplan-rtwtf260309.pdf](http://www.townforum.org.uk/planning/rtwmasterplan-rtwtf260309.pdf)

(RTW Town Forum Meeting 26 March 2009)

**Question 24**

**Do you think there are particular sites and/or areas that are not suitable for future development? Please specify and state why you think they are not suitable.**

No comment

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**Question 25**

**Do you wish to submit any further sites for consideration for allocation in either the Town Centres Area Action Plan DPD or Allocations DPD?**

*(please delete as applicable)*

**No**

**Please note that any sites submitted after the closing date for this consultation may not be considered as the Borough Council has made two previous “calls for sites”.**

*Please note: if you have already submitted a particular site through an earlier process, please do not submit it again unless you want to amend your submission.*

**To submit a site, please use the Site Submission Form, which you can download at <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/tcaap>. If you would like to submit any other supporting information please return it to us with the form. You will also have the opportunity within the Site Submission Form to attach a site plan.**

**Question 26**

**It may be necessary for the Borough Council to identify additional sites to meet the Borough’s development needs. Are there any areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells that you think should not accommodate any further development of a particular type? Please be specific about your reasons.**

No comment

**ANY OTHER COMMENTS?**

**Question 27**

**If you have additional comments about Royal Tunbridge Wells that you consider the Borough Council should take into account when preparing the Town Centres Area Action Plan DPD and/or Allocations DPD, please make them in the comments box below.**

The entire area around Trinity should be fully protected, not by the simple knowledge that buildings are listed. The site of Trinity to be protected should run from the edge of Church Road to the edge of York Road. It is essential and important that this entire site be retained as a green lung for the town centre.

One specific page to demonstrate the area around Trinity with the maps is here [www.telephonehouse.org.uk/openspace/trinityenvirons-rtwmasterplan-rtwtf260309.pdf](http://www.telephonehouse.org.uk/openspace/trinityenvirons-rtwmasterplan-rtwtf260309.pdf)  
also seen as part of RTW TF ppt / Daniel Bech 26 March 2009  
[www.townforum.org.uk/planning/rtwmasterplan-rtwtf260309.pdf](http://www.townforum.org.uk/planning/rtwmasterplan-rtwtf260309.pdf)

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Date of submission: 24 August 2010

From the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum TCAAP Working Group (2010)

Members:

Christopher Thomas (Woodbury Close Residents Association)

Katharina Mahler-Bech (Telephone House Neighbours Association)

Altan Omer (Benhall Mill Road Land Association)

Jane Fenwick (Calverley Park Residents Association)

[www.townforum.org.uk](http://www.townforum.org.uk)