

Tunbridge Wells - Retail and Town Centre Stakeholder Event – 13 July 2010
Cushman & Wakefield LLP, 43/45 Portman Square, London W1A 3BG

Follow-up
Questionnaire

These results will NOT be attributed to the individuals/organisations represented, but will be aggregated to give an overall impression of the responses received.

1. Given the current economic climate, how well do you consider Royal Tunbridge Wells Town centre is performing, and why?

5. Well
4. Above average
3. Average
2. Below average/
1. Poorly

Average.

Reasons:

- The town has a number of shops that are antiquated and do not keep up with the times. Therefore they start to look run down. Look at Camden Road. Some shops do not even keep a smart exterior.
- They are scared of the internet while at the same time there appears to be a lack of desire to use both mediums of retail to succeed i.e Noakes.
- There has been a lack of attention towards planning how the town should be joined from top to bottom and how it should work in conjunction with the nearby industrial estate. The Council seems to have little understanding of how to nurture the town's economy by combining the ethos of the industrial estate with that of the town.
- What rentals are being charged? When was a survey completed to assess an appropriate rent for type of store layout? Rentals need to be scrutinised to ensure they are fair.
- Inflexible leases need to be revised.
- KCC need to review rating structures to draw people to certain parts of town that need more footfall and more shops.
- Lack of interesting Street Art. Chronic transport into/out of town.

2. What do you consider is needed to help the Town Centre perform better, in order of preference?

	Order of Pref.
More retail uses	1
More non retail uses eg cafés, restaurants, leisure uses	9
Better access by car	4
Increased parking	5
Park & Ride	2
Better Public Transport	2
Improved Cycle and Pedestrian access	3
Environmental improvements	3
Other (Please specify)	

- Define the phrase “More Retail Uses”. If you mean a wider choice then it is agreed this is indeed required as primary.
- At present we have more than enough cafes etc to sink a battleship, but in this question you include the term “leisure”. Please define what you mean. The word leisure in this context could mean simply sitting on a seat. This part of the question needs to be set aside and be more specific in types you are looking at.
- The town needs a Planning Department that “listens” to its residents to understand what the residents need. The town needs to ensure there are adequate green spaces at the top end. At present the entire Trinity Theatre and environs is not protected. This should be protected from the Church Road side to the York Road side.
- There must be stricter control over drinking establishments so that people who wish to enjoy the town in the evening are not put off by drunkards and loud-mouthed idiots.
- All inappropriate street furniture should be removed and all motorway style lamp posts should be replaced within the Conservation area. GROT SPOTS MUST DISAPPEAR!!!!
- WIFI enabled Information Points around town.
- A modern and PROFESSIONALLY run theatre with multi-functional use that is fit for purpose.
- Shopper Hopper from The Pantiles to the end of Camden Road.
- More SECURE bicycle stands and taxi ranks in correct places.

Looking at retail and associated uses, does the Centre need more of the following?

	Yes/No
Large stores	Yes – Quality type(s)
Unit shops	Please define meaning
Food stores	Yes - Supermarket
Specialist shops	Yes
Cafes and restaurants	No – not at present
Financial services (Banks, Building Societies etc)	See point below
Leisure (Cinema, bingo, health clubs etc)	Yes - Cinema
Other (Please specify)	

- The Council should be attracting the Health Sector. There is also something known as a Community Centre which is Leisure.
- Regarding banks and buildings societies, do we need more? This question we answer NO to, but with the banks and building societies we have there is little competition. Nearly all the banks have merged so by default you have no competition. We therefore would like to see more different banks to create vibrancy. We also see banks as invariably having bland and boring frontages, with little attraction and we also hear little of what they are doing for the community except taking money.

3. Do you agree with the Town Centre boundaries the Council are proposing? If not, are they too large or too small? Should any specific sites be included, or excluded?

Response:

- No. Area should include Woodbury Park Cemetery.
Answer provided in TCAAP response.

4. Looking at locations for possible future development, should the Council's objectives be:

- To reinforce the core Primary Shopping Area around Calverley Road
- Rebalance the centre by developing to the south around the Town Hall
- Support the Mount Pleasant/High Street area
- Support The Pantiles
- Support edge of centre development, if more central sites are not suitable or available
- Support out of centre development, if more central sites are not suitable or available
- Pursue a combination of these, if so which.

Comments:

- The Council should be looking at a process of joining the bottom end of town (Pantiles) right up to the end of Camden Road. The shopping spine is long and work is required to look at having a better bus link from the Pantiles to the end of Camden Road for Shoppers.

We would not like to misinterpret the statement of “Rebalance the centre by developing to the south around the Town Hall” How far down are you implying?

The Council should be looking at a balanced approach towards future development. It should NOT favour one area to another save insofar where there are major sites identified to be redeveloped in the centre. If focus is simply on one part the rest of the town will suffer.

5. Are there any other improvements the Council should consider, especially in the longer term (say after 2016)?

Response:

Please see our response to the TCAAP and DPD papers. Herewith link to our responses, which should be taken to answer this question.

<http://www.townforum.org.uk/consultation/tcaap-rtwquestionnaire-rtwtf24082010.pdf>

The links included on this questionnaire response are integral so need to be viewed.

This reply is made by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum, TCAAP Working Group 2010.

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www.townforum.org.uk

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Thank you for your contribution.