

TMBC's response to EPPC's submission

Dear Karen,

Thank you for forwarding the response of East Peckham Parish Council in respect of the recent Local Plan consultation 'The Way Forward'. We received in excess of 1,300 responses by the closing date of the 25th November, most of which arrived in the last week, so as you will appreciate processing and summarising the responses is very much the focus for my small team at this time.

I am sorry to learn of the Parish Council's disappointment that TMBC did not host a formal exhibition on the Local Plan in the village. We invited all Parish Councils to attend one of four consultation events to explain the arrangements for the consultations including the purpose, location and timing of the public exhibitions that we arranged and I note that one of your Councillors attended the first event at the Angel Centre on the 1st October.

We were pleased with the attendance at the exhibitions, which were well attended, but they required in excess of 100 hours of staff time. We considered times and locations to give residents an opportunity to attend one relatively close by and in the case of East Peckham there were two exhibitions held at Hadlow and Tonbridge during the consultation.

With our limited resources it was simply not possible to hold exhibitions in every community over the eight week period. However, all of the information at the exhibitions and more was made widely available on the Borough Council's website and other ways to access the material were provided through the briefings to Local Councils, at local libraries and Council Offices, social media and YouTube.

We hope to be able to report back to our Members at the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board on March 7th 2017 and there will be an opportunity to update on progress at the Parish Partnership Panel on the 16th February, at which no doubt you will be represented. However, those reports will be an initial overview of the consultation and not go into any detail as to the selection of sites and so forth. Consequently, there will be little to add by way of an update for the Annual Parish Meeting on the 3rd April, particularly as our own Members will not have had any detailed feedback or been invited to consider the options for the next steps in the local plan. In order that we can maintain momentum in preparing the Local Plan we will continue to focus our resources on the assessments to be made and the work to be done and therefore respectfully decline the invitation to attend the meeting. I very much hope that is not taken in the wrong way, it is simply a practical issue for us.

Finally I am sorry that you felt the wording of the consultation document was vague, contradictory and confusing in places. We have on whole received very positive remarks about the consultation materials and have tried to make the key messages available in a number of formats from the simple 'infographic' through to the full Way Forward document including an executive summary and even a YouTube video.

I would welcome any specific examples so that we can consider these before preparing our next consultation due to take place later next year.

I hope this is of assistance,

Yours Sincerely,

Ian

Ian Bailey
Planning Policy Manager
TMBC