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## Growth and Communities

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6 October 2023

### BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir / Madam,

### Re: Tenterden Neighbourhood Plan (2013–2030) - Regulation 16 Consultation

Thank you for consulting Kent County Council (KCC) on the Tenterden Neighbourhood Plan, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The County Council has reviewed the Neighbourhood Plan and for ease of reference, has provided comments structured under the chapter headings and policies used within the document.

#### **Section 2: Tenterden Today**

Heritage Conservation: The County Council considers that this section would benefit from a short review of Tenterden's historic development, including both the town and the rural areas. Much of what follows in the text is predicated on an understanding of Tenterden's historic character and landscape, including several policies, however, there is no information presented on this until the heritage section on page 38. It is suggested that a summary presented earlier on in the Neighbourhood Plan would help readers understand why policies on landscape character, green spaces, design and development, all of which are discussed before the heritage section, have been defined as they are.

#### **Section 5 Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

##### *Environment Objectives*

Heritage Conservation: The County Council supports the inclusion of the following objectives within the Neighbourhood Plan, as they ensure that the heritage within Tenterden is appropriately protected and fits into the wider development:

- *“To ensure development is well designed and takes into account the distinctive character and heritage of the Parish*
- *To conserve and enhance the distinctive heritage assets of the area”*

## **Environment Policies**

### *Landscape*

Heritage Conservation: The County Council acknowledges that the text correctly identifies the historic nature of the landscape within Tenterden. However, the individual historic features mentioned need to be considered as part of a whole, if their significance is to be appreciated and correct management decisions are made. The landscape that is visible today is the result of many centuries of evolution and the pattern of roads, tracks, field boundaries and hedgerows that gives the modern landscape its character is firmly rooted in the past. The [Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation](#) (2001) is a tool for understanding this historic context and should be used to inform decisions taken regarding the landscape character within the Ashford Borough. The County Council would recommend that this county level study is deepened to be more relevant at the district and local level, as with the Hoo Peninsula and Tunbridge Wells. The County Council would welcome further discussion on this matter to see how this can be taken forward for Tenterden.

### *Development in the countryside*

Heritage Conservation: The County Council recognises that the Tenterden parish has historically had a dispersed settlement pattern. Development between villages and hamlets and among farm buildings would, in many places, be consistent with the historic character of those areas. Historic England, along with the County Council and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team, have published [guidance](#) on historic farmsteads in Kent. This guidance considers how rural development proposals can be assessed for whether they are consistent with the existing character of the countryside. The County Council would suggest that the Neighbourhood Plan identifies and references this guidance as part of its evidence base.

### *Policy TEN NP3 – Conserve and Enhance Biodiversity*

Biodiversity: The County Council would reiterate its comments made in the Regulation 14 consultation (Appendix A), which remain applicable.

Point (d) of this policy states – *“enhance habitats for wildlife on site, with a minimum 10% increase in habitat value for wildlife compared with the pre-development baseline;”*

The County Council recognises that this point is referring to Biodiversity Net Gain. The correct terminology should therefore be used to provide clarity for readers of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is also acknowledged that this point only discusses habitats for wildlife, however, it is all habitats that require a 10% increase in value under Biodiversity Net Gain. The County Council would therefore recommend that point (d) is replaced with the following:

- d) **Submit a Biodiversity Net Gain metric with all applications demonstrating a minimum increase in value of 10% in accordance with the Environment Act 2021.**

The County Council would also recommend that point (g) requires the inclusion of integrated enhancement features within all new buildings.

### *Heritage*

Heritage Conservation: The County Council welcomes the review of Tenterden's more recent heritage presented in this section, however, it is recommended that the review is presented earlier in the Neighbourhood Plan. The document contains many earlier references to the historic character of the town and countryside but until this point in the Neighbourhood Plan, there is no information to explain this. The County Council would therefore advise that this section is summarised as an introduction within section two. It is also recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee refers to a document produced by Kent County Council in 2004 'Historic Town Survey of Tenterden', which reviews the known archaeological data for the town. Although this document was issued in 2004, it is still relevant and can be found [online](#).

*Policy TEN NP4 - Design of New Development and Conservation and Policy TEN NP5 – Tenterden, St Michaels, Smallhythe and Reading Street Conservation Areas and their setting*

Heritage Conservation: The County Council welcomes these policies which will help ensure that the historic character of the built-up areas of Tenterden parish is conserved and enhanced appropriately.

### *Non-designated Heritage Assets*

Heritage Conservation: The County Council welcomes the consideration given to non-designated heritage assets. Such assets play a key role in the character of the Neighbourhood Plan area, whether in urban or rural contexts, and it is important that the development management process is used effectively to conserve and enhance them as indicated in the text.

*Policy TEN NP7 - Non-designated Heritage Assets*

Heritage Conservation: The County Council supports this policy, as it seeks to protect and enhance non-designated heritage assets.

### *Historic Routeways*

Heritage Conservation: The County Council supports the identification of historic routeways as a key element in the character of Tenterden parish. The routeways are best understood in the context of the historic landscape in which they lie, and the County Council would therefore recommend that an improved historic landscape characterisation is included in the text.

### *Policy TEN NP15 – Historic Routeways*

Heritage Conservation: The County Council is supportive of this policy, as it ensures that historic routeways and their character are not harmed.

### *Policy TEN NP16 – Public Rights of Way*

Public Rights of Way (PRoW): As a general statement, the County Council is keen to ensure that its interests are represented within the local policy frameworks of the towns in Kent. The team is committed to working in partnership with town councils to achieve the aims contained within the County Council [Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#) (ROWIP). This aims to provide a high-quality PRoW network, which will support the Kent economy, provide sustainable travel choices, encourage active lifestyles and contribute to making Kent a great place to live, work and visit.

The County Council appreciates the changes made to the Neighbourhood Plan, in respect of its comments made at the Regulation 14 consultation (Appendix A).

The County Council recognises that the supporting text mentions the need for developer contributions through legal mechanisms, for example, section 106, for offsite improvements related to any new development. However, this must be included within the policy TEN NP16 itself to maximise opportunities for access to funding opportunities.

### *Policy TEN NP17 – Securing Infrastructure*

PRoW: The County Council recommends that this policy is amended to the following, to ensure that funding opportunities for the PRoW network are not missed:

“Sustainable transport measures serving new development which assist walking and cycling, **including the Public Rights of Way Network**; and”

## **Appendix 2 Non-designated Heritage Assets**

Heritage: The County Council recognises that the list of identified non-designated heritage assets within the appendix is very partial and only contains a small part (48) of the known non-designated assets of Tenterden. The [Kent Historic Environment Record](#) contains records of 149 non-Listed buildings, historic farmsteads and archaeological monuments in the parish, and many of these could have been included in the list proposed. A range of sites/buildings of significance within Tenterden can be included on the list, and some of these are provided below:

- Several 19<sup>th</sup> century former school buildings
- At least two milestones
- At least 90 historic farmsteads and outfarms
- Archaeological sites relating to former mills, windmills, brick and tile works and limekilns, ice houses and oast houses.

## **Appendix 3 Associated Projects**

### **Project Summary**

*Project Theme: Routeways and Transport*

PRoW: The County Council supports the projects outlined in this theme, and would welcome a discussion with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to ensure that all funding opportunities are explored for the delivery of these projects.

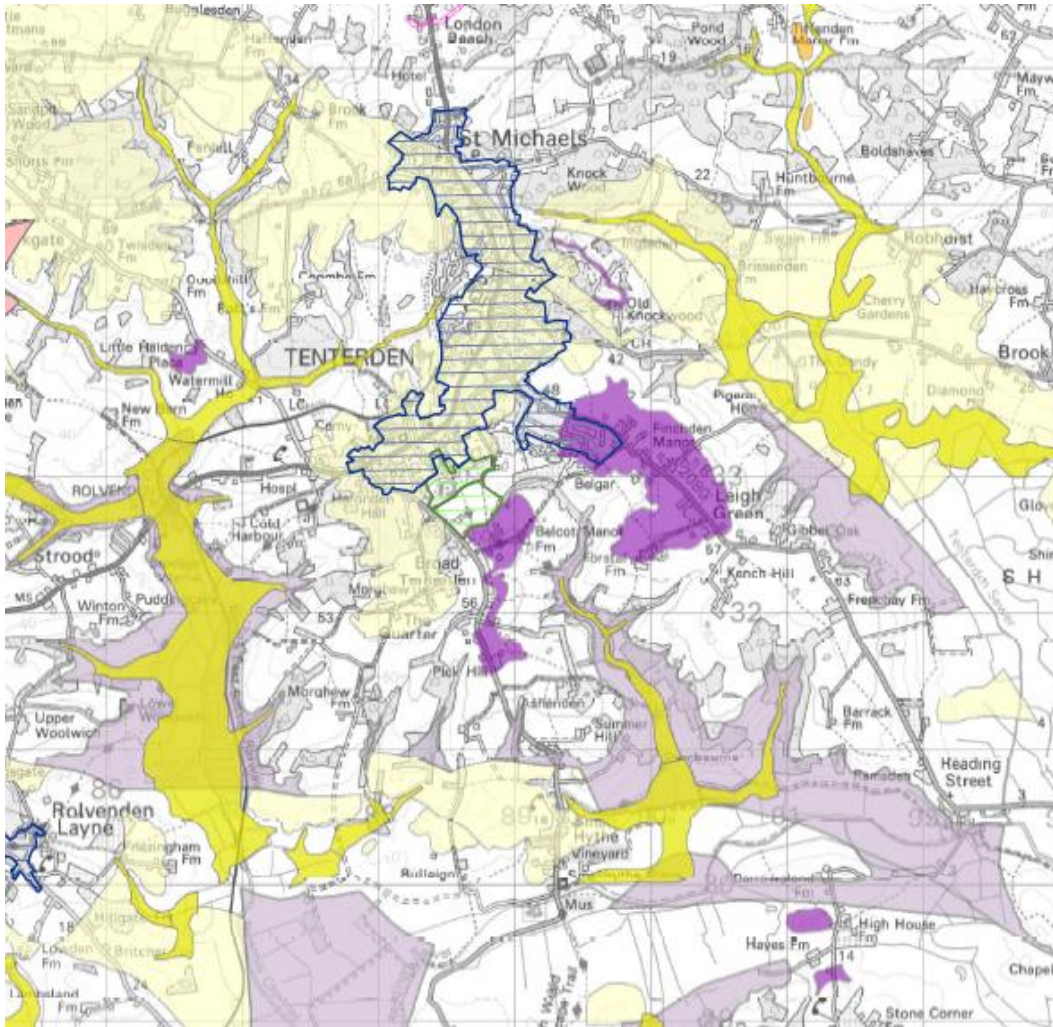
*Project Theme: Routeways and Transport and Project Theme: Transport Infrastructure*

Highways and Transportation: The County Council, as Local Highway Authority, notes that the list of suggested routeways and transport (numbers 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18 and 22) and transport infrastructure projects (numbers 1, 2, 4 and 5) need to form part of Tenterden Town Council's Highway Improvement Plan. This will ensure consideration by the County Council's Highways and Transportation Highway Improvements Team.

### **Additional Comments:**

PRoW: As the Local Highway Authority, the County Council must be directly involved in future discussions regarding projects that will affect the PRoW network. The County Council can then advise on the design and delivery of these projects, ensuring that new routes successfully integrate with the existing PRoW network. Future engagement is therefore welcomed to consider the local aspirations outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan for access improvements and potential funding sources for the delivery of these schemes.

Minerals and Waste: The County Council, as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, can confirm that the Neighbourhood Plan area does not have any safeguarded minerals or waste management facilities. However, it does have safeguarded land-won minerals, as shown below in an extract from the Ashford Borough Council Mineral Safeguarding Area Proposals Map from the adopted [Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan](#) 2013-2030 (Early Partial Review 2020):



- Sub - Alluvial River Terrace Deposits
- Sandstone - Wadhurst Clay Formation
- Sandstone - Ardingly Sandstone
- Sandstone - Ashdown Formation

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan proposals do not affect these deposits, the County Council would recommend that reference is made to the presence of these minerals, as they would act as a constraint on future development in the locality, either as future local plan allocations or speculative sites.

### **Supporting Documentation**

#### **Evidence Base - Routeways**

**PRoW:** The County Council supports this evidence base, however, would advise specific inclusion of the County Council ROWIP, a statutory policy document which outlines the PRoW objectives of the County Council.

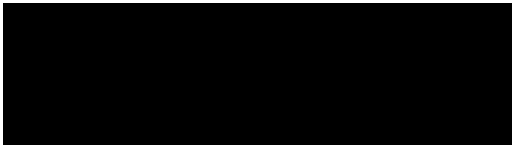
The ROWIP sets out a strategic approach for the protection and enhancement of PRoW, connecting the wider community and green open spaces. Inclusion of the ROWIP facilitates

partnership working to achieve the aims of local councils and the County Council, and this document should therefore be referenced within the Neighbourhood Plan.

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KCC would welcome continued engagement as the Neighbourhood Plan progresses. If you require any further information or clarification on any matters raised above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



**Stephanie Holt-Castle**  
Director for Growth and Communities

Encs:

Appendix A: KCC Response to Tenterden Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation