



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

COMMENTS to COMMUNITY PLAN 2006 – FINAL DRAFT

Meeting of the Community Plan Sub-Committee Thursday 15.06.2006

Present: Daniel Bech, John Cunningham, Michael Doyle, Adrian Ekins-Daukes, John Goodfellow, Estelle Grant, John Higgs, Michael Larsen, George Lawson, Leonard Price, David Wakefield.

1. Safeguarding our Environment

Priority 1 Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment and Landscape

1.1 Support local producers (Market):

Add Action Items

- Consider holding market more frequently
- Move market to a more suitable location, such as Camden Square, with better facilities (Parking & Toilets)
- Consider establishing a regular General Market

1.2 Balance between Conservation / Development Needs:

Add Partners: Stakeholders listed in the Statement of Community Involvement:

- RTW Town Forum and Parish/Town Councils, RTW Civic Society
- Individual Residents (as part of an Residents Association or not)
(Residents have to be involved right from the beginning and their comments to Supplementary Planning Documents should be considered and taken on board)

Add Action Items

- Designate “Green” and “Arcadian” areas in RTW Town Centre.
- Ensure that all developments, except in designated areas, do not exceed densities laid down in PPG3 being replaced by PPS 3

Add Action Points

- (1.6) - Promote the greater use of existing footpaths by repairing and improving both paths and signage.
- (1.7) - TWBC should concentrate on bringing back into use unoccupied houses and use true brownfield sites for development rather than back gardens.

Priority 2 Conserving and Improving the Built Environment including Public Spaces and Local Heritage

2.1 Conservation Area Appraisals/Enhancement Schemes:

Add Partners: RTW Civic Society and RTW Town Forum

2.2 There is more to “Clean neighbourhoods” than just Graffiti and Fly-tipping.

Add Partners: Town Forum, Waste Collection Company, Schools (Education), Civic Warden, KCC Highways, JTB (Joint Transportation Board)

Add Action Items:

- Draw up and maintain a register of Grot Spots (neglected and derelict properties) and initiate action to repair, restore or clean up these sites.
- Initiate proactive action against gum and litter
- Reinstate the weekly collection of household waste (green bin)
- Find solutions for refuse in black bags (used as dustbins) collections to avoid health hazards, by organising regular pick-ups and by sharing communal big bins (even if losing a car parking bay – contractor has to invest in appropriate machines to cope with different sizes of bins)
- Bring extraction systems at restaurants and other commercial premises into 21st century (find solutions to odour and noise)
- Find solutions for shopping trolleys left abandoned – enforce penalties
- Remove clutter from pavements
- Inspect all street furniture including lighting at least twice a year.
- Improve the standard of maintenance of street furniture (especially benches), street lighting, pavements and repair pot holes regularly.
- Clean all road signs at least twice a year.
- Set up a one stop hot-line for the public to report defects of street furniture, lighting, road signs, pavements and pot holes.

2.5. Encourage high standards in building:

Amendments Lead / Partners:

Conservation Awards: RTW Civic Society (active for the town RTW); include other amenity societies as leading organisations; TWBC is partner.

Shop Front Awards: TWBC is leading; Civic Society/amenity societies are partner organisations.

2.6 Protect and enhance listed buildings:

Add Action Items:

- Include the setting of principal landmark buildings such as the churches of RTW e.g. Trinity Church (Grade I), St James, St Marks, St Peters, - in the list of areas of important open spaces / open spaces of historic importance. (Local Plan 4.154 – Policy EN20 formerly EN21)
- Draw up a schedule of important unlisted Buildings, Monuments, Cemeteries and Areas that are neglected and in danger of becoming derelict and initiate action to repair, restore or clean up these sites.

(2.7) Add Action Point and Action Items:

Enhancement of Buildings in Conservation Areas:

- Impose land charges on properties to improve poor conditions of buildings.
- Take responsibility for the general condition of derelict or becoming derelict areas, including responsibility for compulsory purchase if necessary, and Section 215 orders.
- Get rid of satellite dishes (especially multiple installations on the facade of buildings) in the Conservation Area and make residents aware that cable tv is available
- Get rid of Estate Agents “For Sale” notices
- Site Mobile Phone Masts in a more sensitive manner.

Priority 3 Reducing Climate Change through Efficient Use of Resources.

3.1 Sustainable construction methods for new developments / more efficient use of resources:

Add Action Item

- Promote environmental measures directed at water collection, reuse of brown water, use of pv, ground heat energy etc.
- Actively pursue the installation of renewable energy techniques on Council Buildings to set an example.
- Investigate the introduction of photo-cell activated lights in public places, public buildings and car parks to conserve power.
- Promote the use of grey water on building sites.

3.2 Recycling - Increase the amount of waste that is recycled:

Add Action Items

- There is a need to concentrate on businesses that produce substantial quantities of plastic waste.
- Also in the case of glass - licensed premises.
- Doorstep collection not only for plastic, also for glass and cans could be explored; it leaves more room in green bins whether collected weekly or fortnightly

3.3 Efficient use of water resources:

Add Action Item

- Special attention needs to be paid to construction sites where there is considerable waste of water. Metering these supplies would have a salutary effect.
- Promote the use of grey water on building sites.

2. Maintaining a Thriving Economy

Priority 2 Enhance Attractiveness of Towns and others centres in the borough as thriving places to visit, shop and establish new enterprises

2.1 RTW Town Centre Action Plan:

Add Partner: RTW Town Forum

Add Action Items

- Approach key retailers and land owners: eliminate Grot Spots and enhance attractiveness of RTW
- Encourage RVP to set an exemplary sample to maintain the exterior of its shopping centre in Calverley Road, Victoria Road, Camden Centre (faded banners, eley court entrance letters, faded rvp-emblems)

2.2 Market RTW Town Centre:

Add Action Item

- Businesses / Shops have to clear “back yard” – eliminate Grot Spots (e.g. Newton Road / rear of Calverley Road - side of No.1 Grosvenor Rd at Five Ways / side of Dixons at Five Ways)

2.4 Increase tourist, service providers and business:

Add Partners: West Kent College, Greenwich University, Canterbury University

Add Action Items

- Encourage the setting up of Language Schools in Tunbridge Wells
- Encourage the skills base in the town through developing a local university.
- Incentivise knowledge businesses to locate in and around the town

(2.11) Add Action Point

- Continue to promote a Town Centre Cinema

3. Enabling People to Take Part in and Enjoy Leisure Activities

Priority 2 Encourage Participation in Leisure Activities by All Age Groups

2.5 400th Anniversary Celebrations:

Delete this item. By the time this Plan is published the 400th Anniversary will be over.

(2.7) Add Action Point

- Promote the use of the two Commons, Happy Valley and High Rocks as recreational facilities for all age groups.

Add Lead Organisation: TWBC

Add Partners: Commons Conservators, Friends of the Commons, Spa Valley Railway, Beacon Hotel

Priority 3 Providing Appropriate Places for People to Pursue their Leisure Interests

3.3 Improvements to Parks:

Add Action Item

- No mention of the two Commons, Happy Valley or High Rocks.
All are excellent places for leisure activities for all age groups.

Add Lead Organisation: TWBC

Add Partners: Commons Conservators, Friends of the Commons, Spa Valley Railway, Beacon Hotel

5 Transport – Getting Round the Borough

In the Consultation Draft, p26 second para: Add following words at the end:

“... and to improve traffic flow through bottlenecks, whilst continuing to achieve a high level of safety.”

Priority 1 Reduce Traffic Congestion etc.

1.4 Parking in RTW – Future Parking Policies in RTW:

Add Action Items

- Introduction of “Residents Only Parking” in the RTW town centre
- All Residents should be able to buy Visitors Parking Vouchers (valid for whole zone, not privileged to singled-out roads)
- Not only Park and Ride, but include Park & Rail
- Enforcement action to stamp out on pavement parking should be addressed.

1.5 RTW priority cycle network:

Add Action Item

- Cycle link Rusthall (Woodside) to Coniston Ave (Culverden Down) should form part of the RTW cycle network.

1.6 Reduce Junction Congestion:

Amendments to ‘Action’ text: (remove: North – add: capacity)

“Review the Operation of major junctions on A26 to improve junction efficiency and capacity and enhance protection of vulnerable road users.”

1.9 Increased awareness of sustainable travel choices (NHS / PCT)

Add Action Item

- Provide adequate dedicated parking for frail and elderly patients.

1.10 Continue the programme of pedestrian improvements in RTW Town Centre:

‘Time Scale’: 2007/8 and 2008/9 is controversial to: ‘Target’: schemes implemented.

Add Action Items

- The Town / Town Centre should be pedestrian led
- Take enforcement action against unauthorised vehicles using ‘Buses/Cycles only’ route through 5Ways
- Introduction of 20 mph in the town centre

Priority 2 Pursue Improvement to Key Transport Routes and Public Transport to promote the Role of the Tunbridge Wells / Tonbridge Transport Hub

Add Action Points

- (2.7) - Take enforcement action against unauthorised vehicles using 'Buses/Taxis only' route through Five Ways
- (2.8) - Promote the establishment of a Transport Hub in the Town Centre of RTW.
- (2.9) - Seek improvement for St John's Road - the area around and including the Bus Depot
Bus Depot in St Johns Road to be closed and re-sited in out of Town location.
- (2.10) - To support the very strong initiative in East Sussex to get the Rail connection between Lewes & Uckfield and Eridge to TW/Tonbridge restored.
This will enable Park & Rail to ease RTW traffic congestion.
- (2.11) - Facilitate more innovative schemes such as shared car ownership or plug in recharge facilities around the town in the same way as say Amsterdam. This is particularly essential in such a high traffic density town.
- (2.12) - Examine the problem of nox pollution along the A26 between the junction with Mt Ephraim and Southborough Common and initiate action to achieve a substantial reduction in pollution levels.
- (2.13) - Review the structural opening of the Railway Bridge, North Farm Road, to provide easy access to Longfield Industrial Estate (including provision for pedestrians)

6. Meeting the Need for Housing

Priority 4 Improving the Quality of Existing Homes

AMEND: Improving the Quality of Existing Homes and ensure High Quality of New Developments

4.4 Add Action Item

- Set up regular inspection of all multiple occupancy homes

Add Action Points

- (4.6) - Introduce planning policies to ensure that necessary infrastructure improvements (transport, schools, doctors, dentists, etc.) are in place in advance or at least in tandem with the construction of new developments.
- (4.7) - Make planning consent for developments in the town more sensitive to the way that residents live – the environmental impact of all developments on Town Centre residential properties and their occupants to be a major consideration in granting planning consent.

8 . Encouraging Social Inclusion

In the Consultation Draft pp39-41, in the Action Plan p30 item 2.2 and p30, Priority 3 and item 3.2 and possibly elsewhere: Delete all references to: “*Black and Minority ethnic groups*”

Add Action Point

- TWBC should seek to encourage public engagement across all age ranges to enhance civic pride and a sense of involvement in the Community.

9. Learning for All

Priority 1 To improve literacy, numeracy, behaviour and school attendance in early years, primary and secondary education

Add Action Points

- (1.11) - Reading age should match chronological age leaving primary school
- (1.12) - Achievements of children at secondary school: More statistics should be made available during the different stages

Priority 3 Further develop the wider Role of Schools / Colleges within their community and increase their focus on community and adult learning

Add Action Points

- (3.9) - English lessons for non-english speakers
- (3.10) - Citizenship taught in schools – organise town visits – “Do Well – Doubt Not”

Add Aims to the Community Plan 2006:

- **Co-ordinate Survey of Infrastructure of the Town Covering Drains, Water Supply, Electricity, Gas, etc., to establish whether we have sufficient facilities to meet the needs of future plans.**

- **TWBC should commit to developing clear lines of communication and responsibility to improve interaction and accountability to the public.**