



## **Council Leader makes case to Secretary of State setting out why Reg 19 Local Plan intervention is unnecessary**

TMBC's Leader Matt Boughton has set out a compelling argument to the Secretary of State Matthew Pennycook demanding that the Government's intervention on the Local Plan be withdrawn and that the Council should be allowed to progress with further preparation to ensure that it is deliverable and sound.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councillors had previously voted to pause the local plan at their meeting on 3 September. Whilst recognising the significant work that had been carried out to positively prepare a Regulation 19 Local Plan to meet the Government's requirements, including their prescribed housing target and timescales, councillors did not have confidence in the capacity of South East Water's infrastructure to support the significant additional housing numbers required.

The Council also had major concerns about wider infrastructure delivery including foul drainage and the sustainability of the 'vision led' transport approach required by national planning policy.

Despite these concerns Minister Pennycook wrote to Cllr Boughton as Leader of the Council less than 24 hours later and directed him to proceed with consultation on the Draft Local Plan.

In a strongly worded letter Cllr Boughton argues that:

"it is clear that it would be costly and counterproductive to progress a plan for which the majority of houses within it cannot actually be delivered and which therefore will not meet the soundness test.

"Such action would in fact actively frustrate the Government's ambitions for housing delivery; potentially result in even more sustained water shortages throughout the borough (as well as other authorities also served by SEW); but also fail to provide a sound plan that can be legally adopted."

He adds that:

"the Council does not believe the Government wishes to actively worsen the supply of water in the south east, but this would be the case should this plan based on the current position progress as directed in the Intervention letters."

Councillor Matt Boughton, Leader of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, said: "We have launched the consultation today because we are legally required to do so but we do not believe that this is a good use of taxpayers money or time. I hope that the Minister will see sense and let those of us that know and live in the local area make the right decisions for our borough."

- [Read Matt Boughton's letter to Minister Pennycook](#)