

Many people get concerned about future development in their local area after it is too late to do anything to prevent it. Not due to laziness or lack of interest but because people are unaware that they have an opportunity to influence outcomes before decisions are made. This is the case with the current consultation by Tonbridge & Malling Council on its local plan.

The Government requires, through the national planning policy framework, each local authority to deliver a development plan which provides a strategic direction for growth with housing a key part of it. The council goes through a set process to meet this requirement which includes a public consultation on proposed areas of development. TMBC is out for consultation at present and requires responses by the end of next week (25<sup>th</sup> November). I would strongly encourage readers to go onto TMBC's website and find the details of the local plan under the planning heading. Or if you live in Larkfield, and are reading this on Friday, you may wish to go along to the meeting being held tonight at the Parish Council offices where the specific proposals for the immediate area are being discussed.

It is important that residents are aware of the plans and respond accordingly. As an MP I have no authority over the Council (and rightly so) but I will be reflecting in my response that while I recognise the desire of central government to build more housing there is only so much already stretched part of the borough can take. The roads, schools and health services are under massive pressure and housing development, without investment in infrastructure, is unimaginable.

But they shouldn't just receive this message for me. So please make sure you have your say and reply to the local plan consultation by next Friday.