

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Draft Strategic Plan 2024-32

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Introduction

Dear neighbours,

For many people Tunbridge Wells is a great place to live, a great place to work and a great place to visit.

Our towns and villages are full of caring, creative and community-minded people.

Our Borough oozes passion and dynamism!

As a Council, we are unashamedly ambitious for our Borough and we are about much more than the services we provide to residents and businesses.

I believe Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is a force for good.

This document sets out what your elected councillors and our talented Council staff want to achieve.

It contains our priorities that we believe will make Tunbridge Wells an even better place to live, work and play.

We may not be able to make all these projects happen but our commitment and ambition to our communities is clear.

I hope you enjoy exploring our Strategic Plan.

Cllr Ben Chapelard

Leader of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Our borough

Did you know?

19.4% of people in Tunbridge Wells are 65 years or over.

Number of Parish/Town councils: 14 parish and 2 town councils.

Average price for a home in the borough is £446,000.

Mid-point weekly pay before tax is £652.

Tunbridge Wells population: 115,311 increasing to 127,046 in 2043.

Median monthly rent for a two-bedroom property: £1,050.

29.4% of households in Tunbridge Wells have 1 person per household.

Employment rate for 16- to 64-year-olds - 75.2%.

91.5% of the people in Tunbridge Wells are in the white ethnic group.

19.9% of people in Tunbridge Wells are 15 years and under.

As of May 2024 there are 39 councillors and 14 wards.

The proportion of people between 16-64 years with GCSEs in English and maths is 84.8%.

Of the 68 neighbourhoods in Tunbridge Wells, 1 neighbourhood is among the 20% most income deprived in England, 21 are in the least income deprived.

The borough is 128 square miles (331 km²).

Percentage of population over the age of 65 will increase to 27% by 2043.

As of May 2024 there are 39 councillors and 14 wards.

5.5% of people in Tunbridge Wells have a disability limiting their day-to-day activities a lot.

We have 22,000 subscribed to the fortnightly garden waste collection.

What we do

We provide events and activities such as the ice rink for residents to enjoy.

Over 500 planning applications are assessed each year to determine the environmental impact of proposed developments.

We provide 4,770 parking spaces in our car parks.

We negotiate lease renewals, new lettings and receive income from rents of around 2.5 million pounds each year.

The Amelia Scott welcomes over 1000 visitors a day.

We protect the public by ensuring legitimate taxis and private hire vehicles are licensed.

Our borough consistently remains one of the safest in the county.

We carry out a maintenance programme each year to ensure our buildings remain compliant and to prevent dilapidation.

We maintain and monitor 43 CCTV cameras across the borough to keep residents safe.

We manage 23 parks, open spaces and sports grounds for residents to enjoy.

We collect recycling and waste from over 53,000 households each week.

We welcome around 100,000 visitors to the assembly hall theatre each year.

We support the business community and new businesses wishing to open in the borough.

We manage local and national elections in the borough, so that over 86,000 residents can vote with ease.

The visit Tunbridge Wells website is a great resource for residents to explore the borough and find out what is going on.

We receive approximately 3.5 million pounds in developer contributions each year to spend on infrastructure across the borough to improve local communities.

We inspect around 400 food businesses each year to check that hygiene standards are maintained for customers.

We help over 3000 residents each year who are looking to extend and improve their homes safely and sustainably.

We support over 1000 households each year with housing assistance and advice. our work prevents over 130 households becoming homeless. we support over 100 homeless households find suitable places to live.

The Kent and Sussex crematorium supports over 2000 bereaved families each year.

We keep residents informed with a magazine each quarter for just 12p a copy. 20,000 residents receive our weekly email, and our website is updated daily to ensure residents receive the most current information.

Our ambition

A place where all generations can live healthy and fulfilling lives in vibrant and connected communities.

We have three priorities: Community wellbeing, Sustainable growth and climate action, Vibrant economy.

Sustainable growth and climate action

We will continue to create a net-zero Borough, protecting nature and heritage, whilst building the right infrastructure for new homes.

Actions

We will balance the need to deliver more housing with the need to protect and enhance our natural and built environment.

We will support local towns and villages to shape their own local areas.

We will improve the supply of affordable housing.

We will create a more sustainable

Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre.

We will deliver more or better quality natural habitat.

We will reduce the Council's emissions to net zero by 2030.

We will look to reduce congestion and carbon emissions from vehicles.

We will encourage alternative modes of transport to the car.

We will explore options to deliver renewable energy generation to help meet our net zero carbon commitments.

Did you know?

The borough covers 125 square miles (325km²).

The borough houses 2,857 listed buildings and 25 conservation areas.

Nearly 70% of the borough is designated as national landscapes (previously area of outstanding natural beauty).

We have seen a 42.3% reduction in borough emissions since 2005.

TWBC's corporate emissions have seen a 24% reduction since 2018/19.

Vibrant Economy

We want to support our urban and rural economies to thrive, creating local jobs in our communities.

Actions

We will enhance the vitality of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre.

We will support the creation and growth of local businesses.

We will increase tourism in our towns and villages.

We will capitalise on funding opportunities to promote businesses and the rural economy.

We will balance visitor and resident parking and encourage responsible car use.

We will encourage new businesses to set up in the borough.

Did you know?

27.4% of people in employment travel under 10km to work.

8.2% of people in employment work in the building industry.

3.6million visitors to the borough each year.

42.3% of people in employment work mainly from home.

9.3% of people in employment work in retail.

Community wellbeing

We will continue to look after the vulnerable and to support our urban and rural communities to flourish and fulfil their potential to be caring, healthy, connected and inclusive.

Actions

We will work with clubs to invest in and improve sports facilities and playing fields.

We will improve the Council's leisure centres.

We will support parish and town councils to develop their own community facilities.

We will work to ensure that the Borough remains one of the safest places to live.

We will support the provision of modern healthcare facilities.

We will protect and enhance our streets.

We will maintain our parks and green spaces for all to enjoy.

Did you know?

378,000 Council-owned leisure centre activities take place per year, including:

47,000 Swim school session attendances

96,000 Fitness class attendances

30,000 Racquet court hires

Around 30 community and support groups use the Wesley Centre and Camden Centre each week

Making it happen

We will review outdoor sports facilities for grass-roots clubs across the borough to improve and develop provision.

We will introduce a new farmers' market, independently run in Royal Tunbridge Wells selling high quality, locally produced items.

We will design and deliver four improved walking and cycling routes:

1. Southborough to High Brooms walking and cycling route.
2. A26 between Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells and the boundary with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council cycling route.
3. Royal Tunbridge Wells cross town centre cycling route.
4. Langton Green through Rusthall to Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre cycling route.

We will modernise and improve our existing three leisure centres in Cranbrook, Paddock Wood and Royal Tunbridge Wells.

We will create youth hubs across the Borough for 12-17 year olds providing activities chosen by young people.

We will build a new, modern crematorium with more appropriate, comfortable and energy-saving facilities.

We will continue to redevelop Royal Victoria Place to create a modern location, including the regeneration of Palm Court and Ely Court.

We will examine how best to ensure the delivery of new affordable housing across the Borough.

We will enable the delivery of a community centre and GP surgery in Cranbrook.

We will explore the business case for a Solar Farm to help the Council's aim of becoming carbon neutral.

We will provide new football pitches and facilities at Hawkenbury Hub, replacing pitches at Bayham West, Colebrook and Culverden.

We will improve the road safety and livability of urban/residential streets in the borough - our first step is to implement Better Streets pilots in St James' and St John's areas.

We will plant a tree for every resident - 116,000 over 10 years.

Feedback

Please share your views by visiting twbc.online/strategicplansurvey or email consultations@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

The closing date for feedback is 13 October

Data Sources

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

Office for National Statistics

Draft Parking Strategy

Thanks for reading!