Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Transport Strategy Review: Context and Way Forward

September 2019

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Introduction

Purpose

1. This paper sets the scene for a review of the Council's current Transport Strategy. It explains the contextual framework for the review, including key challenges, from which proposed aims for the review are put forward. The updated Transport Strategy will complement and integrate with the emerging new Local Plan for the borough. Hence, the paper sets out how the proposed aims clearly link with relevant objectives and policies in the new Draft Local Plan.

Why do we need a Transport Strategy?

2. The Tunbridge Wells Transport Strategy is being prepared to:

   - support future development in the borough;
   - address existing transport issues; and
   - identify new opportunities in mobility.

3. The Strategy is being prepared alongside the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (Appendix A) and the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Appendix B) which is seeking to deliver approximately 13,500 new homes across the Borough between 2016 and 2036 and, in addition up to 14 hectares of new employment floorspace to retain existing and create new jobs. This development will support the continued prosperity of the borough and new infrastructure is required to ensure that it does not result in negative impacts on the existing transport network.

4. There are other challenges relating to the existing transport network and services that also need to be addressed. In addition, significant advances in data collection and use, as well as other developments in new transport technology, will lead to changes in the way people travel in the future. The Transport Strategy will need to take a carefully considered approach to these changes, to ensure that the benefits of new technology are maximised for the borough.

5. There are a significant number of policies in the Local Plan that refer to sustainable design, infrastructure, digital connectivity, transport, travel and parking issues and these are referenced in this paper.

Transport roles and responsibilities

6. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) is the Local Planning Authority for the borough and also has delegated responsibility for Civil Parking Enforcement under the Traffic Management Act 2004. TWBC also undertakes street cleaning, the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles, manages the contract for the provision of bus shelters (within the urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells) as well as some of the street lighting, and the monitoring and improvement of air quality.

7. Kent County Council (KCC) is the Local Highway Authority for Kent and is responsible for the management and maintenance of all adopted roads in the county, other than motorways and trunk roads, which are the responsibility of Highways England. KCC also has responsibility for road safety, procuring socially necessary public and school bus services and in maintaining cycle routes and public rights of way (PROW), and promoting active travel.

Transport challenges

8. This paper sets out the key challenges relating to both the existing and the future transport network and services, that we know are of importance to the lives of local people and that impact on the built and natural environment. The transport challenges facing Tunbridge Wells borough and the UK as a whole, are such that the policy response will need to come from all tiers of government, not just at the local level. For example changes in regulation or fiscal measures such as new taxation or incentives are likely to be needed from national government. Private sector investment will also be required to address some issues.

9. In May 2019 the Government declared an environment and climate emergency and in July 2019, TWBC also passed a motion at Full Council, declaring its recognition of global climate and biodiversity emergencies (see the Full Council Motion July 2019).

Current travel behaviour in the borough

10. The most recent information about travel behaviour in the borough is available from national census data (see 2011 Census Data). The most recent data is from 2011, but the travel patterns that are shown are still relevant as an indicator for today.

11. Figure 1 shows car ownership levels in the borough in 2011. The borough as a whole is shown as having a higher than average car ownership compared with the rest of Kent and the South East region with 39% of borough households having more than one car. The rural areas of the borough had the highest car ownership levels especially in Brenchley & Horsmonden. The lowest levels of car ownership per household were found in the urban areas of the borough such as Culverden,

Park, Sherwood and St James. The data also showed that in 2011, 17% of households did not have any car or van available for private use, which means that access to other means of travel is likely to remain very important for a significant proportion of borough residents.

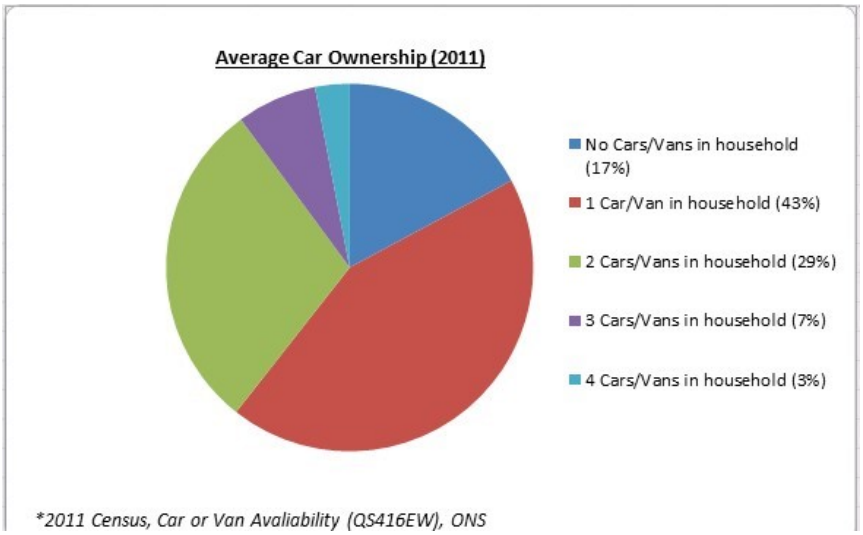

Figure 1: Car ownership in Tunbridge Wells borough

12. Although it is anticipated that car ownership will remain high in Tunbridge Wells borough, nationwide evidence also shows that car ownership is static in every age group in the UK except the over 60s (see Centre for the Reduction of Energy Demand Studies (CREDS) Report: Shifting the Focus 2019).

13. A high level of car ownership does not necessarily lead to higher than average levels of car commuter trips. In fact, recent evidence suggests that in the UK, on average, cars are parked for over 98% of their lifetime, with a third of all cars not being used on a daily basis (CREDS 2019). Figure 2 shows that in 2011 53% of residents travelled to work by car in the borough. However, when considering the number of residents commuting by train to London, the presence of walkable neighbourhoods near to town centre employment opportunities and the significant number of residents working mainly from home, the overall picture is a more balanced modal split than might be expected from car ownership statistics.

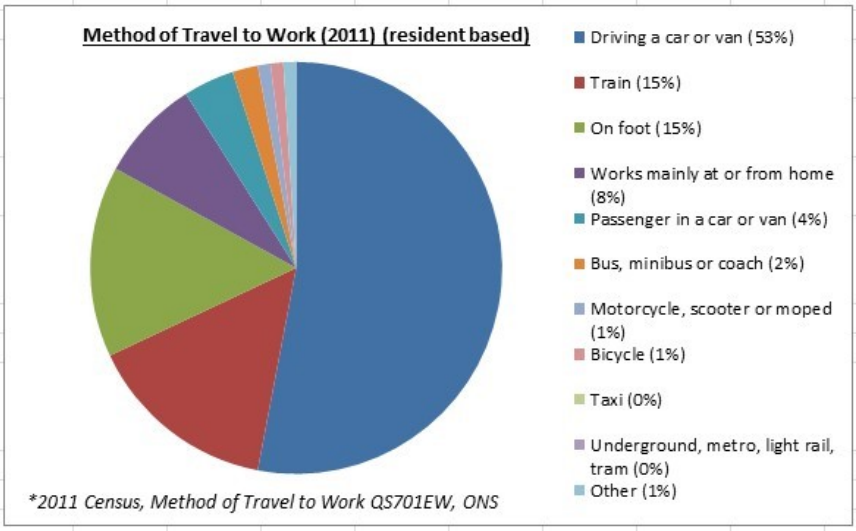

Figure 2: Travel to work by mode in Tunbridge Wells borough

14. Figure 3 shows the distances that people were travelling to work in 2011. The average distance is higher than that for Kent and the wider South East region, as trips to London fall into the 40km+ category. However, the data also shows a high proportion of residents travelling less than 5km (31%) which suggests that there should be scope to increase the number of trips made on foot or by bike with appropriate infrastructure improvements. The data shows that the distances travelled is higher for residents in the rural areas of the borough for example those living in Frittenden, Sissinghurst, Goudhurst and Lamberhurst.

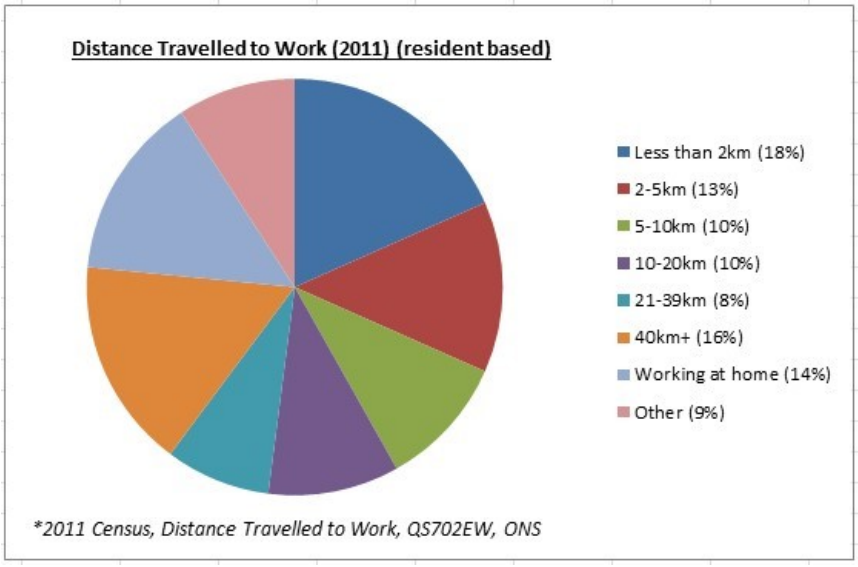

Figure 3: Distance travelled to work in Tunbridge Wells borough

15. The 2016 Economic Needs Study for the borough (prepared as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan) provided information about the Travel to Work Area (TTWA) for Tunbridge Wells borough, using information from the 2011 census (view the Economic Needs Study). The TTWA boundary shows where *"at least 75% of*

the area's resident workforce work in the area and at least 75% of the people who work in the area also live in the area."

16. Figure 4 below shows the extent of the local Travel To Work Area centred around Royal Tunbridge Wells. It covers the towns of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Crowborough and surrounding villages in adjacent authorities, including the north west of Rother and Wealden districts. The figure highlights the importance of the strategic transport links (roads and public transport routes) between these settlements for commuter journeys.

17. The main commuter inflows to Tunbridge Wells borough for work are from Tonbridge & Malling and Wealden and the main outflows are to Tonbridge & Malling and London, again showing the importance of the rail links to the City of London or Westminster.

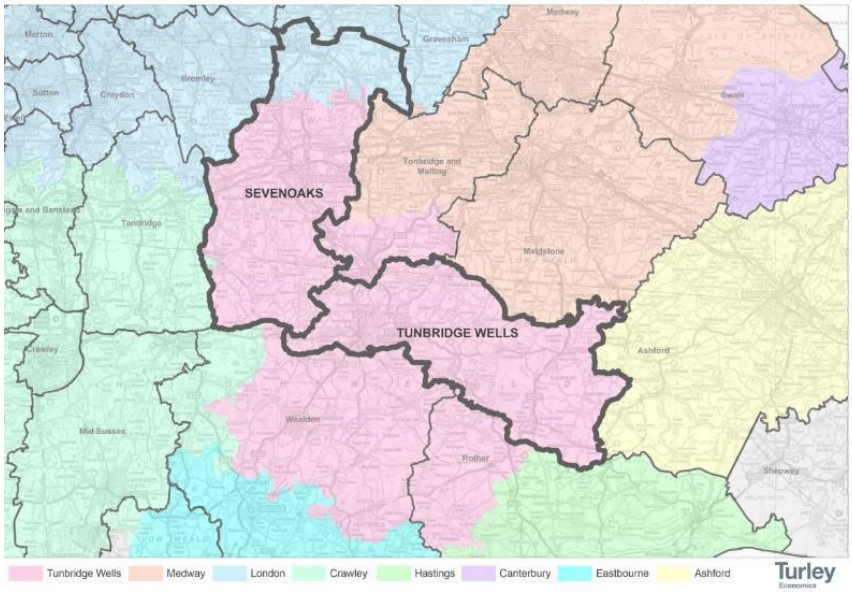

Figure 4: Travel to Work Area, Tunbridge Wells Economic Needs Study 2016, Turley Economics

18. Figure 5 shows the residential population of the borough split between the urban and rural areas. There will need to be different transport policy approaches required to support both urban and rural communities.

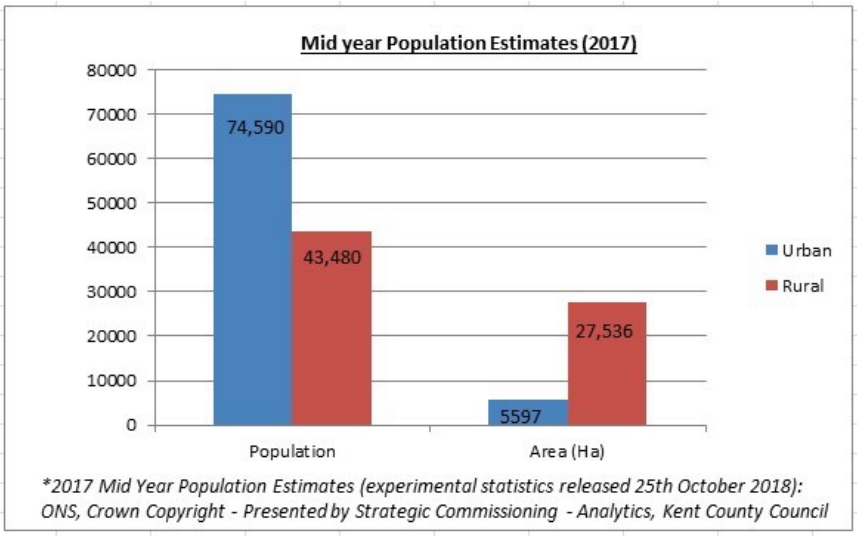

Figure 5: Urban and rural population split in Tunbridge Wells borough

Future Changes in Travel Behaviour and New Technology

> *"Multiple changes in transport technology are happening at once….At the same time significant demographic economic and behavioural trends are changing how and when we travel. Together these technology and demand led changes are driving new business models that could have transformative effects of their own."* (Department for Transport (DfT) Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy March 2019)

19. It is widely recognised that there will be significant changes in the UK population's travel behaviour over the next decades, including in Tunbridge Wells borough. Some of these changes will result in an increased number of vehicle trips on the network and others to a decrease. Forecasts point to an overall growth in travel demand driven by population growth, while on an individual basis people are generally travelling less than they did 20 years ago (see DfT Future of Mobility 2019).

20. Some of the reasons for the future changes in travel demand are set out in the table below:

Table 1: Reasons for future changes in travel demand

Increase in vehicle trips	Decrease in vehicle trips
Population growth	Commuter journeys reduced due to working from home, part-time working and self-employment: -16% between 1995 and 2014 (DfT Future of Mobility 2019)

Increase in vehicle trips	Decrease in vehicle trips
Employment growth	Shopping trips reduced to town centres and retail parks: -30% reduction in last decade with 18% of purchases now made online (DfT Future of Mobility 2019)
Increased freight deliveries e.g. internet deliveries: evidence gathering is required to quantify this trend	Younger people less likely to own cars as staying in education longer and starting families later (although they may have access to family-owned vehicles)
Population ageing and more older people driving	Technology for mobility as a service, allowing vehicle sharing: more likely to be adopted by younger people
Reduction in rural bus service mileage: leading to greater dependency on private vehicles	Greater take up of cycling and walking: (particularly in cities where funding for cycling infrastructure has been focused to date)

21. Some of the trends above are already affecting the borough, for example pressure on rural bus services, reduced footfall in town centres as a result of online shopping and an increasing number of delivery vans in residential areas.

22. The new technology that will lead to changes in travel patterns can be summarised as follows:

- Data availability and improved connectivity are transforming journeys: e.g. planning multi-stage journeys, optimising public transport network management, mobility as a service (see Section 7);
- Transport is becoming increasingly automated: e.g. improved sensing technology already in many vehicles, speed limitors (intelligent speed assistance system) and self-driving vehicles being widely tested;
- Transport is becoming cleaner: e.g. electric vehicles and biofuels; and
- New modes are emerging: e.g. micro-mobility (electric scooters), vertical take off and landing unmanned aircraft (drones).

23. There are potential benefits and risks to these new technological developments, shown in the table below:

Table 2: Potential benefits and risks

Potential Benefits	Potential Risks
• More inclusive transport system: lower running costs make it more affordable for travellers • Safer streets: advances in automation and vehicle sensors	• Safety and security threats: cyber crime • Risks to public transport viability: decline in rural buses • Digital and financial exclusion: people need to be on relevant digital platforms

Potential Benefits	Potential Risks
• Smoother journeys: booking and paying made easier • Increased active travel and use of public transport: e.g. bike sharing • Environmental benefits (CO2 emissions, air & noise pollution reduced): electric vehicles • Unlocking space from cars to people: fewer vehicles parked on streets • Tackling congestion: maximise the capacity of the network • Improving productivity: free up travel time for work • Attracting investment and creating jobs: in the knowledge economy	• Health & wellbeing: door to door mobility options reduce walking & cycling • Social isolation: more home working • Privacy risks: increased use of data • Urban sprawl: easier travel options leading to longer journeys • Local environmental impact: disruptive modes e.g. drones • Increasing congestion: if vehicle sharing is not adopted • Power supply: lack of national provision to meet demand • Loss of jobs and new skills needed: fewer driving roles

24. There is a need for central and local government to work together to ensure that the benefits of new technology are realised and the risks mitigated. For example, the results of exploratory analysis into the effect of self-driving vehicles on traffic growth (between 2015 and 2050) shows that road traffic could grow between 55 – 71% if ride-sharing is not embedded to increase vehicle occupancy rates (see DfT Future of Mobility 2019).

25. In discussing the future for public transport, the concept of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is now entering common parlance. *"Mobility as a Service (Maas) is a term used to describe digital transport service platforms that enable users to access, pay for and get real-time information on a range of public and private transport options. These platforms may also be linked to the provision of new transport services."* An early example of this is the national rail provider SNCF in France that is partnering with a digital ride-sharing business in order to offer integrated, multi-modal ticket options to customers.

26. MaaS would be a major change from transport being provider-led to being a user-led system, where the level and type of transport adjusts continually in response to the requirements of travellers. There is already a culture of 'collaborative consumption' amongst younger people, where possessions are lent or borrowed. This lends itself to the concept of MaaS. However, in order to facilitate the widespread adoption of MaaS, there will be a need for the government to set open data policies and create the right conditions for businesses and users to share data.

27. Studies into the impact of technological changes on transport suggest that local authorities need to take an approach that is flexible and adaptable: *"major challenges exist for policymakers, who will need to balance the promised benefits with issues such as safety, data security and privacy, equity and the threat of marketplace distortion by dominant unscrupulous suppliers"* (see Mobility as a

Service in the UK: Change and its implications, Government Office for Science 2018).

Policy Aim: Tunbridge Wells to be an early adopter of appropriate new technology, as referenced in the Local Plan Strategic Objectives 3 and 8:

To prioritise active travel, but where necessary to plan appropriately for use by private motor vehicle, in particular embracing new technology.

To tackle climate change and minimise the impact of development on communities, the economy, and the environment with carefully considered design and by embracing technology, such as renewable energy generation.

Policy Implementation: Facilitate 5G and other smarter corridor digital infrastructure, explore possibility of autonomous vehicles pilots.

Supporting Growth and the Local Economy

"Enabling growth without gridlock has been highlighted as a key challenge for Kent & Medway and one that will only be achieved through a combination of measures that influence behaviour and improve infrastructure." (Kent County Council Kent & Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy Consultation July 2019)

28. Having an efficient transport network is essential to the vitality and competitiveness of the borough's businesses. The strategic transport network in the borough must support the local economy and provide access for customers, employees, delivery of goods and servicing.

29. There have been recent improvements to the strategic road network with the dualling of the A21, the Longfield Road widening scheme and junction improvements on the A26 in Southborough. However, the A264 and A26 remain congested corridors during peak hours. In addition, the A228 at Colts Hill, and the A21 south of Royal Tunbridge Wells at Kippings Cross are both bottlenecks, preventing the efficient flow of traffic at peak times. Transport congestion is also an issue in other parts of the borough including, for example, the A229/A268 in the centre of Hawkhurst. These roads provide important access to and from the borough's Key Employment Areas and current congestion levels are a constraint on the performance of local businesses. They also provide appropriate routes for freight vehicles servicing the borough.

30. The growth that will be delivered in the borough through the new Local Plan will need to be supported by appropriate transport infrastructure and services. A Transport Assessment for the Plan has been undertaken and has identified the schemes that are required to ensure that the proposed housing and employment growth can be accommodated without a negative impact on the borough's existing

network (Appendix C). These measures will include highway improvements (links and junctions), innovative bus services and new public transport routes as well as better infrastructure for walking and cycling. On a borough-wide basis a modal shift away from the car will be required to accommodate the proposed growth. The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 sets out that new development should give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and high quality public transport (see the NPPF 2019) and this is reflected in policies in the emerging Local Plan for example Policy STR6: Transport and Parking and criterion 6 of STR7: Place Shaping and Design.

31. High streets and town centres across the country have been undergoing change for some time and the challenges relating to this are becoming increasingly obvious and a matter of widespread concern (approximately 20% of shopping is now undertaken online). As more people have changed the way that they shop, their expectation of town centres has also changed. Many visitors to town centres are seeking an 'experience' that cannot be bought online, such as events and festivals. Evidence from other towns shows that better streets and pleasant public spaces can add to the visitor experience and therefore play a part in supporting town centre businesses.

32. There is considerable evidence from recent research (for example in parts of London) to suggest that investment in walking and cycling can lead to:

- Footfall increase;
- Longer dwell times;
- Higher spend;
- Fewer retail vacancies; and
- Rental values increasing. (see Transport for London, Walking & Cycling in London: the economic benefits 2018 and Living Streets, The Pedestrian Pound 2018)

33. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has been seeking to support town centre businesses through the public realm improvements at Fiveways and on Mount Pleasant Road in Royal Tunbridge Wells. This will create a better environment for pedestrians, cyclists and those using public transport and will encourage people to stay longer in the town centre in a more pleasant environment.

34. Whilst some new infrastructure is needed to support local businesses, the businesses themselves also should be encouraged or incentivised to reduce their carbon footprint for example through increased use of technology to conduct virtual meetings, providing changing facilities for active commuting or by promoting car sharing. In recent years a number of grant schemes have been available to support businesses in this: for example the LoCase scheme (EU Funded) provided businesses with grants of up to £20,000 to assist them with the adoption of electric vehicles, while the Kent County Council Sustainable Travel Grant is an annual programme which offers businesses with grants to provide facilities for employees to use that will encourage sustainable travel to work.

Policy Aim: Maintain and improve transport infrastructure at the strategic and local level (including rail, highways, bus and cycle networks) as set out in Local Plan Policy STR6: Transport and Parking. Specific policies in the Local Plan including STR/CA1, STR/PW1, AL/HA1, AL/HA3, ALPW1 and AL/PW2

Policy Implementation: Ensure provision of new infrastructure through working with developers, submit bids for funding (e.g. Local Growth Fund) for infrastructure improvements to deliver growth, take balanced approach to parking standards in new development and parking provision in town centres, public realm improvements in town and village centres, work with businesses to reduce travel footprint grants to businesses to support active travel.

Road Safety

"Minimising road danger is fundamental to the creation of streets where everyone feels safe walking cycling and using public transport." (Transport for London Mayor's Transport Strategy for London 2018)

"It is vital that death and injury on Kent roads continues to be tackled as effectively as possible by all agencies involved. We all must recognise that the way we drive ride or walk plays a huge part in avoiding us or our dependents becoming a road casualty." (Kent County Council Road Casualty Reduction Strategy 2014 updated 2017)

35. Over recent years the issue of road safety has been highlighted by borough residents as a key concern and one that has an impact on their choice of mode for travel. The personal injury crash statistics for the borough in 2017 are shown in the table below:

Table 3: Personal injury crash statistics for Tunbridge Wells Borough in 2017 (Source: Kent County Council crash data 2019)

Crash Type (2017)	Collisions	Casualties
Fatal	5	7
Serious	46	51
Slight	235	323
Total	286	381

36. Between 2016 and 2017 there was an overall increase in the number of casualties. This was a result of an increase in the number of pedestrian casualties and

particularly in the number of incidents involving older people (over 65 years). The target for the borough should be zero casualties (as adopted by other authorities).

37. The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) has identified three main factors behind incidents that cause death and injury on the road: the Environment (the road), the Machine (the vehicle) and the Road User Behaviour (the human). These are shown in the graphic below:

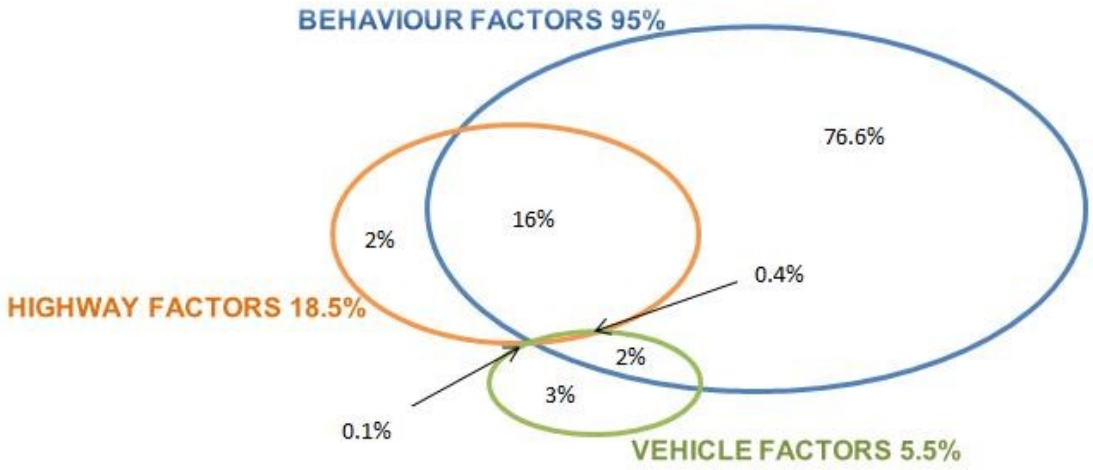

Figure 6: Factors involved in crashes (source: see Transport Research Laboratory)

38. The research shows that 2% of crashes are caused solely due to a poor road environment; 3% are solely due to vehicle failure; whilst 76.6% are solely due to the behaviour of the road user. When adding elements where poor road user behaviour mixes with a poor environment and/or a mechanical failure, it takes the human factor to 95% causation. Therefore, the key to improvements in road safety is changing the way that road users interact with their environment and their vehicle.

39. Kent County Council's approach to road safety is set out in the Kent Road Casualty Reduction Strategy 2014 (updated in 2017). The Strategy recognises the importance of influencing the road user through the '3 Es' of Education, Enforcement and Engineering. The County Council collects data in order to prioritise locations for safety schemes to address accident black spots.

40. Many towns and cities in the UK (for example Brighton and Edinburgh) have now adopted area-wide 20mph speed restrictions, as part of a package of measures to improve highway safety and encourage more walking and cycling. Kent County Council has recently reviewed its policy on the introduction of 20mph speed restrictions and will consider:

- if the speed restriction is likely to address several issues including reducing speeds, road crashes and improving the road environment for people walking and cycling;
- if there is clear evidence of local support which outweighs opposition; and

- all the factors affecting a road environment, not only the existing average speeds, for example public health indicators and air quality.

41. Some of the design and engineering measures that can be used to lower speeds include:

- signs and road markings;
- raising pedestrian crossing points, including at side road junctions (raised tables);
- widening footpaths and creating more space for cycling;
- removing the white line in the centre of the road or changing the surface of the road; and
- preventing rat running by closing road junctions to allow residential roads to be used by cyclists and pedestrians, and to keep through traffic on the main roads.

42. There is an active 20s Plenty action group in the borough and a number of 20mph schemes have been introduced recently including: Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre at Five Ways and on Mount Pleasant Road; in Speldhurst village; to the east of High Brooms station (Oak Road/Clifton Road); and in St Johns to the north of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre. Design work is currently underway for a 20mph scheme in Culverden also. These initiatives have been well supported by local residents, although there are still concerns about enforcement of limits. Community Speed Watch groups, that promote awareness of speeding vehicles and encourage positive driver behaviour are supported by the borough's Community Safety Unit and have been set up in some of the 20mph areas.

43. In the future, all vehicles may be fitted with intelligent speed assistance systems (ISA) which are intended to assist drivers to stay at the most appropriate speed for the road that they are on. ISAs operate by limiting engine power with information either from links to GPS satellite navigation technology or by a camera that can read speed limit signage. However, this technology is still developing at present and operational problems still remain. Once 5G connections are more widely available, the opportunity for vehicle to infrastructure communication becomes possible. This would allow signs and traffic lights, for example, to transmit information to vehicles.

Policy Aim: Eradicate deaths and serious injuries from the borough's transport network (a vision zero approach). Relevant Local Plan policies include STR6 Transport and Parking, STR7: Place Shaping and Design, TP2: Transport Design and Accessibility. Reference to speed restrictions in policies for Benenden (STR/BE1), Sandhurst (STR/SA1) and Speldhurst (AL/SP2).

Policy Implementation: Speed restrictions and associated engineering measures, remedial schemes for accident black spots, better maintenance of highways, improved infrastructure for walking and cycling, education programmes for road safety (for all users), community speed watch and other community involvement programmes, appropriate levels of police enforcement.

Traffic Dominance and Congestion

"While the rise of motor transport has brought substantial benefits high levels of car ownership and use have also brought serious challenges." (DfT Future of Mobility Urban Strategy 2018)

"Enabling and encouraging a shift from private motorised travel to more energy efficient modes requires systematic support for the very lowest energy methods of transport – walking cycling (including e-bikes and e-scooters) and public transport through investment programmes on both capital and revenue spending priority use of road space and an expansion of 'soft' or 'smarter' methods of encouraging behavioural change." (CREDS: Shifting the Focus Oxford University 2019)

44. Whilst motorised road transport provides benefits to many, including comfort and convenience, there is a cost to society. The dominance of the car as a mode of transport can lead to congestion, more road accidents, air and noise pollution. In addition, it contributes to climate change, reduces social cohesion and leads to less healthy lifestyles (see Sections 9 and 10).

45. It is recognised that residents living in the rural areas of the borough are more dependent on cars for many journeys, due to limited access to public transport and the greater travel distances to facilities (see Section 8 below). However, over the past 50 years car-centric development has led to many people becoming dependent on driving. Out of town businesses and retail parks have also contributed to this trend.

46. Peak hour congestion has been an issue for the borough for a number of years with some key routes suffering significant delays during the AM peak period in particular (the PM peak is generally spread over a wider time period). As already noted in Section 4, the A264 Pembury Road and the A26 London Road/St John's Road into Royal Tunbridge Wells both experience severe congestion during peak hours, as does the A229 at Hawkhurst.

47. Another problem linked to congestion is rat-running, often experienced on unsuitable residential streets, as a result of motorists trying to avoid delays on the more strategic routes. It is recognised that this is a concern for people living in the borough for example in streets off the A26. Rat-running can be addressed by introducing road closures for through traffic, whilst retaining local access and routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Both evidence-based studies and experience from elsewhere suggests that closing streets can lead to 'traffic evaporation' – a decrease in car use as a result of changes in mode or reduced travel overall. This has been the experience in the London Borough of Waltham Forest (visited by Councillors and Officers from KCC and TWBC in 2019).

48. There is a need to improve the efficiency of the road network in the future, in support of the growth to be delivered via the Local Plan. This will include new link roads, junction improvements and greater co-ordination of traffic signals for example. Nevertheless, it is not possible to build our way out of congestion, especially within existing urban areas with historic road layouts or in parts of the borough where the natural environment would suffer significant negative impacts.

49. Some of the developments in technology mentioned earlier, could assist in addressing the issue of car dominance. For example, automated vehicles are likely to drive more efficiently than people, leading to smoother traffic flows. If the introduction of automation is well managed, it could help tackle congestion and air pollution, improve connectivity and boost the local economy. It could also make urban areas more pleasant places to be, as well as increasing the convenience and affordability of travel and widening access to mobility for older people and those with disabilities. However, if not managed appropriately, automated mobility could worsen congestion and have negative public health outcomes.

50. In order to alleviate the problems associated with car dependency and traffic dominance there is a need to reduce car use overall, through facilitating modal shift towards walking, cycling and public transport use, car sharing or by travelling less for example through more home working and virtual meetings. With reference to this, the Kent Environment Strategy (Kent County Council 2016) acknowledges the importance of promoting smarter working through supporting investment in digital technologies that enable flexible working and workspaces.

51. Whilst recognising that the car will remain an important mode of travel for some journeys, this does not mean that measures to encourage modal shift for shorter journeys should not be implemented. This may require the reallocation of road space in some locations. It is notable that in other towns and cities where seemingly difficult decisions have been taken to reclaim road space from the car (for example in Waltham Forest), this has not led to increased congestion but to a decrease in car use and better streets for people to live in. This has generally been supported by local people and has resulted in benefits to the local economy.

Policy Aim: Plan to reduce the need to travel overall and where it is necessary, prioritise active travel and public transport as an alternative means of travel to the private car as set out in Local Plan Policy STR6: Transport and Parking and STR7: Place Shaping and Design and TP2: Transport Design and Accessibility.

Policy Implementation: Overall Local Plan development strategy and subsequent development management decisions, facilitate infrastructure for walking and cycling through preparation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and bidding for funding, consider schemes to reduce rat-running (filtered permeability measures), expansion of car club, explore options for congestion charging and parking charges and restrictions.

Public Transport

Bus

"Buses can move 70 people in the same amount of space taken up by about three cars. Many trips that people make by car which they may not want to make by foot or cycle can be switched to the bus." (Transport for London Mayor's Transport Strategy for London 2018)

52. The borough has a good network of buses within the urban areas. The best served routes in the borough include the A26 between Tonbridge and Royal Tunbridge Wells (Arriva services 7/402 providing a 10 minute frequency) and services from Rusthall through Royal Tunbridge Wells to High Brooms (Arriva Service 281 providing a 15 minute frequency). In addition, buses bring a high proportion of pupils to the many secondary schools in the borough. However, as an overall share by mode, usage is very low in the borough.

53. Approximately 95% of bus services in Tunbridge Wells borough are operated on a commercial basis and do not require local authority support. The remainder are either wholly or partly subsided by KCC, to provide 'socially necessary' services, particularly focused on rural areas and access to education.

54. The Council has a positive working relationship with the 9 bus operators that serve the borough, with regular meetings held to address current issues of concern and assist in the planning of future services. TWBC and KCC have signed a voluntary Quality Bus Partnership Agreement with the borough's principal commercial bus operator, Arriva, which commits all parties to invest jointly in local bus services and supporting infrastructure. One of the issues frequently raised by all the bus operators, is the lack of layover parking for drivers between journeys in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre when drivers need a break. A number of the operators now use the parking intended for coaches on London Road, as well as the bus stands in Meadow Road, but there is limited space available. This is an issue that

will need to be considered further if the transport strategy is seeking to support a greater modal shift to bus services from the car.

55. TWBC and KCC seek to support bus services through Section 106 agreements with developers where appropriate, particularly to get new services started in the expectation that they can become commercially viable over time as well as the provision of appropriate infrastructure such as bus shelters and seating.

56. Many of the bus companies in the borough are now seeking to innovate to attract more passengers and ensure that bus travel is an attractive travel alternative to the car. Recent innovations include on-vehicle contactless payment and mobile apps to enable passengers to access real time information about bus schedules. New vehicles have been introduced on some routes that are more comfortable, with services such as wifi and charging points on board. In addition, operators are running demand-responsive services in some locations e.g. Arriva Click in Sittingbourne. The cost of tickets remains an issue that impacts on this choice of mode (for example parking for a day in Royal Tunbridge Wells can be cheaper than a return bus ticket from Tonbridge to Royal Tunbridge Wells), not taking into account the whole cost of running a car.

57. A Study was undertaken in 2018 to consider the option of a Park & Ride bus service centred on Royal Tunbridge Wells (see the TWBC Park & Ride Feasibility Study). The study showed that park and ride services could work, particularly on the A264 Pembury Road and on the A26 south of the town centre. However, there was limited benefits in terms of journey times and the services would need long term financial subsidies (as is the case in many other locations in the UK).

58. Increasingly, Local Authorities are introducing Emissions Standards for the bus fleets. One consequence of this is that, as bus fleet operators use their newer, cleaner buses in areas where emissions standards have been introduced, they shift their older more polluting buses to the areas where no standards apply. TWBC therefore needs to ensure that appropriate standards are established so that the vehicles deployed in the borough are as clean as possible. Kent County Council has recently partnered with Renault Trucks to provide an electric minibus for the local charity Compaid's accessible transport services to for disabled and vulnerable people in the borough. It is the first pilot in KCC's sustainable transport approach, to assess the longer term financial and environmental benefits of electromobility. Later on in the year, KCC and the local bus operators will be trialling larger electric vehicles on some services in the borough.

Taxis

59. Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) can assist in tackling congestion and encourage sustainable travel by reducing the need for car ownership. They can also play an important role in providing access to services for rural residents and those who are unable to use conventional bus services (e.g. older people). The Council's Licensing Partnership is responsible for the regulation of the taxi trade within the

Borough and has recently commissioned a Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey. This work encompasses stakeholder consultation on the level of service provided by licensed vehicles in this area.

Rail

> *"Further growth in home working is likely to be embraced most by those who are otherwise most likely to be heavy rail users."* (Williams Rail Review Evidence Paper for Department of Transport 2019)

60. Rail services in the borough are operated primarily as part of the South Eastern Franchise, which is specified by the Department for Transport (DfT). The franchise is currently held by Southeastern and has been extended by direct award to November 2019, with a possible extension to April 2020. The west of the Borough also has access to services by Southern on the Oxted Line, from Ashurst station and the Medway Valley Line links Tonbridge (via Paddock Wood) to Maidstone and Strood, operated by a Community Rail Partnership.

61. The Council seeks to lobby the rail operators for improvements to services as opportunities arise and recently provided feedback to the consultation on the new rail franchise. Both Southeastern and Network Rail regularly attend the Tunbridge Wells Borough Public Transport Forum and report back on service performance and future plans.

62. As indicated in Section 2 levels of rail commuting in the borough remain high at present with all the stations and services busy at peak times. It is anticipated that the new franchise will bring with it new rolling stock that may provide additional capacity on board the existing services but the number of carriages per train on the Hastings line is constrained by the power supply to the south of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The new South Eastern franchise should also provide additional services on the Medway Valley Line making commuting by train from the borough to Maidstone a more attractive modal choice. However, Department for Transport franchise makes no requirement for improved services to Gatwick Airport which would be a significant benefit for commuters and passengers travelling to and from the airport.

63. Rail companies have also been introducing innovation in their services recently. Rail passengers have for a long time stated that they would like better information both about their normal services and particularly in times of disruption. As a result train operators are introducing digital real time information (on screens and via mobile applications for customers). This now includes letting passengers know the crowding levels on the train carriages so that they can stand at the best place on the platform, allowing for quicker boarding and helping people to find available seating. In addition, wifi is commonly available on trains and smart ticketing is becoming more widely available with ticketless travel likely to become the norm in the near future.

64. There is a need for improved bus-rail interchange in the borough, with many residents choosing to drive to rail stations from rural areas due to the poor levels of bus provision at present (Paddock Wood, Staplehurst and Marden for example). There have been recent improvements to cycle parking facilities at both Tunbridge Wells and High Brooms station and s106 funding has been agreed for improvements at Paddock Wood station. Lobbying is also required to achieve access improvements to the stations in the borough so that they are fully accessible to all those that wish to use the rail services. This is an issue at Tunbridge Wells and High Brooms.

65. The Government commissioned the Williams Rail Review in September 2018 to explore the role of rail in the future transport system of the country and the final report is due in autumn 2019 (see Williams Review – Rail in the Future Transport System). An initial evidence paper (May 2019) prepared as part of the review, confirms that due to flexible working, part time and self employment as well as more home working, the number of rail commuter journeys has decreased. In addition, increasing flexibility in working patterns in the future may lead to further reductions in peak time trips by train. This would improve the passenger experience with less over-crowding and could potentially reduce the need for increased capacity at peak times. On the other hand the share of leisure rail trips is increasing but these trips are much more likely to be spread across the day and week.

66. Whilst acknowledging areas of innovation by rail operators, the Williams evidence paper also recognises that while other modes of transport are changing quickly to accommodate customer's requirements, the rail sector is less flexible because if its long term assets including infrastructure and rolling stock as well as timetables and destinations. Some of these are difficult (or impossible) to change in the short term.

Policy Aim: Working with partners to achieve the best possible public transport services (rail, bus, car club, car share and taxi and Mobility as a Service) available to as many people as possible as set out in Local Plan policy STR6: Transport and Parking, STR7: Place Shaping and Design, TP2: Transport Design and Accessibility and TP5 Safeguarding Railway Land.

Policy Implementation: Overall Local Plan Development Strategy and subsequent development management decisions (including s106 agreements), lobbying and partnering with public transport operators, improved options for smart ticketing, improving bus stop infrastructure, bidding for funding to support public transport, facilitating new technology (MaaS), licensing of taxis and management of taxi ranks, accessibility at rail stations.

Rural Transport Issues

> *"It is far easier to change travel behaviour in urban areas."* (Gordon Stokes Transport and the Rural Economy Presentation Transport Studies Unit Oxford University 2016)
>
> *"On average people living in the most rural areas travel 45% further per year than those in England as a whole and 53% further than those living in urban areas."* (Action with Communities in Rural England website 2019)

67. It is recognised that rural areas of the borough have particular transport challenges to face. Rural bus services have seen a reduction in mileage in recent years, due to pressure on County Council budgets, and for those that do not have access to a car or other transport there is a danger of social exclusion, especially for young and older people.

68. KCC's recent Big Conversation consultation (2018) (see Big Conversation Feedback) which focused on rural bus services showed that 73% of respondents felt the availability of public transport restricted the places that they travelled to for the following reasons:

- Services were too infrequent;
- Timetabling doesn't cover early or late journey requirements or Sundays;
- Routes are not direct enough or there are too many changes;
- Use of travel passes is restricted to certain times of day;
- Walking distances to bus stops are too long; and
- Too expensive compared to other options.

69. The most important features of a rural transport network that were wanted by respondents were:

- a timetabled service;
- routes that are relevant;
- good links to the wider bus/train network; and
- prices cheaper than a one-off taxi journey.

70. As a result of this consultation, Kent County Council launched a number of rural transport pilots in Summer 2019 to assess the potential of Feeder Buses, Bookable and Taxi Bus services. The only part of Tunbridge Wells borough that is part of a pilot is Benenden (as part of the Tenterden Hopper Sevice). The impact of the pilot will be assessed by KCC after one year and these should provide evidence for services across the County in the future.

71. Some rural communities have set up Car Clubs. For example, Forest Row Parish Council (in partnership with Transition Forest Row) invested in car club vehicles

with the help of a grant from East Sussex County Council. The scheme provides an alternative to owning a car (or more than one car). It is run by the Parish Council, with the assistance of three volunteer co-ordinators. The club has three cars at present and runs successfully.

72. Another issue that is raised frequently by those living in the rural areas of the borough in particular is the increasing amount of Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGVs) traffic on unsuitable roads. This can lead to property damage, vibrations/noise and air pollution as well as congestion. The borough has a few well known hotspots for this such as the centre of Goudhurst village.

73. Kent County Council can consider the introduction of restrictions for HGVs whilst taking into account the:

- volume of HGV traffic;
- sensitivity of the area;
- population affected;
- level of HGV access required; and
- availability of suitable alternative routes.

74. The restriction options include environmental limits, structural weight/height limit, advisory signing and directional signing.

75. In addition, KCC is seeking to work with operators to ensure use of appropriate satnavs or route mapping that does not lead to HGVs choosing inappropriate routes. The KCC Freight Action Plan 2012 notes that "*unfortunately many of the Sat-Nav devices used by HGVs were designed for the use of cars and so do not consider restrictions such as weight, height and width limits.*" (see KCC Freight Action Plan for Kent 2012-2016). To seek to address this KCC has developed and adopted the Freight Journey Planner, an online mapping tool specific to HGVs that allows drivers to plan the most effective routes avoiding weight, width and height restricted routes. This tool is free to use for HGV companies and drivers. KCC also works with other mapping and satellite navigation companies to update mapping systems. Co-operation from haulage companies is required in this matter.

76. It is recognised that road safety on rural roads for walking and cycling is also an issue that discourages greater use of these modes, with limited pavements in some locations and few segregated rural cycle routes. Traffic speeds on the rural roads can also be a barrier to cycling and walking. Ensuring that local facilities are available within local communities can also cut down the need to use cars for some journeys.

Policy Aim: Pursue improvements to transport links in rural areas of the borough and conserve and enhance the rural lanes network to ensure that they are convenient and safe for users, as set out in Local Plan policies STR6: Transport and Parking and TP2: Transport Design and Accessibility. Support the rural economy and ensure access to facilities and services for rural communities as set out in ED9: Town and Rural Service Centres, ED12: Retention of local services and facilities within defined Neighbourhood and Village Centres.

Policy Implementation: Credible inter-urban public transport system (e.g. bus rapid transit), other innovative bus services (e.g. Demand Responsive) and community transport schemes for example car clubs, Mobility as a Service, maintenance of local facilities/services in rural areas, support move to low emission vehicles in rural areas, provide cycling and pavement/PROW infrastructure, provide inter-urban cycle routes for electric bikes, speed and access restrictions for HGV traffic on rural roads where required.

Environmental Issues

77. As stated at the start of this document, in July 2019 the Council passed a motion at Full Council, declaring its recognition of global climate and biodiversity emergencies and stated its intention to take action to meet the goal of making the borough carbon neutral by 2030. The approach to the Transport Strategy will need to recognise this.

Climate Change

"…. road transport contributes to a third of Kent's CO2 emissions and pollutants have negative effects on air quality in addition to noise and consequently on human health and the natural environment." (Kent County Council Kent Environment Strategy 2016)

78. Transport now accounts for 28% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions and is the largest emitting sector in the UK15. Cars, vans and HGVs are the three main sources of emissions. The Government has recently confirmed amendments to the Climate Change Act of 2008 that embed a 'Net Zero' carbon target by 2050 into legislation (following recommendations from the Committee on Climate Change (CCC). In its 2018 Progress Report to Parliament (see Progress Report), the CCC identifies a number of ways to reduce emissions including:

- improving conventional vehicle efficiency;
- encouraging a change to ultra-low emission vehicles or use of biofuels;
- measures to change travel behaviour; and
- increasing freight efficiency.

79. Progress on improving conventional vehicle efficiency has stalled in recent years because more people are driving larger vehicles. Sports Utility Vehicles now represent 18% of car sales compared to nearly 8% in 2010 (CCC 2018)15. The 2019 CREDS report Shifting the Focus: energy demand in a net-zero carbon UK, suggests that the availability of larger vehicles may need to be reduced in the future or their use restricted in certain locations.

80. The Government has announced ambitions to end sales of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040, but sales of low emission cars in the UK fell for the first time in more than two years between June 2018 and 2019 (see BBC News 2019). This may be partly due to the removal of subsidies by the Government which were scrapped for plug-in hybrids and reduced for battery electric vehicles. In addition, low emission vehicle purchase prices remain high which also has a negative effect on uptake (although running costs are much lower) and there remains a lack of a nationwide network of charging points. Another factor that is affecting sales is a lack of clarity about new fuel types and the impact of future regulations on the value of vehicles for resale.

81. A national charging network, including both topping-up and rapid charging facilities, is essential to accelerate a significant increase in the take up of electric vehicles. In acknowledgement of this, Kent County Council is preparing an Electric Vehicle Strategic Action Plan (as part of the Kent & Medway Energy and Low Emission Strategy). In addition, guidance on parking will be updated in the new Kent Design Guide.

82. TWBC has been encouraging and facilitating the introduction of charging points through the planning process and through provision in the Council's own car parks. There are rapid charging points in the Great Hall and Crescent Road car parks in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre and the Council's Guidance Note for Applicants (2018) provides developers with information on standards (see TWBC Electric Vehicle Charging Guidance). Reference to parking standards are also set out in the new Local Plan (Appendix B).

83. Most electric vehicle owners will charge their cars at home and some at their workplaces. However, many residential areas in the borough do not have off-street parking, presenting a barrier to plug-in vehicle adoption. TWBC and KCC will need to work together to identify suitable locations for on-street charging and attract inward investment to deliver an appropriate level of electric vehicle charging capacity in these streets. In addition, there will be a need to facilitate the provision of charging infrastructure in other locations e.g. petrol stations or car parks.

84. The Tunbridge Wells Car Club already provides its members with access to low emission and hybrid vehicles and has proved very popular as a type of car sharing. There are five Co-Wheels cars located in and around Royal Tunbridge Wells in their own dedicated car parking space in:

- Grove Hill Road
- Mount Ephraim Road

- Mount Pleasant Road – near the Town Hall
- Mount Pleasant Road – north of the railway station
- Quarry Road

85. In Royal Tunbridge Wells suitable locations are being identified to expand the car club, for example in the Pantiles/High Street area, St Johns and Hawkenbury.

86. Local government needs to play its part in encouraging a change to lower emission vehicles and some towns and cities in the UK are planning to take a robust policy approach. For example, Oxford City Council is consulting on banning non zero-emitting cars, taxis, vans and buses from using certain areas of the city from 2020 and then expanding ban to the whole city and including HGVs in the restrictions by 2035.

Policy Aim: All sustainable modes of transport including active travel, public transport and electric vehicles will be facilitated to reduce dependence on emissions-producing private vehicles, as set out in Local Plan Policy STR6: Transport and Parking and TP2: Transport Design and Accessibility .

Policy Implementation: Network of EV charging points, expand car club, provide infrastructure for walking and cycling, fiscal measures to encourage move to low emission vehicles (e.g. via parking charges), dedicated or free parking spaces for those using a car club.

Air Quality

"What, then, can be done about air pollution? The authors cite the three pillar solution known as 'Avoid Shift Improve': avoid means cutting out motorised travel altogether; shift means getting people to switch from high polluting modes to low polluting ones; and improve is about reducing the harmful environmental impacts of vehicle technology."
(RAC Foundation Report: Air Quality and Road Transport 2014)

87. Air pollution impacts on public health, the natural environment, and the economy. It is well known that long term exposure to high levels of air pollution can have potentially serious health implications, including contributing to cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and respiratory diseases. Poor air quality affects everyone but it has a disproportionate impact on the young and the old, the sick and less affluent people.

88. There is a link between places with congestion and those with poor air quality. A stop-start traffic flow produces more emissions and this is exacerbated in areas with taller buildings that prevent air movement. Transport is widely recognised as one of the biggest causes of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution and particulate matter (PM10) in town centres.

89. The Council has been measuring air pollution for many years, to fulfil statutory obligations under the Environment Act 1990. The pollutants monitored in the Borough are NO2 and PM10. The A26 corridor has suffered from poor air quality over a number of years and has been designated an Air Quality Management Zone. However, in recent years there has been a downward trend in pollution levels and the Council is committed to continuing the improvements. The Council adopted a new Air Quality Action Plan in March 2019 to ensure that air quality continues to improve further (view the Air Quality Action Plan).

90. The Tunbridge Wells Air Quality Action Plan sets out the following aims:

- To ensure that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is complying with relevant air quality legislation;
- To achieve a higher standard of air quality across Tunbridge Wells borough;
- To engage with partners and colleagues including those representing Highways and Transportation, Public Health, Economic Development, local Bus Companies, and other relevant stakeholders, to improve air quality across the borough; and
- To build on previous work in this area in order to drive further improvements in air quality with the ultimate aim of being able to revoke the Air Quality Management Area.

91. The Action Plan sets out a number of measures that will help to achieve these aims, including supporting modal shift to sustainable transport and walking and cycling for shorter journeys (thereby reducing the number of vehicles on the road), improving the flow of traffic on the road network and encouraging the use of cleaner vehicles. The Plan recognises that merely relying on technological change and cleaner vehicles alone will not achieve overall good air quality or reduce congestion, nor will it deliver the co-benefits of improved physical well-being by incorporating physical activity into daily life through active travel (see Section 10 below).

92. The Council has recently launched an anti-idling campaign to coincide with Clean Air Day (20 June 2019). This initiative aims to encourage everyone who needs to drive, to switch off their vehicle engines when they are stationary. The campaign will be rolled out over the coming year and will include placing posters and banners designed by school children at key locations across the borough and other awareness raising events.

Policy Aim: Improve Air Quality across the borough as set out in Local Plan Policy EN23: Air Quality and EN24 Air Quality Management Areas, also STR6: Transport and Parking and TP2 Transport Design and Accessibility. See also Air Quality Action Plan.

Policy Implementation: Develop network of EV charging points, expansion of car club, provide infrastructure for walking and cycling, fiscal measures to encourage low emission vehicles (parking charges) including buses and cars, education/campaigns, air quality signs to discourage idling and monitor emissions.

Public Health

"Walking and cycling are good for our physical and mental health. Switching more journeys to active travel will improve health, quality of life and the environment, and local productivity, while at the same time reducing costs to the public purse. These are substantial 'win wins' that benefit individual people and the community as a whole."
(Public Health England, Working Together to Promote Active Travel 2016)

93. Public Health England (PHE) has provided guidance to local authorities on the policy approach that should be taken to transport19. The following key messages are highlighted for those seeking to develop a healthy local transport strategy including:

- physical inactivity directly contributes to 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and costs £7.4 billion a year to business and wider society;
- the growth in road transport has been a major factor in reducing levels of physical activity and increasing obesity;
- building walking or cycling into daily routines are the most effective ways to increase physical activity;
- short car trips (under 5 miles) are a prime area for switching to active travel and to public transport; and
- health-promoting transport systems are pro-business and support economic prosperity. They enable optimal travel to work with less congestion, collisions, pollution, and they support a healthier workforce

94. The figure below summarises some of the effects that road transport has on health and quality of life, both direct and indirect.

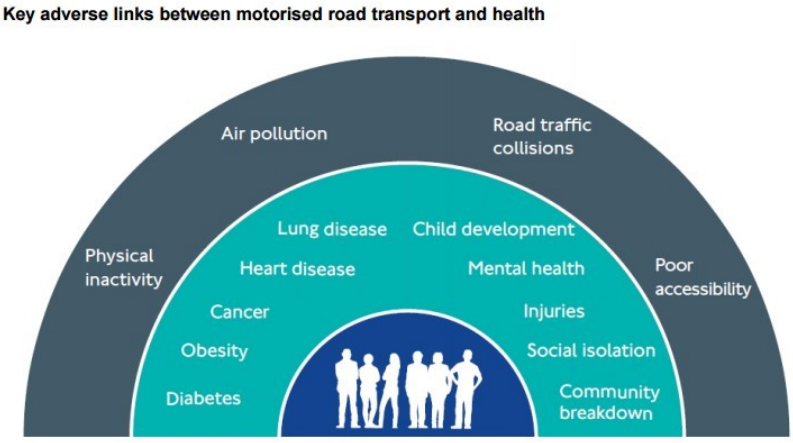

Figure 7: (source: see Public Health England, working Together To Promote Active Travel, 2016)

95. Travelling to work presents one of the main opportunities to incorporate activity into a typical day and many people's commute contains stages that could be walked or cycled. Transport for London research has estimated that by mode of travel, the amount of time spent being physically active during an average journey is as follows:

- by car <1 minute
- by public transport 8–15 minutes
- on foot 17 minutes
- by bicycle 22 minutes (Source: see Mayor's Transport Strategy for London 2018)

96. The infrastructure to encourage active commuting should be facilitated by local authorities and funding will be required from central government (for example via the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2017) (view the DfT Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy). To date there has been very limited ring-fenced funding for walking and cycling for towns, with funding awards mainly going to cities.

Policy Aim: Prioritise all options of active travel to support an improvement in general public health (see Local Plan para 4.59), Policy STR6: Transport and Parking, Policy TP2 Transport Design and Accessibility.

Policy Implementation: Overall Local Plan Development Strategy and subsequent development management decisions, provide infrastructure to facilitate active travel choices: routes, parking and changing facilities, signing and maps for routes, preparation of LCWIP and bid for funding, educational/promotional campaigns.

Active Travel

"Active Travel – journeys made through physical activity of the human body – can bring many benefits to health and wellbeing the economy and the climate. Kent faces a number of challenges in coming years and declining levels of physical activity and an increase in traffic on the roads are two that will have a major impact on the life of residents in the county." (Kent County Council Kent Active Travel Strategy 2016)

97. Active travel means walking or cycling as an alternative to motorised transport (notably cars) for the purpose of making everyday journeys. Earlier sections of this report have provided evidence of the need for more journeys to be taken on foot or by bike, particularly shorter journeys (under 5km).

98. The Kent Active Travel Strategy 2016 (view the Active Travel Strategy) sets out the main reasons that people give for not making short journeys using active travel, including:

- a perceived lack of suitable continuous routes between homes and community services, workplaces or schools;
- not enough promotion of existing routes;
- a lack of facilities such as lockers and secure bicycle parking, obstacles in cycle lanes and in footways;
- perception of safety when walking and cycling;
- the convenience of using a car, especially to carry heavy or bulky loads; and
- the need to make linked trips such as a school drop-off on the way to work.

99. Given these significant barriers, in order to facilitate active travel, pedestrians, cyclists, and users of other transport that involve physical activity will need to take the highest priority within a future transport strategy.

100. In many parts of the borough there is a good walking network with pavements available for many journeys. However, a series of walking audits around Royal Tunbridge Wells have identified that even in urban areas improvements are required to make walking an easier choice for short journeys from residential areas into the town centre. These route audits are being used to inform the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan that is being prepared for the borough (view the DfT Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan: Technical Guidance). Examples of improvements that are needed (many of them relatively small scale) include:

- additional or improved pedestrian crossings;
- replacing broken or uneven paving stones and resurfacing footways;
- improving street lighting;
- widening footways and removing street clutter;
- reducing traffic speeds;
- providing or improving dropped kerbs and tactile paving;
- discouraging footway parking; and
- provision of benches.

101. As indicated above, evidence from across the UK suggests that there is a high level of unmet demand from those who wish to cycle some journeys, but owing to barriers and/or perceived barriers do not do so (see Chartered Institute for Highways and Transportation: Planning for Cycling). The consultation for the 2015 Borough Cycling Strategy showed that the primary barrier to bike use for travel was the lack of cycling infrastructure and the fear of traffic on the roads (see Borough Cycling Strategy 2016-2020).

102. Unfortunately, the cycling infrastructure in the borough remains very poor with a number of sub-standard and discontinuous routes and no coherent overall network. There have been some recent improvements including the delivery of the A21

segregated route between North Farm/Pembury and Tonbridge and the associated link to Tunbridge Wells Hospital, but the reality of delivering cycling infrastructure in the borough remains challenging for a number of reasons including:

- Limited highway space available to provide segregated infrastructure;
- Lack of ring-fenced funding for cycling infrastructure;
- Achieving stakeholder (including political) buy-in for difficult design decisions e.g. reallocation of road space; and
- Access to appropriate expertise in the design of next-generation cycling infrastructure .

103. Improving cycling infrastructure will therefore require innovative design solutions but also commitment by all stakeholders. Priority routes will be set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and opportunities will be taken to bid for funding for cycling infrastructure as these arise.

104. The take up of electric bikes is increasing as prices fall and this will allow people to travel longer distances, making inter-urban trips possible for many, for example between Royal Tunbridge Wells and Paddock Wood, if appropriate infrastructure is provided.

Policy Aim: Prioritise infrastructure for journeys taken on foot or on bike rather than by car (particularly shorter journeys) as set out in Local Plan Policy STR6: Transport and Parking, STR7: Place Shaping and Design, TP2 Transport Design and Accessibility and TP3 Parking Standards.

Policy Implementation: Walking and cycling priority modes in new developments and future masterplanning, improve walk/cycle/public transport interchanges, retrofit cycling infrastructure into existing network where possible, speed restrictions to make walking and cycling safer e.g. 20mph, better PROW and pavement maintenance.

Parking

"*Parking policy, whether in terms of levels of provision or regulation of on or off-street parking, can have significant effects in influencing transport choices and addressing congestion. It can also affect patterns of development and play an important part in the economic success and liveability of places, particularly town centres."* (Greater London Authority, The London Plan 2016)

105. Parking availability and cost is a key issue that is raised by borough residents and businesses on a frequent basis. High levels of car ownership have led to a demand for more and more parking spaces both at people's homes, in residential streets

and in places of work, as well as in high streets, at stations and at other trip attractors, for example leisure facilities.

106. Many residential streets in the urban areas of the borough have limited off-street parking availability particularly in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, High Brooms and Paddock Wood. Some of the borough's streets are filled with parked vehicles throughout the day and night. Pavement parking is also a barrier to walking in many of the more car-crowded residential streets.

107. A balance needs to be struck between the competing demands for roadside space. Local authorities have a duty to preserve the fundamental purpose of a highway to keep traffic flowing efficiently. Tension can be created as the Council seeks to provide sufficient parking for shoppers and visitors in town centres (in addition to those who live and work in these areas) without encouraging unnecessary trips by car that could be made by more sustainable modes. Controlled parking zones are a management tool that have been introduced in a number of areas to restrict parking to residents-only during certain times of the day in order to improve the local environment and restrict commuter parking in places where it has become problematic.

108. Parking standards for new developments will be set out in the new Local Plan and will seek to ensure that there is not an adverse impact on surrounding areas from parking relating to the development. Safe and secure cycle parking provision within all new residential development will be required at the minimum standards outlined within Kent County Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 4 on Vehicle Parking Standards (see SPG 4) or in later guidance if superseded (as stated in Local Plan Policy TP3).

109. The Council has 12 off-street parking facilities in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre and another nine across town and village centres in the borough. These car parks need to be managed in line with the overall transport strategy, and the pricing policy for these must be considered in relation to supporting high street businesses whilst again not encouraging unnecessary car trips. At present, there is sufficient capacity to meet demand in most of the car parks in the borough except on some days in the town centres at Christmas time.

110. The need for a network of electric charging points in the borough has already been noted, both on and off-street. Once a comprehensive network is in place the promotion of lower cost parking permits for vehicles with low emissions and/or those vehicles that occupy less road space could be considered as a policy approach. In other towns or cities, the option of a workplace parking levy has been introduced or is being explored.

111. Parking spaces are also required to expand the borough Co-Wheels Car Club. It is notable that each car club vehicle can displace approximately 6 private vehicles from the network and therefore alleviate pressures on parking in local residential areas.

112. New technology is already making a significant difference to parking management. Firstly, advances in car park machinery have enabled more payment options to be provided to the customer. For example, in borough car parks there are options to pay by phone and check in/out with contactless payments. In addition, the adoption of virtual parking permits allows more efficient management of the permit system. Secondly, increasingly sophisticated ways of conveying information to drivers about the availability of parking space both on and off-street are being developed and it is expected that there will be much further progress in this field in the near future.

113. The Council will be preparing a Parking Policy Review that will support the Transport Strategy and other relevant strategies and policies whilst remaining fully compliant with all relevant legislation. In addition, Parking Standards for new developments will be set out in the Local Plan.

114. Parking policy choices are complex and experts suggest that further research is needed in the UK as a whole about how people respond to parking policy interventions in relation to local circumstances such as the availability of alternative transport modes or the distance to alternative destinations. Decisions about parking policy will be critical in delivering some of the other policy aims in the Transport Strategy.

Policy Aim: Traffic and car parking will be carefully managed through developing innovative strategies that will both provide a sufficient level of parking in the borough as well as encourage sustainable travel (Local Plan Policy STR6: Transport and Parking. Further details in Local Plan Policy TP3: Parking Standards (including cycle parking) and TP4: Public Car Parks.

Policy Implementation: Preparation of Parking Strategy/Policy Paper, parking standards set out in Local Plan, Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) in appropriate locations, parking permit management and charging tariff (on and off-street), tariffs in off-street car parks, new technology to manage car parks.

Transport Funding

115. Funding for transport infrastructure is available from a number of sources but it is limited. Further information is shown in the table below:

Table 4: Funding sources for transport infrastructure and services

Source	Name of funding	Purpose of funding	Project funded in Tunbridge Wells borough	Area available
Local Enterprise Partnerships (South East LEP)	Local Growth Fund (LGF)	Capital grant funding programme for infrastructure related to growth (includes education & skills, community infrastructure, drainage as well as transport). Aimed at delivering new homes and jobs. Requires match funding and delivery within a short time frame.	Yew Tree Road and Speldhurst Road junction capacity improvements (2015)	SELEP (Kent, East Sussex, Essex)
Local Enterprise Partnerships (South East LEP)	West Kent Local Sustainable Transport Fund	Capital grant funding programme for infrastructure related to growth (includes education & skills, community infrastructure, drainage as well as transport). Aimed at delivering new homes and jobs. Requires match funding and delivery within a short time frame.	• A26 cycle route design • Cycle Parking at Tunbridge Wells Station • New pedestrian signage in Royal Tunbridge Wells • Public Realm works on Mount Pleasant Road (currently on site)	West Kent
Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)	Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)	Government capital grant programme. Funding awarded to local authorities on a highly competitive basis, providing grant funding for new infrastructure that will unlock new homes in the areas of greatest housing demand. Requires match funding and	No HIF funding awarded to date.	National

Source	Name of funding	Purpose of funding	Project funded in Tunbridge Wells borough	Area available
		delivery within a short time frame.		
Department for Transport	Major Roads Network Programme	The MRN's purpose is to: • Reduce congestion • Support economic growth • Support housing delivery • Support all road users • Support the Strategic Road Network	Colts Hill Pre Strategic Outline Business Case proforma submitted in May 2019. Outcome not yet known.	National
Department for Transport	Local Pinch Point Fund (available periodically)	Used to fund improvement to transport infrastructure to remove bottlenecks on the local highway network which impede growth.	Successful bid for funding for Longfield Road improvements, scheme now implemented.	National
Department for Transport	Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)	For authorities that have published a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Funding can be used for improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure (currently the majority of funding has been targeted towards cities).	Funding announcements from CWIS yet to be made.	National

Source	Name of funding	Purpose of funding	Project funded in Tunbridge Wells borough	Area available
Department for Transport/Developer Funding	Rail Infrastructure	Network Rail invites investors to work with them to deliver 'enhancements' to the rail network. (Network Rail budgets are reserved for operational and maintenance issues).	e.g. Brighton Main Line 2 proposal	National
Kent County Council	Local Transport Plan funding	Small scale transport improvements and routine maintenance (has recently been top sliced for the Local Growth Fund)	Some studies and design work for local authorities	Kent
Kent County Council	Combined Members Grant	County Councillors are allocated £25,000 per year for small scale transport improvement/community projects.	St John's area and Banner Farm Estate 20mph speed restrictions.	Kent
Parish Councils	Parish precept (allocated by TWBC from Council Tax receipts.	Parish councils have a wide range of powers but work with KCC Highways on transport matters.	Speldhurst 20mph speed restrictions.	Tunbridge Wells Parishes
Developer funding	Section 106 Agreements (negotiated under the Town and Country Planning Act).	Mitigate the impact of new developments on the highway. This is either through:	A variety of transport initiatives have been funded through s106 agreements including bus service improvements (at	New developments in the borough of over 10 houses

Source	Name of funding	Purpose of funding	Project funded in Tunbridge Wells borough	Area available
		• Section 278 Agreement with KCC (an approved contractor undertakes works on behalf of KCC) • Section 106 Agreement with TWBC/KCC (developer makes a funding contribution to either body at an agreed trigger point). Can be used for Capital or Revenue projects.	Knights Wood and in Hawkhurst).	
Developer funding	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	Tariff based approach through planning policy, charged on extent of new floor space proposed. Can fund strategic infrastructure on various scales.	TWBC to make a decision on the adoption of CIL in the near future.	All development in the borough

Appendices

Appendix A: Reference Documents

1. TWBC Full Council Motion (July 2019)

   http://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s43943/11%20Alternative%20Motion.pdf

2. Census Data

   https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census

3. Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions, Oxford University Centre for the Environment: Shifting the Focus: Energy Demand in a net-zero carbon UK (July 2019)

   https://www.creds.ac.uk/publications/shifting-the-focus-energy-demand-in-a-net-zero-carbon-uk/

4. Economic Needs Study, Turley 2016

   http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/134238/Economic-Needs-Study_Final-Report-with-appendices-min2.pdf

5. Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy, Moving Britain Forward (March 2019)

   https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786654/future-of-mobility-strategy.pdf

6. Mobility as a Service (MaaS) in the UK: change and its implications Foresight, Government Office for Science (December 2018)

   https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/766759/Mobilityasaservice.pdf

7. National Planning Policy Framework (Update 2019)

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8. Transport for London – The Benefits of Walking and Cycling

   https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2018/november/getting-more-people-walking-and-cycling-could-help-save-our-high-streets

9. Living Streets – The Pedestrian Pound: the business case for better streets and places

   https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3890/pedestrian-pound-2018.pdf

10. TRL Link

    www.trl.co.uk/research_development/intelligent_transport/human_factors

11. TWBC Park & Ride Feasibility

http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/211547/7300F8E3E5A10D60E0531401A8C0C6BC_Tunbridge_Wells_Park_and_Ride_Feasibility_Study_Final_Report_June_2018.pdf

12. Williams Review – Rail in the Future Transport System

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/802472/rail-in-the-future-transport-system.pdf

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https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/bigconversation/consultationHome

14. KCC Freight Action Plan for Kent 2012 – 2016

https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/6105/Freight-action-plan.pdf

15. Commission on Climate Change 2018: Progress Report to Parliament

https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-uk-emissions-2018-progress-report-to-parliament/

16. BBC News 2019

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-48865702

17. TWBC Electric Vehicle Charging Guidance

http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/279106/Electric_Vehicle_Charging_Points_for_New_Development_Guidance_Note_for_Applicants-2018Dec2018-v6.pdf

18. TWBC Air Quality Action Plan 2019

http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/276060/Air_Quality_Action_Plan__2018_to_2023_Tunbridge_Wells_Borough_Council_final.pdf

19. Public Health England: Active Travel: a Briefing for Local Authorities (May 2016)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523460/Working_Together_to_Promote_Active_Travel_A_briefing_for_local_authorities.pdf

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22. Kent County Council: Kent Active Travel Strategy (2016)

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24. Chartered Institute for Highways and Transportation:

    https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/4461/ciht_-_planning_for_cycling_proof_v2_singles.pdf

25. TWBC Borough Cycling Strategy 2016 – 2020

    http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/132207/6FB057F542A07AF9E0531401A8C01B6A_Final_Cycling_Strategy_2016-20.pdf

26. Kent County Council Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006: Supplementary Planning Guidance 4

    http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/88984/Kent-and-Medway-Structure-Plan-2006-SPG4-Vehicle-Parking-Standards.pdf

Other Background Documents

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28. Department for Transport: A Strategic Framework for Road Safety 2011

    https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8146/strategicframework.pdf

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    https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/FINAL-Economic-Connectivity-Review.pdf

Kent County Council Plans & Strategies

30. Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth Without Gridlock 2016 – 31 (2016)

    https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/72668/Local-transport-plan-4.pdf

31. Rail Action Plan for Kent (2011)

    https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/13811/rail-action-plan-for-kent.pdf

32. Road Casualty Reduction Strategy 2014 (Update 2017)

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33. Kent Environment Strategy 2016

    https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/10676/KES_Final.pdf

34. Kent Energy & Low Emissions Strategy (Draft 2019)

    https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/energyandlowemissionconsultation/consultationHome

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Plans & Strategies

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    http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/53291/Five-Year-Plan-2017-2022.pdf

36. Regulation 18 Draft Tunbridge Wells Local Plan 2019

    http://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/meetings/documents/b50012522/Supplement%20-%20High%20resolution%20version%20of%20Appendix%20A%2005th-Aug-2019%2018.30%20Planning%20and%20Transportation.pdf?T=9

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43. Transport Studies Unit (University of Oxford) – Gordon Stokes

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44. RAC Foundation 2014

https://www.racfoundation.org/assets/rac_foundation/content/downloadables/racf_ricardo_aea_air_quality_report_hitchcock_et_al_june_2014.pdf

Appendix B: Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Please see the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan on the Supporting Documents page of the Local Plan website at https://beta.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/local-plan/evidence

Appendix C: Local Plan Transport Assessment Report 2019 (prepared by Sweco)

Please see the Transport Assessment under the Transport & Infrastructure tab on the Supporting Documents page of the Local Plan website at https://beta.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/local-plan/evidence

If you require this document in another format, please contact:

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