

Position Statement

Between

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

And

Kent County Council Highways

In respect of

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan

November 2024



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Position Statement is a jointly agreed statement between Kent County Council Highways (KCC) and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), hereafter referred to as “the parties”, in relation to the examination of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (TWLP). KCC is responsible for the safety, reliability and operational efficiency of the Local Highway Network.
- 1.2 It takes account of the continued development of the TWLP following the receipt of the Inspector’s Initial Findings in November 2022 and the work undertaken by TWBC in association with KCC (and National Highways) to resolve matters of soundness that were raised.
- 1.3 The TWLP was submitted for examination in November 2021, with Stage 1 and 2 Hearings taking place between March and July 2022. The submission was supported by a signed Statement of Common Ground between the parties dated 11 July 2022 [[CD Reference PS_032](#)] which sets out the agreed work undertaken up to the submission of the TWLP.
- 1.4 This Position Statement relates solely to the work undertaken by consultants on behalf of TWBC in discussions with KCC on the Council’s response to the Inspector’s Initial Findings and does not duplicate settled matters that have been agreed in the earlier SOCG between the parties on unchanged matters in the TWBC Submission Local Plan, referenced at para 1.3 above.

2.0 Overview of the Inspector's Initial Findings

- 2.1 Following Examination hearing sessions during March - July 2022, the Inspector wrote to the Council in November 2022 setting out his ["Initial findings"](#) on the Submission Local Plan (SLP).
- 2.2 The principal issues that bear upon the Local Plan's overall development strategy relative to highways matters related to:
- the need for further consideration to be given to a range of issues in relation to the proposal for a new settlement at Tudeley Village (SLP allocation STR/SS 3), and to alternative ways forward, as posited by the Inspector (Inspector's letter paragraphs 9 – 38);
 - the need to give further consideration to an option for strategic growth at Paddock Wood and land in east Capel that does not involve building on land within higher risk flood zones (Inspector's letter paragraphs 39 – 52).
- 2.3 The Council set out in detail the matters pertinent to the Inspector's Findings and the consequential impacts upon the Local Plan within the [Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum](#) (January 2024). This was informed by a range of evidence, including updated transport evidence which KCC was engaged with during preparation. This was presented to members, who formally agreed to accept the recommended future strategy to propose to delete the allocation for Tudeley Village and adopt an alternative growth strategy for Paddock Wood.

3.0 The response to the Initial Findings in respect of highways

3.1 The following documents form the additional work (following the Initial Findings letter) carried out by the Council and which has been proactively discussed and agreed between the parties: -

- Tunbridge Wells Public Transport Feasibility Study Review ([PS 040](#))
- Paddock Wood Bus Service Options ([PS 041](#))
- TW Stage 1 Technical Note - Review of Strategic Modelling ([PS 047](#)) (August 2023)
- TW Local Plan Stage 2 - Reporting ([PS 048](#)) (August 2023)
- TW Local Plan Stage 3 - Modal Shift Impact Reporting ([PS 049](#)) (September 2023)
- RAG Assessment (PS_050) (October 2023)
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility - Colts Hill Bypass (PS_052) (October 2023)
- Provisions of Sustainable Travel ([PS 053](#)) (November 2023)
- SWECO Strategic Transport Assessment ([PS 103](#)) (April 2024)
- Modal Shift Analysis Technical Note ([PS 100](#)) (April 2024)
- Strategic Transport Assessment Addendum ([PS 104](#)) (June 2024)
- A264 Pembury Road corridor – Junction capacity assessment ([PS 101](#)) (June 2024)
- Junction Hotspot Comparison ([PS 102](#)) (June 2024)
- Introductory Note to Highway Modelling Reports ([PS 099](#)) (September 2024)

3.2 KCC have been a key party in the production of the above documents and direct liaison and feedback has been sought throughout their production. This has allowed any matters of clarification to be sought and resolutions agreed so that a mutually agreeable way forward can be achieved.

3.3 Discussions have continued between the parties in the spirit of collaborative working on a number of aspects. This includes the most recent assessment documents which are subject to the Local Plan Consultation of September 2024.

- 3.4 The parties intend to continue collaborative working concerning any further work in the interests of ensuring the most appropriate outcomes in respect of the highway network and the strategic growth proposed in the Local Plan.
- 3.5 Table 1(below) summarises the additional transport-related work supporting the Council's response to the Inspector's Initial Findings and KCC's engagement and current position. This highlights constructive engagement between both parties.

Table 1: Engagement with KCC on Additional Transport Evidence

Highways Evidence	Engagement	Updated Position
Strategic Transport Assessment: Modelling Appraisal (PS_103)	KCC engaged during preparation, including review and feedback on model	KCC satisfied with outcomes subject to inclusion of identified 'hotspot' junctions in Monitor & Manage Strategy & IDP. <u>TWBC Response</u> – Comments noted. A Monitor and Manage approach is embedded within the IDP and a specific Monitor and Manage policy will be incorporated into the Local Plan through the Main Modifications process.
Modal Shift Analysis (PS_100)	KCC engaged during preparation	KCC satisfied with outcomes
Junction Hotspot Comparison (PS_102)	KCC engaged during preparation	KCC satisfied with outcomes subject to inclusion of identified 'hotspot' junctions in Monitor & Manage Strategy & IDP. <u>TWBC Response</u> – Comments noted. As outlined above regarding Monitor and Manage.
Pembury Road corridor – Junction capacity assessment (PS_101)	KCC engaged during preparation	KCC satisfied with outcomes subject to inclusion of identified 'hotspot' junctions in

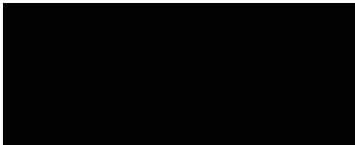
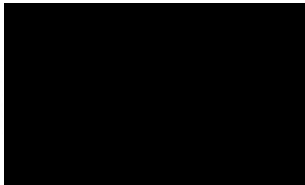
Highways Evidence	Engagement	Updated Position
		Monitor & Manage Strategy & IDP. <u>TWBC Response</u> – Comments noted. As outlined above regarding Monitor and Manage.
Strategic Transport Assessment Addendum (PS_104)	KCC engaged during preparation	KCC satisfied with outcomes
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (PS_105)	KCC engaged during update to the Plan (<i>at various stages including prior to hearings and formal consultation</i>)	This will need updating to reflect the additional transport evidence and the bus studies. See KCC consultation response 23/10/24 regarding PS 105. <u>TWBC Response</u> – Comments noted. Further updates to the IDP will be incorporated through the mods process.
Highway Modelling Reports (PS_099)	KCC engaged during preparation	KCC satisfied with outcomes
Policy STR/SS1 – The Strategy for Paddock Wood including land at east Capel	KCC engaged during the update to the policy	The policy needs to refer to Monitor & Manage and infrastructure and bus service improvements. See KCC consultation response 23/10/24 page 2 regarding PS 095. <u>TWBC Response</u> – Comments noted. Further updates to the policy will be incorporated through the mods process. However, the M&M strategy will be incorporated into a specific standalone policy and so it is not necessary to duplicate this within policy SS1.

4.0 Future working

4.1 Both TWBC and KCC agree to continue to work together effectively and positively on transportation matters. Both parties are committed to continued collaborative working to ensure the Local Plan delivers sustainable growth supported by the necessary highway infrastructure at the right place and the right time within the borough.

5.0 Signatories

6.1 This statement has been prepared and agreed by the following organisations:

<div><div>Tunbridge Wells Borough Council</div><div>Signature</div><div></div><div>William Benson, Chief Executive</div><div>Date: 13 November 2024</div></div>	<div><div>Kent County Council Highways</div><div>Signature</div><div></div><div>Simon Jones, Corporate Director – Growth, Environment & Transport</div><div>Date: 14 November 2024</div></div>
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