Tunbridge Wells Borough

CYCLING STRATEGY
2016 – 2020

Prepared by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
in partnership with Kent County Council

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Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Contents

Foreword

We all strive for health and happiness, both for our families and for ourselves. We want to live and work in green, healthy and prosperous communities and create a more sustainable and safe environment for future generations.

We are fortunate that Tunbridge Wells Borough already enjoys many of these attributes, offering some of the UK's most beautiful buildings, landscapes and open spaces, together with a buoyant economy and a vibrant social and cultural scene. Yet as a popular retail and leisure destination in a well-connected part of the country, Royal Tunbridge Wells suffers especially from congested roads and poor air quality, which have a negative impact on our quality of life and our health.

There is, however, an alternative. When more people cycle or walk, the health of the population improves and our roads become safer and less congested. This in turn, presents opportunities to create more pleasant public spaces and to reduce traffic dominance, on-street parking and the severance that busy roads create.

That is why Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, together with our partners at Kent County Council, has prepared this Strategy, to deliver our vision *'To make cycling a normal part of everyday life in the borough, by creating a safe and welcoming environment for cyclists of all ages and abilities'.* To achieve this, we do not underestimate the scale of the challenge before us. Cycling rates in Tunbridge Wells are currently very low due to a range of actual and perceived barriers including a lack of confidence to cycle, insufficient infrastructure and road safety concerns. Yet we know that the appetite for change exists, following the establishment of an active and well-supported Borough Cycling Forum, and growing public interest in cycling more generally, which has been energised by events including the Tour de France, Ride London, and closer to home, the Great Tunbridge Wells Bike Ride to name but a few.

The Strategy therefore, puts forward ambitious yet practical proposals for the creation of a network of high quality cycle routes, within the urban areas of the borough. This will enable people of all ages and abilities to cycle safely for everyday journeys to education, employment and leisure activities. These routes will complement and in part be delivered as a consequence of highway, public transport and other town centre improvements that are identified in the new Borough Transport Strategy, as well as the County Council's road safety and driver awareness campaigns, which seek to ensure that cyclists and motorists look out for and respect one another.

With these measures in place, we are confident that we can create an even greener, healthier and more prosperous Tunbridge Wells.

Cllr Alan McDermott

1 Introduction

This Cycling Strategy includes actions and principles which support the promotion of cycling and the delivery of related infrastructure in The borough.

This Strategy has been drafted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) and Kent County Council (KCC), with support from the Tunbridge Wells Cycling Forum. The document will act as a tool to assist in the delivery of the vision and, in particular, Objectives 3–6 of the Borough Transport Strategy as follows:

- **Objective 3** – Reduce congestion on the highway network, particularly on key radial routes into Royal Tunbridge Wells.
- **Objective 4** – Improve travel safety across The borough especially for vulnerable road users, including cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.
- **Objective 5** – Improve air quality, particularly within the designated Air Quality Management Area.
- **Objective 6** – Increase the use of sustainable transport modes including cycling, walking and public transport.

This Strategy is aligned with the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan, including the Urban Design Framework, and is supported by the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan which promotes the use of urban green space and Public Rights of Way for active travel. It also contributes to the objectives of the Tunbridge Wells Air Quality Action Plan in facilitating the use of non-motorised transport.

The Strategy encourages active travel and identifies the shared commitment of TWBC and KCC to provide an enhanced cycle network. It acknowledges that levels of cycling in Tunbridge Wells are relatively low at present and that whilst the borough has some cycle routes that link Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre to suburban areas, these are either incomplete or require further enhancement. Elsewhere within the urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and other towns in the borough, safe cycle routes are far more limited or unavailable and there is a lack of cycle parking facilities at some key destinations.

It is recognised that there are many advantages to be gained from promoting cycling as a low cost, efficient, healthy and environmentally friendly mode of transport that can be enjoyed daily by people of broad cycling interest, age and ability.

It is considered that every resident, worker and visitor should have the opportunity to cycle for everyday purposes (referred to as utility cycling). In order to achieve this, it is recognised that a range of measures and interventions are required to make cycling a more attractive proposition, especially for shorter journeys.

The vision of this Cycling Strategy is therefore:

> To make cycling a normal part of everyday life in the borough, by creating a safe and welcoming environment for cyclists of all ages and abilities.

In order to realise this vision, the Strategy identifies the following Actions:

Action 1: A network of high quality cycle routes will be completed in the urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook. Where possible, inter-urban and leisure cycling routes will be delivered. Where a proposed route requires new or upgraded public rights of way, partners will work with landowner(s) to secure implementation.

Action 2: a) Cycle parking will continue to be improved in town and village centres, as well as other key locations in the borough. b) Cycle parking will be provided in all commercial and residential developments (both new build and change of use), secured by partners through the planning process.

Action 3: KCC and TWBC will work with partners to ensure the regular maintenance of all cycle routes within the borough.

Action 4: a) All Year 6 children will have access to Level 1 and 2 Bikeability training, and children in Years 7 to 9 will have access to Level 3 training. b) Adult cycle training will continue to be offered, through initiatives including work place travel planning.

Action 5: Partners will continue to promote road safety campaigns and consider the introduction of 20mph speed limits and zones in accordance with KCC policies and procedures.

Action 6: KCC and TWBC will ensure cycle routes are fully advertised and signposted within the borough and that a cycle map and related information is provided online.

Action 7: TWBC and/or the Cycling Forum will continue to support local cycling events where appropriate.

Action 8: The Cycling Strategy will be regularly monitored, alongside the Transport Strategy, to review the implementation of agreed projects and initiatives.

In England over 40% of all journeys made are less than two miles, and almost 70% are less than five miles; of which 69% are made by car [1], which can contribute significantly to urban congestion and air quality problems. As many established cyclists will know, cycling often provides a faster and more convenient transport option, especially in urban areas during peak periods, and therefore, it offers a relatively inexpensive solution to these issues.

Some 87% of adults in England walked or cycled at least once a month during 2012/13. The proportion of adults who cycled once per month was 14.7% in the year to October 2013. Approximately 10% of people cycle recreationally (ie cycling for pleasure) at least once per month, and 7% cycle for utility purposes at least once per month (ie cycling for commuting, shopping or visiting friends) [2].

In Tunbridge Wells borough, 15.9% of residents cycled at least once per month during 2012/13, which is slightly above both the English average and the Kent average of 14.8%. Of those who cycle in Tunbridge Wells, 12% cycle for at least 30 minutes once per month, and 6% for the same duration once per week [3]. This suggests that most frequent cyclists are confident and capable of journeys exceeding five miles (assumed minimum average speed 10 mph), although it should be noted that 'frequent cyclists' are typically white, male, aged between 25 and 44, and on a higher than average income [4].

1 Department for Transport, National Travel Survey, 2005, www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics

2 Department for Transport, Sport England Active People Survey (APS), 2012/13. The APS is designed to measure participation in sport and active recreation and includes questions about cycling.

3 Department for Transport, Sport England Active People Survey, 2012/13, http://activepeople.sportengland.org/

4 All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group, Get Britain Cycling: Summary and Recommendations report, April 2013, http://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/get-britain-cycling1.pdf

Cycle to work data identifies that only 0.8% of adults (662 people) usually cycle to work in the Tunbridge Wells borough [5]. Whilst the number of adults who cycle to work in Tunbridge Wells is relatively low, it is perceived to be growing annually. Indeed, 4% of respondents to a comprehensive rail passenger survey undertakenat Tunbridge Wells Station over four days in May 2014 stated that they had cycled to or from the station [6].

The table below shows the number of cyclists on the key radial routes into Royal Tunbridge Wells for 2014 and provides a baseline against which to measure the success of this Strategy.

Road	Link	Pedal Cycle	Motor Cycle	Car / Taxi	Bus / Coach	Light Goods	Heavy Goods	All Vehicles
A264 Pembury Road	B2023 to Blackhurst Lane	136	149	20,233	279	3,057	950	24,669
	Percent	**0.6%**	**0.6%**	**82.0%**	**1.1%**	**12.4%**	**3.9%**	
A267 Frant Road	B2169 to A26	33	70	11,071	103	1,786	398	13,428
	Percent	**0.2%**	**0.5%**	**82.4%**	**0.8%**	**13.3%**	**3.0%**	
A26 Eridge Road								
	E. Sussex boundary to A267	42	148	19,220	434	2,344	676	22,822
	Percent	**0.2%**	**0.6%**	**84.2%**	**1.9%**	**10.3%**	**3.0%**	
A264 Langton Road	A264 Mt Ephraim to A26	45	35	7,523	14	908	113	8,593
	Percent	**0.5%**	**0.4%**	**87.5%**	**0.2%**	**10.6%**	**1.3%**	
A26 London Road	A26 Mt Ephraim to B'wood Avenue	108	190	14,797	265	2,564	543	18,359
	Percent	**0.6%**	**1.0%**	**80.6%**	**1.4%**	**14.0%**	**3.0%**	
	Total	364	592	72,844	1,095	10,659	2,680	87,871
	Percent	**0.4%**	**0.7%**	**82.9%**	**1.2%**	**12.1%**	**3.0%**	

Source: DfT, Annual Average Daily Flow data, 2014

5 2011 Census, Table CW0901, www.gov.uk/government/collections/walking-and-cycling-statistics

6 KCC/Amey, Tunbridge Wells Station Travel Plan: Passenger Survey Data Analysis – Summary Report, February 2015

In comparison, Ashford has the highest level of commuter cycling in Kent with 1.7% of adults (1,465 people) in the borough usually cycling to work. Cambridge City had the highest level of commuter cycling in the UK, with 18.1% of adults (17,755 people) usually cycling to work in 2011 [7]. It is notable that both of these locations have invested heavily in dedicated cycling infrastructure.

It is considered that there is a high unmet demand from those who wish to cycle, but due to barriers and/or perceived barriers they do not do so. For example, Sustrans identified that nationally a third of students at secondary schools would like to cycle, yet very often the actual figure is closer to 2% (2006). This Strategy seeks to overcome these barriers, which primarily include:

- Lack of confidence – provision of bike handling and road awareness skills
- Lack of knowledge – publication of information on where to cycle and park bicycles
- Fear of traffic – tackle road safety concerns through campaigns, publicity and/or engineering measures (such as 20mph zones)
- Lack of infrastructure – provision of more dedicated cycle routes and secure cycle parking.

Many people used to cycle as children, predominantly for recreation, but as adults they only do so occasionally or have given up completely. Accessible, continuous and safely designed cycle routes are considered to be important, to encourage more people to come back to cycling or take up cycling for the first time. It is recognised that the borough lacks a comprehensive network of routes for utility cycling, especially in the towns of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook. This Strategy therefore seeks to improve and develop the borough's existing cycle routes, to provide a network that is accessible, direct and safe.
The focus of this Strategy is primarily to develop infrastructure within the borough's towns, to connect destinations including key employment areas, schools and primary shopping areas, with residential communities via established corridors and other routes for utility cycling.

This focus is compatible with the further upgrade of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 18; a prominent long distance route which runs through the borough. This route requires improvement and could provide opportunities for both utility and leisure cycling, although as yet it is not formally defined within Royal Tunbridge Wells.

In a challenging financial climate, infrastructure funding is limited and aligned principally to economic growth and development. However, a recent study by the DfT into the value for money of the Cycle City Ambition Grant and the Cycling in National Parks Grant found that the combined Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of each of these funding streams was 5.5:1, which was considered to represent very high value for money. These benefits were accounted for by improved physical fitness, improved journey quality and congestion relief. Therefore, local authority partners will work together to ensure that all suitable sources of funding are explored to deliver cycling improvements. Further information about infrastructure funding is set out in the borough Transport Strategy.

7 KCC/Amey, Tunbridge Wells Station Travel Plan: Passenger Survey Data Analysis – Summary Report, February 2015

2 National and local policy overview

This Strategy is informed by a range of national and local policies and strategies. This chapter briefly outlines the current policy context within which the Strategy has been prepared.

National Cycling Policy Overview

The All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group published the **Get Britain Cycling** [8] report in 2013. This marked the outcome of an inquiry which was informed by Members from both Houses of Parliament. The report aims to enable more people across the UK to take up cycling, to cycle more often and to cycle more safely. It seeks to identify the obstacles that must be overcome to achieve these objectives and suggests measures to be undertaken by central and local government, as well as the wider business and third sectors. Recommendations are numerous and divided into five broad topics:

- A new priority for investing public funds – including the creation of a cycling budget of at least £10 per person per year, increasing to £20.
- Redesigning our roads, streets and communities – including a statutory requirement for developments to be designed for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Safe driving and safe speed limits – including the extension of locally determined speed limits.
- Training and education – including the provision of cycle training for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Political leadership – including the provision of a cross-departmental Cycling Action Plan.

The DfT published a draft **Cycling Delivery Plan** in 2014. The document identifies the ambition of Government to do more to encourage people across England to cycle. The Government wants to see hundreds of thousands more people taking advantage of the benefits of cycling and walking. The Cycling Delivery Plan is a 10 year plan for England and recognises that a step change in cycling cannot be achieved overnight; this requires strong leadership, commitment and long term planning for incremental change that develops an environment in which cycling is the

8 All Parliamentary Cycling Group, Get Britain Cycling, April 2013, http://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/get-britain-cycling1.pdf

norm. [9] A subsequent commitment has been set in the Infrastructure Act (2015) which requires Government to prepare a national Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published a guidance document entitled **Walking and Cycling: Local Measures to Promote Walking and Cycling as Forms of Travel or Recreation** [10], in 2012. The guidance sets out how people can be encouraged to increase the amount they walk or cycle for travel or recreation purposes. NICE concludes that this will help to meet public health and other goals including the need to address traffic congestion and air pollution. The document has been influential in informing other areas of public policy and includes recommendations relating to the planning system, schools, workplaces and NHS facilities.

The Government's ambitions in relation to cycling are reflected in the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, which states that: 'The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel' (paragraph 29). Furthermore that: 'Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion' (paragraph 30). The NPPF requires that developments give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and minimise conflicts with vehicular traffic.

In recent years the growth in enthusiasm for cycling has been stimulated by events including Sky Ride and Ride London, as well as the successful investment in cycling infrastructure which has been seen in London and other cities. The Greater London Authority published The **Mayor's Vision for Cycling** in 2013, which sets the ambition for cycling to become mainstream and no longer a niche activity. In publishing his vision the Mayor provided a commitment that the main cross-London physical legacy of the 2012 Olympics will be a network of cycle routes throughout the city which will bring the benefits of fitness, enjoyment, easy travel, cleaner air and less traffic to all.

Further guidance has been published to inform decision makers and transport professionals about the benefits of cycling and related design. A list of references is provided at Appendix A.

Local Cycling Policy Overview

The third **Local Transport Plan for Kent (2011–16)** sets out Kent County Council (KCC)'s policies and delivery plans for the management and improvement of the local transport network. It has five principal themes, all of which include cycling as an aspect; 'Growth Without Gridlock', 'A Safer and Healthier County', 'Supporting Independence', 'Tackling a Changing Climate' and 'Enjoying Life in Kent'. The Plan seeks to support housing and employment growth whilst managing the County's highways and Public Rights of Way, many of which include cycle routes. The Plan supports active travel and the development of cycling as a transport mode.

The **Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan (2013–2017)** is KCC's strategy to increase usage and enjoyment of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and improve access to green spaces in Kent. The County's extensive network of paths is a great asset which can be developed further to provide infrastructure for cyclists in both urban and rural areas.

The Tunbridge Wells Borough Transport Strategy sets out the vision for transport in the borough between 2015 and 2026. It seeks to address existing transport problems, support future growth and has been prepared in line with the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan. The Strategy identifies the delivery of the cycle routes as one of its key priorities, acknowledging cycling's potentially significant contribution to congestion reduction, air quality enhancement and road safety.

This Strategy is also supported by the **Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan**, which promotes the use of urban green space and Public Rights of Way for active travel. It also contributes to the objectives of the **Tunbridge Wells Air Quality Action Plan** in facilitating the use of non-motorised transport. In addition, the Council is preparing a **Draft Urban Design Framework**, the final version of which will reference the cycle routes identified in this document.

9 Department for Transport, Cycling Delivery Plan, October 2014, www.gov.uk/government/consultations/cycling-delivery-plan-informal-consultation

10 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, Walking and Cycling: Local Measures to Promote Walking and Cycling as Forms of Travel or Recreation, November 2012, www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph41

3 The benefits of cycling

Economic Benefits

Cycling benefits the economy through encouraging local trade, as a result of the increasing number of people who travel on local streets and routes. Cycling also makes public spaces more welcoming, improves social interaction and enhances natural surveillance. Therefore, cycling has the potential to further support our high streets, making them more prosperous, quieter and cleaner, and more liveable.

Kent's visitor economy is reported to be worth £3.4bn according to research commissioned by Visit Kent, with 57 million visitors per year. Over 5 million of these visitors are estimated to be attracted to the County's cycling offer. Tunbridge Wells is already a very popular destination for visitors from both the UK and further afield, and recently there has been a noticeable increase in the number of visitors that are wishing to cycle as part of their break either on or off-road. A Destination Management Plan was prepared by the Council in 2014 and this document identifies the need to promote cycling and walking as a reason to visit the borough.

Leisure cycling opportunities in the area in and around Tunbridge Wells include Bedgebury Forest, Bewl Water, Penshurst Off Road Cycling Centre. There are also a number of trails including The Tudor Trail from Tonbridge Castle to Penshurst and the Wealden Cycle Trail. Further information about these opportunities is provided on the visittunbridgewells and Explore Kent websites. Training for accommodation providers and attractions on making cyclists and walkers welcome has been provided to local businesses in 2014.

There has also been growth in cycling clubs and the local cycling retail trade as well as in cycling events such as sportives (eg Great Tunbridge Wells Bike Ride) and triathlons (eg Hever) in the local area.

Cycling is reported to be worth £2.9bn per annum to the UK economy, with the average cyclist contributing £230 per annum through activities including bicycle retail and related employment [11].

Health Benefits

The role of active travel (cycling and walking) in helping to create liveable towns and cities, promoting health improvement and social inclusion, is now becoming widely recognised

11 London School of Economics, The British Cycling Economy: 'Gross Cycling Product' Report, August 2011, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/38063/1/BritishCyclingEconomy.pdf

by all tiers of government and health authorities. Warnings about the health consequences of an increasingly sedentary society are widely reported and it has been estimated that the cost of transport-related physical inactivity in England totals £9.8 million per year. This is in addition to the estimated £2.5 billion annual healthcare cost of treating obesity [12].

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) identifies that the health benefits associated with active travel, include:

- improved mental health and wellbeing
- improved physical fitness
- the prevention of chronic diseases and health conditions, which include coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, cancer and obesity.

Both cycling and walking are effective ways of increasing and integrating levels of physical activity into everyday life. Many people have yet to experience the benefits of regular cycling, especially for local journeys.

A recent study by the DfT into the value for money of the Cycle City Ambition Grant and the Cycling in National Parks Grant found that the combined Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of each of these funding streams was 5.5:1, which was considered to represent very high value for money. Around 60% of these benefits were accounted for by improved physical fitness, with much of the remainder being associated with journey quality and congestion relief [13].

Cycling in urban areas can improve air quality through reducing congestion, and the air pollution that is generated by vehicular traffic. An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been designated along the A26 through the urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, where there are annual exceedances of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) above the required 40µg/m3. There are also air quality concerns on other main roads in the borough. Poor air quality affects health, contributing towards cardiovascular disease and respiratory illness, adding further to NHS costs.

Social Benefits

Cycling provides opportunities to enjoy the high quality urban and rural environment of the borough, which cannot be appreciated to the same extent whilst travelling by car. As a leisure activity it provides access to routes and locations that are often too far for many to walk. People are motivated to cycle for many reasons;

- Faster – Cycling is often faster and more convenient, especially in congested urban environments and helps to reduce the number of single occupancy and short car journeys.
- Cheaper – Cycling is a low cost transport option and is therefore, accessible to most people. Cycling can help reduce or remove the costs of car ownership, give young people independence and increase access to employment.
- Fun – Cycling is a positive social activity which is fun and provides opportunity for social interaction, as well as for exercise and recreation.

Image by Department of Health & Make Sport Fun

12 British Medical Association, Healthy Transport = Healthy Lives, July 2012, http://bma.org.uk/transport

13 Department for Transport, Value for Money Assessment for Cycling Grants, August 2014, www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/348943/vfm-assessment-of-cycling-grants.pdf

4

Improving the cycle network

This Strategy seeks to develop connections between key employment areas, schools and primary shopping areas, with residential communities via established corridors and other routes.

Across the borough it is recognised that existing cycle routes are incomplete, that there is no integrated and continuous route network and that existing junctions and road layouts can present points of conflict for cyclists and other vehicles. To ensure that cycling becomes a more popular mode of travel, especially in the towns of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook, KCC and TWBC will seek to plan new developments and road improvement schemes which make space for cycling, and incorporate appropriate design.

Through the delivery of public sector transport projects, those delivered by partner organisations including Highways England and Sustrans, as well as those by developers, KCC and TWBC will seek to ensure that agreed interventions take account of good practice in cycling infrastructure design. At the time of preparing this Strategy, the following were considered to be the most relevant aspects of transport policy and guidance:

The Department for Transport (DfT)'s, Local Transport Notes '**LTN 02/08 Cycle Infrastructure Design**' and '**LTN 01/12 Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists'**, are standard guidance underpinning the design and construction of new cycle infrastructure. The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT)'s '**Manual for Streets 2**' [14], is also widely used by the transport profession, and builds upon the guidance set out in '**Manual for Streets**', seeking to improve the planning, construction and improvement of streets to deliver more sensitive and inclusive designs which prioritise the needs of vulnerable road users.

The CIHT's 'Street **Design for All – Wider Application of the Principles**' [15] and Cyclenation's '**Making Space for Cycling**' [16] reflect the fundamental change in attitudes to street design and management that is taking place in the UK. They recognise the importance of streets in providing a sense of place, where human activity as well as vistas and historic buildings provide character. These documents

14 CIHT, Manual for Streets 2, 2010, www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets-2

15 CIHT, Street Design for All, 2014, www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/street_design_2014.pdf

16 Cyclenation, Making Space for Cycling, 2014, www.makingspaceforcycling.org/MakingSpaceForCycling.pdf

encourage thoughtful design so that pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people can move about more easily and safely. They seek also to encourage wellbeing through healthy, active lifestyles, and create streets which are welcoming and interesting, convenient and thoughtfully designed.

It is recognised that in developing a network of routes, both segregated and shared use paths and cycle lanes need to be improved and delivered. Many of the routes proposed in this Strategy connect with town centres. It will not be possible to provide dedicated cycling infrastructure in all circumstances due to constraints presented by the built environment and available green space. Where continuous dedicated infrastructure can't be delivered, 20mph speed limits could assist in providing a safer environment for cyclists as part of designated cycle routes.

Cycle route assessments have been undertaken to inform the agreed route priorities set out in this Strategy. The identification of priority routes and the route assessments themselves have been undertaken with support from the Tunbridge Wells Cycling Forum. The assessments and methodology can be found in Appendix B. The purpose of the assessment process was to identify opportunities, constraints and other issues from a cyclist's perspective, and to suggest ideas for improvement.

In completing the assessments, five established principles were considered in evaluating each route. As far as possible, cycle routes should be Safe, Direct, Coherent, Comfortable and Attractive. Detailed recommendations for new and improved routes can be found in Chapter 9.

Action 1: A network of high quality cycle routes will be completed in the urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook. Where possible, inter-urban and leisure cycling routes will be enhanced. Where a proposed route requires new or upgraded public rights of way, partners will work with the landowner(s) to secure implementation.

Cycle Parking

Cycle parking needs to be convenient, safe and secure. A cycle locked in a shed at the end of a garden is less likely to be used than one stored close to the front door. It is therefore essential that residential properties are designed with conveniently located and secure cycle storage. This will be secured through the planning process.

Cycling can form part of longer, multi-modal journeys if there is good integration of cycling facilities with other public transport modes. Sufficient cycle parking at railway stations is essential to encourage commuter cycling and limit related vehicular trips. It is known that there is currently insufficient cycle parking provision at stations in the borough and therefore partners are working with rail operators to deliver solutions as the demand for cycling grows. In Tunbridge Wells, this work is being undertaken as part of the preparation of the borough's first Station Travel Plan. The provision of cycle parking at key bus interchanges will also be given further consideration by partners.

The provision of cycle parking at places of work, leisure facilities and schools is also important to support utility cycling. TWBC is investing in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre to enhance the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Additional cycle parking is being provided within the street scene to make it easier for cyclists to visit local shops and venues. Covered and secure cycle storage is also available in many of the Borough Council's car parks. An audit of cycle parking has been completed for Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre and this information is now available on the 'cyclefriday' website (www.cyclefriday.co.uk).

Action 2:
a) Cycle parking will continue to be improved in town and village centres, as well as other locations including stations, schools, leisure facilities, key bus stops and key employment areas [17].
b) Cycle parking will be provided in all commercial and residential developments (both new build and change of use), secured by partners through the planning process.

17 See back cover for new two-tiered cycle rack at Tunbridge Wells Station

5 Maintenance of the cycle network

Unless new and existing cycle facilities are maintained to a good standard they will quickly fall into disrepair and will not be used.

Cycle routes require specific maintenance including the regular cleansing of gullies and kerb lines, as well as the cutting back of vegetation. Road accident debris such as glass and overgrown vegetation can present hazards to cyclists, resulting in punctured tyres, compromised route alignments or obstacles, all of which could risk the safety of cyclists and put them in conflict with other road users. Cycling infrastructure needs to be designed and built to ensure longevity and ease of maintenance.

KCC has primary responsibility for the co-ordination of highways and Public Rights of Way maintenance. It works with third party landowners including TWBC, where required, to achieve maintenance objectives. KCC's maintenance programme is determined on the basis of information from regular inspections, annual surveys using specialist equipment, and reports from councillors, parish councils, community groups and residents. Road surfaces are surveyed by KCC Highway Inspectors in a manner which takes into account the needs of cyclists; for example, by giving appropriate attention to the two metre strip alongside the kerb line where most cyclists ride. In constructing and maintaining cycle routes, the County Council refers to guidance outlined in TRL Application Guide AG26 (Version 2) [18].

It is KCC's intention to produce a cycle route maintenance schedule for off road cycle routes, subject to funding. This will include the use of volunteers similar to the Sustrans Rangers, as well as dedicated contractors. Sustrans Rangers help to maintain the national cycle network in a number of ways, including placing temporary signs, reporting faults, undertaking small-scale vegetation clearance and organising work days for more ambitious maintenance projects.

> **Action 3:** KCC and TWBC will work with partners to ensure the regular maintenance of all cycle routes within the borough.

18 TRL, Footways and Cycle Route Design: Construction and Maintenance Guide, 2003, http://trl.co.uk/reports-publications/trl-reports/report/?reportid=6180


CYCLISTS
DISMOUNT

6 Safer cycling

Cycle training

National Standard Cycle Training (Bikeability) is provided across Kent by KCC and local School Games Partnerships. The training courses are structured for primary and secondary age school children in Years 5 to 9. The courses give children the skills to make safer choices when cycling and to enjoy the freedom of riding a bike. Bikeability courses are booked directly by schools.

Bikeability comprises three levels of competency-based cycle training. Level 1 is aimed at the basic bicycle control skills that are required to cycle safely in any environment. Level 2 is delivered on quiet roads and teaches participants the skills necessary to take a basic on-road journey and includes a variety of junctions. Level 3 tackles busy traffic situations and complex junctions.

Adult cycle training courses are also available. Corporate, group and individual training courses can be arranged and further information is available on KCC's website.

ACTION 4:
a) All Year 6 children will have access to Level 1 and 2 Bikeability training, and children in Years 7 to 9 will have access to Level 3 training.
b) Adult cycle training will continue to be offered, through initiatives including work place travel planning.

Road safety

One of the main reasons that people say that they do not or will not cycle is concerns about road safety. Whilst traffic free, segregated routes are welcomed by cyclists, these are not available in all parts of the borough. Cyclists will frequently need to cycle on roads with other vehicles for all or part of their journey. It is therefore, important that cyclists are equipped to cycle on the road, are confident and have good bike handling skills. It is also important that cyclists and drivers look out for and respect each other. Cycling charities, including The Cycling Touring Club (CTC), Sustrans and British Cycling, are able to provide further advice on these subjects.

KCC undertakes regular road safety campaigns targeted at different road user groups. The Tunbridge Wells Cycling Forum promoted the Department for Transport's 'THINK Cyclist' campaign as well as the AA's 'Think Bikes' campaign during 2014. Both initiatives seek to remind motorists and cyclists about the correct way to drive and ride, with the aim of reducing related collisions.

KCC and TWBC recognise the importance of measures to encourage motorists to travel at appropriate and safe speeds. The KCC Road Casualty Reduction Strategy (2014) promotes a safe systems approach including provision of segregated routes for "vulnerable" road users including cyclists as well as measures to reduce speeding. The introduction of 20mph speed limits and zones is being explored in urban areas and built-up village streets that are primarily residential in character, to prioritise and ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The County Council recently reviewed its policy towards the implementation of new 20mph schemes and agreed to support their introduction where:

- There is clear justification in terms of achieving casualty reduction as part of the ongoing programme of Casualty Reduction Schemes; or
- They would assist in delivering the targets set out in Kent's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy by encouraging walking and cycling; or
- There is a scheme that is important to local people that could be funded via the local County Councillors' Members Fund. [19]

Action 5: Partners will continue to promote road safety campaigns and positively consider the introduction of 20mph speed limits and zones in accordance with KCC policies and procedures.

7

Promoting cycling in the Tunbridge Wells borough

The promotion of cycling and related facilities is required to increase awareness of the opportunities for cycling.

Some residents and businesses lack knowledge of the existing opportunities for both utility and leisure cycling in the borough. To increase participation in cycling, and ensure that this Strategy and related initiatives are successful, cycling must therefore be promoted in an engaging way to these groups.

To overcome this issue, the Tunbridge Wells Cycling Forum developed 'cyclefriday'; an initiative to encourage cyclists of all abilities to get on two wheels. Launched in June 2014, cyclefriday is a movement to encourage and inform residents and workers about the benefits of, and opportunities for, cycling. The website includes information on events, routes and cycle parking facilities. The activities of the Forum, including cyclefriday, are also published on social media and in the local press as required.

KCC and TWBC support the Sky Ride Local initiative, which provides free guided rides for all ages and abilities throughout the UK, including rides in West Kent and Tunbridge Wells borough. The rides are organised during the summer months each year and are led by trained British Cycling Ride Leaders and Breeze Ride Champions.

TWBC has also supported the Great Tunbridge Wells Bike ride, an annual sportive event which has operated successfully since 2012, attracting over 300 cyclists in 2014. It is hoped that this and other future events will continue to encourage participation in all types of cycling.

KCC has an extensive amount of information online to inform residents about routes and recreational opportunities in the County. KCC and TWBC are also preparing an 'Explore Kent' walking and cycling map for the borough. Further information about cycling is available on the following websites:

- www.explorekent.gov.uk
- www.vistitunbridgewells.gov.uk

- www.cyclefriday.gov.uk
- www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

At present not all existing local cycle routes are clearly signed. All cycle routes should be fully signposted for the benefit of new cyclists and those who are unfamiliar with the local area.

ACTION 6: KCC and TWBC will ensure cycle routes are fully advertised and signposted within the borough and that a cycle map and related information is provided online.

ACTION 7: TWBC and/or the Cycling Forum will continue to support local cycling events where appropriate.

8

Monitoring the Cycling Stratey

This Strategy will be regularly monitored alongside the borough Transport Strategy.

The borough Transport Strategy includes an Implementation Plan which will be reviewed regularly. The projects and initiatives identified in this Strategy are also included in the Transport Strategy Implementation Plan. Updates on the planning and delivery of cycling projects and other initiatives will be provided at meetings of the borough Joint Transportation Board as required, as well as the borough Cycling Forum.

Baseline data that is referenced in the Strategy document will continue to be monitored as and when this becomes available. Where future resources allow, monitoring will be extended to include continuous automatic counters on cycle routes and route user surveys. This would provide a detailed evidence base which could be used to inform economic appraisals which support funding bids and negotiations.

ACTION 8: The Cycling Strategy will be regularly monitored, alongside the Transport Strategy, to review the implementation of agreed projects and initiatives.


d Trousers
Cafe Chocolata
Leonidas
RICHARD
'BEAU' NASH
1674 - 1762
Dandy and leader of fashion
Master of the
Ceremonies at the Wells
1735 - 1762
Cafe
Leo
FRESH
HOT Chocolate

9 Development of the Cycle Network

If the actions set out in this Strategy are to be delivered, the cycling infrastructure improvements which are delivered must create a network that appeals to all cyclists.

To guide the development of new, and the improvement of existing, cycle routes in the borough, the following high level design considerations are proposed:-

a **Separate cycle routes** – Many cyclists prefer routes away from heavy traffic flows, due to perceived and actual safety concerns. Routes which make use of green space provide a more comfortable and lower risk environment.

b **Use segregation** – Where routes are included within the highway, dedicated cycle lanes are preferred over shared use provision with either pedestrians or buses. Where appropriate, physical segregation should be incorporated, especially to reinforce on-road cycle lanes and prevent encroachment by vehicular traffic. Different methods of segregation will be required to complement different highway designs and layouts.

c **Shared use paths** – Where shared use paths are the most suitable option, they should be a minimum of 2.5 metres wide (and ideally 3.0 metres wide) to allow pedestrians and cyclists to pass safely.

d **Slower speeds** – In some circumstances it may be preferable to reduce traffic speeds on urban roads, where there are no other opportunities to include cycle lanes or paths. A lower speed environment can increase safety, allowing road users time to negotiate and share space. This can be achieved through design as well as formal speed reductions (such as 20mph zones).

e **Junction priority** – Where possible, cyclists should be given priority at junctions, and where cycle lanes and paths pass side turnings and entrances.

f **Design for growth** – Cycle paths and lanes need to be designed to accommodate future growth in the number of cyclists. Cycle lanes should be a minimum of 1.5 metres wide and shared use paths a minimum of 2.5 to 3.0 metres wide, depending on locational constraints.

g **Public Rights of Way** – Where existing Public Footpaths are proposed as cycle routes the borough Council will work with the County Council to seek either an upgrade to Public Bridleway or conversion to Cycle track Status.

Route Proposals

Route proposals for the Tunbridge Wells urban area, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook are outlined below. The implementation and/or improvement of these routes are dependent upon securing funding, the completion of detailed design, highway safety audits and public consultation where necessary. In some cases further negotiations with landowners and other stakeholders will also be required.

In addition to these proposals, KCC and TWBC will continue to work with partners to ensure that all future highway improvement schemes incorporate enhanced cycling and pedestrian infrastructure wherever possible.

Key

- Preferred Utility Route
- Alternative Alignment
- Leisure Route
- Aspirational Leisure Route

Tunbridge Wells Area

Route 1 – Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells via the A26

Route 2 – Pembury to Tunbridge Wells via the A264

Route 4 – Routes across The Commons

Route 5 – 21st Century Way including Home Farm Lane link

Route 6 – Woodsgate Corner to Vauxhall Lane via Tonbridge Road and A21

Route 7 – Forest Road to Grove Hill Road via Farmcombe Road.

Route 8 – A26 London Road to Dowding Way via Barnetts Wood

Route 9 – Langton Green to Tunbridge Wells including Rusthall and Speldhurst links

Route 10 – Ramslye and Showfields links

Paddock Wood

Route 3 – Paddock Wood circular route

Cranbrook

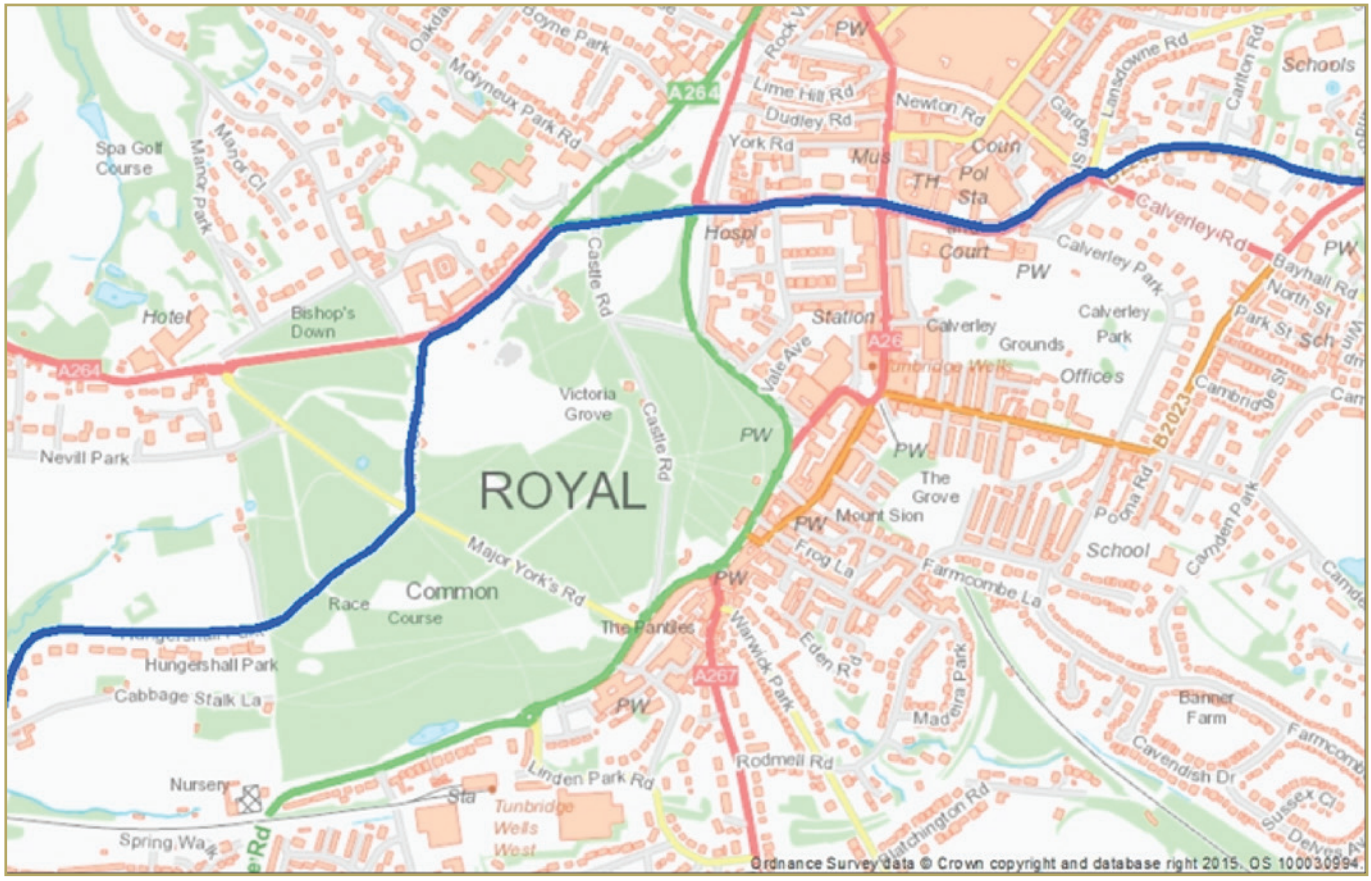
Route 11 – High Weald Academy to High Street

Leisure Routes

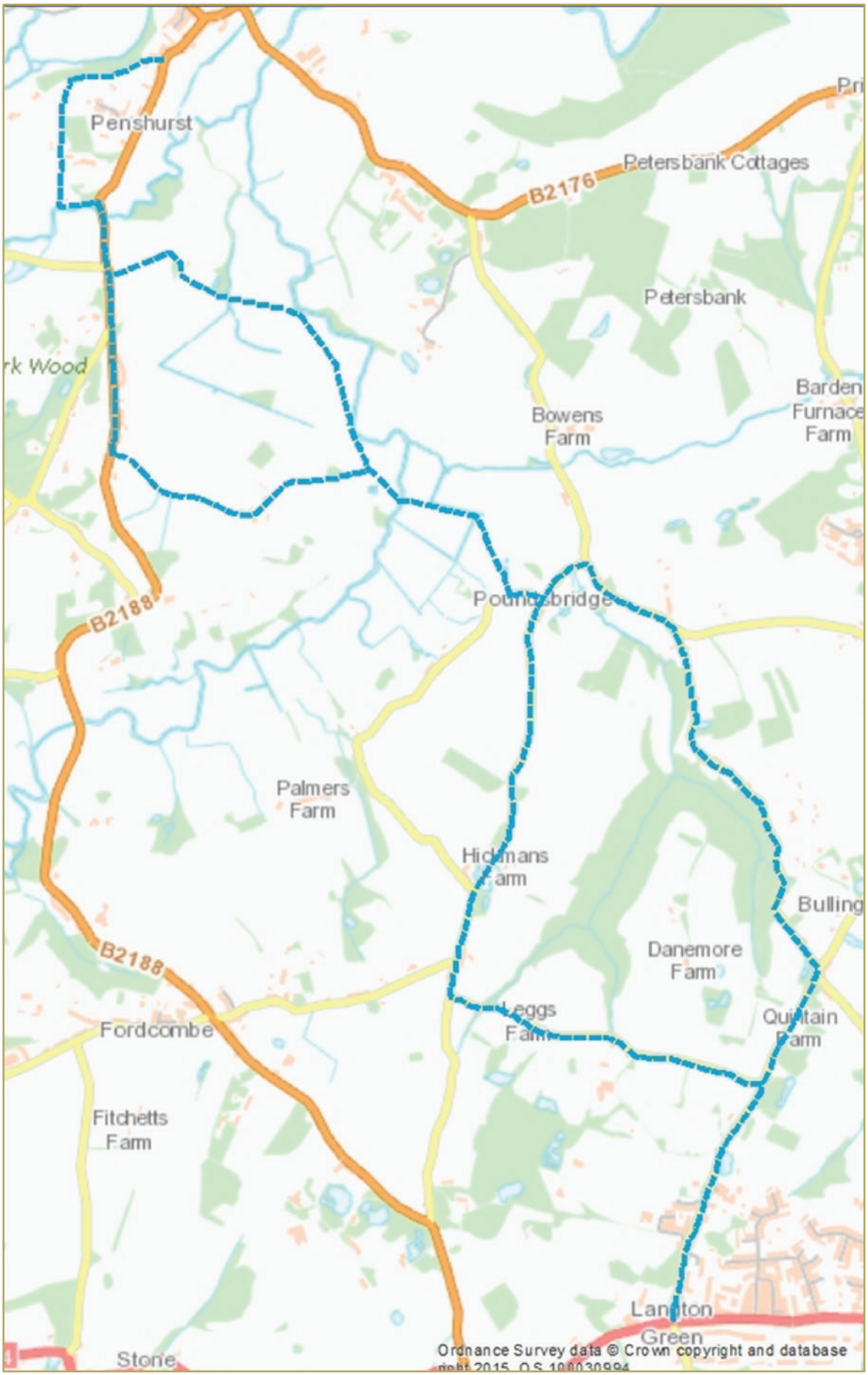
Identified leisure route proposals are considered to be longer term aspirations, the alignments shown are therefore indicative. These are supported by the borough Green Infrastructure Plan SPD (2014). Leisure routes are likely to include both on and off road alignments supported by appropriate wayfinding signage.

In preparing this Strategy, the leisure route proposals have not been subject to detailed route assessment, design work or negotiation with third parties. Should funding become available in the future this work will be undertaken.

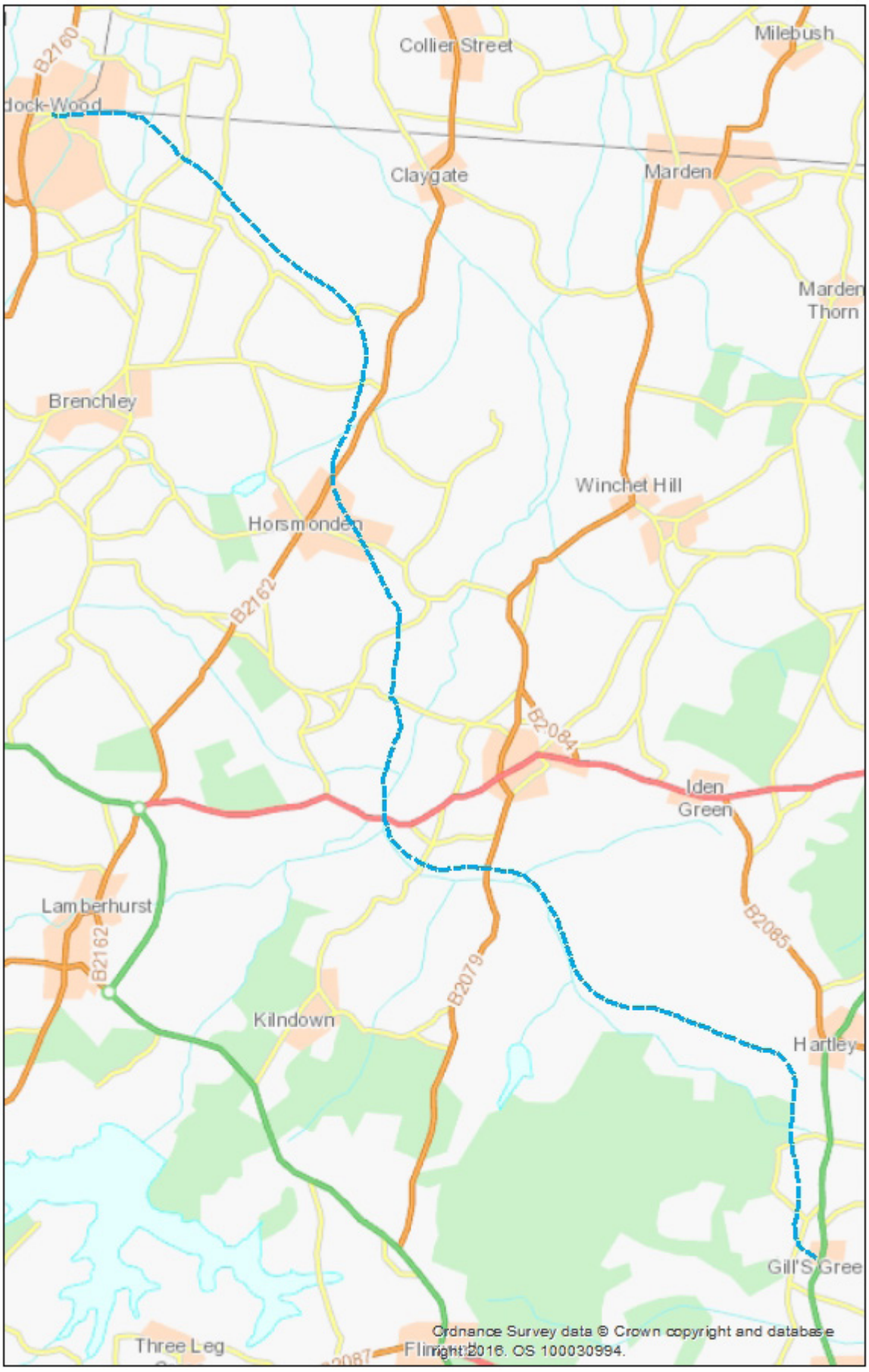
In addition to the proposals below, there are also aspirations to deliver a leisure route between Tunbridge Wells and Lamberhurst. A suitable alignment for this route could not be identified during the preparation of this Strategy; however partners will continue to explore options in the future.



National Cycle Route 18 through Tunbridge Wells town centre



Tunbridge Wells to Penshurst route (crossing borough boundary)



Hop Pickers Heritage route (Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst)

Cranbrook to Sissinghurst route

Appendix A – References

- Sustrans (2014), Handbook for Cycle Friendly Design – www.sustrans.org.uk/our-services/infrastructure/route-design-resources/documents-and-drawings/
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- CROW (2007), Design Manual for Bicycle Traffic – www.crow.nl/publicaties/design-manual-for-bicycle-traffic
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Appendix B – Route Assessments

Methodology

The cycle route assessments were completed by groups of volunteers from the Tunbridge Wells Cycling Forum during October and November 2014. Supported by TWBC officers, volunteers cycled the routes undertaking visual observations which were recorded on the route assessment proformas. The following design considerations informed the preparation of the assessments and were used as prompts for discussion.

- Safety
  - Collision risk – Are there potential conflicts with turning or manoeuvring vehicles?
  - Perceptions of safety – Is there separation from heavy or faster moving traffic? Could traffic speed be reduced?
  - Social safety – Is there natural surveillance? Is the route visible? Is there street lighting?
- Directness
  - Journey – Does the route follow the desire line? If a route deviates could this be addressed?
  - Priority – Is there a lack of priority at junctions which causes delay?
  - Speed – Can cyclists maintain a constant speed?
- Coherence
  - Connections – Ability to join and leave the route conveniently. Does the route link to others?
  - Road markings and signage – Is there sufficient signage?
  - Public transport integration – Is there cycle route continuity through points of interchange? Eg at bus stops.
- Comfort
  - Surface quality – Are there defects in the surface? Potholes, worn markings, raised or sunken covers, kerb alignments.
  - Space to cycle – Is there sufficient width for cycling? If not could this be accommodated within the highway? Is there additional land?
    - 2.5m minimum required for a shared used pedestrian / cycle path (adjacent to or off road)
    - 1.5m minimum for a mandatory cycle lane (on highway, solid white line)
    - There is no minimum width for an advisory cycle lane (assume 1m)
    - 3m minimum for a shared bus / cycle lane.
- Attractiveness
  - Maintenance – Could the visual appearance be improved through better maintenance? If so how? Consider vegetation cutting, street cleaning, and highway maintenance.
  - Street clutter – Is there any unnecessary signage, posts or street furniture?
  - o Cycle parking – Does the route link to areas of cycle parking? If appropriate, how could this be included at local destinations on the route?

Tunbridge Wells Borough **CYCLING STRATEGY** 2016 – 2020