Tunbridge Wells Borough
Local Development Framework

Monitoring Report
Executive Summary
January 2013

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Introduction

Local planning authorities are required to prepare an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) for the purposes of monitoring progress in preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF)\(^1\) and assessing the extent to which policies in the LDF are being implemented. The AMR is designed to help local planning authorities to understand the wider social, environmental and economic issues affecting their area and thereby to ensure that the LDF will be successful in addressing them.

This AMR reports on the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

Local Development Scheme

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the Borough Council’s rolling programme for preparing the different documents that will form part of the LDF.\(^2\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Plan Document (DPD)</th>
<th>Preparation and Engagement</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Submission</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority Monitoring Report</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Dec 2012</td>
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The following milestones have been met since the last AMR:

- Preparatory work on the Development Management Policies DPD continued during 2012
- Preparatory work on the Allocations DPD continued during 2012
- The Authority Monitoring Report 2012 was published in January 2013

Milestones will need to be reviewed in the future due to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Borough Profile

Contextual Indicators

- Tunbridge Wells Borough is highly constrained, with 70% designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 22% Green Belt, along with other biodiversity designations and built heritage.
- The estimated population in 2011 was 115,200 and KCC strategy-based forecasts predict it will rise to 116,000 by 2026 (+0.7%). The number of households is predicted to rise from 48,200 to 52,200 (+8.3%).\(^3\)
- Between 2001 and 2026 a decrease in the population aged 16-64 (-8.00%) is expected, while a significant increase is expected in those aged 65 and over (+33.16%) The population aged 0-15 is expected to rise by 0.85%\(^2\)
- A 21.43% increase in the number of one-person households is predicted between 2010 and 2026.\(^2\)
- The 2011 Census indicates that 94.9% of the population in the Borough is white. Other ethnic groups are represented as follows: Asian/Asian British 2.5%, Mixed/multiple ethnic group 1.6%, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British 0.6% and other ethnic groups 0.3%.
- The latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2010) show that, of the 68 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in the Borough, not one is in the most deprived category. One less LSOA (6) is in the next most deprived category compared to 2007, while three (24) more are in the least deprived.\(^4\)
- The downward trend in the level of crime has continued, with 9% fewer crimes than in 2010/11.\(^5\)
Local Indicators

- Between April 2006 and March 2012, 94.56% of completed dwellings have been within the Limitis to Built Development of settlements within the Borough and 94.15% of dwellings have been on previously developed land. The target for both is 65%.
- During the monitoring year 94.34% of B class employment use completions have been on previously developed land.

- Three dwellings were permitted in the Green Belt during the monitoring year. Two were replacement dwellings and not thought to have a detrimental effect on the Green Belt. The third was a certificate of existing use and, due to evidence provided, had to be approved despite the potential impact on the designation.
- A review of Rural Fringe sites and the inner Green Belt boundaries around the main urban areas is being carried out in the Site Allocations Document and, if necessary, replacement rural fringe sites will be designated.

Contextual Indicators

- The number of motor vehicles crossing the Royal Tunbridge Wells inner cordon increased by 0.05% (54 vehicles) between 2009 and 2010.
- There has been no significant trend in the number of pedestrians or cycles crossing the inner cordon since 2006.
- Since 2006 there has been a slight upward trend in rail journeys from Tunbridge Wells station and a more significant upward trend in bus ticket sales.
Local Indicators

- In 2012, the Government announced funding would be provided to develop the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury dualling scheme. Design work has been restarted and a Public Inquiry is planned for mid 2013. This does not guarantee construction and the final decision will be made at the 2015 spending review.
- A 320-space park and ride facility at the Tesco Store at Pembury has been delayed due to a delay in implementing the planning permission to expand the store. Other possible locations for park & ride infrastructure are also being explored.
- Kent County Council, as the local Highway Authority, prepared a preliminary plan for improvements to the road infrastructure in North Farm. Detailed design work and costings are underway. Implementation of any final scheme will be dependent on the availability of funding.
- A draft Transport Strategy is due to be published for consultation in January 2013 and further VISUM modelling (a Do Something scenario) will be undertaken to support this and the Site Allocations process.
- A Cycling Strategy will be prepared in 2013 to identify improvements to the cycling infrastructure.
- An Urban Parking Study covering Royal Tunbridge Wells was prepared and consulted on in 2011. Parking Studies for Southborough and the rural areas of the Borough have now been prepared and will be consulted on in early 2013. These will assist preparation of a Borough Parking Strategy in 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Issues</th>
<th>DPD/SPD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and encourage walking and cycling while addressing congestion and parking for all road users</td>
<td>Core Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>To investigate mechanisms to secure the delivery of transport and infrastructure schemes</td>
<td>Site Allocations</td>
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<tr>
<td>To set requirements for the delivery of travel plans with new developments</td>
<td>DPD</td>
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Environment

Contextual Indicators

- There are approximately 3,000 listed buildings in the Borough.
- There are 25 conservation areas in the Borough.

Local Indicators

- During the monitoring year, there has been no change to the number of sites of biodiversity importance.
- The percentage of Local Wildlife Sites “In Management” has increased to 64%.
- 92.3% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Borough are either in favourable condition or are improving.

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<td>Core Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>To prioritise the use of previously developed land</td>
<td>Site Allocations</td>
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<td>DPD</td>
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<td>Conservation Area Appraisals</td>
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</table>

Sustainable Design and Construction

Contextual Indicators

- Since 2005 there has been a 16.71% reduction in household consumption (per consumer) of gas and 6.61% for electricity.
• Between 2005 and 2008 there was been a 9.33% reduction in total commercial and industrial gas consumption and 7.43% for electricity.\textsuperscript{8}

• CO\textsubscript{2} emissions per capita have fallen from industrial and commercial, domestic and road transport since 2005 from 6.9t to 6.1t in 2010.\textsuperscript{9}

• The energy efficiency of the Borough’s housing stock, measured by the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP), has increased from 47 in 2005 to 54 in 2010 and is no longer the lowest in the Kent County Council area.\textsuperscript{10}

• **Local Indicators**

  • In 2011 the Council extended Air Quality Management Area in Royal Tunbridge Wells along the A26.

  • No planning applications were granted against the Environment Agency’s advice on grounds of flood risk or water quality in 2011/12.\textsuperscript{11}

  • In addition to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a Surface Water Management Plan for Paddock Wood was completed in December 2011 to help understand flood risk in the Borough.

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<td>To guide development towards areas of lower flood risk and promote</td>
<td>Site</td>
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<td>mitigation measures, such as SuDS, in the design of new buildings</td>
<td>Allocations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote sustainable design practices to increase energy and water</td>
<td>Document</td>
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<tr>
<td>efficiency and meet renewable energy targets</td>
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• **Contextual Indicators**

  • 56% of the household spaces within the Borough are in detached and semi-detached dwellings, which is greater than the average for England and the South East.\textsuperscript{12}

  • 85% of properties are owner occupier or privately rented with the majority of the rest owned by Registered Social Landlords.\textsuperscript{13}

  • Average house prices have fallen 10.03% to £308,495 between March 2011 and March 2012 but remain 35.54% higher than the England and Wales average.\textsuperscript{14}

  • Average prices for all dwelling types, except flats, are higher in the Borough than England and Wales, with the largest difference in detached (64.26%). The average price of flats in the Borough is only 89.31% of the England and Wales figure.\textsuperscript{8}

  • The ratio of lower quartile earnings to lower quartile house prices has increased from 4.98 in 1997 to 9.52 in 2011. In the same time, the median earnings to median house prices ratio has increased from 4.62 to 9.07.\textsuperscript{15}

  • Median private rental figures for all dwellings in the Borough are 138.3% of the England figures, while this increases to 168.2% for dwellings with 4 or more bedrooms.\textsuperscript{16}

• **Local Indicators**

  • 212 dwellings have been completed in 2011/12, resulting in an average rate of 346 per annum since 2006/07 against an annualised target of 300 dwellings between 2006/07 and 2025/26.
TWBC can demonstrate a five-year supply (2012/13 to 2016/17) with projected completions of 1,518 from extant permissions, identified PDL sites, windfalls and the rural exceptions programme, compared to a target of 1,472 for the next five years.

For years 6-14 (2017/18 to 2025/26), a further 668 dwellings are predicted on PDL sites and windfalls, leaving 199 dwellings per annum to be allocated, which should be deliverable from greenfield sites submitted/identified through the LDF.

In 2011/12, 85% of dwellings were built on previously developed land. This is lower than some previous years partly due to the reclassification of residential gardens as greenfield. It is still in excess of the 60% target in the Core Strategy.

85 affordable dwellings were completed in the monitoring year.

In September 2012, there were 34 permanent authorised pitches for Travellers in the Borough. TWBC will set an appropriate target for the provision of future accommodation through its own assessment of need.

In 2010/11, 64% of new dwellings were small or intermediate.

Since 2006/07, 72.0% of dwellings have had one or two bedrooms; 69.6% of completed dwellings were built at densities greater than 30 dwellings per hectare, although the Government has removed the minimum density requirement.

### Contextual Indicators

- 79.3% of the working age population are economically active, which remains higher than the South East and national averages.  
- Unemployment (measured by claimants of jobseekers allowance) has fallen in the monitoring year to 1.9% and remains significantly below the national (4.1%) and regional (2.8%) figures. 24.2% of claimants were aged 16-24 and 20.6% were aged 50-64.
- In August 2010, 30% of unemployed people in the Borough live in the six most deprived LSOAs (out of 68).
- In the year to March 2011, there was a small decrease (1.4%) in the number of VAT registered business in the Borough, with an 86% increase in those less than two years old between 2010 and 2011.

### Local Indicators

- In 2011/12 there was a net gain of 390 square metres (sqm) of B class employment uses. However, B1 and B2 uses both lost floorspace and the floorspace gained was from B8 uses. Between 2006/07 and 2011/12 there have been net losses of 5,474sqm for A2/B1 uses, 6599sqm for B2 uses and 4,004 for B8 uses. NB: approximately 10,000sqm of this relates to the loss to fire of the Transfesa Depot in Paddock Wood in 2005 (22,000sqm loss accounted for in 2008/09, less 12,000sqm from a replacement building completed in 2009/10) and a further 3,542sqm of the net loss relates to the demolition of the Medway Depot in Tunbridge Wells, which was allocated for housing in the Local Plan (2006).
• 94.34% of new B class employment floorspace in 2011/12 was on previously developed land; the target is 65%.

• There has been a net loss of 983sqm in town centre uses (A1, A2, B1a and D2) in the Borough as a whole during 2011/12 and within the town centre boundaries there has been a net loss of 421sqm.

• 0.47ha of employment land was lost to residential in 2011/12, which was lower than the previous year.

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### Key Issues

**DPD/SPD**

- To provide new retail and leisure facilities in accordance with the approach set out
- To provide retail and leisure within the defined town centres and in accordance with the retail study
- To resist any future out of town retailing
- To provide, retain and, where necessary improve the range of leisure, recreational and cultural facilities
- To resist the loss of community facilities and provide additional facilities as necessary

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### Retail, Leisure and Community Facility Provision

**Contextual Indicators**

• Dunorlan Park, The Grove and Woodbury Park Cemetery have retained their Green Flag award status.

• Accessibility modelling shows that over 99% of dwellings within the Limits to Built Development of the main urban area and small rural towns are within 30 minutes public transport time to medical surgeries, primary and secondary schools. Most dwellings in the majority of villages are within 30 minutes of primary schools and doctors surgeries; secondary schools are less accessible.

**Local Indicators**

• Monitoring systems for services in Neighbourhood Centres have been revised and extended to include services in villages and small rural towns and data is currently being analysed.

• 289sqm of A1 floorspace have been lost in the Borough during the monitoring year. Within town centre boundaries this figure is 1,373sqm.
References

8 Kent County Council, 2011. KCC Area Commercial & Industrial CO\textsubscript{2} emissions, energy consumption and conservation 2008/09. Available at www.kent.gov.uk/research
19 Use Class Order. Available at www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/changeofuse/

Remaining Local Indicators compiled from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Housing and Employment monitoring.

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