

# Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report

## Preface

This document can be made available in large copy prints, audio cassette, Braille or languages other than English. If you require the document in one of these formats please contact:

Planning Policy, Planning Services, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Town Hall, Civic Way, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS

Telephone: 01892 554056

or e-mail [strategy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:strategy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

If you need help translating this information, please contact us on 01892 554056.

यदि आप को इस जानकारी के अनुवाद के लिए सहायता चाहिए तो कृपया हम से 01892 554056 पर संपर्क करें। - Hindi

اگر آپ کو اس معلومات کے ترجمہ کیلئے مدد چاہیے تو براہ کرم ہم سے 01892 554056 پر رابطہ کریں۔ Urdu

Si vous avez besoin d'aide pour traduire ces informations, veuillez nous contacter au 01892 554056 . - French

Jeśli potrzebują Państwo pomocy w przetłumaczeniu tej informacji, prosimy o kontakt na numer telefonu 01892 554056 . – Polish

如果你需要将这一信息翻译成你的母语，请致电 01892 554056 联络我们。 - Mandarin

Kung kinakailangan po ninyo ng tulong na maisalin sa ibang wika ang impormasyong ito, paki-tawagan lamang po kami sa numerong 01892 554056 . - Tagalog

এই তথ্য অনুবাদ করার জন্যে যদি আপনার সহায়তার প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে আমাদেরকে 01892 554056 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন। - Bengali

■	Chapter	
1	Introduction and Invitation to Comment	1
	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Invitation to Comment</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>What is a Core Strategy?</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>Planning Context for Preparing the Core Strategy</b>	<b>3</b>
2	Spatial Portrait	6
3	Context for Development to 2026	8
4	Spatial Vision	10
5	Strategic Objectives	12
6	Spatial Strategy	13
7	Core Policies	21
	Place-Shaping Policies	22
	<b>Core Policy 1: Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough</b>	<b>22</b>
	<b>Core Policy 2: Development in Paddock Wood</b>	<b>25</b>
	<b>Core Policy 3: Development in the Rural Area</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>Core Policy 4: Development in Cranbrook and Hawkhurst</b>	<b>29</b>
	<b>Core Policy 5: Development in the Villages</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>Core Policy 6: Development in the Countryside</b>	<b>31</b>
	General Policies	33
	<b>Core Policy 7: Housing Provision</b>	<b>33</b>
	<b>Core Policy 8: Provision for Retail and Leisure</b>	<b>38</b>
	<b>Core Policy 9: Employment Provision</b>	<b>40</b>
	<b>Core Policy 10: Transport Infrastructure</b>	<b>41</b>
	<b>Core Policy 11: Green Belt and Rural Fringe</b>	<b>43</b>
	<b>Core Policy 12: Re-use of Previously Developed Land and Buildings</b>	<b>46</b>
	<b>Core Policy 13: Natural Environment</b>	<b>48</b>
	<b>Core Policy 14: Historic Built Environment</b>	<b>51</b>
	<b>Core Policy 15: Climate Change</b>	<b>52</b>
	<b>Core Policy 16: Design Quality</b>	<b>55</b>
8	Implementation and Monitoring	59
9	Next Steps	62
■	Appendices	
1	Application of Issues & Options Representations	i
2	Background Studies	vi
3	Constraints Maps	vii
4	Accessibility to Key Destinations	xii
5	Glossary and Abbreviations	xxv
6	Bibliography	xxviii



# Chapter 1 Introduction and Invitation to Comment

## Introduction

**1.1** A Core Strategy is a long-term strategic planning document, which sets out the spatial vision and strategic objectives for an area and establishes the planning policy framework necessary to deliver them. Once adopted in 2010, the Core Strategy for Tunbridge Wells will set the agenda for development across the Borough to 2026. This Preferred Options Report is the second of three stages in preparing the Core Strategy for Tunbridge Wells Borough. The first stage was the Issues & Options Report, upon which the Borough Council consulted the public in February and March of this year.

**1.2** The Issues & Options Report set out the main issues facing the Borough with reference to the following six themes<sup>(1)</sup>:

- Safeguarding our Environment
- Maintaining a Thriving Local Economy
- Enabling People to Take Part in and Enjoy Leisure Activities
- Maintaining Community Safety and Reducing the Fear of Crime
- Transport - Getting Around the Borough
- Meeting the Need for Housing

**1.3** The Issues & Options Report sought early views about the best way to approach the specific challenges presented by each theme. Most importantly, it proposed four possible spatial Options for the physical location of development across the Borough that would meet the challenges to different degrees in different ways. The Options were to:

1. Concentrate development at the main urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough
2. Focus development at the main urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough with modest development at the small rural towns of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst
3. Disperse development throughout the Borough's settlements
4. Build a new or expanded town

**1.4** This Preferred Options Report builds on the Issues & Options Report and the feedback received during consultation and sets out the Borough Council's proposed strategy for the future development of the Borough, which it intends to take forward in its final Core Strategy.

**1.5** Please see Appendix 1 for a summary of where the representations made against the Core Strategy: Issues and Options Report have been addressed in this Preferred Options Report.

---

1 The [Sustainable Community Plan 2006-2011](#) considers the main issues facing the Borough with reference to nine themes. The six themes referred to in the text are those which are considered to have a spatial dimension and there is, therefore, some potential to address these through the planning process.

## Invitation to Comment

You are invited to comment on the Preferred Options Report from **30 November 2007 to 11 January 2008**.

If you would like to make a representation during this period, please visit the Borough Council's on-line consultation portal at: <http://consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk>. You can get help making comments on-line by looking at our reference guide by clicking on the [information page](#).

Alternatively, you can send your written representations by email to: [strategy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:strategy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk).

If you do not have access to the internet, you can make your representations in writing and send them by post or fax to:

Planning Policy, Planning Services, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS. Fax: 01892 554076. Telephone Number: 01892 554056

**If you are sending your written representations by email, post or fax, please give your full contact details and specify the following in respect of each representation:**

- Paragraph or Policy number to which the representation relates (or whether it is a general comment on the whole document)
- The nature of your response, i.e.:
  - 'object'
  - 'support'
  - 'support with conditions'
  - 'observations'

**1.6** During the consultation period, the Borough Council will be hosting a series of exhibitions at the following locations:

Date	Venue	Opening Times
Monday 3 December	St Dunstan's Hall, Southborough	10:30-18:30
Tuesday 4 December	Main Hall, Camden Centre, Royal Tunbridge Wells	10:00-18:00
Wednesday 5 December	Vestry Hall, Cranbrook	09:30-16:00
Thursday 6 December	Wesley Centre, Paddock Wood	10:00-20:00
Friday 7 December	Dunks Hall, Hawkhurst	17:30-21:00
Saturday 8 December	Main Hall, Camden Centre, Royal Tunbridge Wells	10:00-17:00

**1.7** At the exhibitions, you will be able to view summary material relating to this Report; speak informally with Planning Officers and get more advice about how to register with and make comments using the Borough Council's on-line consultation portal.

## What is a Core Strategy?

**1.8** The Borough Council is required to prepare a Core Strategy under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which introduced a new system of *spatial* planning. Spatial planning broadens planning's traditionally narrow focus on land use in order to facilitate the delivery of wider objectives that impact on the nature of places and the people who live and work in them. Under this system, the development plan for the Borough will consist of a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and a Local Development Framework (LDF), which will replace the County Structure Plan and Borough Local Plan prepared under the previous system.

**1.9** The Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report explained the structure of the LDF system and so this is not repeated here. It is, however, very important to clarify that the Core Strategy, whilst central to the LDF, will not by itself replace the Local Plan. Nor will it consider so many issues in such depth. It will not, for example, allocate specific sites for development. Nor will it contain detailed policies for development control purposes. These matters will be covered by a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and a Development Control Policies DPD respectively, as shown on the Borough Council's [Local Development Scheme](#) (LDS). The role of the Core Strategy is simply to establish the guiding principles and policy framework for these more detailed DPDs.

### What is a Core Strategy?

A Core Strategy is a **directive** plan. Recognising the issues facing the Borough, it **drives** development in the most appropriate direction to address them. It provides:

- A **Vision** of what the Borough will be like at the end of the Core Strategy period (2026)
- **Strategic Objectives** setting out the main challenges to be met
- A **Spatial Strategy** answering the key questions in relation to the future development in the Borough: how much development will take place; where it will be located; when it will happen; and who will deliver it
- **Core Policies**, both place-specific and general, to support the implementation of the Spatial Strategy
- A **Monitoring and Implementation Framework** to secure its success

It is essential that the Core Strategy is locally distinctive to this Borough - only then can it drive appropriate development. Moreover, it must recognise that there are different challenges to be met in different parts of the Borough, which is why it will contain place-specific, 'place-shaping' policies.

**1.10** The remit of the Core Strategy, as set out above, is quite different from that of a Local Plan. A Core Strategy sets the agenda for the long-term future of the Borough and challenges development to achieve it. It does not focus on the rules by which it will be carried out.

## Planning Context for Preparing the Core Strategy

**1.11** Whilst essentially a 'local' document, a Core Strategy must be prepared in the context of regional and national planning objectives as well as local ones in order to ensure that it fulfils a truly 'spatial' function, as intended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**1.12** The Core Strategy must be in general conformity with higher-level national and regional policies, but it need not repeat them. The policies proposed in this Preferred Options Report do conform with higher-level policy, unless specifically stated otherwise. The different policy levels are as follows:

### National Planning Policy

**1.13** National planning policy and guidance is prepared by the Government and issued in the form of Planning Policy Statements (PPS). PPSs are gradually replacing previously issued Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG). PPSs and PPGs cover a wide range of planning issues, including housing, transport, renewable energy and flood risk. The Government's overarching aim for the planning system is for it to deliver sustainable development and it sets out its policies for achieving this in [PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development](#).

#### What is 'Sustainable Development'?

'Sustainable development' is a term now commonly used to describe development that simultaneously ensures social progress that recognises the needs of everyone; protects the environment; makes prudent use of natural resources; and maintains high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

**1.14** To ensure that consideration of sustainable development is built into the Core Strategy, a process of Sustainability Appraisal is undertaken throughout the preparation process. An initial Sustainability Appraisal Report accompanied the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report and this Preferred Options Report has also been tested by a further Appraisal, which can be found at [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

### Regional Planning Policy

**1.15** The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South East will be South East Plan, which is being prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA). Once adopted in Spring 2008, the South East Plan will replace the existing Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9). The draft South East Plan puts forward a Vision for the region, which is summarised as follows:

*"The South East will show a sustained improvement in its quality of life over the period to 2026, measured by the wellbeing of its citizens, the vitality of its economy, the wealth of its environment and the prudent use of natural resources"<sup>(2)</sup>.*

**1.16** It then set out a series of cross-cutting, topic-specific and spatial policies by which the Vision should be realised.

**1.17** Together, national and regional policies provide the broader context for the Borough's Core Strategy. They identify the strategic opportunities, fixed parameters and constraints that must be taken into consideration when preparing the Core Strategy locally. For example, a key role of the South East Plan is to ensure that sufficient housing is provided to meet the needs of its residents. Following the Examination in Public into the draft South East Plan, which took place between November 2006 and March 2007, the Panel of Inspectors recommended that

---

2 [Draft South East Plan, March 2006](#)

the South East Plan should set a target to provide 32,000 dwellings per year across the region until 2026 in order to meet this need. For Tunbridge Wells Borough specifically, it recommends a target of 300 dwellings per year - a total of 6,000 dwellings by 2026.

## Local Considerations

**1.18** At the local level, the Borough Council has already undertaken a significant amount of work towards preparing the Core Strategy. The [Sustainable Community Plan 2006-2011](#) provided the starting point for the Core Strategy. The Sustainable Community Plan sets out a vision for the Borough which was developed by listening to residents, organisations and businesses with a local interest and by identifying local needs and aspirations. The Sustainable Community Plan outlines priorities and actions for achieving its vision and it is the job of the Local Development Framework, guided by the Core Strategy, to support the delivery of its objectives in a tangible way.

**1.19** The Borough Council has also undertaken numerous studies (listed at Appendix 2) to ensure that the decisions taken in the Core Strategy are grounded in evidence of the Borough's development needs. Finally, valuable early feedback was received from the many stakeholders who responded to the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report earlier this year.

**1.20** Taking all this information together, the Council has prepared this Preferred Options Report. It sets out the Council's proposed strategy for the future development of the Borough, which it intends to take forward in the final Core Strategy. The Preferred Options Report is structured as follows:

### Structure of Preferred Options Report

**Chapter 2: Spatial Portrait** *provides an overview of the Borough to 'set the scene' for the Core Strategy*

**Chapter 3: Context for Development** *identifies the main issues in different areas of the Borough of which future development should take account*

**Chapter 4: Spatial Vision** *sets out what the Borough should be like by the end of the Core Strategy period – 2026*

**Chapter 5: Strategic Objectives** *identify the main challenges for future development*

**Chapter 6: Spatial Strategy** *sets out how much development there will be and broadly where it will go*

**Chapter 7: Core Policies** *are a series of place-specific and topic-specific policies to support the implementation of the Spatial Strategy. The policy wording is intended to convey the preferred approach. It does not represent the final wording*

**Chapter 8: Implementation and Monitoring** *provides information on delivery*

**Chapter 9: Next Steps** *explains the process for preparing the Core Strategy*

**1.21** In chapters 6 and 7, a reasoned justification is provided to explain why the preferred approach has been proposed by the Council and why, having been considered, alternative approaches were rejected.

## Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait

### The Borough Setting

**2.1** Tunbridge Wells Borough lies in the south west of Kent, bordering East Sussex. It covers an area of 326 square kilometres. The neighbouring districts/boroughs are: Rother and Wealden, which are in East Sussex; and Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone and Ashford, which are in Kent. Maidstone and Ashford are identified as growth points.

**2.2** The main town in the Borough is Royal Tunbridge Wells. It is identified as a sub-regional centre and a joint Hub with Tonbridge in the [South East Plan](#). It should be the focus for major retail and commercial developments. Southborough lies within the main urban area but has a separate, smaller town centre. The smaller rural towns of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst serve a wider rural hinterland with a range of more local services. There are also a number of villages within the Borough, all of which have more limited facilities, such as a shop, public house and church.

### The Built and Natural Environment

**2.3** The rural landscape is of a high quality, with approximately 69% of the Borough designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Approximately 22% of the Borough is Green Belt land. With regard to biodiversity, there are currently 10 designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest and four Local Nature Reserves. In addition, the Borough supports extensive areas of woodland, a large number of which are of ancient origin. In terms of built heritage, there are 25 Conservation Areas and approximately 3,000 listed buildings. Parts of the Borough, including Paddock Wood, are subject to flood risk.

### Demographics

**2.4** In 2006, the population of the Borough was estimated at 104,700. By 2026, the population is forecast to fall to 100,200. However, household formation is forecast to rise by 11% over the same period. The population profile of the Borough shows that there will be an increasingly ageing population and a decline in those of working age.

**2.5** Average house prices are high across the Borough (average of £313,084 from October-December 2006) and affordability is a key issue.

**2.6** Unemployment in the Borough is generally low, but pockets of deprivation do exist within Royal Tunbridge Wells. There has been a decline in primary industries, manufacturing and transport and communications. The majority of jobs are concentrated in the service sector and growth has mainly occurred in relatively low-paid service industry jobs, including retail and restaurants. There is significant out-commuting to higher value jobs and in-commuting of generally lower skilled workers for lower paid jobs. The tourist industry is significant in terms of the investment and employment that it generates.

**2.7** Whilst Royal Tunbridge Wells remains a strong shopping centre, it has dropped out of the top 50 centres since 2004, mainly due to other competing centres, including Maidstone and Bluewater, strengthening their retail offer.

**2.8** There are high levels of car ownership and usage within the Borough, but 18.7% of households do not have a car (Census 2001). Considerable congestion is experienced on the A21 between Tonbridge and Royal Tunbridge Wells and also within the towns of Royal Tunbridge

Wells and Southborough along the A26. There are reasonable rail services from Royal Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge, Sevenoaks and London, but in general there is a comparatively low provision and usage of public transport services and poor facilities for cycling and public transport.

## Chapter 3 Context for Development to 2026

### Issues in Tunbridge Wells Borough

**3.1** The preparation of the Core Strategy is underpinned by an extensive evidence base and widespread consultation, the results of which have identified a number of issues that the Local Development Framework will seek to address.

#### Main Urban Area

**3.2** Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough comprise the main urban area in the Borough. The South East Plan has confirmed the designation of Tunbridge Wells as a Regional Hub with Tonbridge, which offers significant development opportunities. Regional hubs are intended to function as highly accessible urban centres where higher density uses and mixed uses will be concentrated. This function will be supported by a package of measures designed to increase the level of accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling and allow for the development of high quality interchange facilities between all modes of transport. Housing development is also intended to be sustainably located in relation to public transport and opportunities for employment, shops, services and other facilities.

**3.3** Many of the housing allocations identified in the existing [Local Plan \(2006\)](#) have been, or are in the process of being, developed. Windfall sites, which are sites not identified in the Local Plan, have also contributed significantly to housing delivery. However, concerns were raised through the [Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report](#) consultation about the cumulative impact of windfall sites on community infrastructure and the character of areas. The need for affordable housing has increased in recent years, as identified through the [Housing Needs Survey 2005](#).

**3.4** In terms of the economy, there has been a loss of employment uses in Royal Tunbridge Wells. Outside the town centre, the main losses have been to uses such as car showrooms and retail warehouses. Within the town centre, there has been a loss of offices, including some large-scale offices, to residential use as this tends to out-bid other uses. Conversely, some of the economic allocations have been almost entirely taken up, as demonstrated by the success of Decimus Park. A planning application for the new district general hospital at Pembury has been received and there are already existing employment opportunities within the health sector in Royal Tunbridge Wells.

**3.5** Royal Tunbridge Wells remains an important retail centre and demand for premises from retailers remains high. However, the town is likely to experience further competition due to improvements in other competing centres, such as the opening of Fremlin Walk at Maidstone. There is a need for Royal Tunbridge Wells to enhance its comparison shopping function through the development of new floorspace to meet the need identified through the [Retail Study 2006](#). No further need for convenience (foodstores) floorspace has been identified.

**3.6** Existing leisure facilities include the out-of-town cinema multiplex at Knights Park. Respondents to the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report highlighted the need for a cinema in town. The Regional Hub designation highlights the potential for the town to support facilities which attract large numbers of people.

**3.7** The schools in Royal Tunbridge Wells continue to attract people to the area but the ability to capitalise on those with higher skills in terms of employment opportunities within the Borough remains a challenge. A further challenge is to balance the often competing pressure for retail, employment and residential uses in an area which has a high-quality built environment, e.g.

conservation area, as well as a high-quality natural environment, e.g. the Commons, which may constrain more dramatic solutions. Sites suitable for new development are generally small and unconnected and therefore opportunities to redevelop existing sites will need to be fully investigated.

**3.8** Whilst the rail service to London is reasonably good, road congestion within, and around, both Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough remains a challenge to be addressed, particularly if Royal Tunbridge Wells is to capitalise on its Regional Hub status.

### **Small Rural Towns**

**3.9** The Borough's small rural towns, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, support a wide rural hinterland.

**3.10** In terms of the physical environment, Paddock Wood is not as constrained as the other towns in the Borough. It does, however, abut the Green Belt to the western edge of the centre. Furthermore, flooding is an issue, particularly to the north of the main railway line, which is likely to rule out residential uses unless no other appropriate sites within the Borough can be found. The town has developed through a number of large-scale residential extensions to the south, but no further allocations are proposed within the existing Local Plan (2006), although it is known that developers have 'options' on a significant amount of greenfield land surrounding Paddock Wood. Large-scale employment allocations to the north of the railway line have generally not been taken up. Evidence points to problems of the poor quality of the existing building stock. Paddock Wood does not have any significant comparison shopping role and, apart from Waitrose, is mainly devoted to the provision of local services. There are some higher-order facilities, such as Mascalls Secondary School, which has a maximum annual intake of 240 boys and girls and is currently over-subscribed. There is also the Putlands Sports and Leisure Centre, which includes a four-court sports hall, fitness studio and outdoor sports facilities.

**3.11** Both Cranbrook and Hawkhurst are located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Future development is therefore likely to be limited to that which seeks to meet local needs and preserves the vitality and viability of the towns. The existing Local Plan (2006) did not allocate any housing to Cranbrook. A site was allocated for affordable housing to meet local needs at Hawkhurst, which has now been completed. Employment opportunities are generally of a smaller scale, although a high percentage of residents in these parishes do also work in the parish. Outside of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, Cranbrook is the only centre in the Borough to have a significant comparison shopping centre. Both Cranbrook and Hawkhurst have supermarkets. The Weald Sports Centre in Cranbrook includes a 25m indoor swimming pool, sports hall and four badminton courts.

### **Villages**

**3.12** There are 17 villages in the Borough, all of which provide some facilities, such as a primary school, shop, public house and church. Most villages are located in the Green Belt and/or the AONB. To date, development within villages has been limited to infill or redevelopment.

### **Countryside**

**3.13** There are a number of hamlets and other more remote buildings dispersed across the Borough. The rural areas have generated a significant amount of new employment land outside of the Economic Development Areas and sites allocated for employment uses.

## Chapter 4 Spatial Vision

**4.1** The Core Strategy must contain a spatial vision of what the Borough should be like if it succeeds in addressing all the challenges it sets out to. The Spatial Vision proposed below interprets the vision within the [Sustainable Community Plan 2006-2011](#) in spatial terms, taking account of the issues and challenges set out in Chapters 2 and 3.

### The Spatial Vision

**4.2** By 2026, Tunbridge Wells Borough will fulfil a dual role: it will provide a centre of strategic importance within the South East Region and, perhaps more importantly, it will provide an environment in which people with a direct interest in its future – residents; businesses; workers; and visitors, can prosper. Future development will maximise the potential of all of the Borough's settlements by respecting and enhancing the characteristics that make them unique. Economic growth will continue to be closely linked to the quality of the Borough's environment and so development in any given place will have succeeded in maintaining the character of its towns and the beauty of its countryside.

**4.3** The main urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough will be the focus for the majority of new development. Royal Tunbridge Wells will be a centre of social, cultural, commercial and economic activity, serving an extensive catchment area. The town centre will out-compete its neighbours, as visitors come to use its new retail, leisure and cultural facilities and as more high quality housing and business premises are built to meet both local needs and those of people wishing to live and work here in the future.

**4.4** The town and its surroundings will be renowned as a centre of excellence for health-related services and activities, building upon its roots as an historic spa town and upon the opportunities arising from the provision of a new district general hospital at Pembury. A thriving business and commercial sector will continue to grow, assisted by the provision of high-quality office space in the town centre and by the reduction in traffic congestion in and around the town, following improvements to the A21, the potential introduction of park and ride services, a considered approach to parking policy and to increased use of high-quality facilities for public transport, cycling and walking.

**4.5** All local residents should be able to benefit from developments at the Hub. For example, it should help to remove existing barriers to young people remaining in the Borough through measures, including the provision of affordable housing and of more flexible commercial premises to encourage entrepreneurial business start-ups and business growth. Regeneration efforts will be targeted on the least affluent parts of the town to ensure that residents of those areas will also benefit to the full.

**4.6** As the Hub grows, local centres will retain a distinct character. Services and facilities in Southborough will have been enhanced by development at Royal Tunbridge Wells, but essentially it will support the Hub rather than become a part of it. Small, independent traders will continue to thrive in Southborough, contributing to a strong sense of place. Likewise, smaller neighbourhood centres will continue to provide essential services and be a focus for local communities.

**4.7** The rural service centres of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst will continue to serve a wider rural hinterland with vibrant town centres that provide a range of high-quality, local services. Paddock Wood will contain a thriving industrial area to the north of the railway line, which will offer modern and flexible business premises to attract high-tech industries that employ people in high-value jobs. Capitalising on its attractive surroundings and existing sports

facilities, the town will also become a centre for outdoor activities, providing opportunities for cycling and walking. Economic success in Paddock Wood will drive some smaller-scale housing development to the south of the railway line, along with town centre regeneration and infrastructure improvements.

**4.8** Cranbrook and Hawkhurst will remain attractive places to live, work and visit, benefiting from the high quality of their natural and built environments. Their character will continue to be defined by their setting within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and by their central conservation areas. Modest development to meet local needs for housing, employment, community services and infrastructure will have secured their continuing vitality.

**4.9** The small rural towns will be at the heart of a thriving, well-connected network of villages and hamlets in the countryside. A strong rural economy will be more closely related to appropriate uses, such as recreation and tourism, which protect the character of the landscape and may also offer opportunities to enhance it due to greater interest in its future use. The small rural towns will continue to provide essential services and to act as a focus for community activity.

## Chapter 5 Strategic Objectives

**5.1** The Spatial Vision proposed in chapter 4 presents some significant challenges for development. The Core Strategy must clearly express these challenges as Strategic Objectives, which all development should have regard to in order to achieve the Spatial Vision. The following are proposed:

### Strategic Objectives

- To provide an adequate and continuous supply of land, in sustainable locations, to meet the Borough's strategic requirements for housing, employment and retail development and for other supporting infrastructure, whilst protecting and seeking to enhance the Borough's unique high-quality built and natural environment
- To maintain the general extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt
- To provide, or to enable the provision of, enhanced infrastructure to support new and existing development, particularly where this can reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport where travel remains necessary
- To provide sufficient affordable housing and a housing mix that meets the needs of local people
- To stimulate and sustain the economic growth and competitiveness of Royal Tunbridge Wells as a Regional Hub in a way that also provides business opportunities for local people. Focusing development at the Hub should not prejudice the need to support the rural economy by protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of the small rural towns, neighbourhood and village centres and wider rural area
- To target regeneration efforts where necessary to ensure that all current and future residents of the Borough have the opportunity to access the services and facilities they require to meet their needs for housing, employment, leisure, education and health

**5.2** In addition to the Strategic Objectives presented above, the Core Strategy must provide for development to be carried out in a sustainable way. As explained in chapter 1, the Sustainability Appraisal accompanying this Preferred Options Report tests it, in detail, against sustainability objectives. Therefore, only the overarching sustainability objectives are presented below.

### Sustainability Objectives

- To maximise the use of previously developed land and the existing property stock
- To conserve, wherever possible, finite non-renewable resources, including land, energy, water, soil and air quality
- To ensure development addresses sustainability issues, including climate change adaptation and mitigation issues
- To ensure development gives full consideration to design principles, including energy efficiency and sustainable construction

## Chapter 6 Spatial Strategy

**6.1** The Spatial Strategy is central to the Core Strategy. It will provide a directive plan of how the spatial vision and strategic objectives set out in the previous sections will be achieved in practical terms. The role of the spatial strategy is to set out how much development there will be, broadly where it will go, when it will take place and who will deliver it.

### How much development will there be?

**6.2** The question of how much development will take place is, to a significant extent, determined by strategic national and regional policy requirements, or by local evidence identifying development needs, which present more or less fixed parameters for the strategy. The Council's Preferred Option is to provide sufficient development over the Plan period to meet both strategic requirements and local needs. This would constitute a balance of uses comprising the following:

- *6,000 additional dwellings over the period 2006-2026.* This is the number of dwellings that the Panel Report into the draft South East Plan has recommended should be provided in order for the backlog and future needs for housing in the Borough to be met. Please refer to Core Policy 7: Housing for detail.
- *Approximately 26,000 sqm of net comparison (non-food) floorspace in the main urban area and small rural towns, with the vast majority of this focused at Royal Tunbridge Wells to 2017.* This reflects the recommendations of the [Tunbridge Wells Borough Retail Study 2006](#). Please refer to Core Policy 8: Provision for Retail and Leisure for detail.
- *Increase or maintain the current amount of employment floorspace across the Borough in pursuit of smart growth, as recommended by the [Employment Land Study 2006](#).* Please refer to Core Policy 9: Employment Provision for detail.
- *A minimum of 12 gypsy and traveller pitches plus, if necessary, provision for travelling showpeople, over the period to 2016.* Circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007 require local authorities to make provision for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers through the planning system. Please refer to Core Policy 7: Housing Provision for detail.
- *Appropriate leisure, cultural, recreational, education and other facilities to support the needs of the local population over the period to 2026.* Please see Core Policy 8: Provision of Retail and Leisure for detail.
- *Improved transport links within the main urban area and between Tonbridge and Royal Tunbridge Wells to 2026 and beyond.*

**6.3** With the quantity and type of development established, the real questions for the Borough Council relate to where it will go and when it will be provided, and these are questions over which it has a greater degree of control.

### Where will new development go?

**6.4** The Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report proposed four possible ways of distributing development that would meet the Borough's needs within given environmental and policy constraints that were known at the time. These were to:

1. Concentrate development at the main urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough
2. Focus development at the main urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, with modest development at the small rural towns of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst

3. Disperse development throughout the Borough's settlements
4. Build a new or expanded town

**6.5** In preparing this Preferred Options Report, each Option has been assessed against the following criteria:

- a. The extent to which it would satisfy strategic policy requirements, particularly in relation to the South East Plan Regional Hub designation
- b. The outcome of the Core Strategy: Issues & Options consultation responses
- c. The findings of Sustainability Appraisal in respect of development needs and environmental constraints
- d. The findings of Accessibility Analysis
- e. The nature of development opportunities

**6.6** Following analysis of each option against these criteria, the Borough Council proposes not to pursue Options 3 or 4, but to put forward a Preferred Option based on Options 1 and 2.

### **Reasons for Rejecting Options 3 and 4**

**6.7 Option 3:** To disperse new development throughout the Borough's settlements does not accord with Regional Spatial Strategy policy, nor does it maximise the opportunities of the Regional Hub. Although there was a degree of support for this option through the Issues & Options consultation, no respondents suggested that the villages should accommodate a significant amount of development. Instead, organic growth to provide essential facilities was favoured.

**6.8** The Sustainability Appraisal has been refined for the Preferred Options stage, particularly in respect of the villages. The Sustainability Appraisal indicates that locating significant new development at most of the smaller settlements would seriously compromise landscape and other environmental objectives, and does not allow for efficient infrastructure provision. Furthermore, accessibility analysis indicates that there would be an increased need to travel for employment, services and facilities and limited choice of mode of travel. On the basis of these considerations, this strategy has been rejected as unsustainable.

**6.9 Option 4:** To build a new or expanded town has been rejected. This option received little support at the Issues & Options stage. Realistically, the only settlement potentially capable of fulfilling this role is Paddock Wood, due primarily to its rail connections. However, the settlement is constrained to the north by flood risk and expansion in other directions is constrained to a degree by landscape and Metropolitan Green Belt. This option would not accord with the Regional Spatial Strategy in respect of Regional Hub status and concentration of development at the main urban areas. It would also not be possible to meet national and regional targets in respect of achieving 60% of new development on previously developed land.

### **The Preferred Option**

**6.10** Option 1 proposed that all development, except for that specifically to meet local needs, be located at the main urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. Option 2 extended this to include modest development at the small rural towns of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. Following analysis in accordance with (a) to (e) above, the Borough Council proposes a Preferred Option comprising elements of both.

**6.11** It is proposed to concentrate the majority of development at Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. Each of the small rural towns will receive some development, but the quantity and type will reflect their respective roles and development constraints, the result being that

Paddock Wood will support quantitatively more development than Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. Development in the villages will be limited to minor infill and redevelopment, or that necessary to meet local needs. This Preferred Option, summarised below, determines a hierarchy for the Borough's settlements, which will govern the type and quantity of development that will be permitted in each. Table 1 below sets out the settlement hierarchy for the Borough:

### Preferred Option

- To focus the majority of development at the main urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough
- To pursue targeted regeneration and, possibly, modest extensions at the small rural town of Paddock Wood
- At the small rural towns of Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, to allow (re)development in keeping with their roles as rural service centres and to meet rural exception housing needs
- At the villages, to limit development to minor infill and redevelopment and to meet rural exception housing needs

Hierarchy	Settlement
Main Urban Area	Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough
Small Rural Towns	Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst
Villages	Benenden, Bidborough, Brenchley, Five Oak Green, Frittenden, Goudhurst, Hawkhurst (The Moor), Horsmonden, Iden Green, Kilndown, Lamberhurst, Langton Green, Matfield, Pembury, Sandhurst, Sissinghurst and Speldhurst

Table 1 Settlement Hierarchy

A sequential approach to development will be adopted. Development requirements not met by sites with existing planning permission should be provided firstly through previously developed land and buildings, followed by greenfield land, in accordance with the principles set out in CP7, CP8 and CP9 of the Core Strategy.

### Reasoned Justification for the Preferred Option

#### (a) Strategic Policy – the Regional Hub

**6.12** In their recent report following the Examination in Public into the draft South East Plan, the Panel of Inspectors supported the proposal for Royal Tunbridge Wells to become a Regional Hub with Tonbridge. It is on this basis that certain key parameters, including the strategic housing requirement of 6,000 homes to 2026, have been set and it would therefore be inconsistent to pursue a long-term local strategy that is not in accordance with the intended role of the town. Concentrating development in this way would develop and support the Hub in the long term by capitalising on existing services and infrastructure and providing greater opportunities for improving and increasing them. By allowing some new development at the small rural towns, however, the Preferred Option does recognise the potential to maximise the range of living and working opportunities available within the Borough.

**(b) Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report - Representations**

**6.13** Responses to both the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report questionnaire and the Stakeholder Workshop broadly supported the Preferred Option (please refer to the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Consultation Summary and the Workshop Event Record on the Borough Council's website at [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk) for details). More questionnaire respondents "Strongly Agreed" with Option 1 than with any other Option and there was general support for an initial focus on Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. The workshop groups were able to show visually how they would distribute development throughout the Borough and all groups located the majority of development at Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, even when they explained that they supported a dispersed approach.

**6.14** Supporters of Option 1 generally recognised that the level of existing facilities, employment opportunities and infrastructure at Royal Tunbridge Wells makes it a sustainable location, able to accommodate a significant proportion of the new development required. A number of respondents referred to specific advantages of pursuing this Option, including the opportunity to provide more low-cost/affordable housing; to maximise the use of brownfield land and thereby preserve greenfield land, and to promote the role of Tunbridge Wells as a Regional Hub.

**6.15** Participants in all consultation events were concerned, however, about the potentially negative effects of locating too much development at Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, hence the inclusion of Core Policy 15: Design Quality within this Report.

**6.16** There was general support for the more dispersed approaches offered by Options 2 and 3. Respondents considered that this would relieve the pressure on Royal Tunbridge Wells and simultaneously allow some necessary growth in the smaller centres to maintain their vitality and viability. Support was, however, commonly provisional upon improved infrastructure accompanying any new housing development.

**6.17** It is significant that all workshop groups proposed to locate more development at Paddock Wood than at Cranbrook or Hawkhurst and two questionnaire responses referred specifically to Paddock Wood, with one strongly stating that expansion of the town should have been put forward as an Option in its own right. The presence of the railway station and the limited environmental constraints were often cited in support of growth at Paddock Wood, whilst respondents were concerned about the lack of transport infrastructure available to support substantial growth at Cranbrook or Hawkhurst. Part (c) below explains, however, that the recommendations of the [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) (SFRA) recently received by the Council, would preclude significant residential development to the north of the railway line in Paddock Wood.

**(c) Sustainability Appraisal**

**6.18** An initial Sustainability Appraisal, carried out at the Core Strategy: Issues & Options stage, concluded that Options 1 and 2 performed better than the others in relation to key sustainability objectives. The Appraisal took account of the performance of each option with regard to a) meeting development needs and b) taking account of constraints on development. It found, for example, that Option 1 would most successfully meet the need for affordable housing and would make the best use of previously developed land. Options 1 and 2 were also considered to have least impact upon the Borough's natural environment. The full initial Sustainability Appraisal Report is available on the Council's website [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk).

**6.19** At Issues & Options stage, consideration had already been given to a number of constraints, including those posed by the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB); Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and biodiversity considerations. Reference to the constraints maps at

Appendix 3 clearly indicates that Options 1 and 2 would perform best in terms of preserving these valuable assets. These maps show that Paddock Wood is comparatively unconstrained in landscape terms and is also well served by transport links. However, the Borough Council has since received the results of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), which indicates that vulnerable development to the north of the town is significantly constrained by flood risk.

**6.20** The purpose of a SFRA, as set out in [PPS25: Development and Flood Risk](#), is to guide development to areas of lowest flood risk. The Borough Council's SFRA has confirmed that a significant area to the north of the railway line is situated within flood zones 2 or 3, which represent significant risk. In accordance with PPS25, the Borough's SFRA applies a 'sequential test' to determine whether it is appropriate to develop areas of flood risk for different types of uses. Application of the sequential test in relation to the flood risk areas of Paddock Wood would rule it out for residential development at present, due to the availability of risk-free land elsewhere. Only when such land is exhausted should mitigation measures be investigated as a way of releasing land subject to flood risk. Application of the sequential test would not, however, rule out the redevelopment of the flood risk areas to the north of the railway line for employment uses. It is therefore proposed to pursue this approach. The provision of more, better quality employment opportunities would perhaps drive some smaller-scale residential development to the south of the town. Please see Core Policy 2 for detail.

**6.21** Further to the Sustainability Appraisal carried out at Issues and Options stage, this Preferred Options Report is itself informed by a two-stage process of sustainability appraisal. An Initial Sustainability Appraisal Briefing Note assessed the relative sustainability of the Borough's settlements and a full [Sustainability Appraisal](#) has been undertaken to test the overall Preferred Options Report. Both concluded that the preferred approach to development, as set out in this Chapter, accords with the principles of Sustainable Development.

**(d)** The findings of Accessibility Analysis

**6.22** Working with Kent County Council, the Borough Council has undertaken an assessment of the relative accessibility of different areas within the Borough in relation to 10 key indicators, including ease of access to hospitals, schools and major employment, retail and leisure opportunities. Appendix 4 sets out the methodology by which the assessment was undertaken, using Accession software.

**6.23** The findings support those of the Sustainability Appraisal in concluding that the main urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough provides the greatest level of accessibility to the services and facilities included within the analysis. The maps included at Appendix 4 illustrate this graphically, with the red areas being the most accessible and the blue areas the least. Figure 2 illustrates the relative accessibility of different areas, taking account of all the indicators. Figures 3-12 break this down into the component indicators.

**(e)** The Nature of Development Opportunities

**6.24** Concentrating development in the main urban area would offer the greatest opportunity to make best use of previously developed land. Historically, over the period 2001-2007, 74% of all housing development completed in the Borough has been within the main urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. Over 95% of all residential development has taken place on previously developed land - 74% has taken place on brownfield windfall sites.

**6.25** The Council has begun to consider the extent of brownfield opportunities in the Borough and the Preferred Option reflects its expectation that the historical trend is likely to continue. Work is ongoing to build up a profile of the relative suitability, availability and viability of individual development opportunities in order to secure a formal programme of delivery. The Borough

Council is undertaking a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), as required by PPS3: Housing, in order to identify where development will take place for the first 10 years of the Plan period. This will be completed before the Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State. The Borough Council is also in the process of appointing a Development Partner to facilitate the delivery of town centre development through its Town Centres Area Action Plan Development Plan Document.

**6.26** Notwithstanding the above, it is important to reiterate that it is not the role of the Core Strategy to identify specific sites for development. The Core Strategy should direct development to where it is needed and the reasoned justification presented above clearly sets out why the Council has arrived at its preferred spatial distribution. Work on the SHLAA and the Town Centres Area Action Plan will test the viability of the Preferred Option proposed and the results will determine the balance of development to take place on brownfield versus greenfield sites in accordance with the sequential approach set out above.

### **When will development take place?**

**6.27** The development requirements of the LDF should be met in a way that provides for timely residential, employment, retail and leisure development and brings forward community facilities and infrastructure when they are needed. This should be coordinated with providers' strategies, whilst at the same time conserving and enhancing the high quality environmental character of the Borough by encouraging excellence in the quality of all development.

### **Who will deliver it?**

**6.28** Provision will be through a coordinated approach of public/private sector stakeholders with a range of partnerships, funding and collaborative working. Planning tools, including the use of tariffs, will be considered in ensuring the timely delivery of development. As set out in Chapter 8: Implementation and Monitoring, the Core Strategy will be monitored to ensure that development takes place in accordance with the overall strategy.

### **Key Diagrams**

**6.29** The key diagrams on the following pages show:

- **Key Diagram, Figure 1** shows the relationship between the main settlements, transport links and environmental constraints in the Borough. Environmental constraints are shown in more detail in Maps 1-4 at Appendix 3. These present the basic spatial context for the Core Strategy and the options for a spatial strategy
- **Key Diagram, Figure 2** shows a visual representation of the Spatial Strategy Preferred Option, which is set out on page 15

**6.30** The maps are in diagrammatic format only.

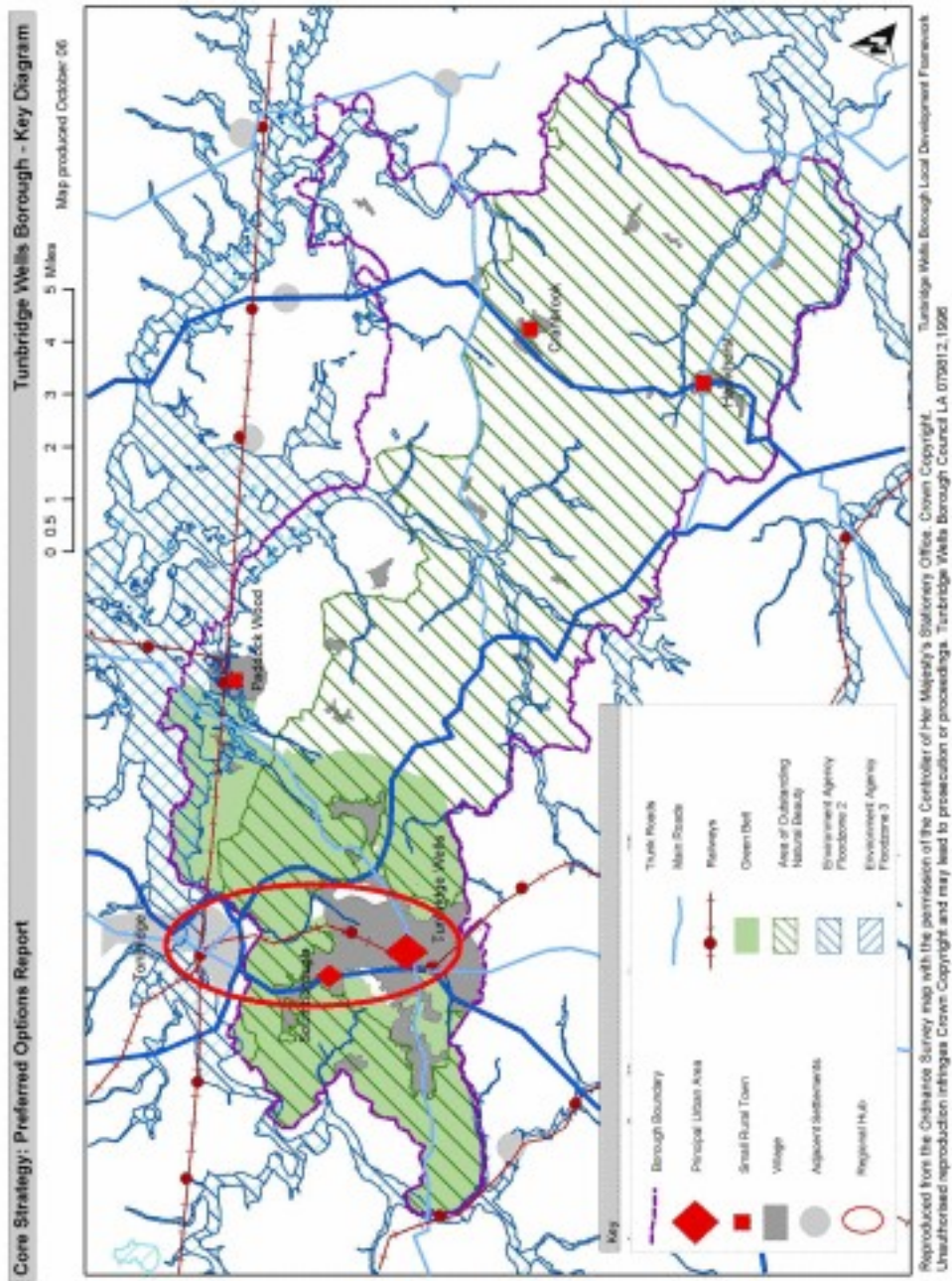


Figure 1 Key Diagram

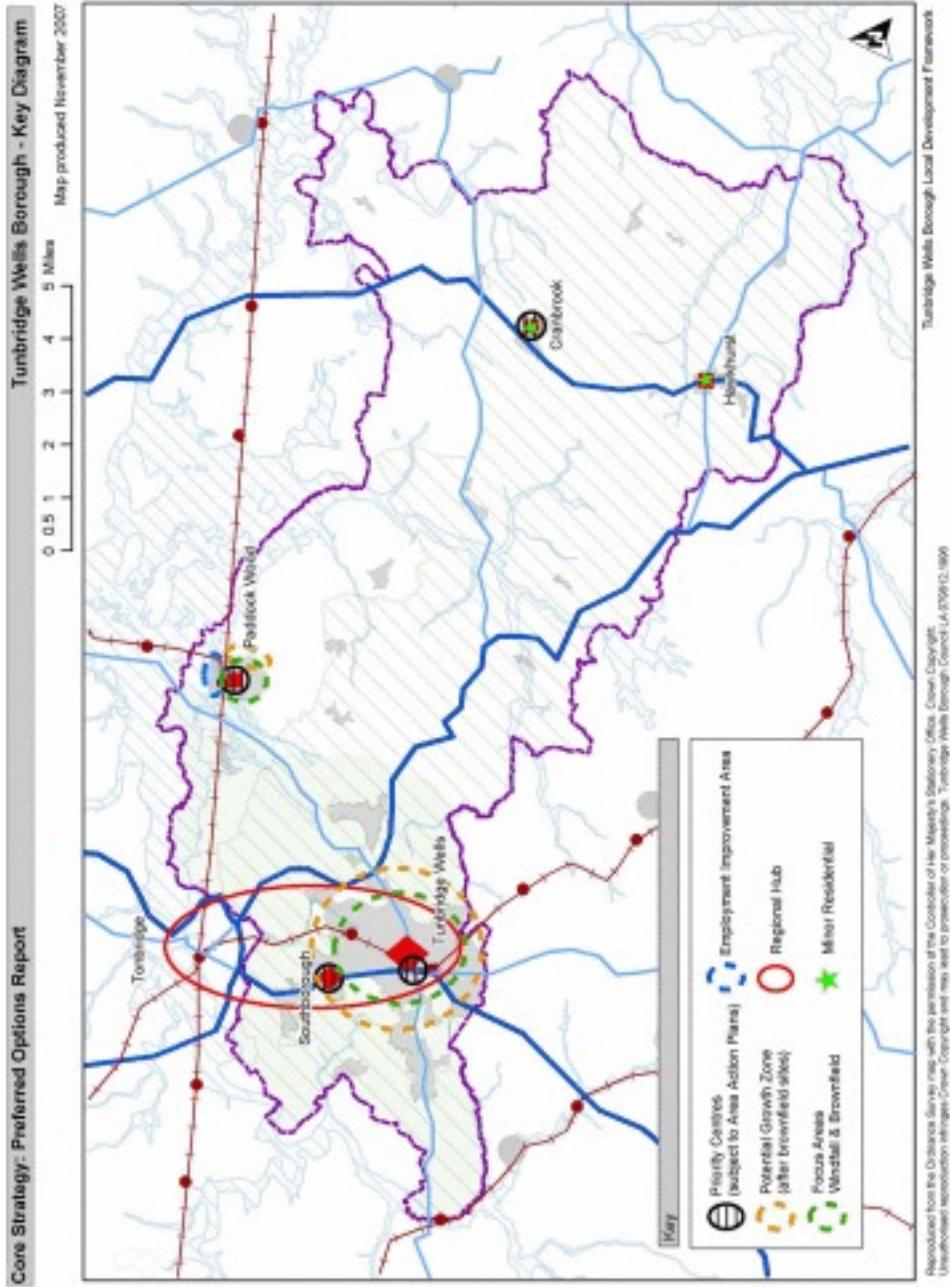


Figure 2 Key Diagram

## Chapter 7 Core Policies

**7.1** The role of the Core Policies is to set out the fundamental principles that should be adhered to in order to support the delivery of development in accordance with the Spatial Strategy.

**7.2** The Spatial Strategy reflects both the general issues and challenges facing the Borough and the Vision for specific places. It is therefore appropriate to include general Core Policies and place-specific Core Policies. In this document, place-specific Core Policies are known as "Place-Shaping Policies", to reflect their role in maintaining or creating a sense of identity in different areas across the Borough.

**7.3** This chapter outlines 15 Core Policies: six Place-Shaping and nine General, which the Council proposes to include within its Core Strategy. A reasoned justification for its inclusion and content accompanies each Policy.

## Place-Shaping Policies

### Core Policy 1: Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough

**7.4** The vast majority of the Borough's needs for residential, retail, commercial, social and cultural developments will be met at Royal Tunbridge Wells. Development at Southborough will secure the strength of this key local centre to enable it to support the function of the hub.

#### Core Policy 1: Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough

The preferred approach for development in Royal Tunbridge Wells is to:

- Prioritise the comprehensive redevelopment of town centre and edge-of-centre sites for development for a range of uses, including residential; commercial; economic; leisure and; cultural
- Provide at least three quarters of the Borough's housing requirement over the Plan period, to include sufficient affordable housing to meet both unmet and future needs
- Maintain/increase the existing amount of employment floorspace whilst maintaining/increasing the proportion of B1 office space, principally in the town centre. Particular encouragement will be given to health sector businesses
- Provide 23,403 sqm of new net comparison retail floorspace in the town centre by 2017, to include the planned expansion of Royal Victoria Place
- Contribute to an integrated approach to improve transport and movement into, and around, the town
- Strengthen the role of neighbourhood centres in providing services to local residents and a focus for community interaction
- Preserve the relationship between the landscape and townscape of Royal Tunbridge Wells to secure its special character in the long term

The preferred approach to development in Southborough is to:

- Maintain the town as a local centre of distinctive character, independent of Royal Tunbridge Wells
- Reinforce the function of Southborough as a local centre through a new mixed use development to provide retail, commercial and community facilities

#### Reasoned Justification

**7.5** To prioritise the redevelopment of the town centre and on the edge of centre for the majority of new development is consistent with the South East Plan Regional Hub designation. Such an approach would capitalise on existing services and infrastructure and allow for efficient use of funding and resources to improve or extend those services to meet the needs of new development.

**7.6** As explained in chapter 6, both the Sustainability Appraisal and accessibility modelling undertaken for the Borough demonstrates that Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough are the most sustainable locations for new development in the Borough, which adds weight to

maximise potential associated with regional hub status. There is also the potential to enhance and reinforce the economic/commercial base of the Borough, which is already concentrated at the main urban area.

**7.7** It is true that development in the town will be constrained, to a degree, by its high quality built and natural environment. It is surrounded by High Weald AONB landscape and other landscape designations, three Conservation Areas, historic parks and gardens and the Commons. The town is also situated entirely within the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB), but there is land outside the MGB that has been held as a long-term development contingency.

**7.8** Constraints exist elsewhere in the Borough outside the MGB and AONB, principally at Paddock Wood, where flood risk precludes residential and other vulnerable types of use. Although it may be possible to mitigate some flood risk areas in the short to medium term, it is unlikely that Paddock Wood could accommodate the scale of development associated with a regional hub.

**7.9** Historically (over the period 2001-2007), some 74% of the Borough's new housing has been built at Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough. The majority has been on unidentified previously developed land and through maximising potential of allocated brownfield sites. Change of use, or redevelopment, of commercial premises in Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough have accounted for the largest proportion of new dwellings compared with other sources. This may imply a loss, or at least displacement, of commercial activity to locations outside the town and possibly the Borough. The impact of this trend on the diversity and strength of the economic base of the town needs to be carefully considered and redressed, particularly in the light of the role of Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough as a Regional Hub.

**7.10** Whilst it is acknowledged that office development has been lost within Royal Tunbridge Wells, it is important that Royal Tunbridge Wells maintains sufficient business premises if it is to capitalise on its Regional Hub status. The success of Decimus Park and the known demand for small B1 units would lend itself to considering the provision of a high quality development.

**7.11** Royal Tunbridge Wells is a major retail centre, which is acknowledged in the RSS as part of its role as Regional Hub and complements Tonbridge town centre in this respect. A need has been identified for additional comparison retail floorspace on the basis of increased expenditure being available within the catchment area of the town by 2017.

**7.12** Opportunities exist within Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough for redevelopment for retail and mixed use schemes, as well as enhancing cultural facilities, such as museums and theatres. The Borough Council intends to pursue a comprehensive approach to delivering this agenda through the use of collaborative working with private sector partners, other stakeholders and production of a Town Centres Area Action Plan DPD.

**7.13** Accessibility modelling has demonstrated that Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough is the most accessible location for key daily trips for employment, shopping, school and other facilities. To maximise its potential as a Regional Hub, however, a package of measures, including improvements to public transport, pedestrian and highway works, will be required to improve movement within Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough and to/from Tonbridge.

**7.14** Within Southborough, there is an existing allocation in the Local Plan for a mixed use development including a supermarket, residential uses and a community building. This development will help to reinforce a sense of place.

**7.15** Within Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough, neighbourhood centres still play an important role as focal points for local communities. They provide easily-accessible shops (meeting day-to-day needs) and local services. In recent years, there has been a tendency to lose essential facilities to other (primarily residential) uses. This may, in turn, increase the occurrence and length of journeys made for basic needs. Neighbourhood centres therefore contribute to overall sustainability objectives.

## Core Policy 2: Development in Paddock Wood

**7.16** Significant economic development will secure the commercial success of Paddock Wood, which, in turn, will drive other development to enhance the infrastructure and community facilities serving the town.

### Core Policy 2: Development in Paddock Wood

The preferred approach for development in Paddock Wood is to:

- Maintain or increase the extent and present functions of the employment land area to the north of the railway line, but secure its redevelopment for current business needs
- Encourage and facilitate the provision of smaller, more flexible and higher quality commercial and industrial units in the employment areas
- Lobby transport providers to provide the means for commuters to access the employment areas by sustainable means
- Provide sufficient residential development to enable targeted improvements to key service infrastructure and community facilities. Residential development should contribute to addressing local affordability issues and provide a greater choice of housing types for local people.
- Locate residential development only in accordance with the sequential test of vulnerability due to flooding provided by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)
- Focus town centre regeneration to benefit commuters as well as local people. Encourage the provision of activities to strengthen the social economy of the town, such as restaurants and meeting places
- Enhance the character and appearance of the town by protecting its heritage and strengthening the sense of place. New development should pay particular attention to the integration of the townscape and landscape with a view to enhancing the quality of the local environment

### Reasoned Justification

**7.17** Paddock Wood still offers opportunities to improve the quality of the employment stock offered locally and it is one of the few places in the Borough that is well connected and also has the scope to meet the needs of businesses with larger space requirements.

**7.18** The employment areas within Paddock Wood also offer scope to support smaller, more high quality B1 and B2 space, as there is some evidence that both the existing large size and often poor quality of accommodation in Paddock Wood has been a cause of low take-up rates.

**7.19** Paddock Wood has excellent rail links to Tonbridge, London and Ashford and reasonable links to Maidstone/Medway via the Medway Valley line. Currently, there is net out-commuting by the resident workforce, whereas workers for local businesses are travelling into the Borough to access employment opportunities. Whilst this pattern is unlikely to be reversed, it will be important to continue to ensure that workers have the opportunity to access sustainable modes of travel.

**7.20** There are very limited brownfield opportunities remaining for residential development within the town. Such recent residential development that has occurred has been either of a very small scale, or confined to greenfield allocations in former Development Plans. The Metropolitan Green Belt extends up to, and abuts, the western boundary of the town. The

preferred approach for housing development in Paddock Wood is therefore to continue to address local choice and 'affordability' issues, possibly via modest extensions to the town, if necessary.

**7.21** Paddock Wood lies within the functional floodplain of the River Medway. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) indicates that land to the north of the railway (some of which has been subject to a long-standing allocation for employment use) is not suitable for residential or other vulnerable uses in the short to medium term.

**7.22** Paddock Wood is a small-scale centre, made up of largely independent retailers occupying small units. Whilst Paddock Wood trades adequately, with a range of convenience and service facilities, opportunities to enhance the vitality and viability of the centre will be sought. Development should be of a high quality and seek to create a sense of place and character.

**7.23** There are no conservation areas within Paddock Wood, nor is the surrounding area subject to any national landscape designations. Nevertheless, opportunities to enhance the quality of the local environment should be sought.

## Core Policy 3: Development in the Rural Area

### The Rural Area

**7.24** The Vision of the rural area as a thriving network of towns, villages and hamlets in the countryside, highlights the diverse nature of this part of the Borough in terms of the different settlement types it accommodates and their various functions. Future development should aim to strengthen the interrelationship of the rural settlements, both within, and outside, the Borough boundaries and so it is proposed to include the following comprehensive policy to set out the general principles. Core Policies 4, 5 and 6 provide additional principles for development in Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, the villages and the open countryside respectively.

#### Core Policy 3: Development in the Rural Area

The preferred approach to development in the rural area is to:

- Protect the natural environment for its own sake
- Preserve, enhance and, where necessary, restore the interrelationship between the natural and built features of the landscape, this being the principal determinant of the character of the rural area
- Strengthen the rural economy and safeguard its long-term sustainability by providing opportunities for commercial activity which utilise rural resources appropriately
- Maintain a hierarchy of settlements consisting of small rural towns, villages and settlements in the countryside and work with our partners to improve access between them
- Provide housing to meet local needs, including through the provision of rural exception sites where appropriate

### Reasoned Justification

**7.25** The rural landscape of the Borough is varied and of a high quality. It includes attractive small towns and villages. The Borough's rural environment is a strong asset, which makes a significant contribution to the special landscape character of the Borough's rural areas and quality of life to those living within the Borough. It is essential to protect, preserve and enhance this asset in order to maintain the character and distinctiveness of these special areas. Restoring and maintaining the interrelationships between the natural and built features of the landscape plays a significant part in this. It is vital to pursue these interrelationships in order to maximise the potential contribution that both natural and built features can make to the rural areas within the Borough and to maximise the potential benefits to the countryside, whilst promoting long-term sustainability within the rural areas.

**7.26** The rural economy is vital for the survival of rural communities and it is essential to encourage the appropriate use of rural resources to ensure that development is both accessible and sustainable.

**7.27** Government guidance indicates that the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting specific development needs in rural areas. [PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas](#) recognises the important and varied roles of agriculture, including in the maintenance and management of the countryside. It is essential that the Core Strategy seeks to support proposals that will encourage farmers to be more competitive, sustainable and, where possible, diversify into new agricultural opportunities.

**7.28** A strong rural economy will enable a strong hierarchy of small rural towns by developing competitive, diverse and thriving rural enterprise that provides a range of jobs and underpins strong economies. These centres are essential to serve visitors to the Borough and local communities, who in turn support local economies. In many cases, the small rural towns are at the heart of a rural community providing essential services and facilities. Maintaining these services at the local level, with improved access, will encourage greater sustainable development as a whole within the rural areas, whilst providing for both rural communities and economies.

**7.29** In line with [PPS3: Housing](#), housing in rural areas will seek to sustain rural communities, recognising identified need within rural areas for both market and affordable housing. Within rural areas, consideration will also be given to rural exception sites. This will enable the local authority to allocate, or release, small sites within, and adjoining, small rural communities, which may be subject to policies of restraint (such as Green Belt) and would not be released for market housing.

## Core Policy 4: Development in Cranbrook and Hawkhurst

**7.30** Cranbrook and Hawkhurst are defined as small rural towns and so the general Development in Rural Areas Policy (CP3) also applies.

### Core Policy 4: Development in Cranbrook and Hawkhurst

The preferred approach to development in Cranbrook and Hawkhurst specifically is to:

- Maintain and secure their long-term function as providers of employment opportunities, services and community facilities to local residents and a wider rural hinterland
- Maintain the vitality of the centres by increasing the net comparison retail floorspace by 1,118 sqm at Cranbrook and by 411 sqm at Hawkhurst by 2017
- Resist the further loss of employment sites at Hawkhurst
- Utilise appropriate opportunities for minor housing development

### Reasoned Justification

**7.31** As small rural towns, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst will provide local employment opportunities, services to the community and essential facilities. These two centres provide the opportunity for those people who live and work in rural areas to have reasonable access to a range of services, facilities and employment. A positive approach to planning within these areas is needed to improve viability and accessibility to existing services and facilities, whilst adding community value. The Core Strategy will support the retention of local facilities and, where possible, plan for new services and facilities.

**7.32** This approach is in line with national Government guidance set out in [Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas](#) (PPS7). In addition, in response to the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report, the majority of respondents agreed that key services are essential to support smaller rural settlements and sustainable communities.

**7.33** Resisting the loss of employment space seeks to encourage local employment opportunities and encourages working towards sustainable development as a whole. This includes reducing the need to travel and utilising local resources.

**7.34** Within the small rural towns of Hawkhurst and Cranbrook, appropriate opportunities for potential minor housing development, if appropriate, will be utilised. Appropriate opportunities for development will enable identified needs to be met for both market and affordable housing. Small-scale residential development in such areas will significantly contribute to creating vibrant, sustainable and accessible small rural towns. This approach is in line with [Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing](#), which recognises the need to promote existing towns and service centres for such development in order to meet the housing needs of those in rural areas. This preferred approach will also recognise the need for rural exception housing sites. Residential development within such areas will recognise the considerable historic and architectural value of the small rural towns and should contribute to the sense of local identity and regional diversity, being appropriate in design and scale for its location.

## Core Policy 5: Development in the Villages

**7.35** There are 17 villages that are distributed throughout the rural area of the Borough. The general Development in Rural Areas Policy (CP3) also applies.

### Core Policy 5: Development in the Villages

In relation to development in the villages specifically, the preferred approach to development is to:

- Protect and enhance the village centres to provide a focus for communities by resisting the loss of essential services and facilities to meet local needs
- Retain existing employment sites and facilitate opportunities for e-working and home working
- Provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs on rural exception sites

### Reasoned Justification

**7.36** Development in the villages will be carefully managed to provide easily accessible facilities and local services that meet day-to-day needs of local people. Protecting and enhancing village centres is essential to maintain local communities and encourage sustainable transport. Retaining existing employment sites and facilitating both e-working and home working will reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable modes of transport. This, in turn, will reduce congestion on our rural roads and improve air quality.

**7.37** The preferred policy approach aims to sustain, enhance and, where appropriate, revitalise villages, providing the opportunity for strong, diverse economic activity, whilst maintaining local character and a high quality environment.

**7.38** This approach is in line with responses to the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report, in which a high percentage of respondents agreed that the provision of key services should be supported in the villages. This approach is further supported by [Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas](#), which recognises that small-scale development in villages can provide the most sustainable option in such areas, which are remote and have poor public transport links.

**7.39** In line with Policy CP3 'Development in Rural Areas', only affordable housing will be provided for within these areas where there is a demonstrated local need.

## Core Policy 6: Development in the Countryside

**7.40** The Borough contains a significant amount of high quality open countryside that is a key feature of the Borough and it is essential that the Core Strategy seeks to protect and enhance this resource for existing and future generations. The general Development in Rural Areas Policy (CP3) also applies.

### Core Policy 6: Development in the Countryside

The preferred approach to development in the countryside is to:

- Operate a policy of restraint on general development in order to maintain the landscape character and quality of the countryside
- Protect and enhance the character of the landscape by valuing all the contributing features
- Maximise opportunities to strengthen the rural economy by encouraging uses related to the land, including appropriate forms of green tourism, agriculture, forestry and equestrian activity
- Provide housing only to meet local need

### Reasoned Justification

**7.41** A high percentage of the Borough is covered by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Special Landscape Areas (SLA), which are of significant value to those living, working and visiting the Borough. The character and attractive appearance of the countryside is one of the Borough's principal assets and its protection is essential. The Borough has a diverse and distinctive landscape formed by a patchwork of agriculture, woodland, heathland and rural settlements. It is predominantly a rural agricultural landscape of grazed pastures and arable fields set within a framework of woodlands, highlighted with broad belts of orchards and hop gardens. Settlement and built character provide a further layer of interest with a locally distinct vernacular style, including brick, tiled, weatherboard, half-timbered and sandstone buildings. In the High Weald, these form traditional ridgetop settlements with commanding views of the countryside. There are also farmsteads and isolated rural dwellings, including characteristic Wealden hall houses and visually distinctive clusters of oasts.



Picture 1 Countryside

**7.42** Within AONBs, it is Government policy to protect and enhance their natural beauty, whilst having due regard to social and economic considerations. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage is also an important consideration. It is essential that the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that the unique character and appearance of the Borough's countryside is enhanced and maintained for future generations, in particular within the High Weald AONB and the High and Low Weald SLAs.

**7.43** In line with [Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas](#), the Core Strategy will seek to be supportive of farm diversification, where appropriate, to help sustain agricultural enterprise and in order to maximise opportunities to strengthen the rural

economy. Links between people, their communities and businesses within these areas are strengthening and the health of the environment and of the community depends on the viability of the local economy. Areas within the countryside that attract visitors for their scenic beauty and which enjoy income from tourism will be better able to afford to sustain the local environment, whilst meeting the objectives for countryside character and quality.

**7.44** Due to the significant importance of the Borough's landscape character, major development within such areas should not take place, except where it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances apply. Within those special designated areas within the countryside, development will only be permitted if it would protect or enhance the natural beauty and special character of the landscape. Therefore, any provision of housing will reflect local need. Redundant rural buildings can be an important resource for new rural enterprises and consideration will need to be given to their retention for future agricultural related development. Where conversion is appropriate, consideration should be given to commercial re-use and/or residential conversion to meet local housing needs.

# General Policies

## Core Policy 7: Housing Provision

**7.45** Housing provision in the Borough must fulfil the following three objectives:

- to meet the strategic housing requirement
- to address local affordability issues
- to provide for the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

This Core Policy is, therefore, divided into three parts.

### Core Policy 7: Housing Provision

The preferred approach is to:

Provide for the Strategic Housing Requirement set out in the South East Plan by:

- Employing the following sequential approach to identify land for housing development (subject to Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Accessibility and Sustainability Appraisal considerations) and include a modest allowance for windfall projections:
  1. Previously developed land within main urban areas
  2. Previously developed land within small rural towns
  3. Previously developed land within villages
 Followed by:
  4. Extensions to the main urban area
  5. Minor extensions to small rural towns
  6. Extensions at villages to meet local needs only through rural exceptions affordable housing

Meeting the need for affordable housing by:

- Adopting an affordable housing target for development which:
  - a. contributes towards meeting the South East Plan's indicative target for 35% of all new housing to be affordable (25% social rented and 10% intermediate); and
  - b. meets local needs as identified in the Local Housing Needs Survey (2005). This suggests that 40% of the dwellings on suitable sites should be sought as affordable (30% social rented and 10% intermediate)
- Undertaking a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to inform both the overall target and the percentage of affordable dwellings to be sought on market sites. This will also inform the overall size, type (including specialist housing for the elderly) and tenure mix to be sought for different parts of the Borough
- Adopting variable site size thresholds for seeking affordable housing on market sites in different parts of the Borough. This may involve lower thresholds for rural settlements

Providing for the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople by:

- Making provision through the Local Development Framework to meet the strategic requirement for additional Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches, as set out in the pending partial review of the South East Plan. This will require the provision of a minimum of 12 permanent pitches to reflect the needs identified through the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for the period to 2016
- Retaining a criteria-based policy within the Core Strategy to assist with the identification of appropriate locations and requirements for Gypsy and Traveller sites and, if necessary, Travelling Showpeople's accommodation, to provide a context for determining any planning applications that may come forward

## Reasoned Justification

### Housing Land Supply and Focus of Development

**7.46** PPS3 requires local planning authorities to plan for the amount of housing set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for their area for a period of at least 15 years. At post-EIP stage for the South East Plan, the recommendation for the Strategic Housing Requirement for the Borough is that 6,000 dwellings should be provided from 2006-2026 at a rate of 300 dwellings per annum. There will need to be some flexibility built into the housing land supply to take into account any late Government changes to the RSS and in maintaining a five-year rolling housing land supply. The means of meeting the housing requirement will be set out in an annually updated Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement, informed by a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

**7.47** There has already been progress in terms of meeting the Borough's strategic housing requirements. At April 2007, 662 dwellings have already been completed and a further 1,276 are the subject of outstanding planning consent. Therefore, some 1,938 dwellings (32%) of the total to 2026 have already been provided.

**7.48** Some 4,062 dwellings therefore remain to be provided through allocations made in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (2006) and subsequently through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, to be prepared as part of the LDF.

**7.49** Unidentified 'windfall' sites for the period 2001-2007 made a significant contribution to the overall housing land supply. Windfall sites (on previously developed land and buildings) coming through the development control system accounted for over 75% of completed dwellings over the period 2001-2007. This significantly exceeds the 37% projection allowance made in the Local Plan (2006) (at a rate of 108 dwellings per annum). Taking into account the national and regional policy objectives to achieve 60% of new housing on previously developed land; plus the landscape, flood risk and other constraints that prevail over large areas of the Borough, it is essential that this resource continues to be utilised. A windfall projection allowance will therefore be included within the first 10 years of the housing land supply.

**7.50** A spatial option for development based entirely on identified sites is unlikely to be able to meet the national and regional targets of providing 60% of new housing on previously developed land. Failure to take account of the Borough's previously developed land resource at the outset of the Plan period is likely to result in strategic guidelines being exceeded by a significant amount; an increase in pressure for the release of greenfield sites in sensitive locations; and may unbalance the provision of housing with appropriate employment, service and infrastructure provision.

**7.51** The South East Plan has confirmed the status of Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough as part of the Tonbridge-Tunbridge Wells Regional Hub. As such, the town will be a focus for new development including housing, economic development and investment in transport and other infrastructure. There are also opportunities for regeneration within the town centre on brownfield sites and it is therefore appropriate that a sequential approach for the location of housing development should focus on this main urban area.

**7.52** At the remaining small rural towns and villages, small-scale opportunities for windfall infill and redevelopment will continue to come forward. New housing development at the periphery of these settlements will be limited to rural exception sites for affordable housing to meet identified local needs.

**7.53** The sequential approach will be taken to identify housing land (subject to Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Accessibility and Sustainability Appraisal considerations), to ensure that the use of available brownfield land is maximised, wherever possible, by allocation of sites and by continuing to allow for windfall sites to come forward.

**7.54** A more dispersed approach to the distribution of general market housing has been rejected for the same considerations in respect of sustainability and maximising the potential of the Regional Hub, as set out in the reasoned justification to the spatial strategy.

### **Affordable Housing**

**7.55** The South East Plan at post-EIP stage includes an indicative target for 35% of **all** new housing to be affordable (of which 25% are to be social rented and 10% are to be intermediate). Local Development Documents are expected to have regard to this guidance. However, the Tunbridge Wells Housing Needs Survey 2005 indicated a need for some 406 new affordable dwellings per annum (which is more than the total strategic requirement) and recommended that 40% of affordable units should be sought on suitable market sites, with 30% being social rented and 10% as intermediate. The South East Plan EIP Panel also recommended that there be reference to lower site size thresholds (than the 15 dwellings in PPS3) in the RSS, which should assist local planning authorities in achieving appropriate local targets.

**7.56** Evidence from the Borough Housing Monitor 2001-2007 indicates that whilst the housing land supply is significantly in excess of strategic requirements overall, the vast majority of dwellings completed in this period have been on small sites. Some 64% of new dwellings in the Borough have been provided on sites of less than 15 dwellings and have not therefore been eligible for negotiating the provision of affordable housing. Even if the remaining 31% of dwellings located on sites above the national threshold of 15 dwellings were delivered at the current Local Plan rate sought of 30% affordable, the number of affordable units achieved will fall short of regional guidelines and locally identified need.

**7.57** Respondents to the Issues & Options Report indicated support for a lower site size threshold, especially in the rural areas. There was general support for a variable site size threshold across the Borough. In regard to the percentage of affordable housing sought on eligible sites, there was resistance by some respondents to increasing the percentage above the current 30%, whilst others felt that the 35% of all new units sought in the RSS was insufficient in Tunbridge Wells Borough. There was some support for a variable percentage, dependent on local need and the viability of the development scheme.

**7.58** The option of retaining the current 15-dwelling site size threshold and percentage of affordable housing sought at 30% is therefore rejected, because this will not meet affordable housing needs adequately in the Borough; it would not maximise opportunities on different

types of site; and would not reflect the nature of the housing land supply, particularly in the rural areas. In the rural areas, some 59% of dwelling completions over the period from 2001-2007 were on sites of less than five dwellings.

**7.59** The Core Strategy will therefore pursue a policy of a variable site size threshold for affordable housing on general market sites, which will be lower in the rural settlements. The percentage of affordable housing sought on different types and locations of site will also be variable and this will be informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

**7.60** The LDF will retain a criteria-based policy for the provision of rural exception sites for affordable housing and, where appropriate, may allocate sites for this purpose through a Site Allocations DPD.

**7.61** The Housing Needs Survey (2005) identified a need for the provision of specialist housing for the elderly, which may range in type from minimal supervision sheltered accommodation to care home provision (which would fall into Use Class C2). An element of this will be needed as affordable provision, so schemes for independent accommodation will not be exempt from affordable housing policy. Specialist allocations may need to be made for care home accommodation. This will be in keeping with the preferred location sequence for new residential development.

### **Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

**7.62** Circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007 refer respectively to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and require local planning authorities to include a criteria-based policy in their Core Strategies in respect of the travelling communities, plus allocations in the appropriate DPD.

**7.63** At January 2007 there were some 40 Gypsy and Traveller pitches on authorised sites in the Borough and 13 caravans on unauthorised sites.

**7.64** The [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2005/2006](#) (GTAA) undertaken for West Kent indicated a need for 12 additional pitches over the period to 2016. A partial review of the South East Plan is in progress and a Preferred Options Report on this matter is expected in spring 2008, which will set out district requirements for pitches. Research (carried out jointly by all Kent planning authorities and submitted to SEERA) indicates that there is no need for a transit site in the Borough. Further joint research is being carried out on requirements for Travelling Showpeople, but there are currently no sites within the Borough and little, or no, need is anticipated to 2026.

**7.65** The Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report consultation indicated a mixed response to the allocation of specific sites for the travelling communities. Some respondents felt that this would allow for certainty and properly tested sites, whilst others felt that this would encourage more travellers into the Borough. There was general support for the continuation of a criteria-based policy.

**7.66** Historically, much of the provision in the Borough has been through private initiatives. There is also provision for a number of pitches on social rented sites in the Borough. Given the low overall numbers and identified need, the preferred option is to include a criteria-based policy in the Core Strategy, which will indicate the type of location and site requirements that will need to be satisfied, with an aim to meet the need for 12 new pitches identified in the GTAA to 2016. Should monitoring indicate that a higher requirement becomes necessary, or the South East Plan allocates a higher strategic requirement to the Borough, the Borough Council will consider the allocation of specific sites through the Allocations DPD.

**7.67** The option of identifying specific settlements or sites for allocations is rejected at this point, because of the low identified need arising locally for the foreseeable future.

## Core Policy 8: Provision for Retail and Leisure

### Core Policy 8: Provision for Retail and Leisure

The preferred approach is to:

- Continue to focus new retail, leisure (including higher-order facilities) and other town centre uses on the centres in the Borough, of a scale that is in accordance with the retail hierarchy
- Allow viable development proposals where this would seek to meet the identified need for additional comparison (non-food) uses in the main urban area and the other town centres, and in other centres where this would contribute to their vitality and viability
- Resist any future out-of-town retailing that would adversely affect identified centres
- Not allow any further additional convenience (food) uses, other than in Southborough
- Resist, as far as practicable, the loss of community facilities, including retail, and to support the provision of such facilities where they are deficient
- Maintain and seek to improve the quality and accessibility of open space where appropriate

### Reasoned Justification

**7.68** Town, neighbourhood and village centres are still an important focus for communities, as they offer an essential mix of services and facilities, which are often accessible by a variety of different means. They will therefore remain the focus for many types of development. The hierarchy of centres in Tunbridge Wells Borough is set out in the Spatial Strategy.

**7.69** The [Retail Study \(2006\)](#) identified a need for additional comparison (non-food) uses in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. The Retail Study recommends that, in line with Government guidance, such floorspace is directed to these centres.

**7.70** Whilst recognising that out-of-town retailing has occurred in locations such as Dowding Way/Longfield Road, this has predominantly been for bulky goods retailing. A further increase in out-of-town retail floorspace may potentially undermine the strategy and therefore should be resisted to avoid any detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of town, neighbourhood and village centres.

**7.71** The Retail Study considered that there was no need for additional convenience (food) floorspace in the Borough, as the existing stores were able to absorb any increase in future expenditure. Whilst the strategy would not seek to resist smaller convenience units, e.g. a newsagent's, larger-scale convenience units such as the proposal for a new supermarket outside of the town centres would be contrary to the strategy. The Retail Study considered that the existing mixed use allocation at Southborough, which includes proposals for a supermarket, should be retained.



Picture 2 Royal Victoria Place

**7.72** Community facilities, including retail uses, have been lost from the existing neighbourhood centres. Whilst in some instances the loss of facilities has been due to national changes and are therefore difficult to resist, neighbourhood centres and villages have an important role in serving the regular needs of the local community. Respondents to the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report almost unanimously supported the view that the Council should continue to support the provision of key facilities, as these would help to improve the vitality and viability of such centres.

**7.73** Leisure, in its widest sense, is about quality of life and choice. Leisure activities include playing sport; participating in the arts; visiting a museum or art gallery or taking part in informal outdoor activities, such as walking or cycling.

**7.74** As well as Royal Tunbridge Wells being a focus for uses (including major cultural, tourism, social and community venues) that attract large numbers of people, it is also important that other facilities are provided and upgraded where necessary in terms of quality and accessibility issues. This has been highlighted as a concern by a PPG17 Sport, Recreation and Open Space Study, as well as by respondents to the Issues & Options report.

**7.75** The [PPG17 Sport, Recreation and Open Space Study](#) (2006) was carried out to help inform the LDF. It showed that, generally, the Borough is well provided for in terms of all types of open space, including both outdoor formal and informal facilities and indoor sports facilities.

**7.76** The Borough's open space and historic built environment assets, such as the Pantiles, are also of great value in attracting tourism to the Borough, which is significant in terms of the investment and employment that it generates. It will be important to ensure that such facilities are protected and enhanced, but also that they are carefully managed.

## Core Policy 9: Employment Provision

### Core Policy 9: Employment Provision

The preferred approach is to:

- Maintain/increase the amount of employment floorspace across the Borough and specifically within Royal Tunbridge Wells
- Support applications that will improve the quality of employment opportunities
- Safeguard existing employment sites that are well located and otherwise well suited to employment use

### Reasoned Justification

#### What is Employment Floorspace?

Employment floorspace comprises A2/B1(business uses); B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) uses.

**7.77** Since 1992, it appears that there has been a small net increase in the amount of completed employment floorspace. However, there has been a significant loss of A2/B1 business uses across the Borough, particularly within Royal Tunbridge Wells. As the [Employment Land Study \(2006\)](#) and other evidence suggests, there is concern that the economic base of the town centre is becoming increasingly dominated by residential and retail uses, making the economy less robust and more vulnerable. It is important for the LDF to maintain sufficient employment opportunities, particularly given that jobs in leisure, tourism, business tourism and retailing, whilst presently sustaining a competitive economy, are generally low paid. Failure to provide an appropriate range of employment opportunities could lead to an increase in the present trend of out-commuting of the Borough's highly skilled workforce. Combined with the effects of an ageing population, this could lead to future labour shortages.

**7.78** The evidence base suggests that, in some instances such as Paddock Wood, the reason that available employment floorspace has not been taken up is not due to locational factors, but due to the quality of accommodation. Where it can be demonstrated that employment floorspace has not been taken up due to qualitative issues, then applications that support the redevelopment of employment floorspace, particularly for high value added businesses such as A2/B1 uses, will be supported.

**7.79** The success of some of the existing Economic Development allocations, such as that covering Decimus Park, has shown a clear demand in the Borough for small to medium research and development/light industrial facilities. The development of existing employment sites needs to be carefully managed. Whilst it may be appropriate for sites that are poorly located or are detrimental to residential amenity to be considered for other uses, it is essential that the majority of existing employment sites are safeguarded. The strategy is therefore to resist the further loss of employment opportunities, particularly the loss of A2/B1 office uses, as well as encouraging high quality B1 floorspace for smaller enterprises to help to reduce out-commuting. The single largest employer in the Borough is the NHS Trust. A new district general hospital is proposed at Pembury and this may offer opportunities for other health-related spin-off enterprises to be provided within the Borough.

## Core Policy 10: Transport Infrastructure

### Core Policy 10: Transport Infrastructure

The preferred approach to addressing transport issues and providing necessary infrastructure is to:

1. Make provision for maintaining and improving transport infrastructure at the strategic and local level through working with partners to:
  - Improve the strategic rail and highways network, including the A21, A26 and A228
  - Support junction and highway capacity improvements, including those which will benefit all road users
2. Encourage sustainable modes of transport including cycling, walking and use of public transport wherever possible to reduce dependence on the private car. This will be done through working with partners to:
  - Promote and plan for a park and ride facility to serve Royal Tunbridge Wells
  - Continue to develop and provide an integrated cycle network, enhance pedestrian routes and encourage improvements in public transport
  - Pursue improvements to transport links in the rural areas of the Borough and protect the rural lanes network to ensure that they remain convenient and safe for users
3. Continue to promote integrated travel planning methods with stakeholders
4. Manage demand for town centre car parking

### Reasoned Justification

**7.80** Government guidance; the draft South East Plan; the Local Transport Plan for Kent 2006-11 (KTP2); and other strategies, as well as the Corporate Priorities of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, promote the need to provide choice in the transport network. This includes giving priority to measures that increase the level of accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling; reducing dependency on the car; and giving priority to the development of high quality interchange facilities between all modes of transport.

**7.81** Acknowledging the need to address transport issues in the Borough is particularly important given the designation of Tunbridge Wells as a joint Regional Hub with Tonbridge in the draft South East Plan. Policy CC8b of the draft South East Plan identifies a specific role for transport improvements in supporting Regional Hubs as 'living centres', both in terms of providing sustainable access to facilities and providing interchanges between sustainable transport modes.

**7.82** Respondents to the Core Strategy: Issues and Options report strongly supported taking measures to improve bus, train, cycle and walking facilities and the interchanges between them, particularly those to address frequency, coverage and quality of services. Respondents also strongly supported Park and Ride. Opinion was split on the introduction of congestion charging in Tunbridge Wells.

**7.83** Addressing transport issues is key to achieving sustainable development in the Borough. The preferred approach set out above will support sustainable development by directly influencing the location of future development within the Borough to maximise the opportunities to utilise

sustainable modes of transport and to make the best use of existing infrastructure. An Implementation Plan will accompany the Core Strategy (more detail is provided in Chapter 8). This will identify the specific organisations with which the Borough Council must work in partnership, in order to attempt to achieve the measures set out above.

**7.84** Two Park and Ride sites are allocated in the adopted Local Plan, at Home Farm (Knights Park) and Woodsgate Corner (Pembury). Responses to the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report highlighted a strong support for Park and Ride and it is already a corporate priority to reach a strategic view on its merits. The Council, working with partners, is currently considering this issue. It is recognised that Park and Ride could bring a number of potential benefits including a possible reduction in traffic congestion; reduced delays for those travelling to the centre; and helping to preserve the character of the town.

**7.85** A number of cycle routes do exist, but it is important that a comprehensive, continuous and integrated network is provided and that pedestrian routes are enhanced to encourage cycling and walking. Improvements to public transport, including bus priority measures on radial routes, will also need to be pursued.

**7.86** Existing gaps in public transport coverage within the rural areas and to the towns need to be identified and filled. The rural lanes network provides a potentially significant resource, which should be protected both for its recreational value and for providing links between areas.

**7.87** A wide range of plans, programmes and strategies, including the draft South East Plan, support the effort to manage the way that people travel. The Council will continue to promote integrated travel planning methods. Travel Plans should provide a package of measures, which may include car sharing schemes; a commitment to improving cycling facilities; provision of a dedicated bus service; or of a managed approach to parking. These methods can bring real benefits to individuals, organisations (where relevant) and the community. They may help to relieve local parking or congestion problems; improve public transport connections; and assist in the management of rising air pollution levels.

**7.88** Parking policy will continue to have a key role in the overall planning framework. Current parking policy is provided by the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006. On-street car parking policy will give priority to residents and customers wherever possible. In terms of off-street car parking, many of the car parks across the Borough are close to capacity. It is, therefore, important to continue to protect such parking provision, but to also seek to encourage regular all-day visitors to Royal Tunbridge Wells to use other modes of transport.

## Core Policy 11: Green Belt and Rural Fringe

### Core Policy 11: Green Belt

The preferred approach is to:

- Maintain the general extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt in the Borough. It continues to include the parishes of Speldhurst, Bidborough, Five Oak Green and Pembury
- Make minor revisions to the detailed (inner) Green Belt boundaries around the main urban area, if this proves necessary to accommodate development needs, as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)
- Make no changes or additions to the three major developed sites within the Green Belt, of Pembury Hospital, Kent College and Holmewood House School
- Continue the general presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, or which would conflict with the purpose of including land within it. Any new development should accord with the national policy provisions of [Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 2](#) (PPG2)

### Reasoned Justification

**7.89** The Metropolitan Green Belt is a long-standing instrument of national and regional planning policy. The [Planning White Paper \(May 2007\)](#) states that the Government is committed to the principles of the Green Belt and will make no fundamental change to the planning policy, as set out in PPG2.

**7.90** The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the most important characteristic of the Green Belt is its openness. Green Belts perform five important functions in:

- Preventing urban sprawl
- Preventing towns from merging into one another
- Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- Preserving the setting and character of historic towns
- Helping urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of underused and outworn urban land and buildings

**7.91** The draft [South East Plan](#) confirms that there is strong public support for the concept of Green Belt and that the functions of the Green Belt are entirely consistent with the spatial strategy for the region. Consequently, no strategic review of the Green Belt within the region is proposed and the general extent of the Green Belt is confirmed, but not described in spatial terms for each sub-region or district. The general extent of Green Belt in Kent was described in strategic terms (and confirmed most recently) in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2006). Since the South East Plan will supersede the Structure Plan, this important definition will be lost and therefore this area of policy needs to be reiterated in the Core Strategy. In accordance with the South East Plan, no large-scale or strategic change to the general extent of the Green Belt is necessary within the Borough and so the description of the Green Belt in Tunbridge Wells is simply restated.

**7.92** The detailed inner boundaries of the Green Belt around settlements that fall within its general extent have always been the responsibility of local planning authorities to define and amend. The South East Plan Policy CC10a also points to the possibility of small-scale local

review of Green Belt boundaries through the Local Development Framework process where, and if, this is necessary. The EIP Panel Report on the South East Plan confirms the status of Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells as a regional hub and recommends the review of the Green Belt boundary around Royal Tunbridge Wells to accommodate new development.

**7.93** In accordance with current South East Plan Policy CC8c, the prime consideration at Royal Tunbridge Wells is the conservation of the built and natural environment, the setting of the town and its location within the Green Belt and High Weald AONB.

**7.94** Inner Green Belt boundaries were defined for Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough in the 1986 Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Local Plan and those around villages situated in the Green Belt were defined for the first time in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 1996. All of these were reviewed in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006. No changes were proposed, as it was possible to accommodate all development requirements without the need to modify the Green Belt boundaries. All of the functions of Green Belt therefore continue to have relevance within Tunbridge Wells Borough.

**7.95** Although the focus of development will continue to be the main urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, there are long-term reserves of land (allocated as Rural Fringe in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006), which are intended to be a long-term development reserve, to be released through allocation in Development Plan Documents. On the basis of this reserve and the availability of brownfield sites to meet development needs for the period to 2026; and the overall principles of maintaining Green Belt boundaries for the longer term, it is not anticipated that large-scale changes will be needed to the Green Belt boundary for development in the short term.

**7.96** If Rural Fringe land needs to be allocated for development in the short term, thought will need to be given to allocating 'new' Rural Fringe to replenish the long-term development reserve. This, in turn, implies change to the Green Belt boundary. It is an option at this point in time to completely review all of the Green Belt boundary and Rural Fringe allocations to examine whether there is a more appropriate and sustainable way to meet current and future needs, given the environmental constraints around the town.

**7.97** It is unlikely that there is any need or justification for Green Belt boundary review around any of the smaller settlements that lie within it. Should this be deemed necessary, small-scale change would be most appropriately dealt with in an Allocations DPD, which is subordinate to the Core Strategy.

**7.98** In the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006, three sites were identified as major developed sites within the Green Belt (Pembury Hospital, Kent College and Holmewood House School). All three sites had an identifiable and substantial core of permanent buildings above 7,500 sqm floorspace. They remain the only three sites of this scale within the Green Belt in the Borough and it is extremely unlikely that new developments of this type will be allocated or permitted in the Green Belt in the period to 2026. Therefore, no additions to the major developed sites within the Green Belt are proposed.

**7.99** At the Issues & Options stage there were mixed reactions to the possibility of a review of the Green Belt and Rural Fringe, with the weight of response in favour of no change.

**7.100** It is unlikely that, with the preferred spatial strategy option of prioritising brownfield and town centre sites, that a major review of Green Belt and Rural Fringe will prove necessary. If greenfield allocations are necessary they are, in accordance with the spatial strategy, most likely to be situated at the main urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, where Rural Fringe has been excluded from the Green Belt to provide a long-term development

reserve. The degree to which it proves necessary to use this reserve in the period to 2026 will also inform a decision on whether it is necessary to review Rural Fringe provision for the period beyond 2026.

## Core Policy 12: Re-use of Previously Developed Land and Buildings

### Core Policy 12: Re-Use of Previously Developed Land and Buildings

The preferred approach is to:

- Meet development needs as far as possible through the re-use and redevelopment of previously developed land and buildings, in accordance with the overall spatial strategy and Policies CP7, CP8 and CP9. This will be achieved by identifying and allocating appropriate sites
- Make appropriate allowances for windfall sites to come forward for housing and employment uses

### Reasoned Justification

**7.101** The Borough is highly constrained by Green Belt and national and local landscape designations. It also has a large number of conservation areas and historic and valued areas of townscape. A balance must therefore be found between making best possible use of previously developed land and buildings and ensuring that high quality areas of built and natural environment are conserved. This will be achieved by identifying and allocating previously developed land for re-use as far as possible.

**7.102** Past trends have shown that it is not always possible to identify these sites and that the market prefers, in some instances, not to subject them to phased allocation through a local development document. The extensive contribution of previously developed land to the housing land supply is outlined at Policy CP7. The majority of these sites are small and would not be easy to identify and allocate through the LDF. Their cumulative contribution to the housing land supply is nonetheless very significant and impacts on service and infrastructure. It should therefore be planned and accounted for in advance. These developments have also largely been concentrated at the main urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough and are therefore very sustainably located. It is therefore logical to ensure balanced and appropriate levels of development to meet strategic needs. This will allow for windfall development of brownfield sites, particularly in the case of housing and employment sites, where past and current trends indicate the importance of this source of development land.

**7.103** Work is being undertaken to identify theoretical capacity remaining for brownfield windfall sites. This will be linked to qualitative appraisal of the effects of recent development in different Character Areas of settlements in the Borough. It may then be possible to identify suitable density ranges for different parts of the Borough, which may be used to protect character (see Policy CP15); and as a means of ensuring that strategic development requirements are not significantly exceeded through both identified sites coming forward and unfettered development of 'windfall' PDL.

**7.104** The effect of windfall development for residential use of former commercial premises is an area of concern, especially in the light of the priorities for the town centre and its role as a Regional Hub. The policy for prioritising the use of previously developed land may therefore need to be subject to retention of suitable commercial and employment premises, in accordance with Core Policy 9: Employment Provision, in order to maintain a balance of residential and commercial use.

**7.105** The option of switching emphasis to greenfield allocations rather than prioritising previously developed land is rejected because:

- It would not enable the Borough Council to meet national and regional targets for achieving 60% of new development on previously developed land
- The Borough is highly constrained by Green Belt and AONB designations
- It would not maximise the potential for town centre regeneration identified as important to the role of Regional Hub for Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough
- It is contrary to the weight of opinion received on this matter at the Issues & Options stage consultation

## Core Policy 13: Natural Environment

### Core Policy 13: Natural Environment

The preferred approach is to:

- Consider rural landscapes and seek to protect or enhance landscape character within the Borough, including national landscape designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Consider the urban landscape and townscape, seek to conserve, protect and enhance local landscape designations, such as Special Landscape Areas, Important Landscape Approaches, Areas of Landscape Importance and Areas of Important Open Space, where possible
- Minimise impacts on biodiversity and enhance it wherever possible. This will include seeking to protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity areas, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and sites of Local Nature Conservation Value (SLNCV)
- Maintain, protect and, where possible, enhance, the historic natural landscape and those features which contribute to the distinctive character of the Borough's landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows and rural buildings

### Reasoned Justification

**7.106** The main challenges for the Borough in terms of our natural environment, as set out above, is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty; the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife; and the wealth of its natural resources, so that it may be enjoyed by all.

### Landscape Designations

**7.107** An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) gives national recognition to the importance of the landscape character of the area. The status of AONBs is equivalent to that of the National Parks and, together, they share the highest level of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The unique and varied landscape is a result of historic land use in turn arising from natural characteristics such as soil, topography, climate and natural vegetation. Within AONBs, it is Government policy and a statutory duty, to protect and enhance their natural beauty, whilst having due regard to social and economic considerations. Approximately 70% of the Borough falls within the High Weald AONB and makes a significant contribution to the special natural beauty of the area.

## Urban Landscape and Townscape

**7.108** Local landscape designations include Special Landscape Areas, Important Landscape Approaches, Areas of Landscape Importance and Areas of Important Open Space, all of which make a significant contribution to the character and quality of the Borough's natural environment. Special Landscape Areas are largely unspoilt areas of countryside which, due to their high scenic quality and distinctive local character, have county-wide importance. Important Landscape Approaches are designated approaches, lined principally by mature hedges and native trees, which partly conceal built development and are important in forming a first impression on approach to a town or village.



Picture 3 Landscape

**7.109** Areas of Landscape Importance have a large degree of tree or vegetation cover that is particularly important for the visual amenity value and the contribution they make to local character. Areas of Important Open Space are important visually, often for a number of reasons, such as being within Conservation Areas and are of historic importance; they provide important visual amenity value for the locality and can include areas such as village greens and parks, or they are of strategic importance providing longer-distance views of towns and villages. As part of the Core Strategy, the Schedule for Areas of Landscape Importance and Areas of Important Open Space will be reviewed to determine the importance of existing sites and the potential for additional sites to be added or removed from the list. This also applies Historic Parks and Gardens.

**7.110** The Borough Council's Landscape Character Area Assessment (August 2002) identifies 19 Character Areas based on natural characteristics and historical influences. These Character Areas cover the rural landscape of the Borough, which includes the small rural towns and villages. The document aims to ensure the retention and, where possible, the enhancement of, the character of the Borough. This objective, for the need to protect, preserve and enhance, will be carried through into the Core Strategy.

## Biodiversity

**7.111** Biodiversity areas include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) and sites of Local Nature Conservation Value (SLNCV). More recently, a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) has been recognised within the Borough as having national status, but it is a site identified as having county-wide status at the local level. It is important to make provision for such designations within the Core Strategy. There are currently 10 designated SSSIs within the Borough; they are nationally important designations recognised for their flora and fauna, geological or physiographical (landform) features. LNRs are habitats of local or regional significance that make a useful contribution both to nature conservation and the opportunity for the community to see and learn about wildlife. LWS and SLNCVs do not have national status, but are sites at the local level identified as having county-wide status. SLNCVs are designated within, or



Picture 4 Biodiversity

adjacent to, built up areas where there is greatest pressure for development. Each site identified provides a high-grade habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna, meriting careful consideration. Whilst these are designated sites, it must be recognised that both designated and un-designated areas are important for nature conservation.

**7.112** Sites of national, county and local nature conservation importance are recognised as being essential to informing the character and local distinctiveness of the Borough. It is essential, and a statutory duty, that we seek to protect, preserve and enhance these sites in line with national and regional guidance. It must also be recognised that the natural wildlife of the Borough is not just confined to designated sites; other areas can also be important in terms of their habitat and nature conservation interest. Therefore, it is also important to seek to protect and enhance these areas where appropriate and necessary.

### Planning Guidance

**7.113** The need to protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the natural environment, is supported by Government guidance, as well as at the regional level through the draft [South East Plan](#) (March 2006). [Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas](#) (PPS7) reiterates the need for continued protection of the open countryside for all, whilst encouraging sustainable economic growth and diversification and promoting sustainable patterns of development.

**7.114** The Borough Council's Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report consultation illustrates support for the protection, preservation and enhancement of Special Landscape Designations within the Borough, stating that building in such areas should be avoided and only done so as a last resort. The consultation highlighted that development should be targeted away from wildlife sites, nature reserves and areas of biodiversity and that the conservation and enhancement of such sites was identified as a high priority.

**7.115** Economic development is important for the Borough, but this should not be pursued at the expense of preserving, protecting and enhancing the natural environment wherever possible. This would result in the loss of the existing distinctive natural environment both in urban and rural areas, which would be to the detriment of an important sense of place that the Borough currently has. This, in turn, could have wider negative implications for the local economy and for people both living in and visiting the Borough. Representations on the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Consultation Report confirmed that this would not be the preferred approach.

## Core Policy 14: Historic Built Environment

### Core Policy 14: Historic Built Environment

The preferred approach is to:

- Preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of conservation areas and listed buildings and their settings
- Protect and, where possible, enhance key features such as historic parks and gardens, ancient monuments and areas of archaeological interest

### Reasoned Justification

**7.116** Tunbridge Wells Borough contains approximately 3,000 buildings of architectural or historic interest, 25 conservation areas, 10 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and a significant number of historic parks and gardens, as well as a number of archaeological remains and sites of archaeological interest. All of these heritage assets contribute to the unique character and quality of Tunbridge Wells Borough's historic built environment. These sites and buildings are an irreplaceable record of the Borough, which can contribute to our learning and understanding of the past and are also a resource for the future. It is therefore essential that we seek to preserve, protect and, where appropriate, enhance, these special buildings and sites using all tools available, in line with national and regional planning policy guidance.

**7.117** Government guidance in PPS1, PPG15 and PPG16 sets out objectives for achieving sustainable development, protecting and enhancing the natural and historic built environment and setting the policy for the treatment of archaeological remains on land. The need to protect, preserve and enhance the historic built environment is identified at the regional level through the draft [South East Plan](#), highlighting the ability of historic built environments to reflect local character and distinctiveness and create a sense of place.

**7.118** It is recognised that the historic built environment cannot be preserved unless there is broad support and understanding of it. The Borough Council's Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report consultation illustrates a strong support for protecting, preserving and, where possible, enhancing, the historic built environment at the local level, whilst meeting the need to intensify development in existing towns and villages where necessary.

**7.119** The Borough Council has adopted several Conservation Area Appraisals as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and these form part of the overall Local Development Framework. They provide a detailed assessment of the special architectural and historic character of individual areas within the Borough, highlighting the key features that both contribute to, or detract from, the character of the conservation areas, providing a framework for development within these areas and outlining our commitment to preserving them. It is essential that these Appraisals are regularly updated and maintained to ensure protection and appropriate management of these special areas.



Picture 5 Vestry Hall, Cranbrook

**7.120** Whilst it is acknowledged that economic development is important for the Borough, it is important to ensure that this respects the Borough's distinctive historic character and contributes to its important sense of place.

## Core Policy 15: Climate Change

### Core Policy 15: Climate Change

The preferred approach is to:

- Seek to provide water resources where necessary, protect the quality of, and make efficient use of, water resources
- Seek to avoid, reduce and manage, present and future flood risk
- Seek low carbon and renewable sources of energy to provide high levels of energy efficiency and optimise resource use
- Deliver the fullest possible use of sustainable transport
- Improve air quality

### Reasoned Justification

**7.121** The publication of the [Stern Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change](#) in October 2006, highlighted that human activity is changing the world's climate and, as changes deepen and intensify, there will be increasing costs for the global, national and local economies, people's health and the natural environment. It is therefore essential to address these needs, where possible, through the spatial planning process. Local planning, in providing for new homes, jobs and infrastructure, can help shape places with lower carbon emissions, planning for waste provision and planning for greater resilience to climate change.

**7.122** The five key areas identified at the local level, whereby the spatial planning process can influence and help address climate change, are:

1. Water Resources
2. Flood Risk
3. Renewable Energy
4. Sustainable Transport
5. Air Quality

### Water Resources

**7.123** It is essential to protect water quality and, where possible, make efficient use of it. The Core Strategy will continue to: protect and enhance the quality and quantity of groundwater; protect and enhance surface water features and control aquatic pollution; ensure new development has an adequate means of water supply and sufficient foul and surface water drainage. In addition, in line with national and regional planning policy guidance, an efficient use of water resources, including recycling, will be sought through sustainable construction methods. The [Kent and Medway Structure Plan](#) sets out the need for development to incorporate sustainable construction methods, conserve and make prudent use of water and other natural resources, including provision for recycling facilities and energy efficiency. Bewl Water offers potential for providing further water resources within the Borough and the South East, therefore there is a need to safeguard areas for expansion when considering other development requirements.

## Flood Risk

**7.124** [Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk](#) (PPS25) outlines the increasing risk of flooding due to the potential effects of climate change; therefore there is an ongoing and increasing need for local authorities to appraise, manage and reduce flood risk. This is supported at the regional level in the draft [South East Plan](#) and the need for effective protection, sustainable drainage systems and increasing flood storage capacity is highlighted. The Core Strategy will continue to seek to avoid, reduce and manage both existing and future flood risk, whilst requiring appropriate sustainable drainage systems. The Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report consultation supported this, with the majority of respondents considering either business and non-residential, or residential development in areas at risk of flooding, to be inappropriate. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Strategic Flood Risk Assessment clearly identifies those areas within the Borough at greatest risk from flooding and enables the sequential test to be applied and thus steer development away from those areas at greatest risk of flooding.

## Renewable Energy

**7.125** [Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy](#) (PPS22) sets out the need for Local Development Documents to contain policies promoting and encouraging the development of renewable energy sources. They should promote the wider environmental and economic benefits of all proposals for renewable energy projects, whatever their scale, as being a material consideration that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be granted planning permission.

**7.126** The Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report consultation highlights support to increase the amount of renewable energy supplied to both new housing and commercial developments. This is in line with the Council's recently adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on [Renewable Energy](#), which sets out the existing planning policy and the need for developers to provide at least 10% of the development's energy demand from renewable sources for housing schemes over 10 dwellings and commercial schemes of over 1,000 sqm.



Picture 6 Wind Turbine

**7.127** The SPD also seeks to attain high efficiency ratings in all new development, where appropriate, through the use of best practice guidance such as Building Research Establishment Assessment Method (BREEAM) and the National Home Energy Rating (NHER). It should be noted that the government's recently-issued [Building a Greener Future: Policy Statement](#) sets a target for all new housing developments built from 2016 to be 'zero carbon', i.e. that, over a year, the net carbon emissions from all energy use in the home should be zero. The use of both sustainable construction methods and energy efficiency will be promoted through the Core Strategy.

## Sustainable Transport

**7.128** Full consideration will need to be given to making optimum use of sustainable transport. Government guidance highlights the opportunities for transport assessments, travel plans, safe walking and cycling facilities, including parking and changing facilities, as well as an appropriate approach to the provision and management of car parking. Achieving the fullest possible use of sustainable transport is also highlighted in both the draft [South East Plan](#) and the [Kent and Medway Structure Plan](#).



Picture 7 Sustainable Transport

**7.129** The Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report consultation set out the need to address congestion through improvements to frequency, coverage and quality of public transport, improving cycle and pedestrian facilities, pursuing the provision of park and ride facilities and seeking highway improvements. Significantly increasing car parking charges was not seen by respondents as an effective way of reducing congestion in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. With this in mind, it is essential that the Core Strategy sets out clear policy on ways in which sustainable transport will be achieved within the Borough. Sustainable transport options will be encouraged in both urban and rural areas.

## Air Quality

**7.130** The need to address air quality management comes from the need to protect human health, as well as the impact of certain pollutants on animals, habitats and vegetation. [Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control](#) sets out the need to prevent pollution through the use of measures to prohibit, or limit to the lowest level, the release of substances into the environment from different sources. It also ensures that air and water quality meets standards that guard against the impacts to the environment and human health. The draft [South East Plan](#) identifies the need for Local Development Documents to achieve improvements in local air quality. In line with this policy, the [Kent and Medway Structure Plan](#) identifies the need for local authorities to review and assess their air quality and, where necessary, declare Air Quality Management Areas. The Borough's existing [Air Quality Management Area](#) will enable development in, or adjoining, such areas to be controlled so as not to adversely affect this improvement. There is opportunity within the Borough to enhance and encourage other such areas through appropriate management.

## Core Policy 16: Design Quality

### Core Policy 16: Design Quality

The preferred approach to contribute to meeting the challenges of future development is to:

- Achieve a greater sense of place across the Borough, by maintaining the distinctiveness of particular localities through more thoughtful regard to existing character, including density of existing and proposed development
- Improve the usability and function of buildings, spaces and places for all people who wish to use them, now and in the future, by observing the principles of good urban design
- Recognise the importance of quality in the public realm in creating attractive and functioning places

### Reasoned Justification

**7.131** This Policy is proposed in response to growing local concerns that the distinctive character of some areas of the Borough, particularly in certain residential areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells, has changed as the pressure for development has increased. At the national level, recent surveys by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) have found that, too often, developments are of indifferent or poor quality. CABE states that *"Fewer than one in five developments we audited could be classed as good or very good. The quality of a substantial minority of developments is so low that they simply should not have been given planning consent."*

**7.132** At the local level, one objective of the [Sustainable Community Plan 2006-2011](#) is to conserve and improve the built environment, including public spaces and local heritage (p.12). Responses to the Core Strategy: Issues & Options Report supported this intention. Whilst people were not necessarily against intensification and redevelopment in existing towns and villages, they were concerned that good design measures should be employed to mitigate against its potential impacts. The Core Strategy and subsequent planning policy documents must consider how this should be done.

**7.133** Design issues are generally being afforded more weight as the new system of spatial planning aims to improve the quality and function of places. National planning policy firmly supports the Borough Council's intention to give greater weight to design considerations, as set out in [PPS1: Planning for Sustainable Development](#) and other Government guidance. The draft [South East Plan](#) also sets out the importance regionally of excellence and quality in design, and its influence on the quality of life of residents.

**7.134** The strategic objectives for the Core Strategy recognise the importance for future development to be carried out in a way that protects and enhances the Borough's unique environmental quality in the long term. The Borough Council will make a commitment to deliberately considering design principles when determining proposals for development. The strategic objectives will also provide the basis upon which to prepare future policies and guidance for development control purposes and thereby enable the Council to take a stronger position on design issues than at present, should it wish do so.

**7.135** This Policy recognises that good design is about more than visual amenity. Whilst the appearance of a place is clearly of central importance to its quality, a well designed place (or building) will also need to function well in terms of its ease of use by people and/or vehicles; the safety of the environment it creates; and its adaptability to meet future needs. The Policy therefore considers design quality in terms of:

- Character and distinctiveness - appreciating the context
- Urban design - creating the structure; making the connections
- Quality in the public realm - detailing the place

### Character and Distinctiveness

**7.136** PPS1 advises planning authorities to have regard to [By Design - Urban Design in the Planning System: towards better practice](#) (ODPM, CABE 2000). By Design defines 'character' as providing a place with its own identity. The Spatial Vision and Place-Shaping Policies proposed in this Report reflect the Council's support for maintaining or improving the distinctive identity of particular areas through future development.



Picture 8 Contemporary approach to design quality

**7.137** A great number of factors can contribute to the distinctive character of an area, including the setting of the settlement within the surrounding landscape; the historic pattern of development, its form, layout and density; and even the principal uses within it. Such factors should be taken into account in future development proposals. To facilitate this, the Council has undertaken, or proposes to undertake, the following:

- Conservation Area Appraisals: to specifically require appropriate development within these sensitive areas by identifying the key elements that contribute to their special historic and architectural character
- Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment: which sets out the character of the landscape types to be found in the Borough (also referred to in Core Policy 13: Natural Environment)
- Within the built up areas, to define Typical Urban Character Areas and their individual, distinctive key characteristics, which should form the basis of guiding the form, layout and density of new development

**7.138** Taken together, the results of these character assessments should provide a firm basis upon which to make planning decisions that take appropriate account of the impact of development upon the character and distinctiveness of any given area.

### Urban Design

**7.139** Urban design is a term that can be used to bring together all the elements of building, space and landscape design that create the identity of a place and shape the way it functions. Good urban design must clearly take account of the appearance and functionality of places and it will meet the objectives already outlined above - of creating places with their own distinctive character and a high-quality, useable public realm. In addition, it should result in developments that are successful in terms of the following:

- Providing a **safe environment**, both in terms of road safety and personal security. With regard to the latter, the opportunities for crime, for example, may be reduced by the avoidance of 'dead' spaces, such as enclosed alleyways; by providing well-lit public spaces and pathways; or by avoiding the concentration of particular uses, such as pubs and clubs

- Creating an environment that is **easy to move** within, has a clear distinction of use of public private spaces and puts people before traffic
- Improving **legibility** and sense of place, with places that are easy to understand and navigate, through the use of landmark buildings and recognisable routes

**7.140** Design quality is also about the buildings that define the spaces. The application of good space standards and considered layouts in buildings can allow for adaptation, conversion or extension and will contribute to the long-term flexibility and future proofing. Good building performance contributes to the quality of life of occupants and the extended life of the building itself. The use of innovation and new building technologies can also be embraced to help improve quality and enhance performance and attractiveness. Sustainable design and construction makes efficient use of resources.

**7.141** Several thousand homes and other developments will be built over the next 20 years and should be to the highest standards. They will need to meet the challenge of:

- Protecting **residential amenity**, including the effects of over-development or inconsiderate development, such as overlooking or overshadowing and of noise or smell from inappropriate uses
- Recognising the importance of the **quality** of both the indoor and outdoor living environment to residential amenity and quality of life
- Being **inclusive and adaptable** in terms of a building's use by all people, now and in the future. Building Regulations already ensure that this is achieved to some extent by requiring that development conforms to, for example, the provisions of the Disability and Discrimination Act 2005. Building Regulations also set out minimum standards in terms of other targets, such as the use of the Lifetime Homes Standard
- Being inherently **sustainable** through the whole development process of location, design, specification, sourcing and construction



Picture 9 Sustainability in fundamental design and construction

### Quality in the Public Realm

**7.142** The 'public realm' refers to the parts of the Borough's settlements that are available to be used by everyone, such as streets, town/market squares and parks and other open spaces. It is proposed that future planning policy should place a new emphasis on the social aspects of design, which goes beyond consideration of the architectural appearance of individual buildings. *By Design* describes a place with a good quality public realm as one that has "*attractive and successful outdoor areas*" that are "*safe, uncluttered and work effectively*" for all in society, including disabled and elderly people - again driving at the need for design considerations to extend to cover the *function* of places as well as their *appearance*.



Picture 10 Self-effacing building design and careful detailing of public realm

**7.143** Wider policy objectives of spatial planning are reflected in Government guidance, such as [Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres](#), which includes the need to promote high quality design and improve the quality of the public realm and open spaces; protect and enhance the architectural and historic heritage of centres; and promote a sense of place and focus for civic activity.

**7.144** It is proposed that the quality of the public realm should be maintained, improved (in existing developments) or created (in new developments) by considering the following:

- the appearance of the streetscene, including surface materials, street furniture and signs; lighting; and opportunities for including public art
- the layout of development and its relationship to open spaces and routes. Places should be easy to access and to move through
- the appropriate integration of landscape within external spaces
- a partnership approach to the design and management of the public realm

## Chapter 8 Implementation and Monitoring

### Implementation

**8.1** As the Core Strategy is a spatial plan, the implementation of its objectives and policies cannot be achieved solely through the use of Council powers and resources. Instead, the success of the LDF depends on partnership working with a range of public, private and voluntary bodies. The role of the Core Strategy is to provide a clear and robust framework for development in order that investment and action can be coordinated and geared to efficient and effective delivery.

**8.2** Delivery will be driven by an Implementation Plan, which will identify the following information in relation to each Core Policy:

#### Implementation Plan Template

Aim of Core Policy	Delivery Agencies		Plans; Programmes; Strategies	Actions / Mechanisms	Core Strategy Timescales	Comments
	Lead Agency	Partner Agencies				

#### Explanation of Implementation Plan Template

##### Aim of Core Policy

**8.3** Each Core Policy makes reference to a combination of specific targets or broad intentions that must be delivered.

##### Lead and Partner Agencies

**8.4** As stated in paragraph 8.1 above, the Borough Council cannot achieve the objectives of the Core Strategy without the commitment of a wide range of other public, private and voluntary organisations, which may be required to take action directly or work in partnership with us. Such organisations may be very large and include the Highways Agency and utility providers, for example; or smaller and more locally-based organisations.

##### Plans, Programmes and Strategies

**8.5** The LDF may be influenced, in various ways, by other plans, programmes and strategies and by external sustainability objectives, such as those laid down in policies or legislation. The LDF will also seek to influence those responsible for producing other plans and programmes in order to secure the delivery of the Vision for the Borough. In many instances, detailed action plans are set out in a plethora of strategic documents prepared at the regional to local level. At the regional level, the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy and others

will combine to deliver targeted funding investment and action. At the local level, under the umbrella of the Sustainable Community Plan, partners will be guided by strategies, such as the Housing and Economic Strategies.

### Actions/Mechanisms

**8.6** The Implementation Plan must identify which specific actions or mechanisms are required to deliver the objectives of the Core Policies. In some cases, these may be very specific, such as the completion of the A21 improvements. In others, it will be more appropriate to secure the mechanisms for implementation. These will include:

- Using the planning application process to bring about developments which support the Core Strategy Vision
- Securing benefits through Section 106 agreements and other mechanisms, where appropriate. Benefits will include, but are not limited to, affordable housing; education provision; community facilities; maintenance payments; highway infrastructure; pedestrian, cycleway and public transport initiatives; nature conservation and wildlife mitigation measures; public art; public realm provision; and recreation
- Integration with transport initiatives through the Local Transport Plan or any successor documents
- Developing a culture of partnership working with key providers to achieve the shared vision for the Borough

### Core Strategy Timescales

**8.7** To ensure that progress on implementation can be measured, timescales for completion will be identified across the Core Strategy period – from 2006 to 2026. This timeframe is common with the South East Plan.

**8.8** The Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) will also play an important role in managing the implementation of the policies and proposals in the Core Strategy. This project management tool sets out the programme for producing the raft of other general and area-specific LDF documents that will support the Core Strategy. In doing so, the LDS can ensure that the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy are implemented in such a way that ensures areas of greatest priority and need are tackled first. This coordinated approach will help to secure implementation and timely delivery of the Core Strategy's objectives.

### **Monitoring**

**8.9** The Core Strategy is intended to provide a robust framework to guide development up to 2026 and it should not need to be frequently revised. The Borough Council will measure the performance of the LDF by assessing the effectiveness of its policies and proposals in delivering the Plan's Strategic Objectives. The policies and proposals will also be assessed against key objectives and targets included in the Sustainability Appraisal, to assess their contribution towards promoting sustainable development.

**8.10** Clearly, the Core Strategy must be able to respond to changing needs and circumstances. This will include assessing the potential impacts of new or updated national, regional and local policy and guidance. Furthermore, the Council will need to consider how changing circumstances have affected the LDF and deal with these accordingly.

**8.11** The mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of the LDF is an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which is produced by the Borough Council at the end of each year. AMRs have been produced for 2005 and 2006 and one is currently being prepared to measure performance

over the last year. As the LDF grows, in line with the timetable set out in the LDS, it will be necessary to revise the indicators against which performance is assessed to take account of emerging policy.

## Chapter 9 Next Steps

**9.1** Consultation on this Preferred Options Stage will close on **11 January 2008**, after which your comments will be analysed to inform the Submission Core Strategy. A statement of the main issues raised during consultation will be made available at the Town Hall and on our website as soon as possible after the close of the consultation period.

**9.2** The diagram below sets out the future stages for producing the Core Strategy in more detail. You will be able to get involved at the stages that are shaded green.

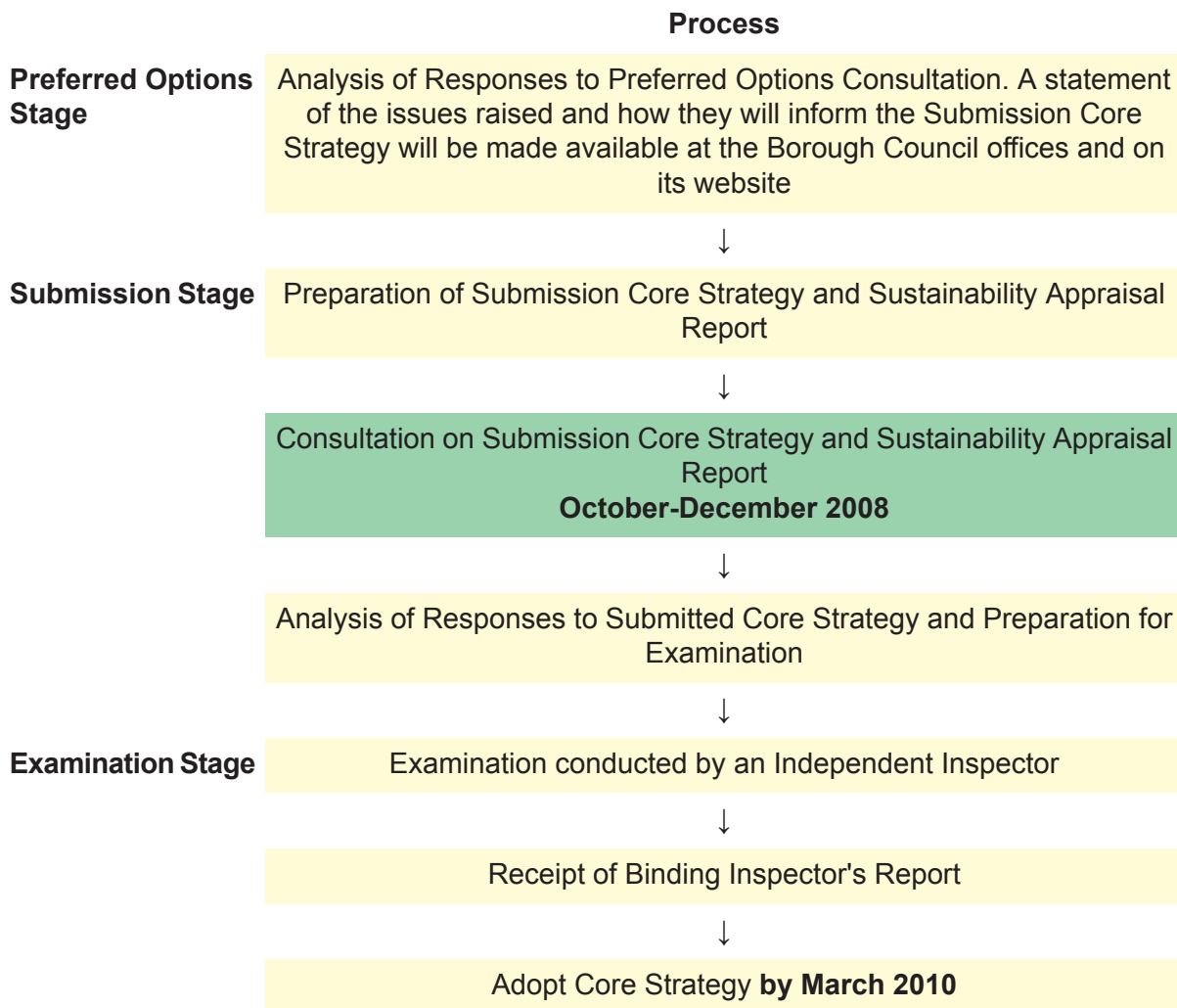


Table 2 Next Steps

**9.3** Thank you for taking the time to participate in the production of the Core Strategy. If you require any additional information or assistance, please contact the Planning Policy Team using the details provided in Chapter 1: 'Invitation to Comment'.

## Appendix 1 Application of Issues & Options Representations

Issues and Options Question No.	Question Subject	Relevant Section of Preferred Options Report	Commentary
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>			
<b>1a-b</b>	Renewable energy supplied to new housing and commercial development	Core Policy 15: Climate Change	CP15 seeks to provide high levels of energy efficiency and to optimise resource use
<b>2</b>	Domestic use of small-scale renewable energy technology	Core Policy 15: Climate Change	CP15 supports the Borough Council's adopted Renewable Energy SPD which seeks to attain high efficiency ratings in all new developments, where appropriate
<b>3</b>	Developer contributions to renewable and sustainable energy schemes	Chapter 8: Implementation and Monitoring	Consideration will be given to how appropriate benefits from development can be secured through mechanisms such as Section 106 Agreements
<b>ECONOMY</b>			
<b>4</b>	Continuing to allow commercial sites to be converted for residential use in the main urban area and small rural towns	Core Policy 9: Employment Provision	CP9 seeks to safeguard existing employment sites that are well suited to employment use. It recognises a potential problem in Royal Tunbridge Wells, which is becoming increasingly dominated by residential and retail uses
<b>5a-e</b>	Type and size of business and commercial uses required throughout the Borough	Core Policy 9: Employment Provision Place-shaping Core Policies 1-4	CP9 seeks to resist further loss of employment floorspace across the Borough CP1-4 provide details of the types of uses that will be sought in different areas

Issues and Options Question No.	Question Subject	Relevant Section of Preferred Options Report	Commentary
<b>6</b>	Should we attract more shoppers to Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre and what would attract them?	Core Policy 1: Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough	CP1 seeks to meet the need for additional retail floorspace in the town centre, which is needed for the town to remain competitive
<b>7a-c</b>	Provision of job opportunities in the small rural towns	Core Policy 2: Development in Paddock Wood Core Policy 4: Development in Cranbrook and Hawkhurst	CP2 seeks to improve the quality of employment opportunities through the redevelopment of the existing employment area CP4 recognises the function of Cranbrook and Hawkhurst as centres for local employment opportunities. It seeks to resist the further loss of employment sites, particularly at Hawkhurst
<b>8a-d</b>	Supporting the provision of local services	Place-shaping Core Policies 1-3	CP1 seeks to strengthen the role of neighbourhood centres in the main urban area; CP2 seeks town centre regeneration in Paddock Wood; CP3 recognises the importance of maintaining an interconnected hierarchy of rural settlements, whereby the small rural towns provide service centres for a wider hinterland
<b>9</b>	Conversion of surplus agricultural buildings	Core Policy 6: Development in the Countryside	CP6 seeks to strengthen the rural economy by encouraging uses associated with the land. Consideration will be given to the conversion of rural buildings to facilitate this
<b>10</b>	Tourism	Core Policy 6: Development in the Countryside Core Policy 8: Provision for Retail and Leisure	CP6 recognises the potential value of green tourism in the rural economy Policy CP8 recognises the value of the Borough's natural and historic built assets for tourism and the value of these in terms of investment and employment

Issues and Options Question No.	Question Subject	Relevant Section of Preferred Options Report	Commentary
<b>LEISURE</b>			
<b>11</b>	Improving the range of leisure facilities	Core Policy 1: Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Core Policy 8: Provision for Retail and Leisure	CP1 recognises the contribution of leisure facilities to the Regional Hub package CP8 supports the provision of a range of leisure facilities at a scale appropriate to their location
<b>12 and 13 a-j</b>	Improving the quality of, and access to, Council-owned leisure/open space facilities	Core Policy 8: Provision for Retail and Leisure	CP8 recognises the need for future policy to make provision to upgrade the quality of facilities where necessary and to ensure that they are accessible
<b>CRIME</b>			
<b>14</b>	The role of design measures in reducing crime and the fear of crime	Core Policy 16: Design Quality	CP16 recognises the importance of design in its own right. It supports the use of good urban design measures to create safe environments
<b>TRANSPORT</b>			
<b>15a-k and 16</b>	Measures to reduce congestion in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough	Core Policy 1: Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Core Policy 10: Transport Infrastructure	CP1 recognises the importance of integrated transport provision as a key element of the South East Plan Regional Hub designation CP10 recognises the need to encourage sustainable modes of transport and to utilise demand management techniques to reduce pressure on existing transport systems
<b>HOUSING</b>			

Issues and Options Question No.	Question Subject	Relevant Section of Preferred Options Report	Commentary
<b>17</b>	Provision of housing on previously developed land (pdl)	Chapter 6: Spatial Strategy Core Policy 7: Housing Provision	The preferred option for a Spatial Strategy, supported by a sequential approach to land use, would prioritise the development of pdl. The provisions of CP7 support this
<b>18</b>	Meeting housing requirements through increased density versus use of greenfield land	Core Policy 7: Housing Provision Core Policy 16: Design Quality	CP7 prioritised the use of pdl over greenfield land. However, CP16 serves to prevent the erosion of character due to factors including over-development
<b>19a-c</b>	Provision of open space with dwellings	Core Policy 16: Design Quality	CP16 recognises the importance of urban design to quality of life
<b>20</b>	Parking space with residential development	Core Policy 16: Design Quality Core Policy 10: Transport Infrastructure	Parking provision is an important consideration in the design of well-functioning places CP10 recognises that parking policy will continue to play a key role in the overall planning framework. It will be important to manage demand for car parking in the town centre
<b>21a-e and 22 a-d</b>	Provision of affordable housing	Core Policy 7: Housing Provision	CP7 proposes to utilise a variable site size threshold for seeking the provision of affordable housing to meet the South East Plan target of 35% of all new housing to be affordable
<b>23</b>	Rural Exception Sites	Core Policy 7: Housing Provision	CP7 provides the basis to consider allocating rural exception sites in a subsequent Allocations DPD
<b>24a-c</b>	Meeting the need for small dwellings	Core Policy 7: Housing Provision	A Strategic Housing Market Assessment will inform the precise mix of size, type and tenure to be sought

Issues and Options Question No.	Question Subject	Relevant Section of Preferred Options Report	Commentary
25	Meeting the need for gypsy and traveller accommodation	Core Policy 7: Housing Provision	A criteria-based policy will be retained to assist in the identification of appropriate sites in order that sufficient provision can be made in an appropriate DPD
<b>SPATIAL STRATEGY</b>			
26a-j and 27a-d	Determining an appropriate spatial distribution of development	Chapter 6: Spatial Strategy	<p>The preferred option for a Spatial Strategy is proposed on the basis of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The extent to which it would satisfy strategic policy requirements, particularly in relation to the South East Plan Regional Hub designation</li> <li>b. The outcome of the Core Strategy: Issues &amp; Options consultation responses</li> <li>c. The findings of Sustainability Appraisal in respect of development needs and environmental constraints</li> <li>d. The findings of Accessibility Analysis</li> <li>e. The nature of development opportunities</li> </ol>

Table 3 Application of Issues &amp; Options Representations

A more detailed explanation of how the Preferred Options Report has taken account of the representations made at Issues & Options stage is provided by the Consultation Responses Report (background paper), which can be accessed on the Borough Council's website at [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk).

## Appendix 2 Background Studies

[Employment Land Study](#) 2006

[Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) 2007

[PPG17 Sport, Recreation and Open Space Study](#) 2006

[Retail Study](#) July 2006

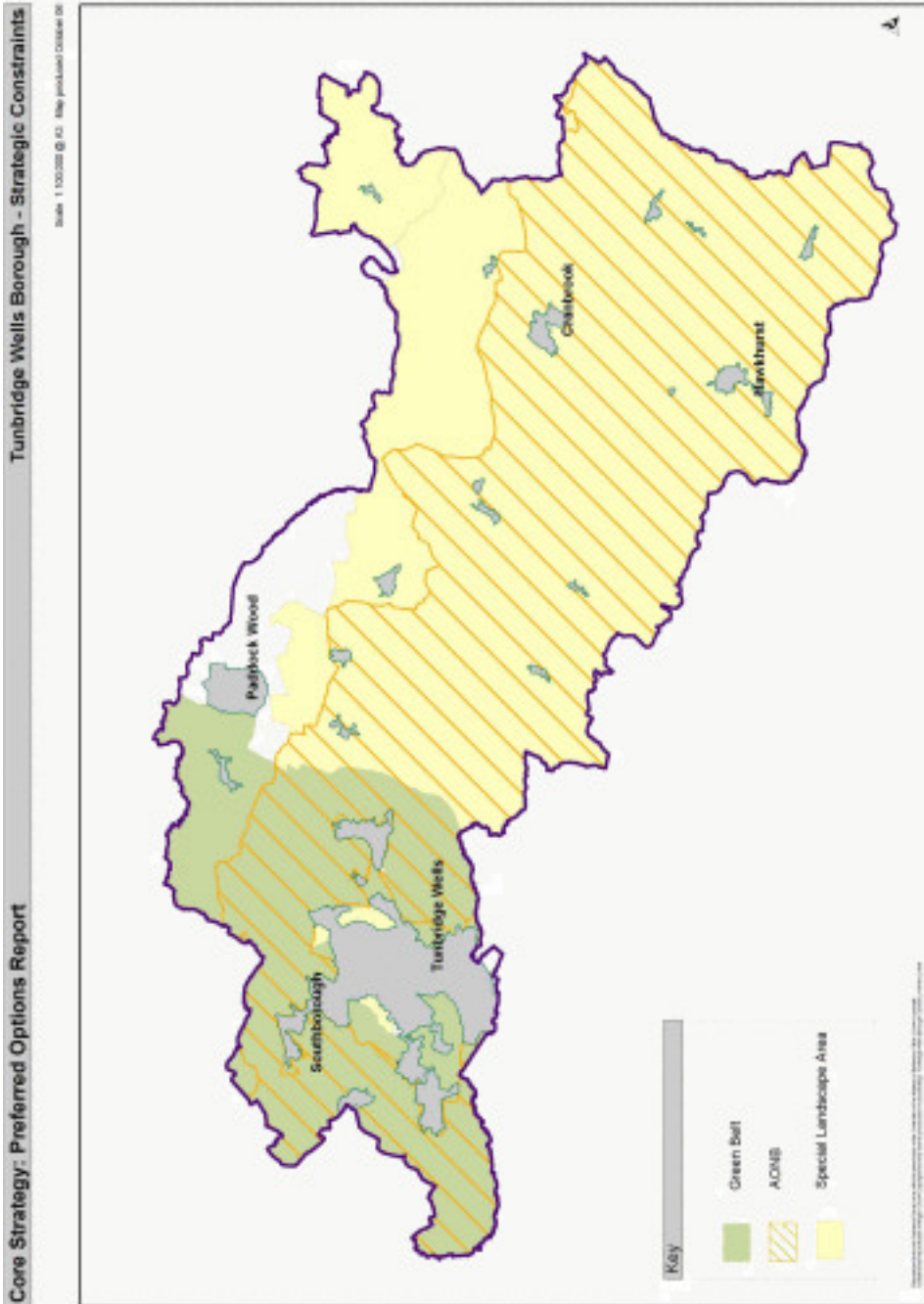
[Sustainability Appraisal](#) 2005

[Housing Needs Survey](#) 2005

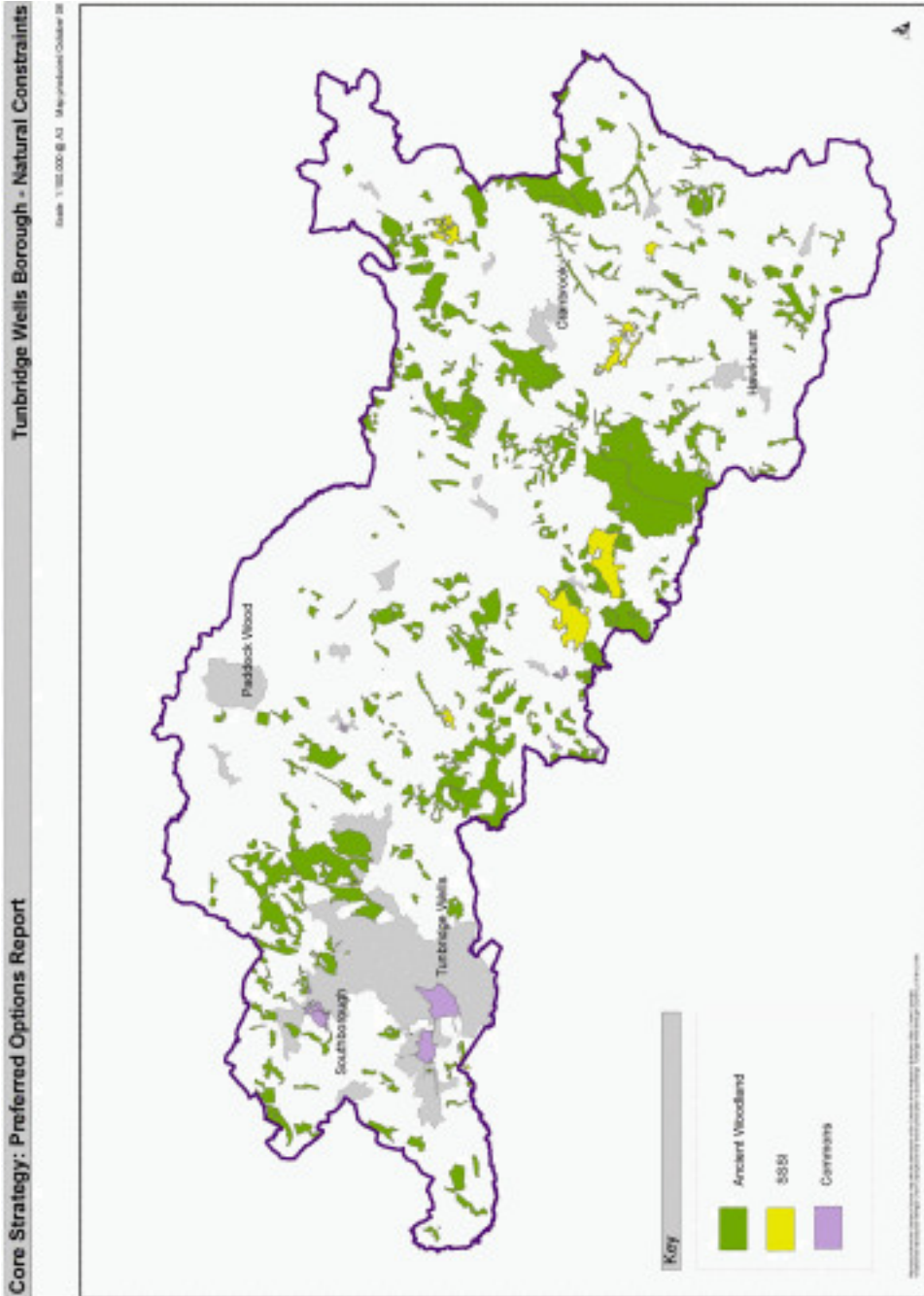
[Hotel Futures](#) 2005-2021

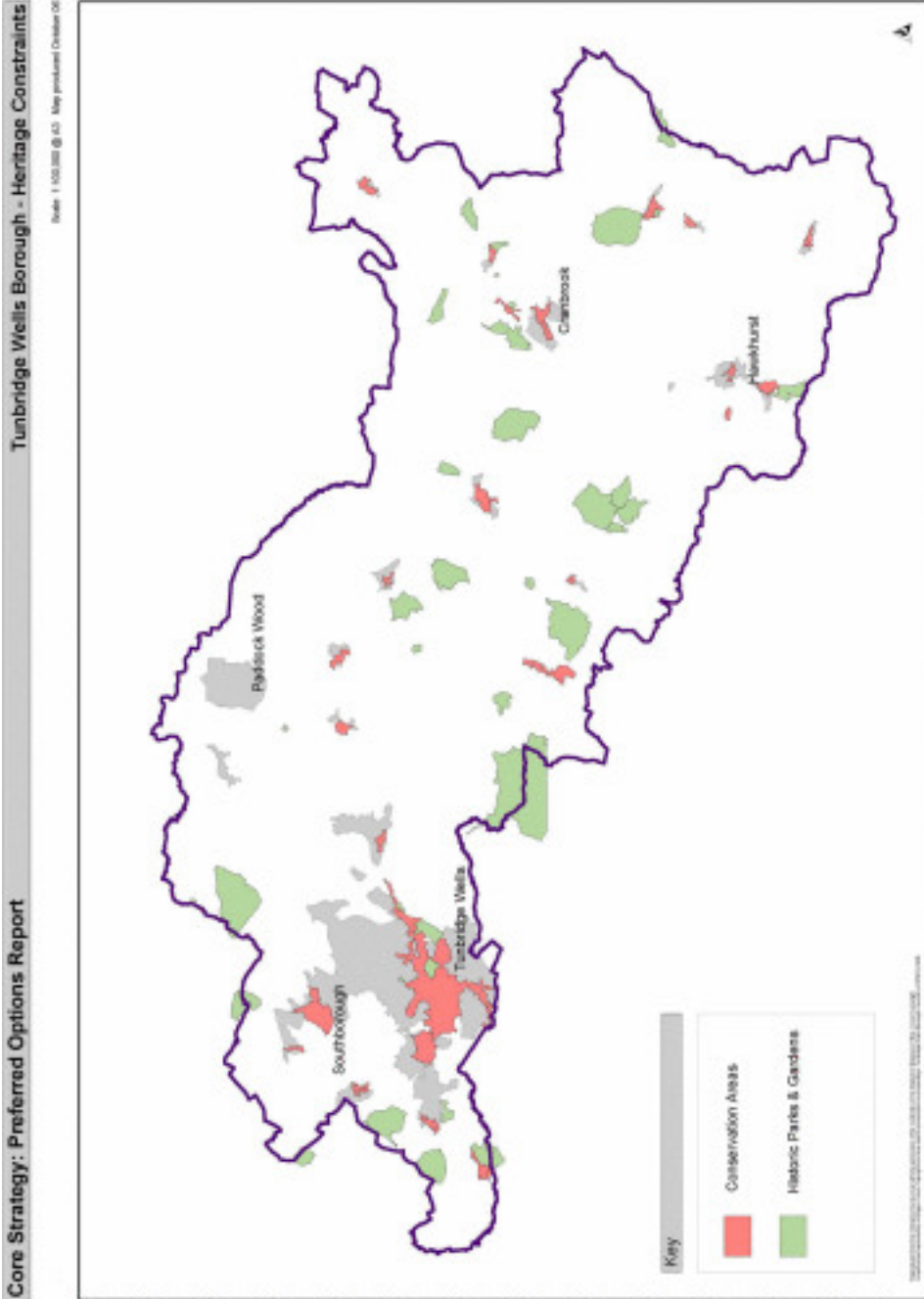
[Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment](#) 2005/2006

## Appendix 3 Constraints Maps

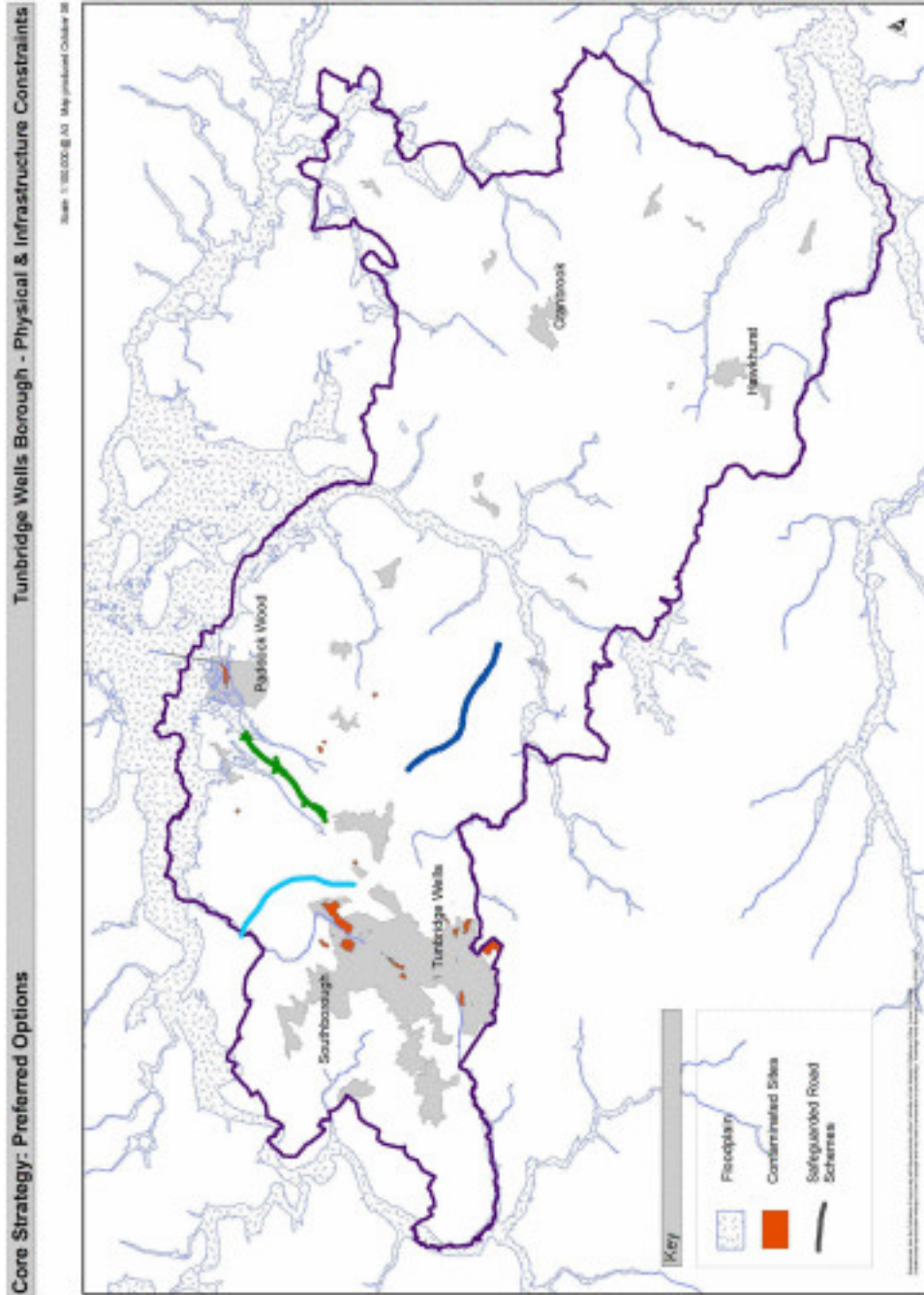


Map 1 Landscape Designations: AONB and SLA Designations





Map 3 The Built Environment: Historic Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas



Map 4 Land at Risk of Flooding

## Appendix 4 Accessibility to Key Destinations

### Tunbridge Wells Accession Runs – LDF Analysis

#### Origin data

For the LDF runs, origin data were created by constructing a grid of points across the Tunbridge Wells Borough area. Initially, a grid of 50m was used. Some calculations were successfully run using this grid, but where more destinations were involved, the size of the calculation exceeded system capacity. Therefore, another grid using 100m spacing was created. Consequently, the output data sets have mixed grid spacings (identified below). This should not adversely affect any subsequent analysis, as discussion with KCC transport analysts revealed that most analysis they perform uses 250m grid spacing; the data from this project is therefore more accurate than necessary.

#### Destination data

Destination data consisted of a mixture of locally supplied data and national data sets. In the case of data that extended beyond the boundaries of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, a 10-mile buffer around the district (7.5 miles in the case of primary schools) has been applied to reduce the number of calculations performed. These buffers are identified where relevant.

The following data sets were used as supplied by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council: Indoor Sports Facilities; Neighbourhood Centres; Villages Centres; Retail Areas; and Knights Park. No buffers were applied as all data was confined to the district boundaries.

Schools data was generated by combining Kent & Medway schools with East Sussex schools. Secondary schools were limited to a 10-mile buffer; primary schools to 7.5 miles (extending the buffer beyond this made the calculation too big to perform and it was considered unlikely that a significant number of children would travel more than this distance).

Hospital and GP data were both created by clipping national data to a 10-mile buffer around the district.

Areas of employment were created by using the centroid of Super Output Areas with more than 500 jobs that fell within the Tunbridge Wells, Rother and Wealden districts.

#### Output data

Output data consists of a point-based shapefile for each of the above corresponding destination data sets. The points represent the time taken to travel (indicated by the 'Value' field), by public transport, to the nearest relevant destination. (The shapefiles only contain points that are less than, or equal to, the 30-minute threshold for Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) monitoring purposes). As discussed above, the size of the grid varies between 50m and 100m – retail areas, neighbourhood centres, indoor leisure and Knights Park use a 50m grid; all other shapefiles are based on a 100m grid.

#### Mapping

For the first series of maps (Public Transport Time), the point data output files detailed above were converted to raster using the appropriate grid size (either 50m or 100m). The time taken to travel, by public transport, to the relevant destination is displayed in groups. The second set

(Accessibility Score) shows the same information, but it has been reclassified to give a score out of 10, with the least accessible areas receiving the lowest score and the most accessible, the highest. Table 4 below shows this reclassification:

Public Transport Time	Accessibility Score
0-3	10
3-6	9
6-9	8
9-12	7
12-15	6
15-18	5
18-21	4
21-24	3
24-27	2
27-30	1
Over 30	0

Table 4 Reclassification of Accessibility Score

For the overall accessibility score, the score for each point across the Borough for each of the 10 destination datasets has been summed. Please note that, for this exercise, all datasets have been assumed to be equally important and, therefore, no weighting has been used in the scores. For example, if a point had a score of 3 for the primary schools dataset, 5 for GPs and zero for all other datasets, the overall score for that point would be 8.

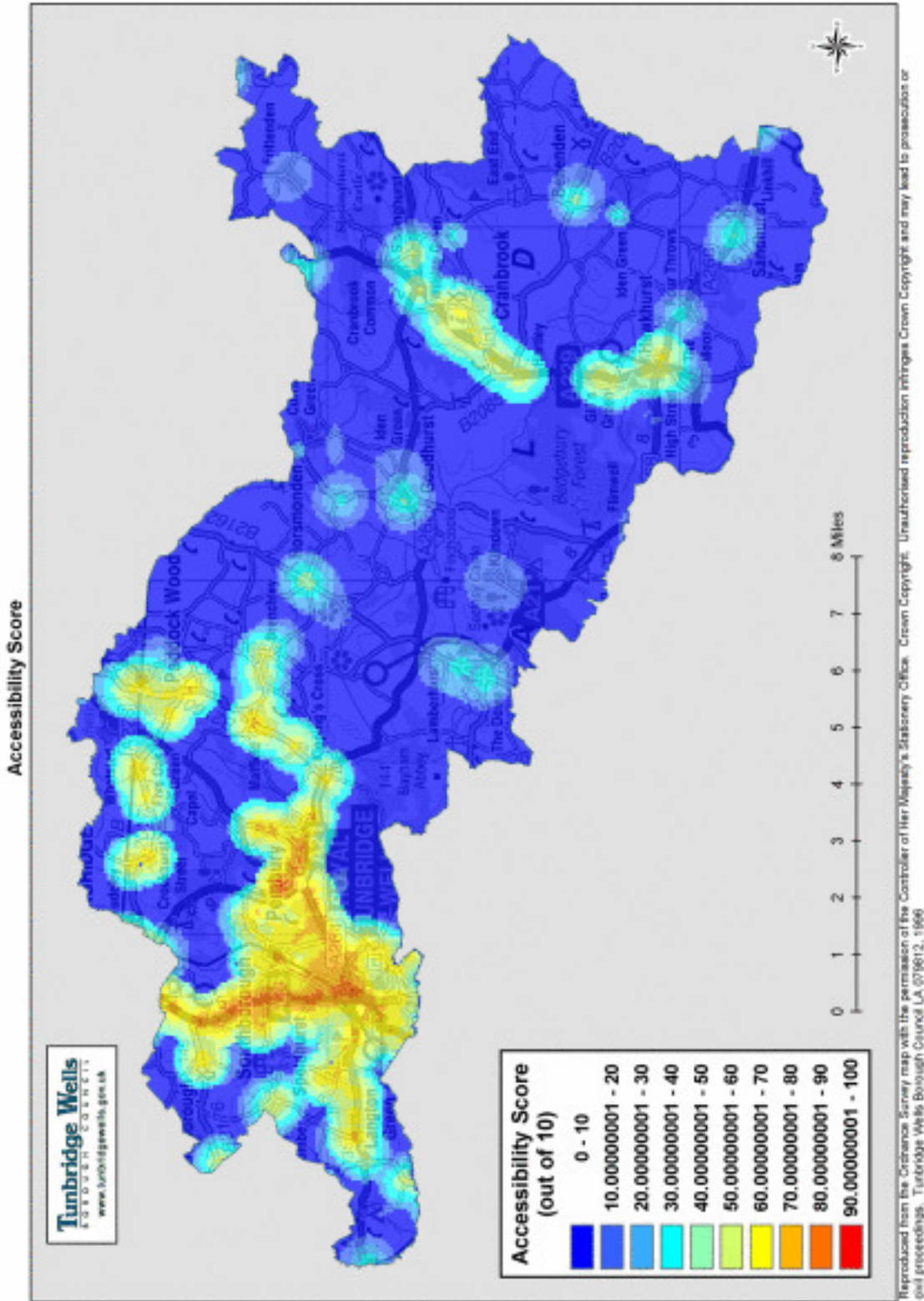


Figure 3 Accessibility Score

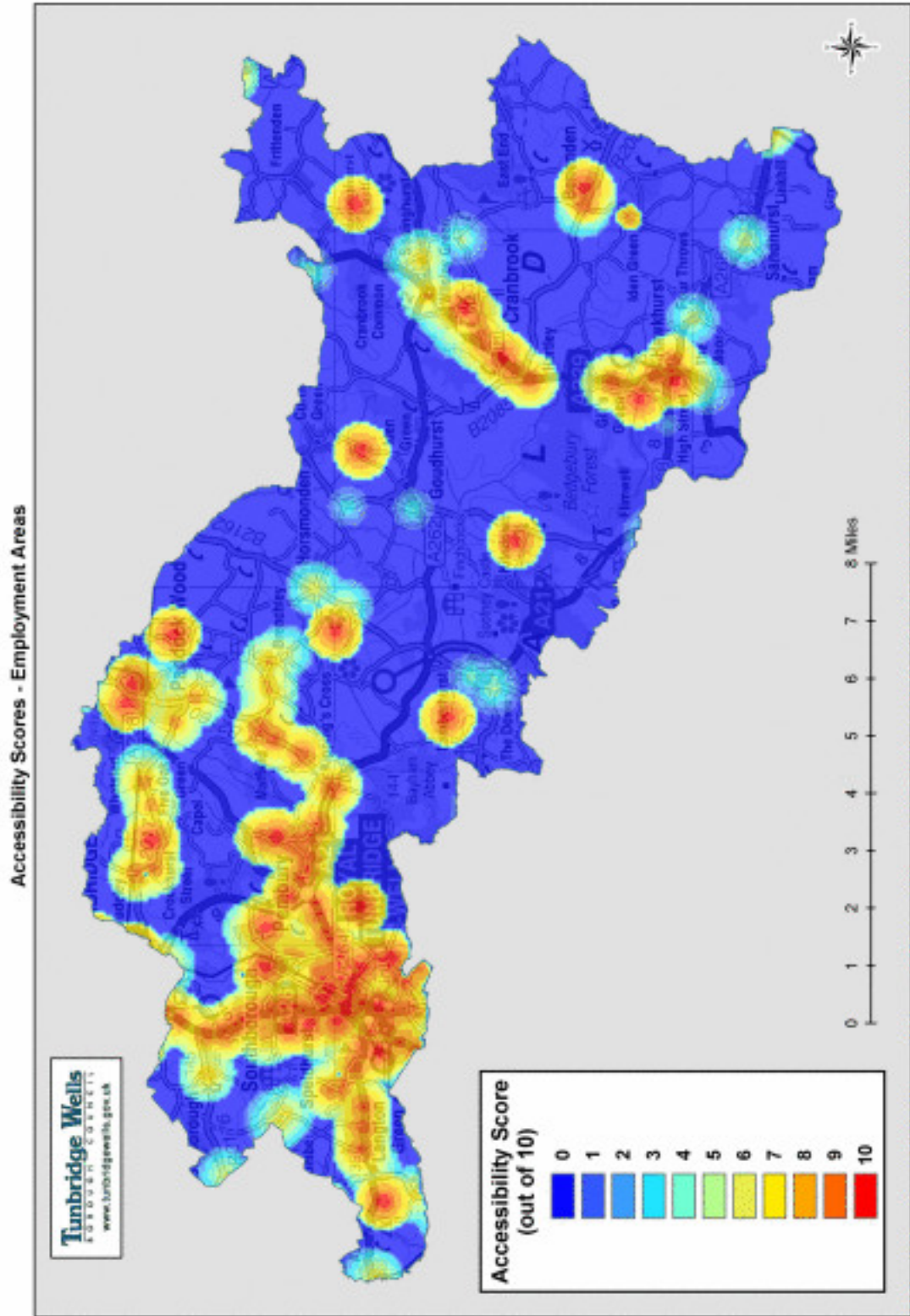


Figure 4 Employment Areas

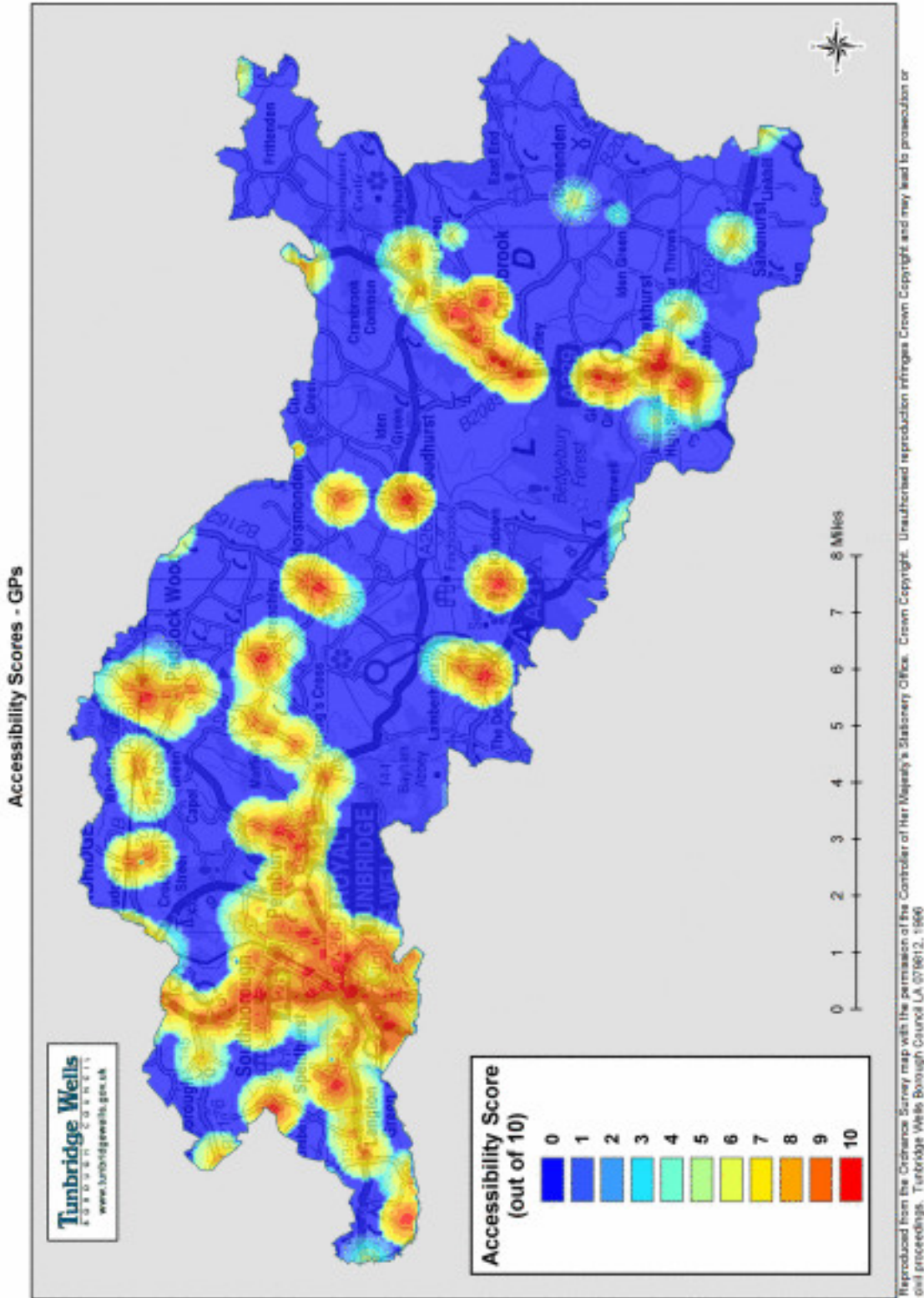


Figure 5 General Practitioners

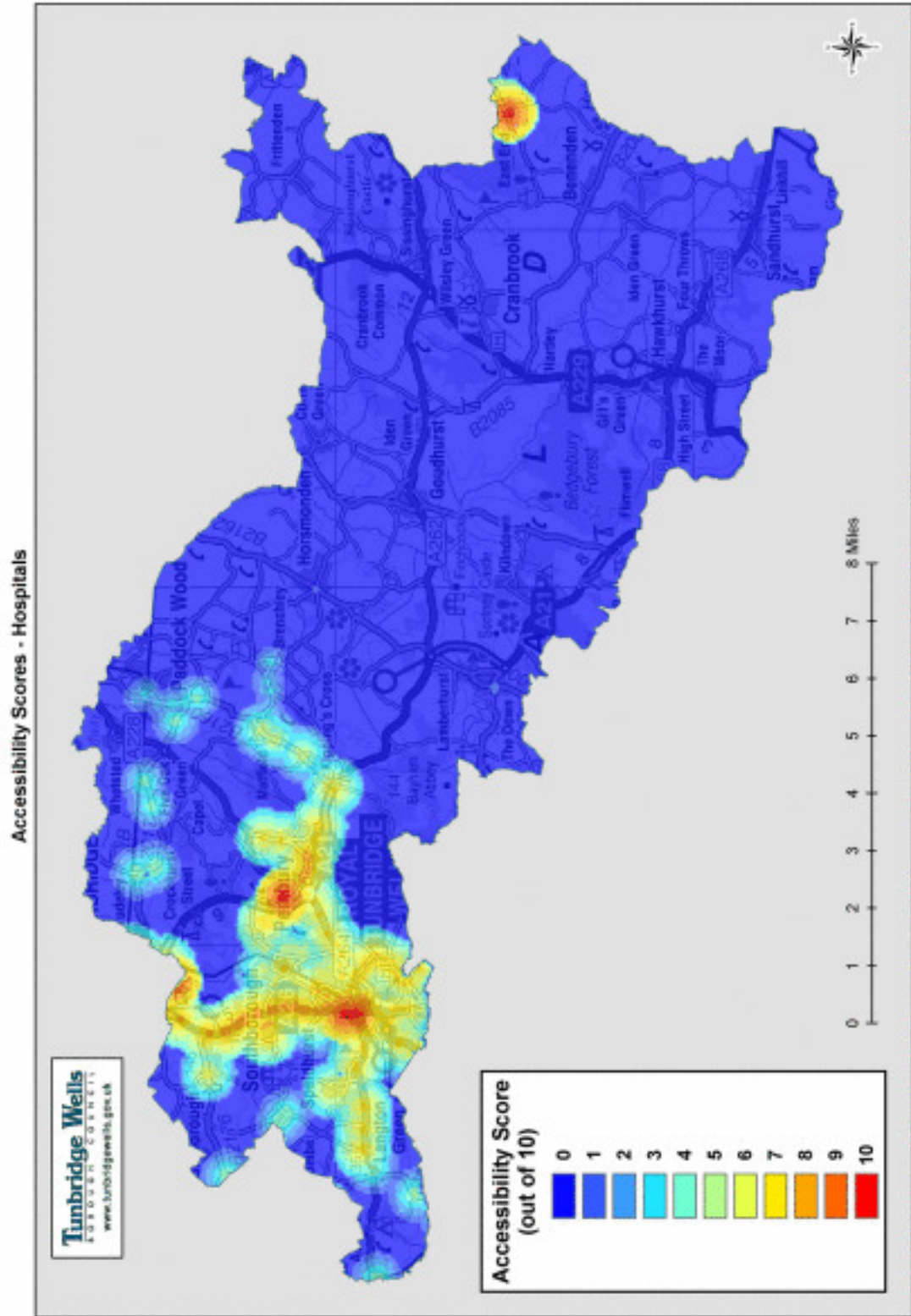


Figure 6 Hospitals

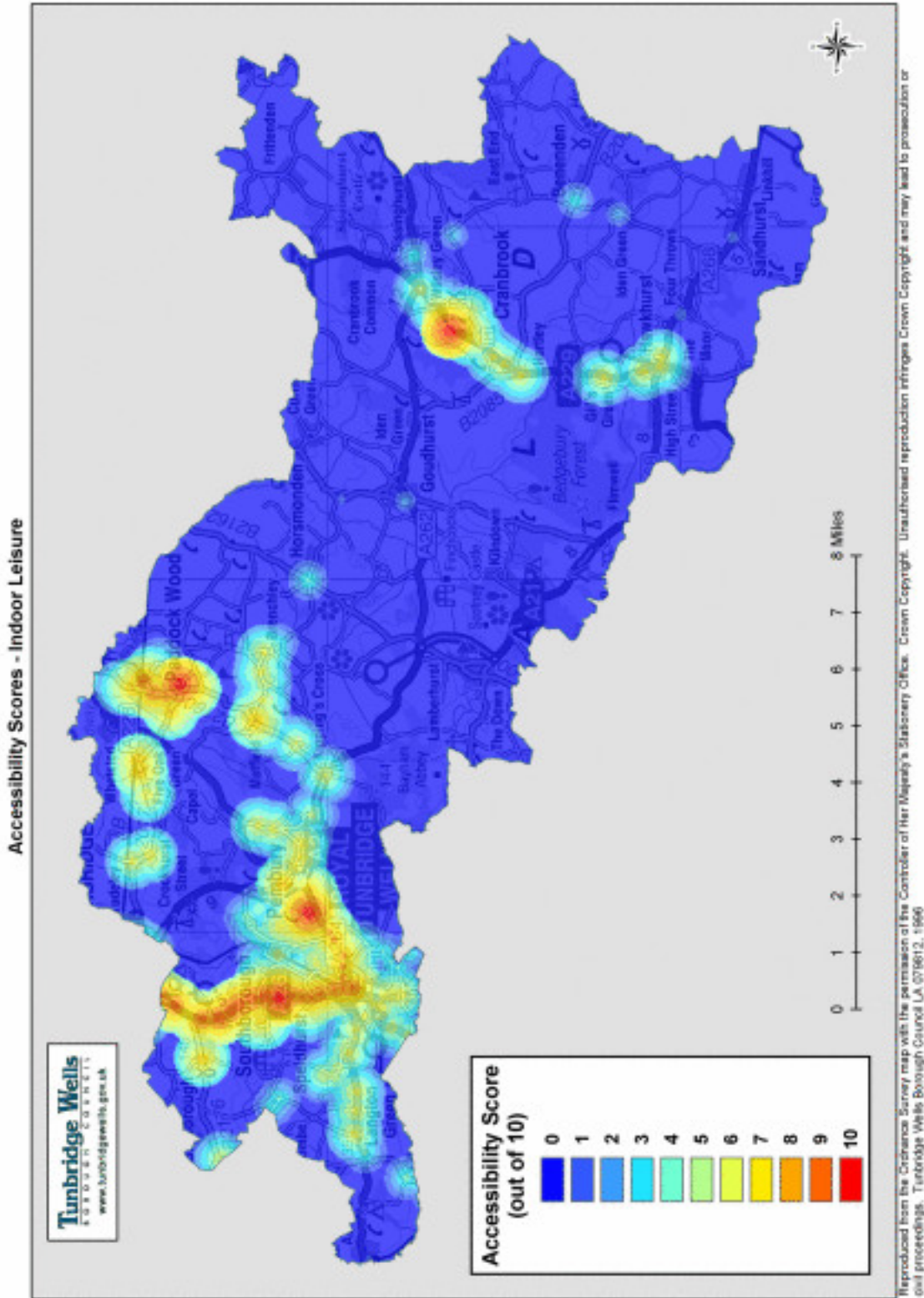


Figure 7 Indoor Leisure

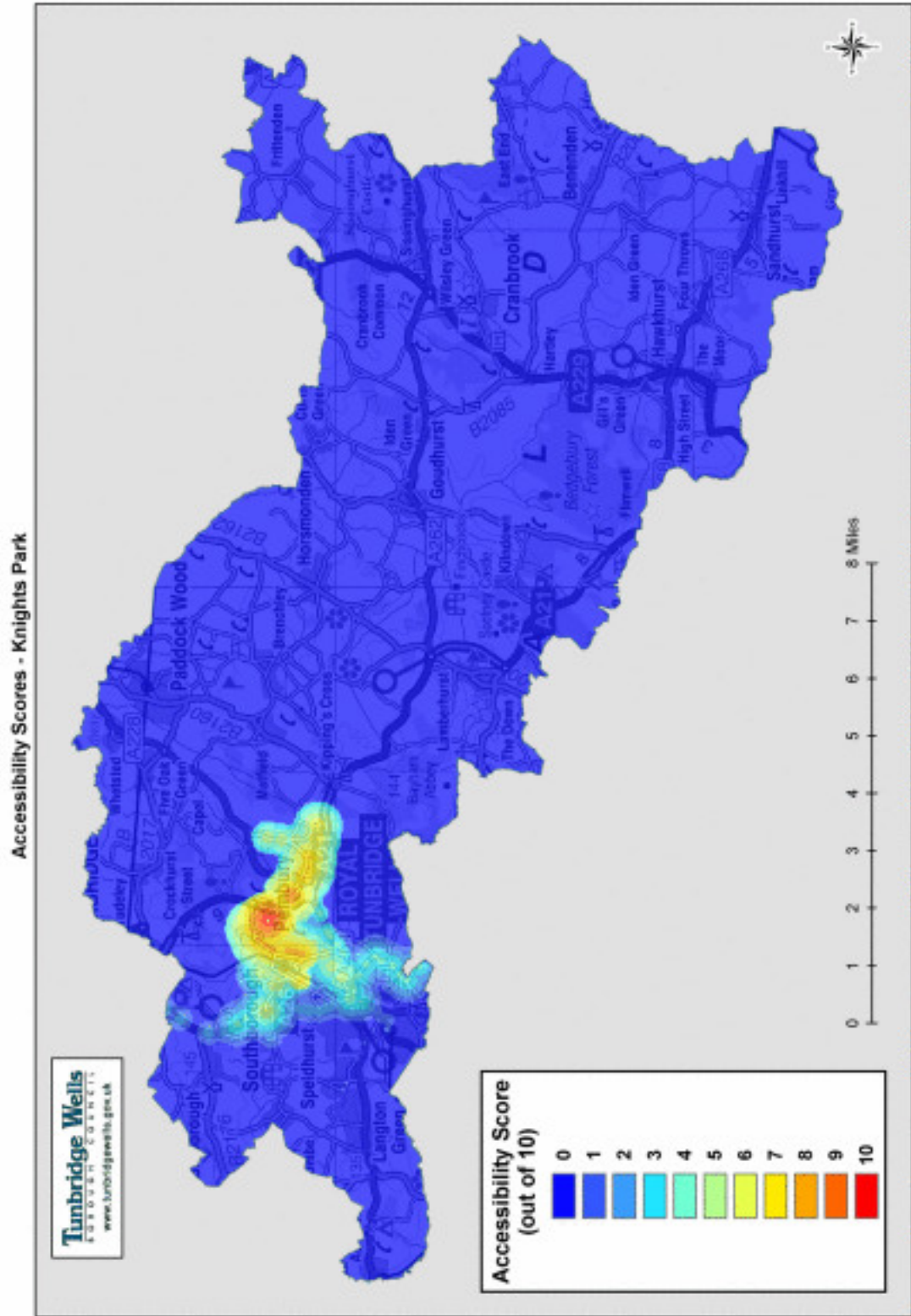


Figure 8 Knights Park

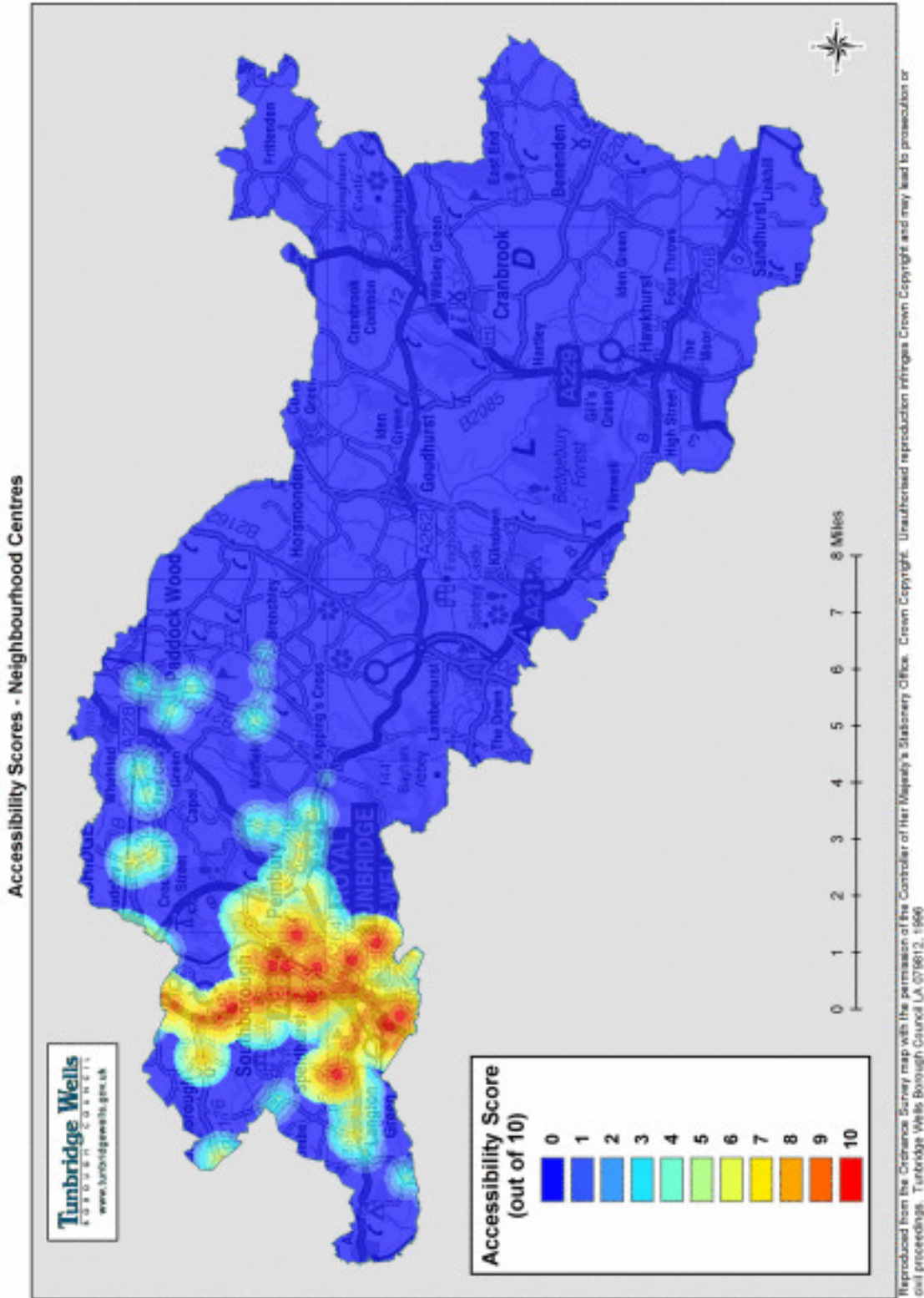


Figure 9 Neighbourhood Centres

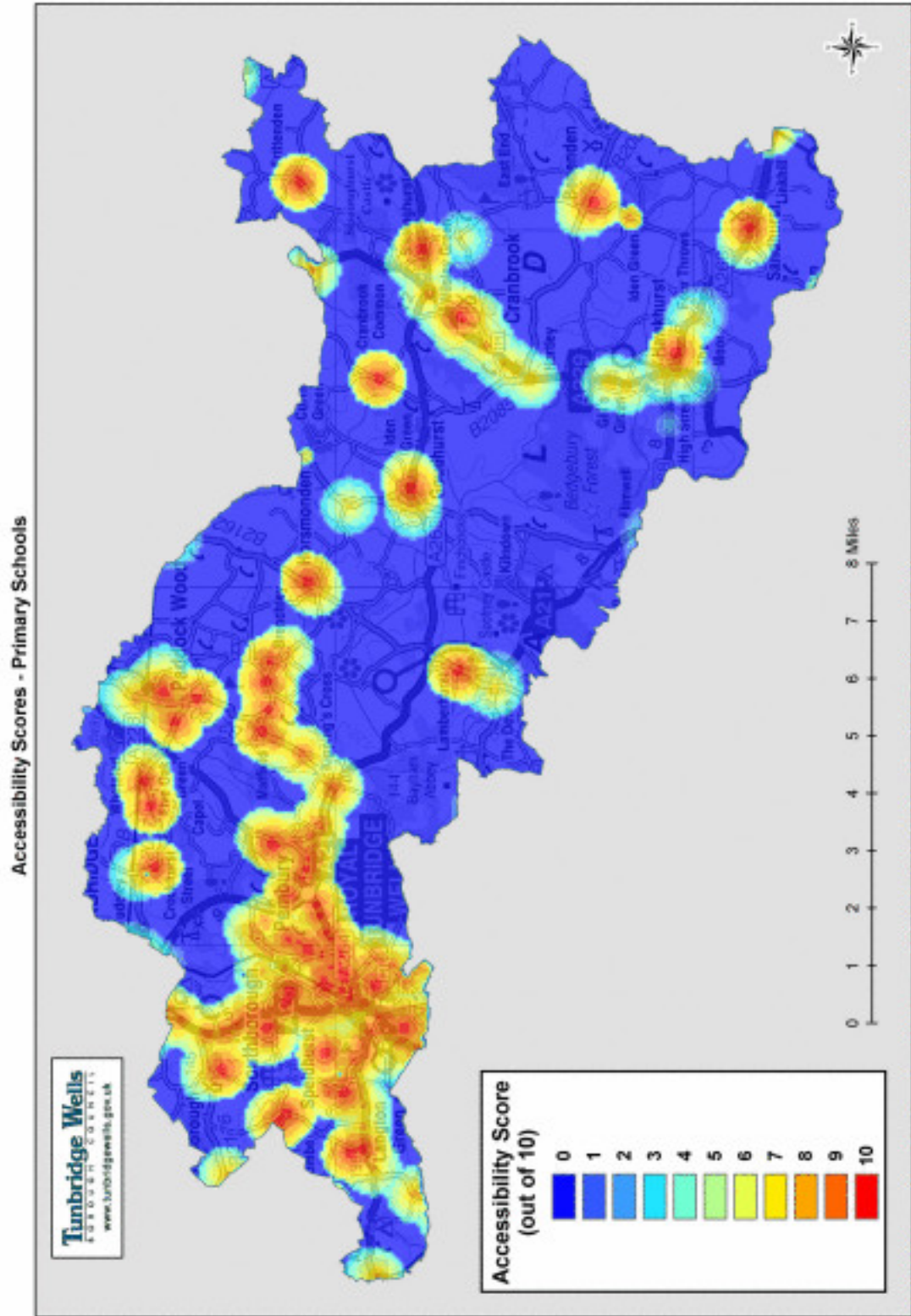


Figure 10 Primary Schools

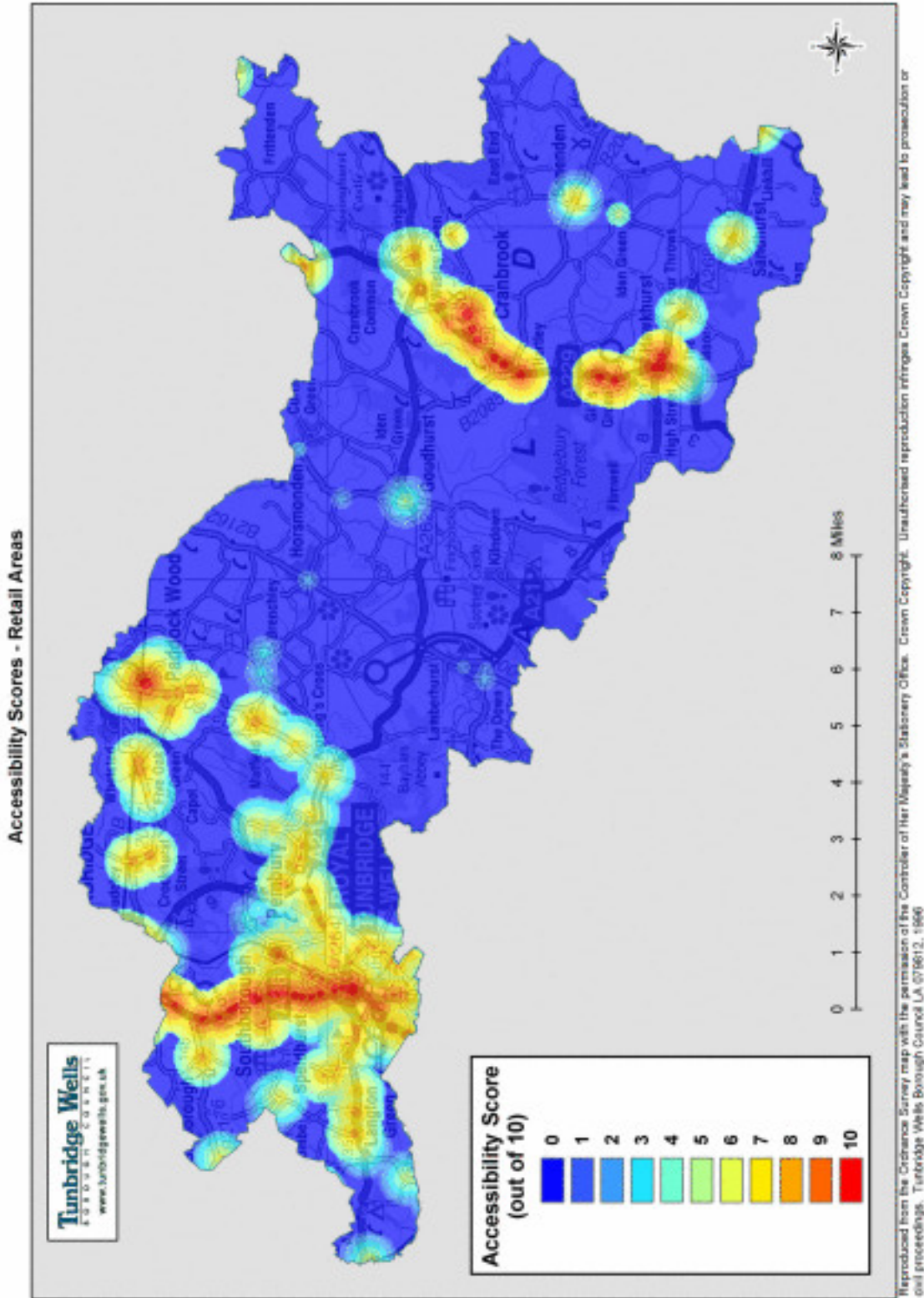


Figure 11 Retail Areas

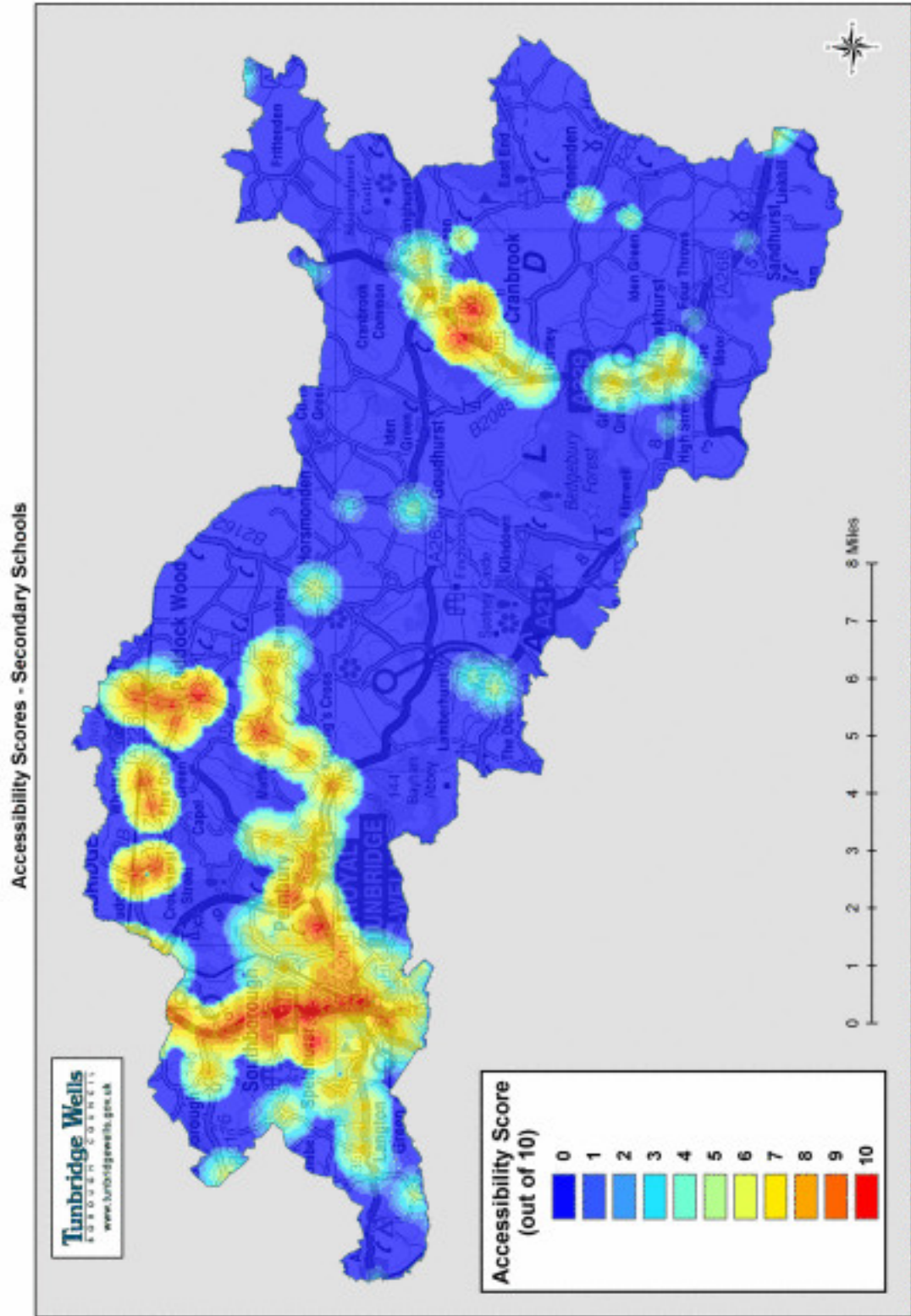


Figure 12 Secondary Schools

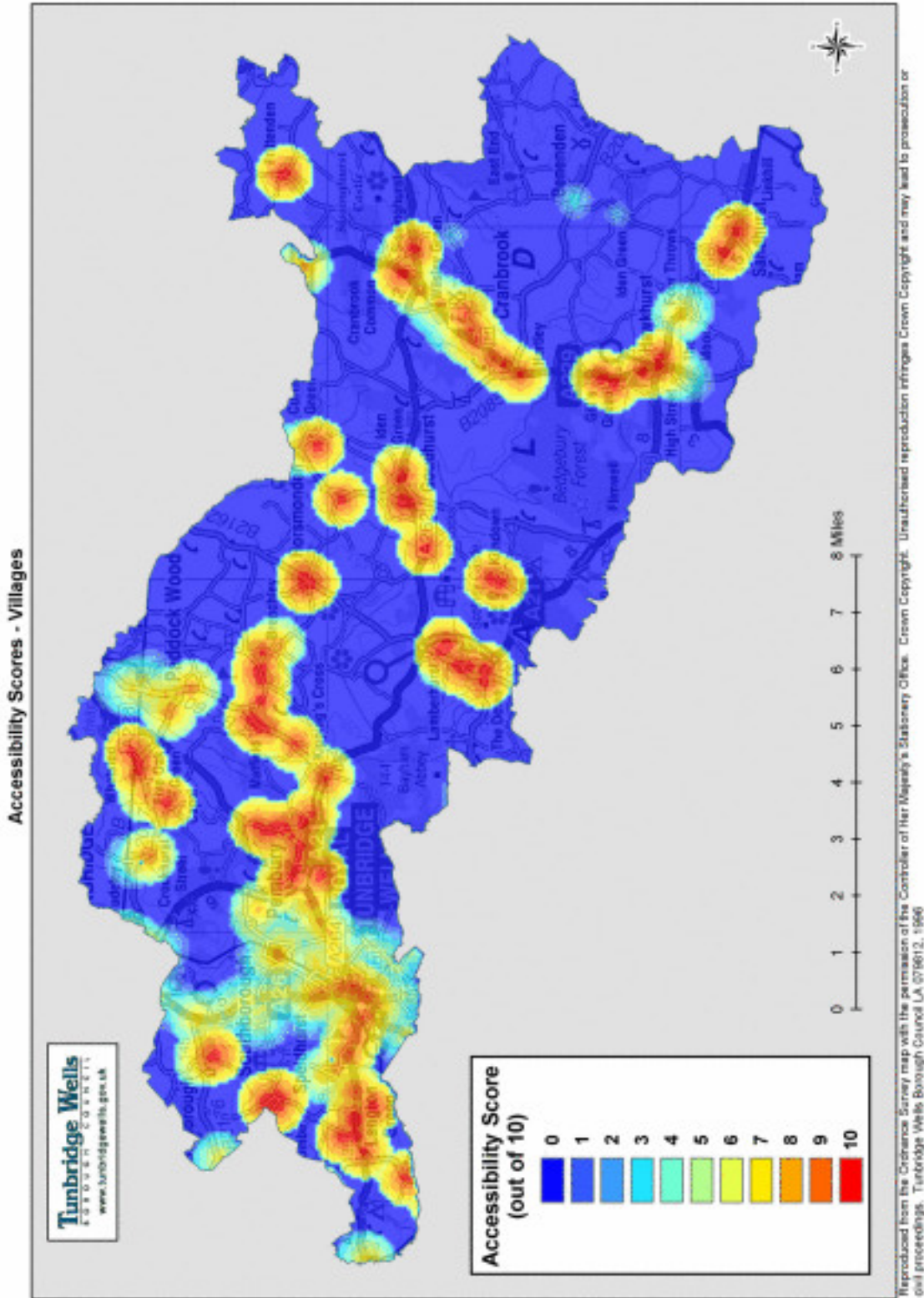


Figure 13 Villages

## Appendix 5 Glossary and Abbreviations

For the purpose of this report the following terms and definitions apply:

Glossary and Abbreviations	
AONB	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) and, along with National Parks, they represent the finest examples of countryside in England and Wales
Adopted	There are many stages in the production of planning policy documents such as the South East Plan and Core Strategy. In the case of the Core Strategy, the final stage is where the document is 'adopted' by the Council
Affordable Housing	Housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market
Agricultural Diversification	Activities involving a change of use of land, or buildings, or new development not falling within the definition of agriculture)
Air Quality Management Order	Imposed in areas where there is a likelihood that the air quality objectives set out in the Air Quality Regulations 2000 will not be met
Brownfield Land	Previously developed land which is, or was, occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. Also see 'Previously-Developed Land'
Conservation Area	An area designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character and interest of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance
DPD	Development Plan Document – A Local Development Document which forms part of the statutory development plan, including the Core Strategy, Proposals Map and Area Action Plans
Examination in Public (EIP)	A term given to the examination of Structure Plans
Employment Land	Land reserved for industrial and business use awaiting development
Green Belt	Green Belt is undeveloped land, which has been specifically designated for long-term protection. It is a nationally important designation. Green Belt land exists to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land free from development
Greenfield Land	Land (which can be a defined site) that has not been previously developed
LDD	Local Development Document – comprising two main types: Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents, which together form the Local Development Framework

### Glossary and Abbreviations

LDF	Local Development Framework – the portfolio or folder of Local Development Documents, which set out the planning policy framework for the district. The Core Strategy is a Local Development Document
Listed Building	A building included on a list of buildings of architectural or historic interest, compiled by the Secretary of State, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
LNR	Local Nature Reserve – a habitat of local or regional significance that makes a useful contribution both to nature conservation and to the opportunities for the community to see, learn about and enjoy wildlife
LWS	Local Wildlife Sites (formerly SNCIs) – identified by Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT), whilst not of national status, have a county-wide significance. Each site identified provides a high-grade habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna meriting careful conservation. Sites are evaluated according to criteria, including: diversity of species; features of wildlife importance; rarity of habitat and species in local and county context; management and current use; public access and linkages with other sites and areas
PDL	Previously Developed Land (or brownfield land) – land that is, or has been, occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. Agricultural and forestry buildings are excluded
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance – Guidance documents which set out national planning policy
PPS	Planning Policy Statement – Guidance documents which set out national planning policy. These are gradually replacing PPGs
Previously Developed Land	A piece of previously developed land or buildings that is abandoned or underused. According to national planning guidance, residential gardens are regarded as previously developed land
Rural Exception Site	Small sites to be used specifically for affordable housing in rural communities that would not normally be used for housing, because they are subject to policies of restraint. Rural exception sites should only be used for affordable housing in perpetuity (PPS3)
Rural Fringe	Land between built up areas and the Green Belt that has been reserved to meet longer-term development needs
Saved	Certain documents, such as the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, are ‘saved’ for the time being. This means that the policies in that document have to be taken into consideration
SEERA	South East England Regional Assembly
South East Plan	This is the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East Region. The Core Strategy must be in general conformity with it
Spatial Planning	System to integrate land use planning policies with the policies of other plans, programmes and strategies, which also influence the nature of places and how they function

<b>Glossary and Abbreviations</b>	
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document – a Local Development Document that is part of the Local Development Framework but does not form part of the statutory development plan. SPDs elaborate upon policies and proposals in a Development Plan Document or ‘saved’ policies and include development briefs and guidance documents
SLA	Special Landscape Area – strategically important landscape character areas identified at the County level. Designated for their high scenic quality and distinctive local character
SLNCV	Site of Local Conservation Value – sites designated high-grade habitat value within, or adjacent to, built up areas where the greatest development pressure exists
Sustainable development	Development that simultaneously ensures social progress that recognises the needs of everyone; protects the environment; makes prudent use of natural resources and maintains high and stable levels of economic growth and employment
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest – the best sites for wildlife and geological features in England, as designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
Windfall Sites	Windfall sites are those which have not been specifically identified as available in the local plan process. They comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available

Table 5 Glossary and Abbreviations

## Appendix 6 Bibliography

DOCUMENT	WEBSITE LINK
<b>National Planning Policy</b>	
<u>Planning Policy Statements</u>	<a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">http://www.communities.gov.uk</a>
PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1)	
Consultation - Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1	
PPS3: Housing	
PPS6: Planning for Town Centres	
PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas	
PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	
PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control	
PPS25: Development and Flood Risk	
<u>Planning Policy Guidance Notes</u>	
PPG2: Green Belts	
PPG4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms	
PPG13: Transport	
PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment	
PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation	
Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17	
<u>Urban Design Guidance and Good Practice</u>	
Protecting Design Quality in Planning	<a href="http://www.cabe.org.uk">www.cabe.org.uk</a>
By Design - better places to live, A Companion Guide to PPG3	
By Design - urban design in the planning system, towards better practice	
Councillor's Toolbox: making the best use of land	

DOCUMENT	WEBSITE LINK
Buildings in Context	
Creating Successful Masterplans	
Urban Design Compendium	<a href="http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk">www.englishpartnerships.co.uk</a>
Kent Design Guide	<a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk">www.kent.gov.uk</a>
<u>Public Realm Guidance and Good Practice</u>	
Living Places: Caring for Quality	<a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a>
Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention	
Manual for Streets	
Green Space Strategies: a good practice guide	<a href="http://www.cabe.org.uk">www.cabe.org.uk</a>
Paving the Way	
Streets for All, South East	
<b>Regional Planning Policy</b>	
Draft South East Plan	<a href="http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk">www.southeast-ra.gov.uk</a>
<b>County Documents</b>	
Kent & Medway Structure Plan	<a href="http://www.kmsp.org.uk">www.kmsp.org.uk</a>
Kent Minerals & Waste Development Framework	<a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk">www.kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Borough Council Documents</b>	
Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan, adopted 2006	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Sustainable Community Plan for Tunbridge Wells Borough 2006-2011	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Leisure Strategy: 'Delivering for the Future' 2006-2012	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Tunbridge Wells Borough Housing Needs Survey 2005	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Development Framework: Annual Monitoring Report	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Tunbridge Wells Borough Employment Land Study 2006	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Tunbridge Wells Borough Retail Study 2006	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>

DOCUMENT	WEBSITE LINK
Tunbridge Wells Borough Transport Strategy 2003	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Tunbridge Wells Borough Housing Strategy 2006-2011	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Survey 2005/2006	<a href="http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk">www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>

Table 6 Bibliography