

# Transport Strategy 2012-26

## DRAFT CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON BEHALF OF THE TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Compiled by the Getting Around Tunbridge Wells Working Group of the Town Forum and **endorsed as the collective view of the Tunbridge Wells Town Forum by David Wakefield, Chairman, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013**

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The Town Forum represents 48 residents associations, business associations and Borough Councillors in the un-parished area of Tunbridge Wells. For the purposes of this consultation, the Town Forum's consultation response also considers the impact of transport issues beyond the un-parished area as well as within it.

The remits of the four Tunbridge Wells Town Forum Working Groups interact, and the full Town Forum draws on their advice to prepare collective views and make recommendations to its members. The Getting Around Tunbridge Wells Working Group presented its initial recommendations to the Town Forum members on 9th January 2013. This written Draft response was circulated to member organisations and relevant Councillors in the w/b 11<sup>th</sup> February 2013. A summary of Town Forum feedback on this consultation response is in the Appendix 10.

The Working Group has divided its consideration of the Transport Strategy into

- Traffic circulation around the town;
- Traffic circulation and congestion within the town;
- Pedestrians, cycling and public transport.

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## SUMMARY

1. The Town Forum welcomes the initiative to develop a Transport Strategy. However, this Strategy offers only an operational guide rather than a strategic vision and as such will, in our opinion, inevitably fall short of even its own limited objectives.
2. This Strategy defers to the KCC, and as a result fails to question whether the current decision-making structure has delivered the transport infrastructure needed in Tunbridge Wells. The split between KCC and TWBC demotes us to the level of lobbying for funds and projects, the Joint Transportation Board lacks any real teeth, the structure is over bureaucratic and KCC Highways is unresponsive, slow, risk averse and inefficient.
3. This Strategy has utilised out-of-date data with the result that its assessment of the current and future transport challenges in Tunbridge Wells significantly under-estimates the problems of traffic volumes and congestion, and offers inadequate solutions.
4. Without strategic aspirations for beyond 2026 and working on out of date data, this Strategy fails to address the level of infrastructure investment in relief roads as a solution to its own objectives, particularly the reduction of congestion, improvement in air quality and a safer environment.
5. The expectation of a shift to bus travel of 1% is completely inadequate as a strategy to reduce congestion, improve sustainability and achieve significant modal shift.
6. This Strategy fails to offer any solutions to a reduction or elimination of heavy freight vehicles transiting the town and contributing to congestion, air pollution and a diminution of the public realm which is detrimental to residents, business, tourists and tourist related activities.
7. This Strategy's aspirations towards improving the public realm are not achievable without a strategic approach to tackling congestion, heavy freight vehicle, traffic volumes, air quality and road safety. Improving road junctions here and there is not a long term solution.
8. This Strategy fails to recognise the need for preserving the unique and historic nature of the town that is threatened by growing traffic volumes, or to reflect its identity through an urban design strategy.
9. While plans described in this Strategy to develop pedestrian and cycle routes from local residential communities for commuting and pleasure are welcomed, these will only result in modal shift if integrated with other improvements, and reductions to congestion and heavy traffic that benefit pedestrians and vehicle users alike.
10. It is the view of the Town Forum that the statement in the Transport Strategy (6.1) "*By 2026 Tunbridge Wells will have a transport network which is less reliant on the private car, with a greater mode share towards walking, cycling and public transport, especially for shorter journeys*" is unrealistic, unachievable and underfunded for the reasons that follow.....

## 1. OUT OF DATE DATA

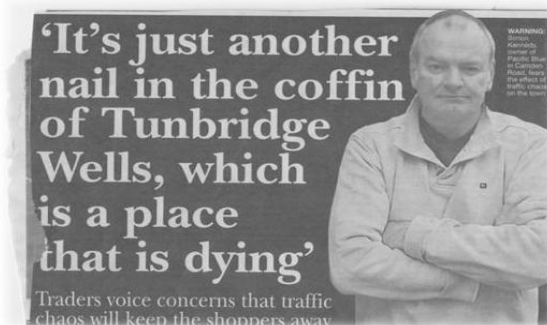
- 1.1 There is a lack of hard data provided in this Strategy to back up assumptions made on traffic levels now and in the future. Assumptions appear to rely on the VISUM and VISSIM models which have not been compiled specifically for the development of this strategy and cannot be easily interrogated.
- 1.2 Population data used (2001) is out of date and as a result, the assumptions and conclusions in this strategy are inaccurate. In 4.2 the document says: “*In 2010 the district had an estimated population of 108,000. By 2026 this is projected to grown to 110,400 people.*”
- In the 2011 Census of Population, the population of Tunbridge Wells has been revised upwards from 108,200 in 2010 to 115,049 in 2011 – **an extra 6,849 people**. Furthermore, applying this revision to previous population forecasts indicates that **the population of Tunbridge Wells will be nearly 118,000 by 2026 – an additional 7,000 people compared to the previous forecast – and an associated increase in numbers of motor vehicles.** (Source: ONS)
- 1.3 The Strategy’s statement “*there will be an increase of around 8% in home-based trips across the 12 hour day time period*” by 2026 (4.20),” also seems out of step with projections provided by the Department of Transport. Even if Kent is set to see the same annual increase as past trends (ie without factoring in increased population, housing, business activity, etc,) the county will experience a big increase in vehicles. The average annual increase in the number of motor vehicles between 2001 and 2011 (in Kent) was 0.68% (source DfT). If this continues, this means that **by 2026 there will be an extra 700,000 vehicles on Kent roads, an increase of more than 10%, including nearly an extra half a million cars, an increase of more than 9%.** The equivalent figures for 2035 are more than 17% increase and an extra 1,170,000 motor vehicles. Again this does not take into account additional traffic generated by new housing, economic activity, etc.
- 1.4 According to the Department of Transport the situation in terms of road congestion could be even worse than the above figures suggest as people are forecast to use their vehicles more. Road traffic forecasts (Road Transport Forecasts 2011, DoT) reveal:
- (a) Despite the traffic estimates for 2008 and 2010 showing declines in over all traffic levels, the Department’s forecasts suggest the longer term trend of continual traffic growth will resume.
- (b) Forecasts from the National Transport Model suggest that **by 2035 motor vehicle traffic nationally in terms of vehicle miles driven will be 44 % higher than in 2010.**
- 1.5 As Tunbridge Wells is at the intersection of four major A-roads; the A267; A226; A26; A264 (4.11) and also has the A21 on its borders, it can expect **a relatively larger share of the impact of the increased traffic flows that are predicted.**
- 1.6 This Strategy recognises that the Borough faces “*significant traffic congestion when travelling in and around the area, especially at peak times*”, (1.3) and it faces acute transport challenges including “*managing existing congestion and future growth*” (2.2). **However, it will fail to fulfil its objectives if the data that underpins its assumptions is so out of date, and results in underestimating the funding required to remedy the problems.**

## 2. TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AROUND THE TOWN

2.1 This Strategy sees the principal road transport challenge for Tunbridge Wells as the chronic congestion along the A26 through Southborough and along the A264 Pembury Road as well as the road network around the North Farm estate. Although the Strategy acknowledges that the *“Borough faces acute transport challenges”*, (2.2) it fails to characterise the congestion as an unacceptable situation that is:

- having a devastating impact on commerce – the town’s notorious reputation for congestion is deterring visitors
- very frustrating to all of us who live in the town
- very unhealthy and is contributing vastly to CO2 emissions.

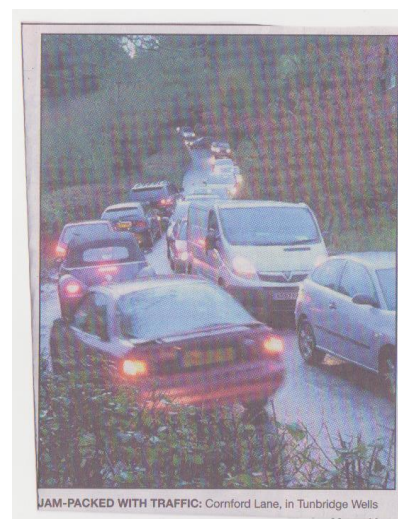
2.2 There is huge anger in the community as evidenced by many articles in the press. For example, this article appeared in the Courier dated 9 November 2012



2.3 As currently drafted, the Strategy (3.12) grossly understates the impact of congestion. This paragraph should contain a full description of the current problems and an analysis of the causes based on up to date information. We suggest that **as a minimum research should be undertaken to define the problem and include:**

- The A21, A26, A264 and North Farm: as well as congestion at peak hours, these areas can suffer stop/start queues frequently at almost any time of the day. It only takes a road traffic incident for the whole of Tunbridge Wells and North Farm Estate to become gridlocked. The areas affected are:
- A21 for 3 miles from before the start of the single carriageway to the North Farm roundabout. The congestion is caused by the inability of the roundabout to handle the volume of traffic.
- A26 for 5 miles from the top of Quarry Hill to the Sainsburys’ roundabout. The congestion is caused by the incompatibility of having a trunk road passing through a dense urban road system with numerous road intersections, traffic lights and roundabouts as well as having to meet the needs of pedestrians.
- A228/A264 Pembury Road for 5 miles from before the A228 traffic lights, through the centre of town to the Spa Hotel roundabout. The congestion is caused by a succession of traffic lights and the Carrs Corner roundabout.
- North Farm from A21 back to North Farm Road through the narrow railway bridge and all roads within the estate. The congestion is mainly caused by the inability of traffic to exit the site at the junction with the A21 and through the one-way bridge to the North Farm Road, as well as layout problems within the site.

2.4 The Strategy does propose some solutions (3.12) but it does not say what the full consequences of these interventions might be. Our experience of some recent so-called ‘improvements’ is that some unwelcome side effects have occurred. For example, following the introduction of the new traffic lights on the Pembury Road, rat runs long the unsuitable, very narrow Halls Hole Road and Cornford Lane have developed as illustrated (above) in the Courier dated 18 January 2013. The reviews mentioned (4.17) must be carried out as part of this Strategy document. .



2.5 The first proposed improvement is the dualling of the A21 from Tonbridge to Pembury. Granted, this will remove congestion from that section of single carriageway and it will provide welcome relief to North Farm by allowing traffic to exit from the estate. However, the downside is that it just moves the congestion a bit further down the road to the next single carriageway. A major disadvantage for the town, not mentioned in the Strategy, is that traffic will be delivered at an even greater rate onto the Pembury Road, hence making the town congestion issues worse.

2.6 Very sound proposals have also been presented to the North Farm shops for improvements within the trading estate (see Appendix 8.1). These include:

- Widening of Longfield Road from McDonalds to the A21
- Lamberts Road, Dowding Way and part of Longfield Road a One Way system
- Modifying the railway bridge
- North Farm to Kingstanding Way to be opened

This looks like a good plan that will solve most of the North Farm problems and we assume the proposals will be included in the final version of the Strategy. However, the impact on the residential streets back into town also needs to be considered.

2.7 A bypass is proposed for Colts Hill and this would be a welcome improvement. However, the downside again is it will lead to more congestion in the Pembury Road.

2.8 By far and away the most significant transport issue for Tunbridge Wells is the chronic congestion on the A26 through Southborough and along the A264 Pembury Road. The Strategy offers a mere 5 lines of text (3.14) out of a total of 42 pages to deal with this problem. A Park and Ride (P&R) service for Pembury Road is given high priority but the caveats mentioned (4.37) render such a scheme effectively unworkable. The study undertaken for the Historic Towns Forum by RPS in 2009 on *The Effectiveness and Sustainability of Park and Ride* found that although these schemes were deemed to be a success, "... All of the historic towns implemented P&R to improve congestion and around 70% had no change in traffic flows and nearly a third saw congestion around their P&R site."

2.9 Removing some traffic lights (4.17) is also likely to have little more than marginal effect. The community is not prepared to accept the damage caused by this congestion any longer and **the solutions proposed in the Strategy are just not good enough.**

2.10 The Strategy must contain viable solutions to eliminate congestion even if they are not immediately affordable. (see Appendix 8.2.1 and 8.2.2) **Among these should be a relief road to the west for the A26 and a relief road to the east for the Pembury Road.** These would, at a stroke:

- Largely remove congestion and the associated costs – some £4.3 billion nationally.
- Reduce accidents – a high priority in the Strategy – Tunbridge Wells is the third most dangerous place on the roads in the country.
- Improve air quality – also a high priority in the Strategy
- Reduce CO2 emissions (Climate Local Kent target 34% by 2020).
- Eliminate the development of rat-runs along unsuitable roads.
- Improve the public realm within the town.

2.11 These advantages are just too good to ignore. If a bypass for Colts Hill is good value for money, then relief roads for Tunbridge Wells must present many times that value. **We cannot allow another 14 years to slip by without addressing this urgent, vexatious problem.** The North Farm problems have been approached with energy, resource and logic. A similar exercise is urgently needed for all the congestion problems in Tunbridge Wells.

### **3. TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AND CONGESTION WITHIN THE TOWN**

3.1 The Strategy does not question the decision-making structure for transport issues which removes almost all transport decisions from local (TWBC) control. This situation is exacerbated by geography as Tunbridge Wells is on the fringes of Kent. The split between KCC and TWBC demotes us to the level of lobbying and the Joint Transportation Board lacks any real teeth. This has resulted in a low priority for investment in transport issues in the area. Furthermore, the two layers of Borough and County produce more bureaucracy and, KCC Highways is perceived to be, and actually is, unresponsive, slow, risk averse and inefficient. **We need more control over our own destiny in transport matters so that we can prioritise projects/solutions to congestion that have local support and increase the pace of change.**

3.2 There is no data provided to support the solutions to congestion presented in this Strategy. A transport study to understand the scale and scope of congestion in and around Tunbridge Wells should be a prerequisite for a 'strategy' and consequential solutions. As a result this Strategy only addresses peak hour traffic congestion in the town and not congestion at weekends and during road repairs. (right: Grove Hill Road)



3.3 This Strategy is produced by TWBC and KCC only and thus fails to understand that a significant proportion of the town's traffic originates in and exits into East Sussex, and that solutions such as relief roads lie at least in part within that county.

3.4 There is no strategy to reduce or eliminate large freight traffic within the town centre which contributes directly to poor air quality, and to damaging foundations and facades of historic buildings. It also inhibits the development of a public realm worthy of the historic centre of the town. **At a minimum, immediate weight, load and speed restrictions should be introduced.**

3.5 No consideration has been given to the guidance provided by the *Manual for Streets* for the creation of 'sustainable and inclusive public spaces' by distinguishing "a street from a road where the main purpose (of a road) is to facilitate movement." Currently, both roads and streets are used for traffic movement resulting in congestion, widespread poor air quality and public realm.

3.6 We are pleased to note that the Strategy does not suggest one-way systems to enable traffic to travel faster within the town. However, consideration of speed restrictions on all traffic of 20mph within the heart.as the town where there are residential as well as retail and business properties, should be considered to create a safer and cleaner environment for pedestrians. The use of mini-roundabout solutions rather than traffic control will better facilitate traffic flow in off peak as well as peak times

3.7 The Strategy also fails to recognise the historic nature of the town and its buildings, and its value to the business community in tourism, retail and leisure activities. No credence has been given to work already undertaken by TWBC officers on schemes to improve the pedestrian experience and reduce congestion that would benefit residents, tourists

and businesses alike, and that ensure a design integrity that reflects the town's historic qualities.

- 3.8 The role of the transport infrastructure in reinforcing the 'brand' of Tunbridge Wells has not been adequately considered, particularly the value of roundabouts and key intersections providing a welcome to visitors and tourists, and marking the heart of the town for speed/width restrictions. The commercial potential for 'brand' reinforcement from planting to water features on roundabouts and key intersections has been ignored. *(right). Glenrothes, Scotland)*



- 3.9 The priority given to traffic over pedestrians should be rebalanced in the town centre to provide an environment that encourages residents, workers, visitors and tourists to make a modal shift from car to foot, bus and bicycle. The absence of crossing points (eg Carrs Corner), poor pedestrian crossing design (old cinema/Town Hall )and corralling of people behind steel barriers (Frant Road/Pantiles and Hoopers/Mount Pleasant/Grove Hill Road) all contribute to an unpleasant pedestrian experience.
- 3.10 Vehicle Parking is a contentious issue in the town centre on several grounds including the Parking Strategy that imposes charges 365 days a year, and the high level of tariffs. This impacts the town by drivers parking in residential streets all day weekdays and weekends with resultant congestion where streets are narrowed to single lanes; parking on pavements causing damage to the historic red brick pavers and constricting use of pavements by pedestrians; degrading the residents and visitor experience by cluttering streets and pavements. Furthermore, where on-street parking is restricted it is ignored with little prospect of penalty from traffic wardens.
- 3.11 The Schemes/Projects listed in the Strategy to alleviate the traffic problems in and around Tunbridge Wells are welcomed although only as part of an integrated strategy, following research and local consultation.

#### 4. **CYCLING AND PEDESTRIANS**

- 4.1 There is an urgent need to rebalance the position of pedestrians and cyclists V traffic. Whilst this strategy offers some individual projects, their success depends on the radical reduction of congestion in the town centre from relief roads, to enable the environment to be safer, cleaner and much more pleasant for all modes of transport.
- 4.2 Even though TWBC has recently indicated a desire to extend the pedestrianized/ shared space areas, the structure of decision making is a hindrance to achieving these locally inspired, popular and urgently overdue plans. The division of the responsibilities between Highways Agency(and other agencies and partners), KCC and TWBC has the result that no one is accountable of the success or otherwise of the solutions put forwards in this Strategy.
- 4.3 What is needed is a proactive, and clear thinking approach to our transport needs and to combine these in a way that satisfies the wider urban design and public realm 'landscapes' that make up our town. Much of the background work for this has been done already and we suggest that TWBC's efforts should be directed to combining its

own resources, and focus these on service and departmental inventiveness. Working together will lead to fewer professional silos and more pooled budgets.

- 4.4 The economic circumstances which inform the Strategy mean that TWBC and KCC and its partners, have to be proactive in their search for less capital intensive and more affordable solutions to achieving the (shared) objectives of 'getting about and in and around Tunbridge Wells'. So, the Strategy should aim for a unified approach building on the work that has been done by TWBC Economic Department and the TWBC Planning Departments, particularly by Mr Alan Legg, whose work on Urban Design & Public Realm Framework complements entirely the work done by Hilary Smith and her team in the sphere of transport.
- 4.5 There is not a single reference in the Strategy to the *Manual for Streets 2007* issued by the DoT and CLG which provides guidance for balancing transport, environment and community needs.
- 4.6 We stress that the strategy should aim for a unified approach, mainly by combining a better integration of both hard and soft projects ranging from de-cluttering street furniture and the introduction of 'mental speed bumps', door2door projects combining taxis and small buses, to multi-ticketing schemes, similar to the Oyster cards scheme so successful in London. This approach provides best value for money and a much higher rate of return on investment, both in the accepted economic sense of the terms and in the wider context of socio-economic and cultural sense. This means improving the town by making it more accessible - focusing on access and movement - for the benefit of all its users, whether they are residents or visitors or tourists alike, and to re-enforce its unique sense of place and attractiveness.
- 4.7 The Town Forum looks forward the promised cycling strategy and welcomes any improvement in the number of cycle ways, 'quiet' routes, cycle storage and parking, as well as innovative schemes to encourage cycling from nearby communities by workers, schoolchildren and residents.
- 4.8 Innovative ideas already developed from within TWBC for improved street crossing within the town centre that enable easier pedestrian access and reduced need for in steel barriers that impede pedestrian flow on pavements have inexplicably been ignored this this Strategy.

## **5. PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

- 5.1 As has been indicated earlier in this Town Forum response, Tunbridge Wells is unfortunate in political terms for sitting on the boundary between Kent and East Sussex. This matters for several reasons, but it is almost fatal in the context of transport and its implications for transport strategy in Tunbridge Wells. Nowhere is this 'acknowledged' in the Transport Strategy.
- 5.2 Tunbridge Wells' strategic horizons need to be both higher and wider so that they encompass various modes of transports across county boundaries. The Strategy should acknowledge visionary transport schemes such as a Tunbridge Wells Relief Road and BML2 and Wealden Railway Line projects or schemes. BML2 will ultimately require Tunbridge Wells West station to be reopened, a fact that has been taken up in an exchange of correspondence between Greg Clark MP and Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin, as here: <http://www.bml2.co.uk/>. Furthermore, at the recent SoCreateaDifference Exhibition at Royal Victoria Place on 26th January 2013,

Ptolemy Dean's contribution featured the re-instatement of the railway line between TW West and TW Main line stations.

- 5.3 There is no consideration in the Strategy of the expansion of Gatwick Airport which will surely come within the next decade or two, Gatwick dealt with 34 million passengers in 2012, this is anticipated to rise to 40 million by 2021 and it will probably rise to more than 45 million by 2030, if a second runway is added. These dates fall comfortably within the timeframe of Strategy. London Gatwick is within easy reach of Tunbridge Wells which has ambitions to become The Tourist Centre of the Weald.
- 5.4 Plus Bus is an important initiative and its one day or weekly tickets make a useful contribution to inter modal travel, but the boundaries are drawn too narrowly and without consideration to travel patterns. For example, this means that you cannot travel between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells on a single ticket on Plus Bus.
- 5.5 Tunbridge Wells is blessed with several bus routes serving communities in both Kent and Sussex. However, these **buses need to be marketed better to those people who currently prefer to use their private vehicles if the 'modal shift' of 1% is to be achieved let alone exceeded.** The strategy talks about *modal shift* – which in English means 'changing habits'. People need to be induced to change from a convenient door-to-door mode to public transport by regular services in clean, modern, right sized buses that are a pleasure to ride on, and accessible for the less mobile.
- 5.6 Air Quality is a high priority in the Transport Strategy and the Strategy should have an ambition to introduce an electric powered public bus system as soon as practicable to give an added incentive to change 'mode'. Why not aim to make Tunbridge Wells a leader in this 'modal shift' – good for health, good for business, good for tourism?
- 5.7 Bus interchanges are needed in the town centre that have passenger facilities that allow passengers to wait for their bus in a dry, safe place with seating, ramps for wheelchairs, etc, and make changing routes easier, and provide easy bus access within the town particularly between the Pantiles and the Fiveways area.
- 5.8 Commuter bus services from surrounding communities such as Crowborough, Rusthall, Pembury, Hawkenbury and Tonbridge/Southborough could take more traffic off the road at peak times if marketed to the working population, timed and priced correctly, and use priority lanes where possible.
- 5.9 Maintaining the much improved rail service is vital to this community, including a connection to London Cannon Street and regular direct services to Gatwick Airport.

## **6. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING**

- 6.1 Published data shows that funding for major roads around the Tunbridge Wells area has been put back by the government until the next Comprehensive Spending Review after the 2015 General Election. The impact of this upon other road schemes within the inner borough is acknowledged, but also unacceptable. The financial implications of this on retail trade and the economic wellbeing of the Borough can be up to £1million a week. (Source: TWBC presentation to RTW Civic Society 2011).

- 6.2 Kent County Council being the budget holder for all Tunbridge Wells' roads, states in its "A Transport Delivery Plan for Kent 2011-2016 (3.11) some "greater transport funding", yet no actual figures are mentioned.
- 6.3 Appendix A in *A West Kent Partnership* recognised that historically limited financial resources have been available to West Kent and that Tunbridge Wells has not been regarded as a priority by bodies at national or regional levels.  
The [www.westkentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.westkentpartnership.org.uk) states "Kent has very few north/south arterial routes and in West Kent the routes we have are badly in need of improvement to meet the demands of the future."
- 6.4 The estimated vehicle increase by 2026 (just 14years ahead) is scheduled to rise by over 10% resulting in nearly half a million extra vehicles on the roads in Kent.
- 6.5 Integrated block funding can deliver small scale projects of less than £5 million but there is no evidence available that any money from this budget has been used for road improvement within the inner area of Tunbridge Wells.
- 6.6 Each county councillor has a budget of £25,000 per annum which can be used for road improvements or amendments yet no evidence is available of any of this money has been used for improvements.
- 6.7 It is also alarming to note that under *Implementation and Monitoring Page 33 0-5 Years* in this Strategy, the A26 corridor which runs through the centre of the town and has a the greatest congestion has (1) No estimated costing and (2) The potential funding source is either Section 106 money or going forward the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). **There is an almost total reliance for road improvement projects funding arising from future residential developments** and, as dictated by the rules, in the vicinity of the development and with funds provided by the developer. This takes no account of population and traffic trends described in this response.
- 6.8 **The lack of sustainable funding for necessary transport related projected is unacceptable and makes no sense.**

## **7. PRIORITY OF PROJECTS**

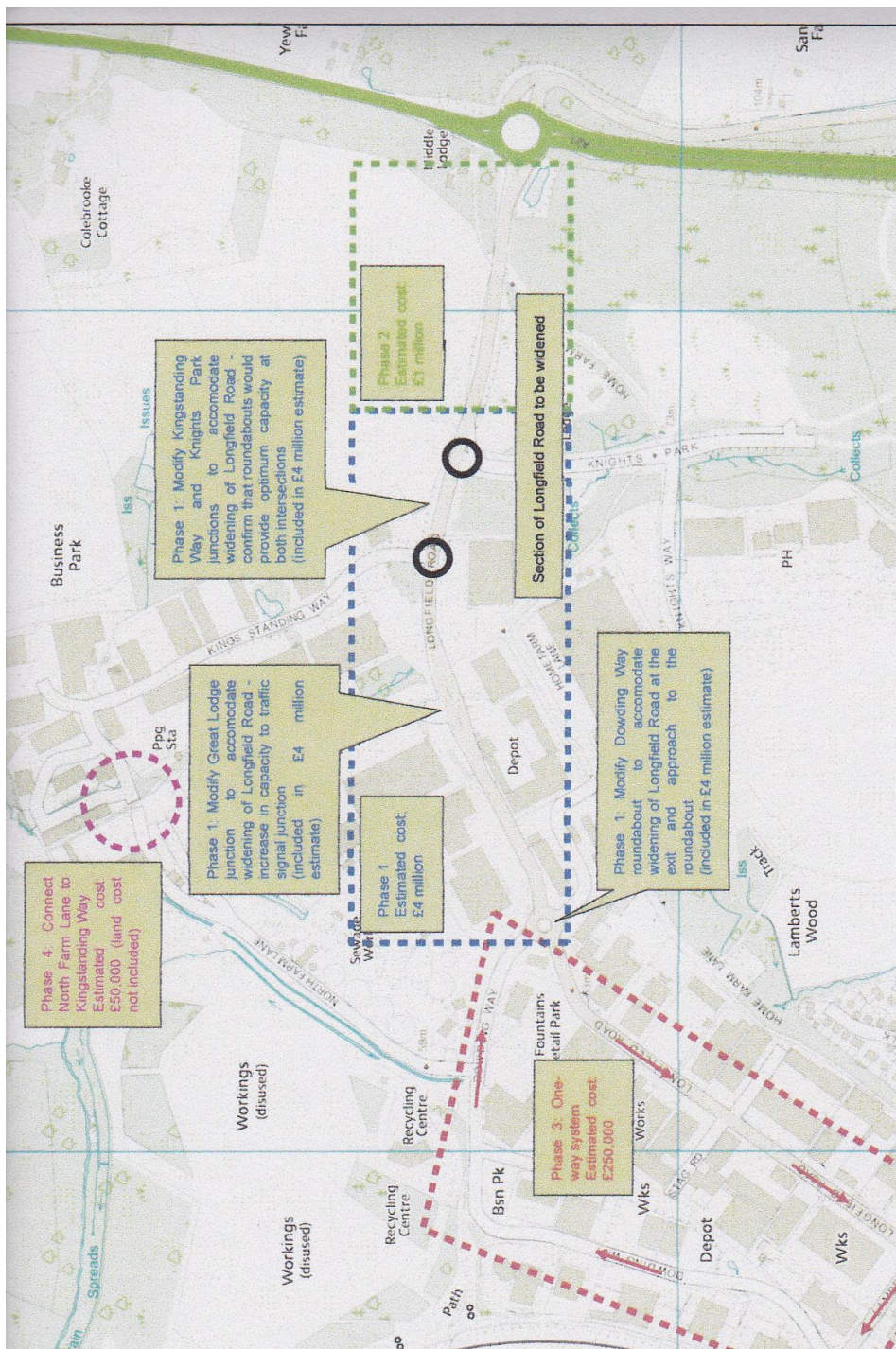
- 7.1 The schedule of projects proposed as 'solutions' in this Strategy in the *Implementation and Monitoring* section is inadequate for all the reasons explained above in the response from the Town Forum. Additionally, since few have any funding allocated at this stage, we regard them as largely theoretical.
- 7.2 Town Forum considers that the priority for project implementation should be as follows and be subject to further consultation on detailed implementation. The notes in red represent some initial observations.

Page on Plan	Project	Agree?	
31	Dualling of A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury.	YES	Priority 1
32	North Farm Capacity Improvement phases 1 and 2 on Longfield Road	YES	Priority 1
<b>Note (a) Moratorium needed on further development on N Farm until congestion is alleviated</b>			
32	Phase 3 One way system	YES	Priority 1

	Phase 4 Route through North Farm Lane	YES	Priority 1
	Phase 5 Widen Bridge under railway at High Brooms	YES	Priority 1
32	A26 Corridor Convert traffic signal junctions at: London Rd/Speldhurst Rd., London Rd/Yew Tree Rd to mini roundabouts	YES	Priority 1
32	A26 Corridor Lay-by for Waiting and Loading Shop frontage between Yew Tree Rd Junction and Western Rd	YES	Priority 1
33	A26 Corridor Prohibit the Right Turn from London Road on to Mt. Ephraim.	NO	Priority 3
<b>Note (b) Will this really help or will it only transfer the hold up to the next junction?</b>			
33	A26 Corridor Convert London Rd/Major Yorks Rd from a mini roundabout to a priority T-junction.	NO	Priority 3
<b>Note (c) If previous scheme is adopted right turning traffic for Mt Ephraim will be displaced to this junction and south bound traffic will back up there.</b>			
33	A26 Corridor Convert London Rd/Lyndon Park Rd from mini roundabout to a priority T junction	NO	Priority 3
<b>Note (d) This mini roundabout handles a lot of traffic from the Sainsbury's Supermarket Conversion to a T junction is going to result in a rapid back up of traffic exiting the Supermarket.</b>			
33	A26 Corridor Identify opportunities for clearway	YES	Priority 2
34	A264 Corridor Convert Pembury Rd Northern Bypass/Tonbridge Rd junction to standard roundabout with foot bridge or at grade pedestrian Crossing	YES	Priority 1
34	A264 Corridor Replace Pelican on Pembury Rd by A21(N. bound) with puffin crossing, set back further from junction including extension of cycle/footway on S. side and extend vehicular merging distance	YES	Priority 2
35	A264 Identify opportunities for clearway(s)	YES	Priority 2
36	Continue to lobby for retention of direct services to Cannon Street from Tunbridge Wells and stations to the south.	YES	Priority 2
39	Enter into further five year Tunbridge Wells Quality Bus partnership to undertake projects including: 1. Provision of real time information at railway stations and other bus stops 2. Improve marketing and promotion of other services 3. Introduction of through ticketing and smart ticketing 4. Exploring the potential to introduce retro-fit equipment to reduce Nitrogen dioxide emissions 5. Other measures to support public transport services	YES	Priority 1
40	Prepare Borough Cycling Strategy to identify measure to enhance cycling infrastructure across the Borough and undertake the following: 1. Completion of/or improvements to cycle routes identified in 2003 Strategy including: A26, A264, Rusthall to RTW town centre, Hawkenbury-RTW town centre and 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Way (Town centre to N.Farm) 2. Review of cycling parking at key locations including: Stations, Town centres/Key employment areas, Schools 3. Prepare and promote information about cycle routes and facilities	YES	Priority 1
<b>Note (e) With a large elderly population and more than our fair share of hills improved cycling routes may not make more than a token impact on the congestion problem.</b>			
41	Safeguard leisure cycle route between Hawkhurst and Paddock Wood	YES	Priority 2
41	Five ways Public Realm Project – Explore shared space options including road surfacing and street furniture.	YES	Priority 1

## 8. APPENDIX

### 8.1 Preliminary Masterplan North Farm September 2012.



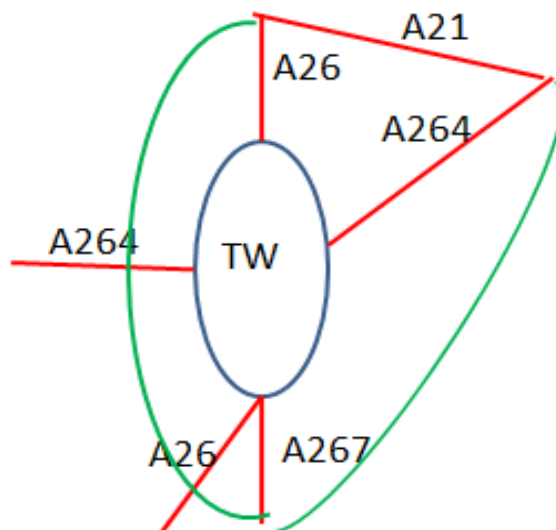
8.2 .1 Civic Association by-pass scheme 1945 (top)

8.2.2 Suggested 21<sup>st</sup> century relief roads drawn in green (below)

## Bypass



## Relief Roads



8.3 Journey to work data extracted by the Guardian Newspaper February 2013 from the 2011 Census data

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/interactive/2013/feb/01/cycle-drive-work-map-census-2011>

**Census 2011 - Getting to Work**

Place	Total people	Work at home, %	Tube, metro DLR, %	Train %	Bus %	Taxi %	Motor-cyc %	Driving %	PAX %	Bicycle %	Walking %
Sevenoaks	82,098	5.4	0.3	13.6	1.1	0.3	0.7	38.2	2.5	0.6	5.1
Maidstone	113,231	4.2	0.1	4.6	2.6	0.2	0.5	44.3	3.4	0.8	8
Tonbridge and Malling	86,435	4.4	0.2	8.4	1.5	0.2	0.6	43.8	3	1	6
Tunbridge Wells	82,052	5.9	0.2	10.3	1.6	0.2	0.4	36.9	2.8	0.8	10.3
Wealden	105,879	6.6	0.1	4.7	1.3	0.2	0.4	44.4	2.9	0.7	5.4

PAX = Passengers sharing a vehicle (car or van share)

## 9. SOURCES

In the course of compiling this consultation response the Getting Around Tunbridge Wells Working Group has consulted:

- Members of the Town Forum representing 48 Residents Associations, community, business and special interest groups
- TWBC Councillors representing the un-parished areas of Tunbridge Wells
- Hilary Smith, Economic Development Manager and Bartholomew Wren Economic Development Officer - Regeneration and Transport, TWBC
- Alan Legg, Urban Design Team Leader, TWBC
- Attended the Joint Transportation Board and Public Transport Forum

The following documents and online sources have been consulted:

- Jan 2013 Draft Transport Strategy 2012-2026
- July 2012 *Report and Recommendations*, Tunbridge Wells Town Plan Advisory Panel
- The report by the Town Forum's Working Group on Leisure Culture and Tourism "A place of pleasure and resort. Tunbridge Wells tourism and the cultural offer-January 2013" reviewed the key economic role of tourism in the local economy and identified as one of the three major negative influences on its prospects the congested traffic conditions challenging any tourist wanting to use the town as an excursions base.
- December 2010 *Growth Without Gridlock, A Transport Delivery plan for Kent*.
- April 2007 *Getting Around Tunbridge Wells, Residents Views*. RTW Town Forum
- 2007 *Manual for Streets*, , Departments for Transport and Communities and Local Government.
- KCC *A Transport Delivery Plan for Kent 2011-2016*
- [www.westkentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.westkentpartnership.org.uk)
- Office for National Statistics [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk) [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)
- Department for Transport [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport)
- Historic Towns Forum, *The Effectiveness and Sustainability of Park and Ride 2009*. [www.historictownsforum.org](http://www.historictownsforum.org)
- Guardian newspaper  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/interactive/2013/feb/01/cycle-drive-work-map-census-2011>

## **10. SUMMARY OF TOWN FORUM MEMBER COMMENTS.**

*Some written responses have been received from Town Forum members in response to the circulation of this consultation response. Members were also encourage to make responses direct to TWBC from their organisations and individually. Below are extracts from those received by the Getting Around Working Group by 1 March 2013.*

*June Bridgeman, Soroptimist International of TW and District*

I think your group have done an impressive bit of work. I have just the following comments:

**Data:** You rightly question this. What has happened is that having hovered on the margins for some time, TW has now "gone critical" and it will be difficult to rescue it. On data, the last time I looked at this nationally and for Kent, the fastest percentage growth area was in medium white delivery vans responding to online shopping growth. These have different patterns from cars of road use and stopping to deliver - often using pavements to reduce the backup congestion they create. Have they/you considered the full spectrum between personal cars and large lorries?

**Parking:** This very important subject, long recognised as a significant factor for strategic traffic planning There are different aspects of this - specific local strategy for onstreet parking, users (including pedestrians) priorities for available space, planning conditions on offstreet provision at new developments , illegal pavement parking and costly damage especially to our characteristic brick pavements as well as impact on pedestrians; off street parking policy (including crossovers and Tbars) public car parks, etc.

**Highways clutter:** We also need to look specifically at street clutter/irrelevant signage etc created or permitted (rules on eg builders advertising their new developments by signs attached to highways poles not being enforced) by highway authority. There are definitely highways as well as environmental matters to be reviewed on this. Is there a "distraction" factor for motorists and the obscuring of genuine and important wayfinding public information? In addition, a review of use of in-car wayfinding devices should be addressed at strategic level with providers.

*Prof. Michael Holman, chair, Tunbridge Wells Town Twinning Association and Chair, Water in the Wells Working Group, TW Town Forum.*

I congratulate you on a clear, powerful, evidence-based piece of work. Justifiably critical of the lack of vision beyond the immediate fire-fighting measures, it rightly highlights the main problem areas. I particularly welcomed concentration on:

1. The frustration resulting from the split responsibilities for transport matters: Kent-TWBC. Tunbridge Wells rightly feels that insufficient account is taken by KCC of its problems, large and small. The Forum must assist TWBC in making its requirements better heard.
2. The insufficient emphasis in the strategy document on the importance of the proximity to Sussex and Gatwick Airport.
3. The reliance on out-of-date statistics.
4. The potential positive effect of opening closed railway lines and keeping routes to Cannon Street open.

I regret that the Consultation Document does not place greater emphasis on the hugely important relationship between people on wheels and people on foot, especially in the town centre. The Document should not just be concerned with vehicular traffic; it should also more frequently use the needs of pedestrians as a starting point for discussion of desiderata. In this connection I would have welcomed greater emphasis on the importance of the public realm, where space is shared by people on wheels and people on foot. This is especially important in the centre of town. Good to mention the importance of the Tunbridge Wells brand - that too has to be part of the vision.

I would also have welcomed a separation of cyclists and pedestrians. Their needs are different, as are the needs of cyclists and powered vehicles. In the final analysis, however, cyclists belong with the vehicular traffic on the roads, not on the pavements.

*David A. Scott Councillor St John's Ward, Tunbridge Wells*

Splendid work! I have made various comments in my own submission a copy but. I would also like to see:

1. High Brooms Road - Peak use should be a clearway and reduced parking.
  2. Consider Cycle Path alongside the Rail link from Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge - primarily from High Brooms north. There is enough ground to the side of the existing track that a path could be laid that runs alongside and rises up above bridges and tunnels. South of High Brooms could run through the parks. This would be a traffic free cycle path considerably enhancing safety for cyclists.
  3. Ring roads round TW – perhaps also enhance an alternative link in the area of Halls Hole Road to the east of the Old Court Yard. Realistically many road users need access from forest Road to the Pembury Road.
  4. Direct access to the north of Southborough through to the North Farms Trading Estate. The area to the north of the estate (previously a rubbish dump site) will become useable in the near future.
  5. Direct bus and cycle/footpath from Knights Way to Sherwood.
  6. Consideration for disabled access needs to be given - e.g. disabled taxis and electrical mobility scooters - these scooters are increasing also being used by able bodied person as an alternative to parking in the major car parks.
  7. I do believe there would be advantage to be gained in making Mount Ephraim from Royal Chaise to the A26 one way (heading North) only.
- I hope these comments are useful.

*Alastair Tod, Chair The Tunbridge Wells Civic Society.*

Your Town Forum paper on the above was excellent. I had just written our much less critical response when I saw yours. You were right!

*Matt Goodwin, former chair, Tunbridge Wells Town Forum*

Just a quick note to congratulate on an excellent piece of work – I really hope that you can find a way to ensure that TWBC/KCC actually do listen.

*Jim Kedge, Chairman, Friends of Calverley Grounds*

The two biggest challenges are, in my view, lack of power within TWBC to do anything meaningful given that KCC are the fundholders for any real money so TWBC is little more than a lobbying body. Secondly there seems to be precious little money anyway. The section 106 money is nowhere quantified in scale nor is it, given the comments about its future use, likely to be available to be pooled for general use in the Borough. The CIL money is likewise un-quantified so it is difficult to see how progress will be made. However the strategy does set out some priorities for the time when (and if) there are funds.

Overall, I am supportive of the comments of your group in the Forum. An excellent and considered response if I may say so.

A few specifics:

1. As a motorist who also lives in the centre of the town and frequently has to travel north and east out of TW and back I read the comments about Pembury Road (A264) and the A26 with some interest. The Park and Ride ideas are sketchy at best. Only the Tesco scheme is mentioned but that is 'on hold'. If it were to be built then two things need to happen to make it attractive, as they do for any Park and Ride): frequent and fast connections into the town (Cambridge is great for this), and attractive pricing. The suggestion in 4.38 seems to be penalty parking prices in town. If prices of town centre parking/ park and ride are too high then motorists with choice will go elsewhere to shop. (Brighton's parking charges already deter all but the most dedicated and wealthy drivers). Buses need to be given priority- hard to envisage on Pembury Road. North Farm as park and ride? I think 'do me a favour' is an adequate if not a quantified response! There are already traffic problems in and around North Farm as the TWBC document makes clear. A driver has to get to North Farm to use

a park and ride there- not something many would undertake voluntarily. The A21 dualling must come first together with road improvements in North Farm itself before any Park and Ride plan there. The building of the new Pembury Hospital without comensurate road improvements was not a good example of joined up thinking! However ,Park and Ride with rapid frequent and cheap buses from all sides of TW must surely form part of any solution within 'Growth without Gridlock' if it is to mean anything.

2. The proposals to change roundabouts at London Rd/Major Yorks Rd and London Road/Lyndon Park Rd to T- junctions seem to me to be totally misguided. If implemented then I believe that they would soon have to be reversed- (similar road 'improvements' around Westgate in Canterbury are about to be reversed!) In TW this particular proposal takes as the main justification the improvement of the A26 as a through route as opposed to improving traffic flows in and around the town. This is misguided in my view. Your comment about Lyndon Park Road and Sainsburys is good but is an understatement of the likely outcome at that junction and the roads in the area. Likewise the Major Yorks junction- any change here is likely to have a major negative effect elsewhere around the common on Bishops Down and the roundabout by the Spa Hotel. Incidentally how is one expected to get from A267 Frant Rd to A264 (Rusthall/Langton Green) and vice-versa if a key junction is made into a T-junction giving priority to thru traffic on A26?
3. The cycling comments are OK from you. The only cycle track at present is up Pembury Road. Others new to be like it with dedicated space for cyclists (I am one). The marked off lanes on St.Johns Road are narrow, rutted and dangerous.
4. I agree with your comment about buses. A 1% change is not a modal shift. A 25% change would be recognised as such. Free travel (or oyster card payment at 50p ride) for all residents might bring this about!

Thanks for the work and good luck with it.