

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

If you would like to raise issues about traffic and public transport, such as sustainable and active transport please see comments below:

What the Plan says

P35 Section 4 - 4.18 (Comment Box 1A and 1B)

The ENS (Economic Needs Study) recommended that the Council should allocate sites to accommodate at least 14 hectares of new employment land (taking into account any residual capacity of existing employment allocations) to 2035 in order to support the **creation of new employment opportunities alongside the provision of new housing, helping to reduce out-commuting from the borough over the plan period.** This target will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the Regulation 19 Pre-submission version of the Local Plan

P36 Section 4 – 4.19 (Comment Box 1A and 1B)

The ENS recommended that expansion of the existing Key Employment Areas would be appropriate, at North Farm/Longfield Road in Royal Tunbridge Wells, around Maidstone Road in Paddock Wood, and at Gill's Green. Additionally, it recognised the area around the A21 highway improvements as a location for significant employment growth potential, subject to further investment. The importance of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre is also recognised in terms of existing and future office provision, and the requirement to retain existing, well located, modern office stock within the centre.

P27 Section 2 - 2.27 (Comment Box 1A and 1B)

It is also important to consider transport issues in the wider rural area, as they are very different from those in the urban area. Public transport coverage is poorer in the rural towns and villages. With a much smaller range of services and fewer local employment opportunities, local residents must travel further, and often these journeys are undertaken by car. While it is recognised that the car will remain the dominant mode of transport for residents of much of the borough, **the Local Plan must encourage and promote the uptake of active and sustainable transport where possible.**

P25 Section 2 - 2.15 (Comment Box 1A and 1B)

Furthermore, climate change is a major issue at both the national and local level, and the policies contained within this Draft Local Plan will seek to support carbon reduction.

P26 Section 2 - 2.25 (Comment Box 1A and 1B)

There is also a need to meet nitrogen dioxide reduction targets along the A26 in Royal Tunbridge Wells, which is identified as an Air Quality Management Area. The new Local Plan should be supportive of opportunities for improving air quality within these areas, as well as borough-wide; for example, by promoting non-motorised forms of travel, including walking and cycling.

P27 Section 2 - 2.26 (Comment Box 1A and 1B)

New development proposals will need to include parking solutions to ensure that additional parking pressures upon the surrounding area are not created.

Notes

- Where will people moving to Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish work?
- ***How can active and sustainable transport be achieved across the borough when employment development is centred around Tunbridge Wells meaning more car travel for employment?*** As identified within the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Economic Needs Study (2016), **50% of residents in the Tunbridge Wells borough commute out of the borough to work** (2011 census data).
- The distance from proposed development in C&S parish to employment centres and stations
Maidstone: 14 miles, Tunbridge Wells 14 miles, Hastings 18 miles, Ashford 18 miles
Staplehurst Station, 6 miles, Marden Station 8.6 miles
- The expectation that new developments will pay attention to active transport will be welcomed.

What the Plan says about traffic

P26 Section 2 - 2.23 (Comment Box 1A and 1B)

Tunbridge Wells borough faces significant transport challenges, particularly in terms of managing existing congestion and future growth, as well as needing to respond to the impacts of air quality and climate change. The borough has an extensive highway network, with several A roads converging in the urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells, including the A21, A26, A264 and A228, and A267. There have been recent improvements to the strategic road network at North Farm and duelling of the A21, but congestion on the A21 at Kippings Cross and the A228/A264 Pembury Road remain unresolved. There are also further congestion, capacity, and air quality issues on the A26, A264, and A228 Colts Hill.

Notes

- What will the effect of 718-803 houses in Cranbrook and 100-115 houses in Sissinghurst be on traffic and congestion? Added to this number will be an additional 681-731 new homes in Hawkhurst.
- There are already pinch points/bottle necks/traffic black spots at Goudhurst, Hawkhurst, and Flimwell as well as severe congestion for traffic heading in the direction of Maidstone and Ashford.
- The nearest stations for commuting to London are at Staplehurst (6 miles) and Marden (8.6 miles). Both station car parks are full at peak times.
- Table 3 - Scale and Distribution of Development indicates that there will be limited increase of employment through 'mixed use place shaping policies' in Cranbrook and NO increase in employment in Sissinghurst despite the intention to allocate so many new houses.

What the Plan says

P40 Section 4 – 4.40 (Comment Box 1A and 1B)

Sustainable development of an appropriate scale at the **smaller settlements** to provide opportunities at the local level to meet housing needs and sustain local services and infrastructure, as well as the support for new local facilities where required, and at all times being aware that such development is taking place on valued and (in many cases) protected landscapes.

P53 Section 4 - 4.59 (Comment Box 1A and 1B)

In accordance with the NPPF, this Draft Local Plan will aim to facilitate all forms of sustainable transport, ranging from active travel (such as walking or cycling), public transport, car share, car club, ultra-low emission vehicles such as electric vehicles and charging points, or any provisions that arise through new technology over the course of the plan period. This should be done in all instances **to reduce private car dependence** in the borough where it is both feasible in relation to local circumstances,

Notes

- The policies above contradict the proposal of large scale developments within the Parish with little/no planning for infrastructure and employment opportunities.
- Private car dependence is likely to increase

What the Plan says

P55 Section 4 Policy STR6 - 8. (Comment Box 2A and 2B)

Pursue improvements to transport links in the rural areas of the borough, and conserve and enhance the rural lanes network to ensure that they are convenient and safe for users.

P55 Section 4 Policy STR6 - b. (Comment Box 2A and 2B)

Retain and improve the strategic rail network by increasing rail capacity, reliability, and punctuality, as well as reducing overall journey times by rail. The Council, as Local Planning Authority, will also aim to provide station infrastructure improvements where necessary;

Notes

- The train service from Staplehurst was very nearly reduced within the last few years and that was only prevented due to public outcry.
- ***Are Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies answerable to TWBC in terms of increasing capacity, reliability, punctuality?***

Buses

[Part of Overview for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Section 5 \(Comment Box 1A and 1B\)](#)

Hourly bus service to Maidstone and Sandhurst and 1.5/2 hourly service to Transport - See individual settlements buses Tunbridge Wells and limited services to Tenterden (times and Staplehurst, services to be re-checked Headcorn, and updated for Regulation 19 consultation) Cranbrook (times and services to be re-checked and updated for Regulation 19 consultation)

Notes

- How can decisions and statements about traffic and transport be made, when the research on critical services such as bus times is incomplete?