

Love Where We Live

to enhance and promote community pride in Tunbridge Wells



Tunbridge Wells
Sustainable Community Strategy
2010-2026

Foreword

Tunbridge Wells Together has ambitions for everyone to be able to love where they live. If we can all Love Where We Live, we would all be in a position of being satisfied that housing meets our needs, that our environment is being safeguarded, that all of our communities are stronger than they were in the past, that we are healthy and the young people of Tunbridge Wells have a bright future to take into the next generation.

Loving Where We Live is not just about the Council cleaning your streets, nor is it just about the police tackling crime; it is also about the people of Tunbridge Wells making a difference themselves.

Tunbridge Wells Together believes that the people of Tunbridge Wells have an enormous amount to contribute to this great borough.

If we can help to make a difference in your community, then perhaps you can too.

We can collect your waste and recycling, but we also need to you to pick up litter if you see it, or stop people from dropping litter in the first place.

For young people, we can help to provide activities, but they must also love those places by keeping them clean.

Loving Where We Live is something we can all do; whether you are a multimillionaire or not a multimillionaire, loving where we live is achievable.

But it takes a balance of us providing services and you to do your bit too.

This is the spirit of community pride that we can apply to our lives.

This strategy sets out how the partnership of organisations that is *Tunbridge Wells Together* sets out to achieve this. But it means we need your help to enhance and promote community pride in Tunbridge Wells.

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SECTION 1

Tunbridge Wells in 2026

Our Ambitions for Tunbridge Wells

In recent years, our residents, visitors and business of Tunbridge Wells have been telling us what they want the Borough to be like in the future. *Tunbridge Wells Together*, our Local Strategic Partnership, now has an in-depth understanding of what our communities want. From Ward Walks, where we talk directly with the people of Tunbridge Wells, to surveys of our residents and the feedback that people give, we are now better informed than ever before.

This is what the people of Tunbridge Wells has told us they want for the Borough:

Our vision for Tunbridge Wells:

For everyone to be able to say “Love Where We Live – to enhance and promote community pride”

The things that will determine if we achieve this vision

- Our economy
- Our environment
- Our society

Our ambitions for Tunbridge Wells:

The Drivers	Our Ambitions	The Things We Want to Focus On
Our Society	To be safe	Safer Communities
	To be inclusive and cohesive, vibrant	Stronger Communities
	To be educated	Children and Families
	To be healthy	Health and Older People
Our Economy	To have high quality homes	Housing
	To be skilled, enterprising, connected	Economic Development
Our Environment	To be environmentally sustainable	Cleaner and Greener

It is these ambitions that drive this strategy and guide what we all want to achieve. We believe that if we achieve these ambitions, we will be able to say that we Love Where We Live.

Being able to say those words requires us all to be able to contribute and make a difference. The partnership of organisations that is *Tunbridge Wells Together*, cannot do this on its own. It needs the people of Tunbridge Wells to make a difference too. We vow to help make that happen.

Delivering national, regional and local priorities

Living, working or visiting Tunbridge Wells means that we also have ambitions beyond just our borders. It is for that reason that *Tunbridge Wells Together* has ensured we are also taking into account our aspirations for our county and region. Here is how it all joins up:

Vision for Kent



Vision for Tunbridge Wells



Focus Areas



Making this strategy sustainable

Achieving our ambitions is our collective goal. To do this, we have a number of partnerships that contribute towards getting our borough to where it wants to be. These partners have pledged to deliver the ambitions of Tunbridge Wells and can be seen on the *Tunbridge Wells Together* website.

How is the strategy sustainable?

The strategy is sustainable for two reasons. Firstly, it is based on sound intelligence and secondly, it is flexible enough to deal with any changes in circumstances that may occur. This is being written in the context of a severe recession, but we know that this will change. *Tunbridge Wells Together* has ensured our ambitions, and the partnership's commitment, won't change through good or bad economic times. We want to always deliver our nine ambitions but what may change is how we deliver them. The ambitions are for the long term, but the way we approach delivering them has enough flexibility in the short-term to ensure we are completely realistic about what can and cannot be achieved.

Are we sure this is the right strategy for the right people for the right time?

Tunbridge Wells Together has completed two impact assessments on this strategy:

- Sustainability Impact Assessment

This has tested if the strategy has taken account of the significant issues that affect the sustainability of Tunbridge Wells. For example issues such as biodiversity, health, economic growth, waste reduction, crime, energy use, education and skills, climate change, modes of transport, access to goods, services, amenities, housing and employment, the built and natural environment.

- Equality Impact Assessment

This has tested the impact this strategy has on all of the diverse elements of our community to ensure that there is no disadvantage being shown to women, men, black & minority ethnic people, people who are older, children, young people, people who are disabled, gay, lesbian or bisexual or who are travelers.

There are also two vital components to the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- Housing Strategy and Local Development Framework (LDF)

Of all the supporting strategies, the two most important are those relating to housing and development. The LDF is the spatial interpretation of the Community Strategy and the housing strategy, with its own significant long-term aims for the Borough, are both grounded in extensive consultation and peoples needs. For this reason, they are central to all of the work that we are undertaking to ensure that the people of Tunbridge Wells are able to so they love where they live.

SECTION 2

Delivering our ambitions for Tunbridge Wells

SAFER COMMUNITIES

Objective:

To make Tunbridge Wells a safe locality for those who live, work or spend leisure time in the borough.

What will success look like in 2026?

Those who live in Tunbridge Wells and visitors who come to the borough to work, develop businesses or take advantage of the many attractions on offer will feel safer and have lower levels of worry about crime and anti-social behaviour than they do now.

This will be due in part to the fact that levels of crime and anti-social behaviour will be amongst the lowest in Kent and in the South East as a whole. In addition, there will be high levels of satisfaction and confidence in the way in which the police, the council and their community safety partners work with the public to prevent crimes from being committed and to catch and deal appropriately with offenders through the criminal justice system.

The reassurance resulting from this joint working will encourage people to spend more time in the borough of Tunbridge Wells, whether it's enjoying the countryside, getting involved in cultural and sporting activities, taking advantage of the retail opportunities available in our town centres or benefiting from what is on offer in the vibrant night-time economy .

This will be measured by:

- All reported crime levels
- Feelings of safety of the people of Tunbridge Wells

Strategies and Plans that will help deliver this ambition:

- Community Safety Partnership Plan and Action Plans 2008-11

Main Contact:

Chair of TDG: Chief Executive, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and District Chief Inspector, Kent Police

Lead Officer of TDG: Community Safety Manager, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Safer Communities Thematic Group

Delivery by the Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership

- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- Kent County Council
- Kent Police
- Kent Police Authority
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service
- West Kent NHS Primary Care Trust
- Kent Probation Service
- Business Sector
- Safe Town Partnership/Pubwatch
- Town and Country Housing Group
- Registered Social Landlords
- Kent Partnership
- Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Kenward Trust
- Her Majesty's Court Service
- Domestic Abuse Forum
- Kent and Medway DV Co-ordinator
- Voluntary Action West Kent
- Community & Voluntary Sector Organisations
- Parish and Town Councils
- Residents Groups
- Victim Support
- West Kent Neighbourhood Watch

STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Objective:

To achieve a strong, safe, empowered, community where people are involved in decision-making and have a strong sense of community pride.

What will success look like in 2026?:

The borough will continue to have some of the lowest levels of crime in the South East and, as a result, communities will feel safe.

Young people will have the opportunity to participate in a range of activities and be able to influence decision-making.

A thriving community pride culture will have developed with high levels of volunteering and public involvement. The Borough will be recognised as one of the major cultural destinations in the South East.

Tunbridge Wells will be a cohesive borough – a place where people with different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs and different generations get on well together.

The borough will be a place of opportunity – with high levels of educational attainment and skills, ease of access to a range of good quality employment and opportunities for independent living.

Families and, in particular, young people, will be supported to achieve their full potential

This will be measured by:

- High levels of involvement of the community in decision-making, volunteering, and the arts
- Young people's involvement in activities
- National Indicators 3, 6, 11 and 110

Strategies and Plans that will help deliver this ambition:

- Kent Community Development Managers Group NI 3 & NI 6 Action Plan
- Stronger Communities Thematic Group Action Plan

Main Contact:

Chair: Mandy Wynne , mandy.wynne@vawk.org.uk (01892) 530330

Lead Officer: Estelle Hudson, estelle.hudson@tunbridgewells.gov.uk (01892) 554064

Stronger Communities Thematic Group

Names of partner organisations:

- Voluntary Action West Kent
- Volunteer Centre
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- Town & Country Foundation
- Action with Communities in Rural Kent
- AXA PPP
- Kent Association of Local Councils
- Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum
- NHS West Kent
- Kent High Weald Partnership
- Trinity Theatre
- BTCV

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Objective:

Taking part in positive activities as a family unit

What will success look like in 2026?:

Children and young people participating in learning, sports, cultural and social activities with their immediate and extended family members.

This will be measured by:

- Children reporting more engagement with their family and are happier at home
- An increase in positive reporting of the behaviour and participation of children and young people in their communities

Strategies and Plans that will help deliver this ambition:

- Local Children and Young People Plan
- LCSP Action Plans
- Tunbridge Wells Youth Strategy
- Tunbridge Wells Leisure Strategy

Main Contact:

Nigel Bolton – Head of Leisure and Wellbeing
Julie Stones – Cranbrook and Paddock Wood LCSP Manager.

Beth MacIldowie – Tunbridge Wells LCSP Manager

Children and Families Thematic Group

Names of partner organisations:

- Tunbridge Wells LCSP
- Cranbrook and Paddock Wood LCSP
- Youth Service
- Schools
- Children's Centres
- Youth Offending Service
- NHS West Kent
- Voluntary Action West Kent
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- West Kent Police
- Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership

HEALTH AND OLDER PEOPLE

Objective:

Health: To support residents across the borough to make healthier choices with a focus on those communities with the worst health outcomes, thereby reducing health inequalities.

Older People:

To promote a positive image of older people and improve accessibility to local services, enabling older people to fully participate in community life whilst ensuring that those who need support to live independently have choice, control and good quality care.

What will success look like in 2026?:

The gap in life expectancy across the borough will be narrowed or eliminated entirely.

Older residents in the borough will have improved access to local services and an increased opportunity to inform the development of local services. They will have a greater awareness of opportunities to get involved with their community and maintain their interests, through volunteering and other initiatives.

This will be measured by:

- Life expectancy rates and infant mortality rates
- Monitoring and improving the levels of satisfaction amongst local older people

Strategies and Plans that will help deliver this ambition:

- Health and Older People Thematic Group Business Plan
- Health Improvement Action Plan 2009-2011, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- 'Live Life to the Full' Public Health Strategy for Kent 2008
- Vision for Kent, Kent County Council, 2006
- Kent County Council Health Inequalities Action Plan 2008
- Kent Policy Framework for Later Life
- Tunbridge Wells Sustainable Community Plan
- Service-level strategies across Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Main Contact:

Jess Mookherjee, Assistant Director of Public Health for NHS West Kent (the PCT)

Lead Officers:

Helen Wolstenholme, Healthier Communities Co-ordinator, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Stephanie Bollen Hickman, Housing Policy & Research Manager and Corporate Lead Officer for Older People, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Health and Older People Thematic Group

Names of partner organisations:

- NHS West Kent
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Hospital Trust
- Voluntary Action West Kent
- Kent Libraries & Archives
- Age Concern
- Kent LiNK
- Kent County Council
- Kent Supporting People Team
- Town and Country Housing Group
- Voluntary Action West Kent
- Local Children's Service Partnerships
- Leisure Providers

HOUSING

Objective:

To ensure that there is a range of housing to meet the needs of those who want to live in the borough, both now and in the future, and that all residents enjoy high standards of housing conditions.

What will success look like in 2026?

The housing market in the borough will provide a range of high quality homes meeting the housing needs of all residents with a range of tenures including affordable homes which provide real housing options for local people. The housing conditions of the borough's most vulnerable residents will have significantly improved through targeted support, and residents will enjoy improved home energy efficiency, which will positively benefit both them (through reduced fuel costs and improved living conditions) and the environment through reduced carbon emissions.

This will be measured by:

- The number of homeless households (1) applying for and (2) accepted for help with housing under the homelessness legislation
- The % of vulnerable people living in non-decent homes (including homes that are non-decent due to poor thermal insulation) in the private sector (owner-occupied and private rented)

Strategies and Plans that will help deliver this ambition:

- Tunbridge Wells Housing Strategy 2006-2011 and sub-strategies including:
 - Private Sector Renewal Strategy
 - Empty Property Strategy
 - Homelessness Strategy
 - ME Housing Strategy
- Kent Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010
- Kent Health & Affordable Warmth Strategy

Main Contacts:

Ian Coupland, Planning Officer, Kent Adult Social Services, Chair of the Borough Housing Partnership (Housing Thematic Group)

David Crosby, Head of Housing & Health, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council & Lead Officer for Housing Thematic Group

Housing Thematic Group

Delivery by the Borough Housing Partnership:

- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- Kent County Council Adult Social Services
- Kent Supporting People Team
- Kent Youth Offending Team
- Kent Probation Area
- NHS West Kent
- Parish and Town Council representatives
- Town & Country Housing Group
- Other Registered Social Landlord representatives
- West Kent YMCA
- The Bridge Trust
- Shelter
- Tunbridge Wells & District Citizens Advice Bureau
- Age Concern
- National Landlords Association
- Homes & Communities Agency
- Residents group representatives

ECONOMY, SKILLS AND TRANSPORT

Objective:

“Tunbridge Wells borough area is a thriving and diverse local economy where all the residents can access quality education, employment and skills in a safe, convenient and sustainable way”.

To achieve our objective of maintaining a prosperous economy and looking towards the challenges of the future Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has engaged with John Laing as a preferred development partner to create Tunbridge Wells Regeneration Company Limited. This innovative partnership arrangement will have a specific role in supporting and taking forward the priorities of the local strategic partnership within the borough including the four centres.

What will success look like in 2026:

- Royal Tunbridge Wells will be the best town centre in the South East to live, work and visit, supported by thriving centres of Paddock Wood, Southborough and Cranbrook.
- The borough more generally will have enhanced its natural and built assets while planning for and accommodating future growth including high-speed broadband.
- The borough will have capitalised on the new PFI hospital at Pembury by using it as a hub to boost the health-based economy of the wider area.
- The borough will have used its designation as a Regional Hub to solve the congestion problems by increasing investment in infrastructure, such as roads and public transport.
- Through improved investment in technology and infrastructure, we will have created a broader range of local employment opportunities for our residents by attracting new employers.
- We will ensure that people have access to excellent, quality training and educational opportunities raising their skills and qualifications.
- We will work with partners to develop a vibrant local economy that nurtures enterprise and creates a learning environment preparing people for future employment opportunities including support for the new Tunbridge Wells Academy.

This will be measured by:

- Increase and improvement in the number of sustainable transport schemes
- GVA per head
- Increase in wider curriculum, out-of-school and apprenticeships

Economy, Skills and Transport Thematic Group

Names of partner organisations:

- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- Kent County Council – Innovation & Skills
- Kent County Council – Highways
- Business Link
- Learning and Skills Council
- Locate in Kent
- Job Centre Plus – West Kent
- West Kent College
- Kent Adult Education
- AXA-PPP
- Meta Corporate Finance
- Arriva Southern Counties
- SouthEastern Trains
- Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Business Forum
- Voluntary Action West Kent
- Cranbrook and Weald Tourism and Economic Forum
- Targetfollow
- Westfield
- West Kent Chamber of Commerce
- Federation of Small Businesses - West Kent
- Bracketts
- West Kent PCT
- Connexions Kent
- Network Rail
- Courier Newspaper Group

Strategies and Plans that will help deliver this ambition:

- Regional Economic Strategy – SEEDA
- Kent Prospects – 2007 – 2012 Kent County Council Economic Strategy
- Unlocking Kent's Potential: Opportunities and challenges (KCC Framework for Regeneration 2009 – 2020)
- West Kent Area Investment Framework / West Kent Investment Strategy
- Tunbridge Wells Economic Strategy
- Tunbridge Wells Transport Strategy
- Integrated Transport Plan for Kent
- Tunbridge Wells Local Development Framework

Main Contact:

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council - Lead Member for Economic Development

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council – Head of Economic Development and Regeneration

CLEANER AND GREENER

Objective:

To make the transition to a low carbon economy to minimise our impact on the environment.

What will success look like in 2026?:

The borough will remain a clean beautiful place to live, work and relax

Individuals, communities and businesses will have taken action to reduce their use of natural resources to minimise CO₂ emissions, including the use of renewable energy and the installation of home insulation measures

We will have a local environment that is resilient and adaptable to a changing climate supporting a wide range of biodiversity

This will be measured by:

- Carbon emissions – A reduction in the per capita CO₂ emissions in the area in line with the national targets in Climate Change Act 2008. (currently National Indicator 186)
- Local Environmental Quality – Improved street and environmental cleanliness (currently National Indicator 195)

Strategies and Plans that will help deliver this ambition:

- Delivery Plans for National Indicators, 185, 196, 187, 188, 197
- TWBC Environmental Strategy *
- Emerging Kent Environment Strategy
- TWBC Carbon Management Plan *
- TWBC proposed Low Carbon decentralisation energy plan (DELTA)
- Energy Saving Trust's one to one carbon saving plan
- TWBC Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)
- TWBC Procurement Strategy
- TWBC Health Strategy
- TWBC Housing Strategy
- Tunbridge Wells Transport Strategy
- Local Development Framework
- Green Infrastructure Plan (to be developed)
- Climate Change Plan (to be developed)

*These two plans are due to be changed in 2010/11 at the end of their life span. It is envisaged that they will become an Energy Plan and a Climate Change Adaptation plan

Main Contact:

Gary Stevenson – Head of Environment & Street Scene TWBC

Cleaner and Greener Thematic Group

Names of partner organisations:

- Environment Agency
- Kent County Council
- Town & Country Housing Group
- Business Link
- Kent High Weald Project

To help us all Love Where We Live...

...we will help to:

- reduce crime
- make Tunbridge Wells feel even safer
- increase opportunities to volunteer on a regular basis
- enable young people to be more involved in positive activities
- enable young people to be more engaged in family life
- enable young people to be more involved in their communities
- give opportunities for people to improve their life expectancy
- improve the prospects of older people in society
- increase the number of people in decent homes
- move people from homelessness into homes
- improve the added value of the local economy by encouraging business to start-up
- increase the number of jobs in the borough
- keep the streets clean by collecting your waste and recycling and tackling 'grot-spots'

...you can help by:

- taking crime prevention measures yourself
- seeking to make use of volunteers in your community or even volunteer yourself
- encouraging young people to take part in positive activities
- getting to know your neighbours and look out for your neighbours
- encouraging family involvement by having dinner together and taking part in community activities as a family
- eat, live and promote healthy lifestyles – take part in physical activity for 30 minutes per day
- looking after older members of your family or older friends
- recycling and composting more of your waste
- saving energy in your home – it can save you money!
- Reporting highway defects so they can be repaired quicker
- Picking up litter if you do it, others will soon do so too
- Report flytipping so it can be removed within 24 hours
- Reporting anti-social behaviour so it can be solved quickly
- Loving where you live!



Statutory Bodies

West Kent Primary Care Trust
West Kent Police
Kent Fire and Rescue
Learning and Skills Council

Public Sector Partners

Town and Country Housing Group
West Kent College
Government Office South East (GOSE)
South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)

Business Sector

Chamber of Commerce
Royal Victoria Place
Courier Newspaper
AXA PPP Healthcare

Local Government

Leader of the Borough Council
Chief Executive of the Borough Council
Parish Council Representative
Kent County Council Councillor
Kent County Council Directors

Voluntary & Community Sector

Voluntary Action West Kent
Town Forum
Action with Communities in Rural Kent