

Local Plan  
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
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2021-06-04

Dear Sir / Madam,

## **Pre-Submission Local Plan**

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, national independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities.

We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in transport and development planning.

We are content that the Pre-Submission Local Plan is compliant with legal and procedural requirements, and from our perspective is sound.

We observe that the new shadow sub-national transport body Transport for the South East (TfSE), which includes Kent and its districts, and Medway, within its regional scope has been developing its 30-year Transport Strategy 2050 in parallel with the new Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells, and secured formal approval by its shadow Partnership Board in July 2020. Since then it has embarked on a number of studies to inform its draft Strategic Investment Plan, one such being the South Central Radial Area study which for the first time accorded TfSE recognition to an 'economic corridor' between the hubs of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Brighton, via Wealden and Lewes Districts.

Whilst acknowledging that the next Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells has a shorter planning horizon than TfSE's Transport Strategy, we nevertheless consider that the latter provides additional strategic context to Local Plan policies. Specifically, the economic corridor may be perceived currently as defined essentially by the road network while across the timespan of TfSE's Transport Strategy the corridor has potential for transformational development of rail links between the hubs at either end. The new Local Plan, and its successors, need in our view to be fully cognisant of the opportunities thereby available for Tunbridge Wells.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Blake BA, MRTPI (Rtd), MTPS  
Railfuture  
Vice-Chair London & South East regional branch  
Director for Infrastructure & Networks, national Board

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