



Summons to and  
Agenda for a  
Meeting on  
**Thursday, 19th  
December, 2024**  
at **10.00 am**





DEMOCRATIC SERVICES  
SESSIONS HOUSE  
MAIDSTONE

Wednesday, 11 December 2024

To: All Members of the County Council

A meeting of the County Council will be held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ on Thursday, 19th December, 2024 at **10.00 am** to deal with the following business. **The meeting is scheduled to end by 4.30 pm.**

## A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests in items on the agenda
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2024, if in order, to be approved as a correct record **(Pages 1 - 14)**
4. Corporate Parenting Panel - Minutes for noting **(Pages 15 - 20)**
5. Chairman's Announcements
6. Questions
7. Report by Leader of the Council
8. Corporate Parenting Panel - Annual Report **(Pages 21 - 68)**
9. Local Transport Plan **(Pages 69 - 226)**
10. Governance Working Party Update  
*To follow*
11. Proportionality Update  
*To follow*

12. Motions for Time Limited Debate

(Pages 227 - 234)

The following motions are to be debated by the Council:

Motion 1 – Labour – Integrated Care Strategy

Motion 2 – Liberal Democrat – Electoral Reform in Kent

Motion 3 – Conservative – 'Family Farm Tax'

Motion 4 – Green & Independents – Climate and Nature Bill

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Watts', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Benjamin Watts  
General Counsel  
03000 416814

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 7 November 2024.

PRESENT: Mr B J Sweetland (Chairman), Mr N Baker, Mr M Baldock, Mr P Bartlett, Mrs C Bell, Mrs R Binks, Mr A Booth, Mr A Brady, Mr D L Brazier, Mr S R Campkin, Miss S J Carey, Sir Paul Carter, CBE, Mrs S Chandler, Mr N J D Chard, Mr I S Chittenden, Mrs P T Cole, Mr P Cole, Ms K Constantine, Mr G Cooke, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr M C Dance, Ms M Dawkins, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr M Dendor, Mr R W Gough, Ms S Hamilton, Mr A R Hills, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr S Holden, Mr M A J Hood, Mr A J Hook, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr A Kennedy, Mr J A Kite, MBE, Rich Lehmann, Mr B H Lewis, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr S C Manion, Mr R A Marsh, Mrs M McArthur, Mr J P McInroy, Ms J Meade, Mr J Meade, Mr D Murphy, Mr P J Oakford, Mr J M Ozog, Ms L Parfitt, Mr C Passmore, Mr H Rayner, Mr O Richardson, Mr D Robey, Mr A Sandhu, MBE, Mr T L Shonk, Mr M J Sole, Mr P Stepto, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Dr L Sullivan, Mr R J Thomas, Mr D Watkins, Mr M Whiting, Mr J Wright and Ms L Wright

ALSO PRESENT:

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Cook (Democratic Services Manager) and Mr B Watts (General Counsel)

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**259. Apologies for Absence**  
*(Item 1)*

The Democratic Services Manager reported apologies from Mr Barrington-King, Mr Beaney, Mr Bond, Mrs Bruneau, Mr Cannon, Mrs Game, Ms Hawkins, Mr Hill, Mrs Hudson, Mrs Prendergast, Mr Ridgers, Mr Simkins and Mr Webb.

**260. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests in items on the agenda**  
*(Item 2)*

Mr Jeffrey declared an interest later in the meeting, under Item 11 (Motion for Time Limited Debate 1), that he was a member of the Kent Local Government Pension Scheme and would not take part in the debate or vote.

**261. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2024 and, if in order, to be approved as a correct record**  
*(Item 3)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

## **262. Chairman's Announcements**

*(Item 4)*

- 1) As agreed at the County Council meeting in September, the Chairman wrote to the Kent Paralympians on behalf of the Council to congratulate them on competing in Paris. A response was received from Mr Matthew Robertson, a Paralympian on the GB Cycling team who won a bronze medal in the men's C2 3,000m individual pursuit, thanking Members and Officers for taking the time to write.
- 2) The Chairman thanked the Democratic Services Manager for his dedicated support to Full Council.
- 3) The Chairman explained that Item 10 on the agenda - *Petition Debate Seashells Commissioned Family Hub* - would be taken immediately after Item 6 - *Report by the Leader of the Council*.

## **263. Questions**

*(Item 5)*

In accordance with Sections 14.15 to 14.22 of the Constitution, 8 questions were submitted by the deadline and 8 questions were put to the Executive. 8 questions were asked and replies given. A record of all questions put and answers given at the meeting is available [online](#) with the papers for this meeting.

## **264. Report by Leader of the Council**

*(Item 6)*

- 1) The Leader updated Members on events since the last meeting and said he would not refer to the Entry/Exit System in his report as it was a later item on the agenda.
- 2) Regarding devolution Mr Gough said an expression of interest, in partnership with Medway Council, had been submitted to government accompanied by a letter signed by the Council, Medway Council and all 12 districts. He highlighted the importance of working together and emphasised there was unanimity across the Kent local authorities that the area should cover all of Kent and Medway. Mr Gough explained that Mr Jim McMahon MP had set out a comprehensive view of government's plans for devolution at the recent Local Government Association conference and the English Devolution White Paper was anticipated by the end of 2024.
- 3) Mr Gough turned to the recent Autumn Budget and said he would focus on areas that directly affected the Council and local government. He welcomed the overall amount of £1.3billion additional support to the sector, which included £600million for social care, along with funding for SEND and a further renewal of the Household Support Fund. He noted, however the offsetting impacts of the changes to the national living wage and employers' national insurance; their precise effects,

and those of the funding distribution formulas, remained to be seen. He referred to three areas of pressure the Council faced and questioned how government would address them, including adult social care, special educational needs and disability (SEND), and children's services.

- 4) The Leader spoke about the decision in relation to the Lower Thames Crossing which had been delayed to May 2025 and about which the Council continued to engage.
- 5) Regarding the government's decision to remove the winter fuel allowance, the Council had been working alongside district and borough colleagues to promote the take-up of pension credit and funding had been allocated from the Household Support Fund to support those who sat just above the level to claim. Mr Gough said these measures aimed to support those on very modest incomes who would be suffering severe pressures over the winter.
- 6) Mr Gough spoke about bus transport and referred to the Government's announcement regarding £650 million for local transport and the fare cap increase from £2 to £3. He said the Council remained focussed on sustaining the bus network and where possible achieving enhancements.
- 7) The Leader explained that the link between work and health was an important focus for the Council through two partnership groups - the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership and the Integrated Care Partnership. A strategic partnership for health and the economy would be developed and an All Member Briefing would take place in January 2025. The Leader also referred to the scheme previously known as Universal Support which the Council would be the accountable body for and which was a vital initiative likely to be launched in April 2025.
- 8) Mr Gough concluded by referring to the Poppy Appeal launch and the memorandum of understanding with the Chernihiv region in Ukraine. At the invitation of the regional Administration, Mr Gough and Mr Meade had recently travelled to Chernihiv to sign the agreement. He noted that this did not cost the Council any money and they travelled at their own expense. Mr Gough emphasised the importance of the agreement and said he would keep Members updated on developments.
- 9) The Leader of the Labour Group, Mr Brady, commended the Council's continued support of Ukraine and its citizens.
- 10) Turning to devolution, Mr Brady was grateful for the update and was pleased to hear that there was engagement with the districts. He noted that of utmost importance was what was best for Kent's residents and commented that a substantial financial package alongside devolution would be needed to solve the financial problems faced by the Council.
- 11) Mr Brady spoke about the recent Autumn Statement which, he said, included a funding boost for local authorities after 14 years of austerity. He compared it against the government's 2022 budget which he explained included multiple unfunded tax cuts and resulted in the pound fall against the dollar, an increase in interest rates, and a near collapse of the UK pension industry. He said the Labour government's budget would see investment in Britain's future, including: major infrastructure investments for schools, hospitals and roads; funding for buses; protection of working people's living standards; and protection for businesses.

- 12) Mr Brady referred to the increase to employers' national insurance which he said could potentially damage the Council's finances and questioned whether the Leader thought it would be beneficial to deliver services in house instead of relying on the private sector, and whether this would be funded by an increase in Council tax if that were possible, or the implementation of a wealth tax.
- 13) Mr Brady welcomed the work being undertaken to increase pension credit take-up, the continuation of the Household Support Fund, and the extra funding for public transport in Kent. His group welcomed partnership working between work and health, but questioned whether it was purely lip service if the Council's decisions did not align with the Integrated Care Strategy. Overall, more funding for the Council to deliver its services was welcomed.
- 14) Mr Lehmann, the Leader of the Green & Independents Group was pleased that from the perspective of local government, there was more positivity than in recent years regarding the recent budget but expressed concern that a large proportion of the additional £1.3 billion of funding would go straight back to government in the form of employers' national insurance contributions. He said he was not aware of any specific exemptions for local authorities with respect to either employers' national insurance contributions or the national living wage. Mr Lehmann was disappointed that the emergency 5p cut to fuel duty had been extended at an estimated cost of £3billion and noted that just 10% of this amount would have enabled the government to cover the full cost of the £2 bus fare cap instead of increasing it to £3. He was pleased to see that the budget included additional funding for family hubs.
- 15) Regarding devolution Mr Lehmann confirmed his group's opposition to a directly elected mayor or to any changes which moved decision making powers away from communities.
- 16) In relation to the Lower Thames Crossing, his group was pleased that the proposed crossing had been delayed. Mr Lehmann compared the cost of the proposed Medway-Canvey Island crossing in 2008 with the estimated cost in 2022 for the Lower Thames Crossing and commented that the cost would likely rise further. In terms of infrastructure, he commented that £10billion did not go far and his group felt this sum could be spent on more innovative solutions to mitigate the transport issues in North Kent.
- 17) Mr Lehmann explained that October saw the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, which went on to publish the Seven Principles of Public Life, more commonly known as the Nolan Principles. He wondered what Lord Nolan would have made of the political landscape of recent years, particularly with regard to the issues in the United States and questioned how the US election would affect the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. He offered his congratulations to Ms Kemi Badenoch MP, who had become the Conservative Party's fourth female leader and fifth leader since 2009. Mr Lehmann said he feared the coming years could see a further erosion of the Nolan principles.
- 18) Mr Hook, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, referred to the upcoming period of remembrance and thanked the Leader and Mr Meade, for representing the Council at their visit to Ukraine. Mr Hook said Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine had cost Kent dearly in terms of increased energy costs and building material costs, and were Russia to be victorious, the cost to everyone in the west would be financially and morally incalculable. Mr Hook also expressed his disappointment of the recent



US election results and hoped that American policy in Ukraine would continue to be supportive.

- 19) Mr Hook said his group strongly supported the current bid for devolution of power to Kent and Medway and said the power should be at the most local level. He said his group strongly opposed the idea of an elected mayor where all the power would be in the hands of one person who could not be removed until the next election. He expressed preference to a situation where a group of people were elected, took decisions together, and elected a leadership from among their own number.
- 20) Mr Hook's group welcomed the extension of the Household Support Fund and referred to the use of part of it for a winter fuel payment scheme restricted to people aged over 65. He noted that there were many people under 65 who were also struggling with bills.
- 21) Mr Hook's group was disappointed by the increase in employers' national insurance and suggested that the government care sector be exempt. He said an alternative way to raise money would be to double tax online gambling whilst also curbing an activity that caused harm to people's mental health. His group was also disappointed that the decision on the Lower Thames crossing had been delayed.
- 22) The Leader responded to some of the points made by the Group Leaders and began by thanking Mr Hook for his remarks about remembrance and Ukraine.
- 23) On devolution Mr Gough agreed with Mr Brady that the starting point was what was best for Kent residents. He did not think that devolution was a resolution to the Council's financial issues and commented that an effective combined authority could focus its powers on strategic areas whilst not being impacted by pressures in areas such as adult social care, children's social services, and SEND.
- 24) Mr Gough referred to Mr Brady's comments about the 2022 Autumn Statement and recalled the letter that he and the Leader of Hampshire had sent to senior ministers and the financial settlement from government that followed.
- 25) Regarding the recent Budget, The Leader reiterated that there was probably a net benefit to the Council in terms of extra costs and extra revenue, but it could not be claimed that it was a definitive solution to all the pressures the Council faced. The Leader was clear that the Council had and always would push hard on government, regardless of party, where it was believed financial support was inadequate.
- 26) Returning to devolution Mr Gough commented on the points made by Mr Lehmann and Mr Hook in relation to the mayoral issue and whether this moved decision making away from communities. He recognised the importance of not looking at one form of devolution and noted the opportunity within the boundaries of Kent and Medway to bring public services together to deliver better use of the Kent pound and better services to residents.
- 27) Finally, the Leader responded to comments made about the Lower Thames Crossing and agreed with Mr Lehmann that the costs of infrastructure had risen dramatically over the years along with the processes. Mr Gough hoped that the questions regarding delays and cost escalations in projects of great importance to the Council would be addressed.
- 28) RESOLVED that the Leader's report be noted.

**265. Entry and Exit System (EES) Update**  
*(Item 7)*

- 1) Mr Gough proposed, and Mr Baker seconded the motion that  
“The County Council to consider the following proposal to:
  1. Note the national and local preparations for the introduction of EES border checks; and
  2. Endorse Kent County Council’s priorities for urgent Government action to resolve the outstanding issues as highlighted in this report.”
  
- 2) Mr Love proposed the following amendment to the motion set out in paragraph 1:  
“The County Council to consider the following proposal to:
  1. Note the national and local preparations for the introduction of EES border checks; and
  2. Endorse Kent County Council’s priorities for urgent Government action to resolve the outstanding issues as highlighted in this report, **subject to the seeking of a permanent solution ‘at pace’ to Operation Brock to resolve lorry parking on the M20, in line with HM Government commitments made in 2016, being added to the list of outstanding issues in section 7 of this Report.**
  
- 3) The Chairman put the amendment set out in paragraph 2 to the vote and it was agreed unanimously.

*Amendment carried.*
  
- 4) Mr Hook proposed and Mr Passmore seconded the following amendment to the motion set out in paragraph 2:  
“The County Council to consider the following proposal to:
  1. Note the national and local preparations for the introduction of EES border checks; and
  2. Endorse Kent County Council’s priorities for urgent Government action to resolve the outstanding issues as highlighted in this report; subject to the seeking of a permanent solution ‘at pace’ to Operation Brock to resolve lorry parking on the M20, in line with HM Government commitments made in 2016, being added to the list of outstanding issues in section 7 of this Report.
  3. **Council asks the government to explore ways to prevent EES coming into effect at all on the UK/France border including by objectively studying the costs and benefits and viability of the UK joining with other non-EU states (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Lichtenstein) who are already in a common travel area with the EU, building on the common travel area that already exists between the UK and Ireland.**
  
- 5) Following the debate, the Chairman put the amendment set out in paragraph 4 to the vote and the voting was as follows:

For (10)

Mr S Campkin, Mr Chittenden, Mrs Dean, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr R Lehmann, Mr Passmore, Mr Sole, Mr P Stepto, Mr Streatfeild

Against (41)

Mr Baker, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mr Cole, Mrs Cole, Mr Cooke, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr Marsh, Mrs McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Oakford, Ms Parfitt, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Abstain (5)

Mr A Brady, Ms K Constantine, Ms M Dawkins, Mr B Lewis, Ms J Meade

*Amendment lost.*

6) The Chairman put the substantive motion set out in paragraph 2 to the vote.

For (48)

Mr Baker, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Booth, Mr Brady, Mr Brazier, Mr Campkin, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mr Cole, Mrs Cole, Ms Constantine, Mr Cooke, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Ms Dawkins, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Lewis, Mr Love, Mr Marsh, Mrs McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Ms Meade, Mr Oakford, Ms Parfitt, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Stepto, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Against (8)

Mr Chittenden, Mrs Dean, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lehmann, Mr Passmore, Mr Sole, Mr Streatfeild

Abstain (0)

*Motion carried.*

7) RESOLVED that the County Council:

1. Notes the national and local preparations for the introduction of EES border checks; and
2. Endorses Kent County Council's priorities for urgent Government action to resolve the outstanding issues as highlighted in this report, subject to the seeking of a permanent solution 'at pace' to Operation Brock to resolve lorry parking on the M20, in line with HM Government commitments made in 2016, being added to the list of outstanding issues in section 7 of this Report.

## **266. Spending the Council's Money** *(Item 8)*

- 1) The Chairman proposed, and Mr Booth seconded, that Council resolve to extend the meeting beyond 5pm with business to conclude no later than 5.30pm and it was agreed unanimously.
- 2) Mr Gough proposed, and Mrs Binks seconded the motion that  
“County Council is asked to approve the substantive changes proposed to Spending the Council’s Money, detailed in Sections 2 to 8 and available in full in the appended documents and as recommended by the Governance and Audit Committee on 9 October 2024.”
- 3) Following the debate, the Chairman put the motion set out in paragraph 2 to the vote.
- 4) RESOLVED that the County Council approves the substantive changes proposed to Spending the Council’s Money, detailed in Sections 2 to 8 and available in full in the appended documents and as recommended by the Governance and Audit Committee on 9 October 2024.

**267. Member Remuneration Panel Appointment**  
*(Item 9)*

- 1) Mr Gough proposed, and Mr Jeffrey seconded the motion that  
“County Council is asked to agree the appointment of Malvern Chirume, Karen Price, and Roisin Reynolds to the Member Remuneration Panel for a four-year term commencing 7 November 2024.”
- 2) Following a comment made by a Member, the Democratic Services Manager explained that the management of the Member Scheme Allowance was outside the scope of this item.
- 3) Following the debate, the Chairman put the motion set out in paragraph 1 to the vote.
- 4) RESOLVED that the County Council agrees the appointment of Malvern Chirume, Karen Price, and Roisin Reynolds to the Member Remuneration Panel for a four-year term commencing 7 November 2024.

**268. Petition Debate - Seashells Commissioned Family Hub**  
*(Item 10)*

*This item was taken after Item 6 and before Item 7.*

- 1) The Petitioners, Ms Kate Townsend-Brazier and Ms Amy Watkins, provided a verbal statement.
- 2) The Chairman invited Members to debate the petition.
- 3) The Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services responded to the petition and the debate.

- 4) Mr Whiting proposed and Rich Lehmann seconded the motion that

“This Council resolves;

1. to thank the petitioners for raising this important issue.
2. to recommend to the Cabinet Member that she puts on hold her decision;
  - a. until she has explored with Seashells a possible reduction in the contract value,
  - b. until she has clarity over the government’s extension of its Family Hub Continuity Funding,
  - c. until after Cabinet has considered the total cross-departmental cost to the County Council accruing from any decision to cancel the commissioned service at Seashells.”

- 5) Following the debate, the Chairman put the motion set out in paragraph 4 to the vote and the voting was as follows:

For (18)

Mr Brady, Mr S Campkin, Mr Chittenden, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr R Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Passmore, Mr Sole, Mr P Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan, Mr Whiting, Mr Wright

Against (41)

Mr Baker, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Miss Carey, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mr Cole, Mrs Cole, Mr Cooke, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mrs McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Ms Parfitt, Mr Rayner, Mr Richardson, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Ms Wright

Abstain (1)

Mr Carter

*Motion lost.*

- 6) Mr Jeffrey proposed and Mr Booth seconded the motion that

“Council recognises that this petition represents significant local opinion regarding the proposed decision to not recommission Family Hub Services at Seashells and asks the Cabinet Member to take that into consideration in addition to the consultation report before taking the decision.”

- 7) Mr Lehmann proposed the following amendment to the motion set out at paragraph 6:

“Council recognises that this petition represents significant local opinion regarding the proposed decision to not recommission Family Hub Services at Seashells and asks the Cabinet Member to take that into consideration in addition to the consultation report, **and detailed financial analysis**, before taking the decision.”

- 8) The Chairman put the amendment set out in paragraph 7 to the vote and it was agreed.

*Amendment carried.*

- 9) Following the debate, the Chairman put the substantive motion set out at paragraph 7 to the vote and the voting was as follows:

For (56)

Mr Baker, Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Booth, Mr Brady, Mr Brazier, Mr Campkin, Miss Carey, Mr Carter, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mr Chittenden, Mr Cole, Ms Constantine, Mr Cooke, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hills, Mrs Hohler, Mr Holden, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Mr Love, Mr Manion, Mr Marsh, Mrs McArthur, Mr McInroy, Mr Meade, Ms Meade, Mr Murphy, Mr Oakford, Mr Ozog, Mr Passmore, Mr Richardson, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild, Dr Sullivan, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Mr Wright, Ms Wright

Against (0)

Abstain (1)

Mr Whiting

*Motion carried.*

- 10) RESOLVED that Council recognises that this petition represents significant local opinion regarding the proposed decision to not recommission Family Hub Services at Seashells and asks the Cabinet Member to take that into consideration in addition to the consultation report, and detailed financial analysis, before taking the decision.

**269. Motions for Time Limited Debate**  
*(Item 11)*

Motion for Time Limited Debate 1 – Pension Fund Investment in Affordable Housing

- 1) Ms Dawkins proposed, and Mr Stepto seconded the motion that
- “The County Council resolves to:
- Support the principle of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) investment in affordable housing; and
  - Recommend that the Pension Fund Committee investigates the viability of committing to a project to invest LGPS funds in affordable housing.”
- 2) Mr Jeffrey declared an interest that he was a member of the Kent Local Government Pension Scheme and would not take part in the debate or vote.
- 3) Mr Chard proposed and Mr Oakford seconded the following amendment to the motion set out at paragraph 1:

The County Council resolves to:

- Support the principle of **the Kent** Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) ~~investment in affordable housing~~ **having investments in a range of assets that meet their agreed strategy**; and
  - Recommend that the Pension Fund Committee **ask its advisors, Mercers, to further** investigate the viability of ~~committing to a project to invest LGPS funds in affordable housing.~~
- 4) Following the debate, the Chairman put the amendment set out in paragraph 3 to the vote and it was agreed.
- Amendment carried.*
- 5) The Chairman put the substantive motion set out in paragraph 3 to the vote and it was agreed.
- Substantive Motion carried.*
- 6) RESOLVED that the County Council:
- Supports the principle of the Kent Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) having investments in a range of assets that meet their agreed strategy; and
  - Recommends that the Pension Fund Committee ask its advisors, Mercers, to further investigate the viability of a project to invest LGPS funds in affordable housing.

#### Motion for Time Limited Debate 2 – Reforming Council Tax in England

- 1) Mr Lehmann proposed, and Mr Hood seconded the motion that
- “County Council resolves:
1. To agree that the current council tax system is regressive and requires significant reform; and
  2. To recommend that the Executive write to the relevant Ministers of State to request that, for the reasons stated above, the government introduces council tax reforms in England similar to those underway in Wales.”
- 2) Mr Lehmann proposed the following amendment to the motion set out at paragraph 1:
- “County Council resolves:
1. To agree that the current council tax system is regressive and requires significant reform; and
  2. To recommend that the Executive write to the relevant Ministers of State to request that, for the reasons stated above, the government **undertakes work to scrap Council Tax and replace it with a fairer tax more reflective of people’s ability to pay whilst also remaining aware of the significant funding pressures facing local authorities.**” ~~introduces council tax reforms in England similar to those underway in Wales.”~~

- 3) The Chairman put the amendment set out in paragraph 2 to the vote and the voting was as follows:

For (19)

Mr Baker, Mr Brady, Mrs Binks, Mr Chittenden, Ms Constantine, Mr Crow-Brown, Ms Dawkins, Mrs Dean, Mr Dendor, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Kennedy, Mr Lehmann, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Passmore, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild

Against (28)

Mr Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Miss Carey, Mrs Chandler, Mr Cole, Mrs Cole, Mr Cooke, Mr Dance, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hills, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Oakford, Ms Parfitt, Mr Rayner, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Ms Wright

Abstain (0)

*Amendment lost.*

- 4) Following the debate, the Chairman put the motion set out in paragraph 1 to the vote and the voting was as follows:

For (4)

Mr Hood, Mr Kennedy, Mr Lehmann, Mr Stepto

Against (37)

Mr Baker, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Miss Carey, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mr Chittenden, Mr Cole, Mr Cooke, Mr Crow-Brown, Mr Dance, Mrs Dean, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hills, Mr Holden, Mr Hook, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr Marsh, Mr McInroy, Mr Oakford, Mr Passmore, Ms Parfitt, Mr Rayner, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Sole, Mr Streatfeild, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins, Ms Wright

Abstain (6)

Mr Brady, Mrs Cole, Ms Constantine, Ms Dawkins, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade

*Motion lost.*

### Motion for Time Limited Debate 3 – Cross-channel opportunities for young people

- 1) Mr Hook proposed, and Mr Streatfeild seconded the motion that

“This Council regrets:

1. The loss of the ability of young people from Kent and the rest of the UK to travel freely to the EU for study.



2. The significant impact on our university sector of the loss of youth mobility, including a sharp decline in the number of European students enrolling on courses.
3. The impact on visits to Kent from EU schools, and Kent schools to the EU, due to additional bureaucracy and associated costs.

This Council resolves to:

Request that the Leader write to the Prime Minister expressing the council's support for:

1. Negotiations to re-establish reciprocal mobility between the EU and UK for school trips, students and other young people.
  2. Expansion of opportunities for young people to study, teach and volunteer abroad by returning to the Erasmus + programme as an associated programme member.”
- 2) Following the debate, the Chairman put the motion set out in paragraph 1 to the vote and the voting was as follows.

For (12)

Mr Brady, Mr Chittenden, Ms Constantine, Mrs Dean, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Lewis, Ms Meade, Mr Passmore, Mr Sole, Mr Stepto, Mr Streatfeild

Against (30)

Mr Baker, Mrs Bell, Mrs Binks, Mr Booth, Mr Brazier, Miss Carey, Mrs Chandler, Mr Chard, Mr Cole, Mrs Cole, Mr Cooke, Mr Dance, Mr Dendor, Mr Gough, Ms Hamilton, Mr Hills, Mr Holden, Mr Jeffrey, Mr Kennedy, Mr Kite, Mr Love, Mr McInroy, Mr Oakford, Ms Parfitt, Mr Rayner, Mr Robey, Mr Sandhu, Mr Shonk, Mr Thomas, Mr Watkins

Abstain (0)

*Motion lost.*

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**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL– 30 July 2024  
(YOUNG PEOPLE’S TAKE OVER EVENT)**

**MINUTES of the meeting held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House,  
County Hall, Maidstone.**

PRESENT: Shellina Prendergast, Gary Cooke, Dylan Jeffrey, Paul Bartlett, David Brazier, Kelly Grehan, Sarah Hamilton, Sarah Hammond, Caroline Smith, Maria Cordery, Alison Farmer, Tracy Scott, Rory Love, Stephen Gray, Kayleigh Leonard, Nancy Sayer and Biran Horton.

ALSO PRESENT: Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services.

IN ATTENDANCE: 20 Young People, Joanna Carpenter (Participation and Engagement Manager), the Participation Team, Ingrid Crisan (Director – Operational Integrated Children’s Services), Kevin Kasaven (Director of Children’s Countywide Services), Leemya McKeown (Assistant Director, Safeguarding Professional Standards and Quality Assurance), Marian Smith (VSK Deputy Head), Sarah Howell (VSK Deputy Head), Deborah Royle (QA Manager – IRO Service North West) and James Clapson (Democratic Services Officer).

**1. Apologies and Substitutes**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Ms Bride, Mr Byrne and Mr Doran,

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024.**

2.1 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024 were a correct record of the meeting.

**3. Chairman’s announcements**

3.1 The annual VSK awards celebration would take place on 22 September at the Kingswood Activity Centre in Ashford. Further details would be circulated in due course.

**4. Listen Up Workshop**

4.1 The Panel received a workshop presentation that was delivered by young people with the support of the Participation Team. It was designed to highlight the importance of listening to young people and would be delivered to KCC’s Children’s Services.

- 4.2 The following points were noted from the comments raised during consideration of the item:
- The exercises were very good at highlighting the importance of active listening.
  - Consideration should be given to presenting the workshop to KCC's partner agencies, such as the NHS, and to sharing the videos with district councils.
  - The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service would work with the Participation Team to encourage partner agencies to adopt the Lundy Model.
  - It was important that elected Members were aware of their responsibilities to young people. Elements of the workshop would be included in the 2025 Member Induction Programme.
  - The young people were thanked for their presentation. The message was powerful and inspiring. It should be shared as widely as possible.
- 4.3 RESOLVED that workshop's message was noted.

## **5. Participation Team update**

- 5.1 Ms Carpenter introduced the item and then handed over to the young people to describe their experiences as members of the Young People's Councils.
- 5.2 The key themes from the update were that the Young People's Councils;
- encouraged participation from all ages
  - were a fun and trusting environment
  - were a safe place to offload feelings, both good and bad
  - helped children and young people feel that they could talk about their lives and support each other
  - brought a feeling togetherness for children and young people
- 5.3 RESOLVED that the update was noted.

## **6. Challenge Card Update**

- 6.1 Ms Carpenter introduced the report that detailed a challenge card for KCC from the Young Adult Council. The card asked for a review of young people's involvement in the recruitment and selection of staff.
- 6.2 The Panel heard from a young person who had completed the Interview Skills training but had not yet had the opportunity to take part in the selection process.
- 6.2 During consideration of the item the following points were noted:
- Young people wished to help shape the services they received.
  - Interviews normally took place during the school day which did not allow young people to be involvement.

- It would probably not be practical to schedule the entire interview process outside of school hours or during school holidays; however, Officers would look at how young people could be more included in the process.

6.3 RESOLVED to note the challenge card and the action arising from it.

## **7. Verbal Update by the Cabinet Member**

### **7.1 Fostering**

7.1.1 There was an urgent need for more foster carers in Kent. KCC had joined with other authorities to create the Country's largest foster care service. Local Authority Fostering South East was launched on 8 July and brought together the expertise of 20 councils.

7.1.2 There were 11,000 children in care across the South East, but only 3000 local authority approved foster carers. The new hub would ensure prospective foster carers had access to a centralised platform for their initial enquiries and would see local authorities work collaboratively to provide the best support throughout the process.

### **7.2 Virtual Schools Kent Post 16 Awards Celebration**

7.2.1 The Virtual Schools Kent Post 16 Awards Celebration had been a great success. It was held on 16 July and Mrs Chandler presented some of the awards during the evening.

### **7.3 Recruitment of Social Workers**

7.3.1 There were currently a number of active programmes to recruit social workers. Following the Spring Newly Qualified Social Worker campaign, 70 candidates were invited for interview leading to 49 offers of employment.

### **7.4 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)**

7.4.1 The number of UASC had continued to rise. The service did their best to ensure that the children were well supported upon arrival in Kent, before they continued their onward journey.

7.5 The Panel heard from a young person about her experiences as a young person coming to the UK. She spoke about the support and kindness that she had received. The Panel thanked the young person for sharing her experience.

7.6 RESOLVED to note the verbal update.

## **8. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service Annual Report**

- 8.1 The Panel heard from two young people who described their IRO's and the important role that they played in their lives.
- 8.2 Ms Royle provided the Panel with a presentation that gave a summary of the 2023/24 Annual Report and ended with the action plan for 2024/25.
- 8.3 The following points were noted during consideration of the item:
- The response rate for feedback surveys following Child in Care Reviews, was between 25% and 30%.
  - The number of purposeful visits had increased, and workshops had taken place to share good visiting practices that made best use of the time.
  - The number of children in care had reduced over the year, however there were still more children in care than before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 8.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

## **9. Fostering Annual Report and Business Plan**

- 9.1 The Panel heard from a young person who described how she was proud to be part of a family that fostered.
- 9.2 Ms C Smith and Ms Cordrey introduced the report that provided an overview of the Kent Fostering Service between April 2023 and March 2024.
- 9.3 The following points were noted during consideration of the item:
- There were 615 approved carers.
  - There had been 117 new approvals during the year, of which three quarters were kinship carers. The Service was realigning its focus in response to the high proportion of kinship carers.
  - The Kent Fostering website was rated as one of the top three fostering websites within the South East.
  - Virtual information events had proved to be an effective way to engage with people interesting in fostering.
- 9.4 RESOLVED to note the Kent Fostering Annual Report.

## **10. Virtual School Kent's (VSK) Annual Report**

- 10.1 The Panel heard from a young person who spoke about how the VSK had supported her and provided her with opportunities to do things that would otherwise have been inaccessible.
- 10.2 Ms M Smith and Ms Howell introduced the report that reviewed the work of the VSK over the last academic year.
- 10.3 The following points were noted during consideration of the item:

- Key stage two results were below the national average, however, the progress of students during the year was higher than the South East and National averages.
- There had been an increase in the number of students achieving five GCSE's or more.
- There had been a reduction in the provision of key stage five services nationally, and the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) had increased by 13.8%, this was 5% less than the national average of 18.9%.
- The new Advisory Team that was becoming increasingly active, in 2022/23 the Team provided advice to more than 500 parents.
- The process around personal education plans had been made more robust and completion rates had reached 97%. This exceeded the 95% target.
- It had been a successful year for the Participation and Engagement Team. The Pre-16 and Post 16 awards ceremonies were both very successful events and had more nominations for awards than ever before.
- Young people in a specialist setting were more likely to achieve a lower outcome than young people not in a specialist setting.

10.4 RESOLVED to note the Annual Report and to receive additional information about the comparison of outcomes for young people in a specialist setting and young people not in a specialist setting, to be included as a post meeting note.

Post Meeting note:

2023 KS4 Results	Attainment 8 Score	Progress 8 Score
<b>Kent CiC Young people WITH an EHCP &amp; attending State Mainstream schools</b>	16.5 (National CiC: 17.4)	-1.58 (National CiC: -1.26)
<b>Kent CiC Young people WITH an EHCP &amp; attending State Specialist schools</b>	1.1 (National CiC: 2.7)	-1.88 (National CiC: -1.80)

In 2023, Kent CiC in Year 11 with an EHCP who attended a mainstream setting, attained higher results than those at a specialist setting. Progress was also better at state mainstream settings; however, progress for those attending state specialist settings was nearer to the national CiC average. Data for independent settings was unavailable.

The outcomes for 2024 would be available for comparison in Spring 2025.

## **11. SEND Showcase**

- 11.1 Young people from Our Children and Young People's Council - Making A Great and Important Change (OCYPC MAGIC) gave a presentation to the Panel. It was the first anniversary of the group that was for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 11.2 The Panel received a film that OCYPC MAGIC had created. It explained about their experiences, the challenges they faced, the support they needed and their aspirations.
- 11.3 The Panel thanked the young people for the presentation of the Showcase.
- 11.4 RESOLVED to note the SEND Showcase.



**From:** Sue Chandler - Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services  
Shellina Prendergast – Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel  
Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

**To:** County Council – 19 December 2024

**Subject:** Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2024

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:**

The Corporate Parenting Annual Report for 2024 was presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel on 10 December, where it was noted and endorsed.

The CPP Annual Report is here presented to County Council for consideration and noting by all Members.

**Recommendation:**

County Council is asked to NOTE the annual report and associated Member responsibilities as corporate parents.

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Annual Report was first requested in 2018 by the Corporate Parenting Panel, to be written annually for elected Members, to detail the work of the services and the support we provide to our children and young people in care.
- 1.2 The report details the corporate parenting responsibilities for Kent County Council staff, elected Members and partner agencies and is a summary of the work undertaken during the full year period for 2024.
- 1.3 Our annual report provides an overview of the role and work of our key Corporate Parenting services:
  - Kent Fostering Service
  - Adoption Partnership *Southeast*
  - Participation and Engagement Team

- 18+ Care Leavers Service including the Supported Accommodation Service, Kent Supported Homes
- Total Placement Service

## **2. Legal implications**

2.1 Corporate Parenting is a statutory responsibility as defined under The Children and Social Work Act (2017). Kent County Council are ambitious for our children and young people and committed to providing them the best possible opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential whilst they are in our care.

## **3. Conclusions**

3.1 Being a corporate parent is a joint responsibility for all Kent County Council staff, elected members and partner agencies and we value the continued support from the Corporate Parenting Panel in achieving this. All elected Members are welcome to show their support as a corporate parent by championing for our children and young people and meeting them directly through attending our participation events throughout the year.

### **Recommendation:**

County Council is asked to NOTE the Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2024 and the associated Member responsibilities as corporate parents.

## **5. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2024.

## **6. Contact details**

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# FOSTER FOR KENT

Adoption  
Partnership  
South East



## Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2023 – 2024



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## Message from the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services: Sue Chandler



Welcome to the Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2024 which highlights the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and our services to children in care.

As the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, I strongly support and endorse the work of the Panel. Officers, elected Members and partners play an important role, providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children and young people who are looked after by Kent County Council.

Many of the children and young people in our care have faced challenges in their early life and all members of the Corporate Parenting Panel share the ambition that they get the best possible support to go on to live happy and successful lives. I am proud of all our young people, and it is a privilege to work with them.

I would like to thank the Officers, Members and especially our young people for their contribution to the work of the Panel.

## Message from the Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting: Caroline Smith

It is with great pleasure that I introduce our 2024 annual report for the corporate parenting services at Kent County Council.



Kent County Council have joined other Local Authorities to work together to address the national challenge of a shortage of foster carers and other types of care provision for children. The Social Care Review will see national changes to the way children in care are supported and Kent have successfully applied for a number of Department of Education grants to develop our Corporate Parenting services.

I am very proud of the 1950 children and young people in our care and the 2,004 young adults who are care experienced. During 2024, Kent has seen a further increase in the numbers of new arrivals of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and our services are continually adapting to manage this demand.

Over the last year, it has been an absolute privilege to join the services to celebrate children, young people, and our staff's achievements at a variety of activity days, award ceremonies, conferences and service days.

We continue to be aspirational for our children and young people and support them in every way we can, to be the best corporate parents we can be.

# About Us

The government introduced clear corporate parenting principles that requires all departments within a local authority, including staff, elected members and partner agencies; to recognise their role as a corporate parent and encourage them to look at the support and services they provide.

Kent County Council (KCC) works to be the best corporate parent to our children and young people by following these key principles:

- To act in the best interest and promote the physical, mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people.
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- To consider the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- To help those children and young people to gain access to, and make the best use of, the services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people.
- To ensure those children and young people are safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships, education, and workplace.
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Our corporate parenting panel and corporate parenting services are overseen by the Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting, Caroline Smith, and comprise of four key services: Kent Fostering, Adoption Partnership Southeast (APSE), Total Placement Service (TPS), and 18+ Care Leavers Service.

The services form part of the overall countywide services for children and young people, reporting to the Director for Children's Countywide Services, Kevin Kasaven. Corporate parenting works closely with Virtual School Kent (VSK), children's early help and social work, health, education, youth offending and our key partners including the Young Lives Foundation (YLF) and Kent Association of Foster Carers (KAFC).

Our services report into the corporate parenting panel who meet six times per year and, alongside elected members and staff officers, the panel has a wide range of independent members including foster carers, the designated nurse for children in care, Chair of Kent Housing Group and YLF.

Following a previous challenge that children and young people wanted to attend panel without having to miss out on their education, we ensure some panel dates are planned around school holidays to facilitate this. In July 2024, the panel held its second Corporate Parenting Takeover event in the council chambers where children and young people co-chaired/presented all agenda items. There is the option to join the panel virtually, to encourage wider attendance and participation. The voice of our children and young people is represented at all panels by our VSK apprentices and participation workers.

Members of the panel are invited to attend celebration events, award ceremonies and activity days to meet the children and young people for whom they are a corporate parent. In 2024, we have held a wide variety of events, to celebrate our children and young people's achievements. Each corporate parenting panel includes a cabinet member update.

# Performance Scorecard

The performance scorecard is presented regularly to enable the panel to monitor key targets and statutory requirements. For 2024, targets have in the majority been maintained within an amber or green rating across the key performance indicators. However, the increased numbers of new arrivals of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, has significantly impacted upon three areas, where performance is within the red, below the required target.

- The health target for completion of the initial health assessment within the statutory timescale, is below the required target due to the numbers of new children arriving.
- The increased numbers of new arrivals of unaccompanied children under the age of 16, needing to be placed with foster carers has impacted upon availability for local children to be placed within 20 miles of their local community. This will be addressed, with the planned opening of new unaccompanied children's residential homes, supported accommodation and safe care centres, which will ease the pressure on fostering provision, with an anticipated improvement for this target by the end of 2024.
- The increase in unaccompanied asylum young adults transferring into the 18+ Care Leavers service, without confirmed immigration status has impacted on our performance of young adults within education, training or employment (ETE). Without status, young unaccompanied adults are unable to legally work and during 2024, the availability of ESOL education courses has reduced meaning performance in this area has been impacted. The service have two specialist ETE workers who are focusing on improvement in this area, alongside working closely with the Home Office to address the back log of asylum applications for care leavers.



# Virtual School Kent's Participation and Engagement Team

We have continued to work to provide opportunities for children and young people, who are in receipt of services from social care, to help empower them, and to have their views and opinions heard and acted upon within their individual care planning, and to help make positive changes to service design and delivery. The team have worked over the past year to ensure that there is a wide range of engagement and participatory opportunities available to children and young people who come under the umbrella of corporate parenting.

The team currently includes six apprentices, who have lived experience of being in care, fostering or adoption. They are working towards level two and three qualifications and are supported to be successful by a team of participation officers. In the last year, we have promoted care experienced members of the team who originally joined the team as level two apprentices, these team members have successfully completed qualifications and have worked hard to attain permanent roles in the team. The personal experience of Children's Social Services within the team brings a unique point of view and enormous amount of knowledge, as the lived experience that team members have themselves ensures that the team works in an inclusive and empathic way when working with and supporting children and young people.

## About Our Councils

Our team has focused on making our council groups for children and young people as accessible as possible, as we recognise that not everyone is able or wants to travel to attend our main meetings in person. We feel that in order to appeal to as wide a range as possible of young people, it is important we offer different ways for children and young people to feel included and share their views, opinions and experiences.

All of our councils now offer a range of opportunities for young people to engage if they are not able or want to attend the main meetings, and we have embedded a 'we will come to you in a way that suits you' approach to our engagement work. In the meeting cycles, in addition to running our main meetings, children and young people have met with members of the team on an individual or small group basis, both in person and virtually. This approach has been received really positively by young people, children and their parents and foster carers. We can evidence that we have a wider network of young people who are engaging with us.

## Our Councils

- The Young Adult Council (YAC) is for care experienced young people aged 16-25-years-old.
- The Young Adult Council Extra (YACE) for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people aged 16-25-years-old.
- Our Children and Young People's Council (OCYPC) is for young people in care aged 11-16-years-old.
- Our Children and Young Peoples Council Extra (OCYPCE) is an outreach group for care experienced young people aged 7-16-years-old who are unable to make the main meetings.
- The Super Council is for Children in Care aged 7-11-years-old.
- The Adoptables is for adopted young people aged 11-18-years-old.
- The Young Persons Reference Group (YPRC) is for adopted young people aged 16+.
- Children Who Care (CWC) for the sons and daughters of foster carers aged 7+.
- Our Children and Young Peoples Council making a great and important change (OCYPC MAGIC) is for young people with special educational needs (SEND) and disabilities (adopted, in care or with a social worker) aged 11–18-years-old.



## The Young Adult Council and Young Adult Council Extra

YAC has continued to develop with members meeting monthly in Maidstone and Ashford. They have discussed a variety of topics and agenda items including:

- Visits from local universities and discussions about going to university and answering any questions they had in regard to finance and the support they can receive due to their status as a care leaver.
- Meeting with the heads of 18+ care leavers service and looking at changes made to their local offer, also looking at the future of communications with young people, creating a new app and making information clearer, and young person friendly.
- Looking at the step up to social work programme and the job roles of children's social workers and personal advisers.
- Planning activities that give back to the community. The YAC have been looking at supporting homeless charities and have been practising their cooking skills to support the Maidstone day centre, who provide homeless people with hot meals and a place to wash their clothes. They attended a day to prepare, cook and serve food for people who attend the centre.
- At our YACE meeting, we have had guests attend from the YLF to discuss advocacy and the unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people specialist independent review officers attend our meetings.
- YACE were involved in planning the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children's conference for adults working with young people in January at Dover Castle and made a video sharing what is working well for them and the challenges they sometimes face.<sup>1</sup>
- They have also discussed the availability of local amenities, how easy it was for young people to get to know their local area, are they able to find the shops, places of worship and leisure activities that they needed.



## Super Council, Our Children and Young Peoples Council and Our Children and Young Peoples Council Extra



This has been a successful year for the super council, OCYPC and OCYPCE and we are incredibly proud of the members for all of their hard work, commitment and positivity.

In total, a large number of children have regularly attended one of the three groups, or contributed in a way that suits them, whether this is virtually online or in person 1-1 at their home. We have been pleased that by being more creative in how young people can be part of the groups, we have enabled some young people to join the children in care councils who otherwise would not have attended a group meeting in real life.

This year, the three groups have discussed several topics including:

- How their workers can encourage positive relationships between themselves and their young people, as well as between young people and their friends and family. Feedback for this was shared with Coram Voice, as part of their engagement work with children in care on behalf of the Department of Education (DfE), as well as informing this year's planning of sessions for university students studying to become social workers.
- What young people in care would want from careers fayres alongside the strategic careers hub lead from the Kent and Medway careers hub; in particular they discussed the social care sector.
- Fostering to help ensure that children's views and opinions are included in some of the changes that are taking place in the service including the development of the regional hub to support initial enquiries of potential new foster carers and the mockingbird programme. Group members discussed what an ideal foster carer should be like and what qualities they should have. This

<sup>1</sup> <https://youtu.be/9-Yn2dtBx0w?si=e20p1qOpAAC9JIG2>

was also shared, alongside the work of other children in care councils at the launch event in Bracknell in July 2024.

- The support they feel young people need at school, particularly those whose attendance is low, to learn and feel happy, safe and like they belong. Young people discussed what they feel teachers and other school, or college staff need to know about supporting children in care in school, the assumptions that professionals can make about them and the strategies and resources they feel would be useful. This feedback was used in 3 ways - by the VSK advisory team who have produced a guide for schools around belonging; by Become, the national charity for children in care and care leavers, who are working with young people across the country to produce a film for educational professionals focussed on supporting young people in care in school, and by our own team who presented to over 100 2<sup>nd</sup> year primary teaching students at Canterbury Christ Church University on the topic of supporting young people in care at school in early May 2024.

In addition, some members of the children in care councils have contributed to an online focus group with Coram Voice and Ofsted, around the Big Listen Campaign, co-produced a film and training sessions called 'Listen Up!' about the importance of workers really listening to their young people and supported the social care awards judging panels.

## Children Who Care

Members of CWC, a group for the children of foster carers, started the year by looking at what fostering means to them. Members looked at the importance of their role within a fostering family, as well as the positives of welcoming young people into their home.

In October 2023 they were asked for their feedback around the new mockingbird programme. The scheme has been adopted by KCC and aims to replicate the support available through an extended family network. Members expressed their thoughts and feelings about how this can be rolled out successfully to all of our fostering families.

Members also took part in contributing to a new attendance guide, written by the VSK advisory team. The council provided feedback about what it's like to be part of a fostering family and looked at who they feel should know about their home life. Members spoke about what it feels like to 'belong' in school.

Earlier this year, CWC looked at what they thought were important qualities of being a good foster carer and celebrating their parents' roles. Young people's views have been sent to the fostering service and a project delivery manager responsible for delivering the regional fostering hub. These will be incorporated in a document shared with enquiry officers and people at the early stages of their fostering journey so they know from the very beginning what young people need from them which should support them to become better carers.

## The Adoptables

Our well established Adoptables group have had a successful year, being involved in several projects, supporting the APSE and VSK.

In October 2023, members were asked for their help to provide feedback around approval and matching panels, ensuring the process focuses on the child's perspective as well as potential adopters. In February, the Adoptables wrote and produced a short film about their aspirations and hope for the future. The film was made in the lovely setting of the big cat sanctuary and is now available for professionals to watch to help promote how they can support young people achieve their future aspirations. In March 2024, representatives from the Adoptables were invited to attend the APSE board meeting. Members wanted to discuss what information and support was available for adopted young people. This resulted in a new children's guide to adoption being made. which



the Adoptables co-produced with APSE. This is now available on the APSE website, where young people can find support and guidance.

This year members contributed to a new guide to promoting attendance in schools. This was compiled by the VSK advisory team. The Adoptables provide their insight as to what made school a nice place to be, and any improvements that teachers and professionals could do to support and increase attendance in school.

## Our Children and Young People's Council MAGIC

OCYPC MAGIC is our newest council group and has been running a year. It is open to children who are SEND, aged 11-18-years-old who are in care, adopted young people and children with a social worker.

Within our council group meetings, we have been working on the project 'This is Me'. The children have shared their likes, dislikes and what triggers certain emotions in them. They were lucky enough to have one of their meetings at the big cat sanctuary! Before having the exciting tour of the sanctuary, they discussed their top tips that they would give to professionals on the subject of transitioning between primary to secondary school and onto college and further employment.

They designed their own PowerPoint slides outlining the challenges they face at school and in society and what helps them succeed. During our last meeting the children spoke about what makes them amazing, reflected on what helps them grow, flourish and shared what they would like to be like in 5 years' time. We used the children's feedback to contribute towards a 'This is Me' video which was shared and celebrated at the corporate parenting panel take over day.<sup>2</sup>

All our meetings always have a great fun factor element to them, with us playing games, having access to sensory areas and doing an arty or practical activity. We have done planting, pottery painting, easter crafts and games, a chocolate making workshop and the big cat sanctuary. We are looking forward to going to Faversham community centre in October 2024 to do pizza making and to use their entertainment room.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMdFFRUd7Mg>

# Council Memberships for our children and young people

Super  
council

13

OCYPC

32

YAC

20

YACE

14

CWC

13

Adoptables and  
reference  
group

18

OCYPC MAGIC

19

**Total = 129**



## Activity Days

Our participation activity days continue to be popular with children and young people. Face to face participation activity days and events have been run throughout the school holidays for children in care, the children of foster carers and adopted young people.

Children come to the days to socialise and make friends, meet other children who are in similar situations to them, and try out something new that they may not have done before. The days are also opportunities for our participation team to meet children in a relaxed environment and speak to them about the work of the team, explain how they can get involved if they would like to by joining councils or focus groups and how they can help make positive changes for other young people.

During the last 12-months, our participation team have run 26 activity days for children in care and the sons and daughters of foster carers. They have also organised a further 12 in person activity days for adopted children. This is in addition to 2 Christmas parties and 2 bespoke events for children with SEND.

The range of activities on offer have been wide in order to appeal to as many children and young people as possible and also to fulfil requests from them to run activities that they particularly enjoy or have never tried before. Activities have included horse riding, a range of sporting activities including water sports and outdoor pursuits, arts and craft workshops, and visits to animal parks including the big cat sanctuary which was an extremely positive experience for many children.



## Feedback from social workers, foster carers and parents

*"We know how much careful thought, organization and support must have gone into managing today so successfully, thank you so much for all of your hard work. It was a lovely, memorable day for them to be able to experience together. Thank you all again."*

*"Well done to you all for another amazing event, this was my second one I have attended, and I look forward to more in the future. Thank you for offering these events to our young people, I know how much they gain from them and look forward to the next one."*

*"He has created an amazing piece of art work and a write up about his journey for refugee week, he also allowed it to be used in training events to share the lived UASC experience and prompt empathy and positive engagement, he has offered to create more pieces of writing if it helps promote positive interest."*

*Ju" just wanted to say thank you so much for a lovely day today. Both xxx and xxx had a wonderful time and came out so happy and animated about everything they'd done. They both said it was 'super fun' and when I asked what the best bit was they said 'everything!!!'. I can't believe how many fabulous activities you squeezed into one day."*

*"I just wanted to say a huge thank you from xxx and myself for the wonderful two participation activity days she attended yesterday and Friday. She had a great time. These days really help her with her wellbeing and feeling safe in an environment that she feels accepted so thank you."*

*"After working very hard and achieving astounding GCSE results, he has successfully made the transition to college where he is completing a Level 3 course in engineering."*

*"She has been working part-time towards a Social Work Apprenticeship whilst working as a Support Worker with vulnerable adults. She has been working in a difficult and sometimes challenging environment while also focusing on her own studies."*



For several years, our apprentices and other members of the team with lived experience have taken part in presentations and training sessions with student social workers at both the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University sharing both their own experiences and advice alongside that of the young people we work with.

This year, we have sought to develop this work and have met with second year children's nursing students and nursing associate students at Christ Church and second year medical students at the Kent and Medway Medical School.

During the sessions, members of the team challenged students to consider their assumptions about care experienced young people and any misconceptions they held, sought to develop their understanding of what being in care means and shared some key themes around health care and care experience. They were also able to share some of our YAC members' own experiences of seeking health care support and what they, as care experienced young people, needed from health care professionals.

## Events for Children with SEND

Steph Storer, Course Director for the Nurse Associate Programme at CCCU - *"All our students enjoyed yesterday's session so much, so a big thank you to you and the team. The presentation and the confidence of your care leavers was superb. You left us with a lot to consider and because you were able to speak from experience our students will always remember it. A big thank you to you and please come again."*

The team ran an easter sensory event for children who come under the strengthening independence service and their families, and for SEND children in care. We had 19 children attend along with their wider family.

The team prepared lots of easter themed sensory activities that met the children's needs and captured their interest perfectly! After lunch we enjoyed a show performed by Head2Head Sensory Theatre Company that engaged the children. They signed Makaton throughout the show and passed out sensory bags to encourage participation and interaction.

Another event was held in the summer holidays at Yew Tree Farm and Bredgar railway. 39 children and their families attended the day along with a picnic lunch. There were lots of accessible arts and crafts activities available, alongside a party entertainer plus lots of opportunities to see the animals on the farm. To finish the day everyone was able to have a ride on the steam train.

## Launch of Local Authority Fostering Southeast

Our apprentices contributed to the launch of the DfE funded initiative to work towards more Southeast children being fostered in the region. They attended the event and spoke about their own experiences of fostering and how previous foster carers have had a such a positive impact in their lives.

## Speak Up Sessions

Something that is very important to the team is ensuring that we support children's individual participation, so as well as the collective participation at our councils, we offer speak up sessions. We offer support to help them to express themselves and share their own views, wishes and experiences.

This 1-1 work is intended as a way for young people to get their voices heard and shared with the people who matter to them. Our team are there to help promote the child or young person's voice

and provide a means of amplifying what they want to say. This can be in a format of their choice such as a short, animated video, poster, presentation, photo book or leaflet, and are worked on over a period of approximately six weeks.

This work is proving very popular, and members of the team are booking in sessions with children after school on a weekly short-term basis. Children are producing a range of work in a way that want to share their experiences with their workers, teachers and foster carers.

## **Corporate Parenting Events** organised by our participation and engagement team

### **Christmas Parties**

Christmas parties held in December 2023 were a big success. 30 families attended the children in care Christmas party, and 62 families attended the adoption Christmas party. It was great to see so many children and their families coming together to take part in festive games and activities to enjoy the holiday season. There were some lovely crafts to take home as a reminder of the day – reindeer food, handprints, tree decorations. As well as crafts, there were many entertaining stall games for everyone to participate in. And of course, the children had the opportunity to see Santa in Santa's grotto and receive a lovely Christmas gift from him.

*"A HUGE thank you for the amazing adoption Christmas party. Our girls loved it. The craft tables were a huge hit, and the games so much fun. Such a lot of fun and a lot of effort from your team. I'm sure all the children loved it. Thank you for all that you do."*

### **Christmas Show**

Just a few days before Christmas we held our 'VSK Christmas show in a day'. In the morning the children (children in care, children of foster carers and adopted children) came along to practise and learn some Christmas songs and routines that they were all going to be performing later that afternoon. Parents, carers, KCC staff and elected members were able to come along and watch the performance in the afternoon. We were also lucky enough to have some fantastic young people execute some solo performances on stage too.

The feedback from the children, parents and carers was that they had great fun getting in the Christmas spirit. They also said that for a lot of them it was a rare chance to feel that they were in the spotlight and had their moment to shine. We also did not miss the opportunity to involve their corporate parents, including the Chairman of KCC, Gary Cooke and Chairman of Corporate Parenting Panel, Dirk Ross, who went head-to-head with Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting, Caroline Smith, and Headteacher for VSK, Tony Doran, in some silly Christmas games up on the stage with Santa and the Grinch!

### **Adoption Partnership Southeast Family Picnic**

Our annual summer picnic for adopted children took place in July 2024. Lots of children attended the day along with their extended family, so it was a great occasion for them to spend a fun day together. They were a wide of games and sensory activities to take part in alongside a party entertainer.

### **Corporate Parenting Panel Takeover Day**

In July 2024, representatives from our young people's councils took over the corporate parenting panel in the council chambers at sessions house. Members from our children in care councils: the



Super Council, OCYPC and YAC joined up with children from our OCYPC MAGIC, Adoptables and CWC councils.

The aim of the day was to give children and young people in care, care leavers, adopted young people and the children of our foster carers the chance to be involved in the meeting, have a say and speak about their lives to their corporate parents. Each young person had the opportunity to shadow KCC directors, senior officers and elected members.

Children and young people had the opportunity to tell the panel members about the value of their council groups, why they attend and about the benefits they bring to them and other young people. The way reports were presented with young people first giving an account of their lived experience made it feel like the reports held more context and inspired a different way of considering the evidence.

They also worked to prepare a workshop entitled 'Listen Up' which aims to emphasise the importance of all professionals listening to the children and young people they work with. The 'Listen Up' workshop was debuted to the corporate parenting panel members and presented by the young people who wrote it. The workshop was enthusiastically received by the panel and will be rolled out to other services in the autumn.

Our OCYPC MAGIC members, also produced a film to share called 'This is Me' which celebrated and showcased the work of their council for their first anniversary.

## Award Celebration

The participation team has supported VSK in planning two award celebrations this year, one event for our children in care which is due to take place in September 2024, and one for post-16 and care leavers. The post-16 award celebration took place on an evening in July was full of good food, lots of award presentations alongside a vintage funfair and garden games.

The awards celebrated the academic achievements of young people plus their wider achievements of note in the community. We received 278 nominations that with 115 young people attending the celebration along with their foster carers, social workers or personal advisers.

The evening was a great opportunity for senior staff and our county councillors, to hear many of the amazing things that our young people are doing. The reasons for their nominations were inspiring to everyone present.

# Event Photography

## Christmas Show



## Adoption Partnership Southeast Family Picnic



# Corporate Parenting Panel Takeover Day



Award Celebration



Continued...



## Young Peoples Councils



## OCYPC MAGIC



# Activity Days



## Children with SEND



## Launch of Local Authority Fostering Southeast



## Care Leavers 18+ Service

Our service operates from two office bases: Worrall House in West Malling and Thistly Hill in Dover. We continue to work closely with care experienced young people aged 18-25 years-old and have found new ways to support them during the last year. All staff are provided with the appropriate technology to achieve this, including laptops, remote access to KCC systems and smart phones and mobile working the hybrid model is firmly embedded.

Each of the 12-case holding teams, has a team manager who is responsible for one Senior Personal Advisor and seven Personal Advisers with the exception of our post-22+ team that has two Senior Personal Advisors. All of our team managers are permanent members of staff and are qualified social workers. Our service continues to work as one integrated service under the two heads of service (HoS) and two service managers. This integrated approach ensures that all care experienced young people can expect the same support wherever they happen to live in the county and those who live out of county.

We currently support 1,869<sup>3</sup> young people aged 18-25-years-old. An additional 129 care experienced young people are supported in other services, including Adult Services and Strengthening Independence service. We are expecting a further rise in the care leaver population in line with recent increases in our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children population and the reformulation of the national transfer scheme.

We have been successful in getting agreement for the care leavers covenant. More information can be found at [Care Leaver Covenant - GOV.UK](#).

### What We Offer

Our service puts the needs of our care experienced young people at the heart of our practice to ensure a person-centred approach in the delivery of our responsibilities as corporate parents. Our service is delivered through personal advisers who are there to assist young people by providing advice, support, encouragement, and financial guidance in accessing housing, education, training, work experience and health services, supporting their successful transition to independence and adulthood and helping them to take every opportunity available to them.

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<sup>3</sup> Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children: 981 and non-unaccompanied asylum-seeking children: 895.

# Performance for those young people our service is in touch with

As of July 2024, according to the last corporate parenting score card published on 6th August 2024

Young people our service are in touch with

Target

85%

Actual

78.6%

Young people in education, training or employment

Target

65%

Actual

55.5%

Young people in suitable accommodation

Target

90%

Actual

93%

Pathway plans to be upheld and reviewed every 6-months

Target

95%

Actual

90%





## Developments and Initiatives

- Kent County Council signed up to the Care Leavers Covenant in March 2024.
- External funding to allow the development and continuation of specialist posts within the service. The rough sleeping grant is now called the Housing Pathways team and has been extended until 31st March 2025. Beyond this period, we are aiming for the team to be a permanent part of the service offered to young people.
- A project group is exploring the development of our digital offer including an updated website and a potential app.
- The service continues to strengthen our relationship with adult services to improve the transitional arrangements for young people turning 18-years-old who may have Care Act needs. Therefore, assessments are done in a timely manner by the establishment of a transitions panel that we are hoping will become a county wide approach. The transition process is being reviewed by external consultants.
- The service provides opportunities for two permanent apprenticeship posts.
- The Kent housing joint protocols have been updated and are now a stand-alone set of agreed protocols specifically for our care experienced young people. We are aiming to achieve all 12 district councils signing up to ratify the agreement.
- We have expanded the use of housing panels to look at collaborative planning in regard to the accommodation needs of care experienced young people. This is now expanded to 8 out of 12 district councils.
- Our reviewed Local Offer has now been published.
- We are working collaboratively with VSK and had a summer activity event at Mote Park on the 26th of June 2024.
- The service participated in a wider Kent unaccompanied asylum-seeking children networking forum which brings together national and local partners such as British Red Cross, Barnardos, Kent Refugee Action Network, YLF and many more.

## Drop-in Service

Our drop-in service goes from strength to strength with seven separate locations across the county. We look to expand it further as part of staying connected with our young people and offering an opportunity to engage in an alternative way with the service to seek further advice and support from our personal advisers and specialist workers. Our care leaver apprentices also attend the drop-in sessions to offer support. Working in partnership with other organisations we have been able to offer drop-ins in local libraries, youth hubs and KCC social care buildings.

The main purposes of our drop-in services are:

- To offer networking opportunities for young people.
- To provide access to advice for education and careers for those who are not in education, training, or employment.
- To provide advice on access and entitlements to welfare benefits.
- To provide advice and support to move on to an independent affordable accommodation through their bespoke housing plan.
- To maintain constructive contact with our isolated and vulnerable young people.
- To promote re-engagement with care services.

## Those Vulnerable to Homelessness

Based on the success of our practice initiatives, the DfE agreed further funding for the continuation of our housing options and advice team, also known as the housing pathways team, through the rough sleeping grant. Our housing pathways team have experienced some staffing issues, but we have now successfully recruited to the vacant posts. We have also launched our online tenancy

training programme to help care experience young people navigate and understand their housing and accommodation options.

## Care Experienced Young People in Custody

Our custody co-ordinator has been appointed since 2019 and continues to remain the single point of contact with all key partners and offers support to the allocated personal advisers and team managers to ensure that robust needs assessment and pathway planning are formulated in a timely manner for young people who enter and leave custody. We regularly keep in touch with young people in custody and support them to meet their needs within the HM Prisons (HMP) as well as upon their release into the community; through joint working with key partner agencies such as the Probation Service, Police, housing, education and training providers, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Home Office's Immigration Service, prison in-reach mental health services and Community National Health Services. The use of video link facility continues to be utilised to stay in touch virtually with young people wherever possible in both HMP. There is a joint working protocol with early help for young people in the criminal justice system and guidance for our personal advisers working with young people in custody. Due to personal advisers and our custody co-ordinator attending release planning meetings, we are better able to plan for prison releases, ensuring young people have a suitable place to live, with support if required, claim their benefits, refer them to education, training and employment opportunities to reduce the chances of the young person re-offending due to not having these in place<sup>4</sup>.

## Survey

In October and November 2023, an online survey was sent by text to the mobile phones of young people receiving our services. The survey was designed to understand service satisfaction and to identify areas where we could better support our young people. The survey has been run every October since 2018 and this report considers changing attitudes and opinions of young people over this period. There were 677 responses to the survey, which is a 36% response rate. Some of the key findings are the positive ratings of the 'overall experience' of the care leavers survey remained stable at 70% year-on-year, this has been an upward trend since 2018. 78% of young people surveyed in 2023 rated their relationship with their personal advisers as positive, a similar level to both the 2022 survey (78%) and the 2021 survey (79%).

Staff are trained to help young people understand the triple planning process for asylum so that they can understand the consequences of any negative decision regarding their asylum decision by the Home Office and are supported through these complexities.

## Enhanced Support to Asylum-Seeking Young People

The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people continues to grow, the service uses the information management system, Power BI, to monitor and review the immigration status of our unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people to help ensure those with limited leave to remain can apply for further leave to remain in good time, with the Home Office. The Illegal Migration Act 2024 has impacted upon a number of our unaccompanied young adults, with significant delays in their claims for asylum. In recognition of the specialist and additional needs that our unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people have, our two permanent asylum specialist social workers continued to lead and offer additional support to young people with an un-concluded immigration status to overcome this barrier to their journey to independence.

This is based on a shared recognition that unresolved immigration status is a key barrier for young people in planning for their independence by excluding them from education and employment

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<sup>4</sup> As of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024, total 41 young people were in custody. Seven unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, 29 non-unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people and two EEA nationals.

opportunities and impacting their mental health. The social workers undertake various roles such as age assessments, human rights assessments, regular Home Office immigration checks, close oversight of young peoples' status on Liberi to prevent them from becoming overstayers, supporting the service with all queries related to asylum and immigration, providing internal and external training around asylum and triple planning and undertaking joint pathway plan assessments with personal advisers for young people with complex legal challenges.

## **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People Outreach Programme at Colleges in Kent**

With the support and collaboration of Kent colleges, our specialist staff members have initiated a bespoke unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people outreach programme for the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people at various Kent colleges. The outreach sessions are regularly delivered the service at Canterbury, Ashford, Folkestone, Dover and Gillingham. The aim of the this outreach programme is to provide young people with an opportunity to meet with the our specialists, engage and ask questions and receive advice regarding accommodation, education, immigration status, custody, benefits, etc, to promote community engagement and our service presences at various colleges to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people understand the meaning of triple pathway planning and to promote awareness of our local offer.

The unaccompanied asylum-seeking children outreach programme has provided an opportunity for those young people to see that our works in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders. The events have been attended by the DWP, VSK and organisations supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children such as Together South and Groundworks.

## **Vulnerable Young People and Suitability of Accommodation**

There has been a continuation of our monthly high-cost placement panel to review the suitability of the accommodation and ensure cost effective use of resources and this continues to prove a valuable process in ensuring that placements are meeting the needs of young people and helping them move on in a constructive way and are value for money. In 2023, a policy change was agreed to offer accommodation for one year following the transfer of young people into the service, up until their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Since the start of our high-cost panels, we achieved a reduction in high-cost semi-independent placements. As of October 2024, we have no young adults in long-term high-cost placements.

## **Education, Training and Employment Event**

We continue to try and develop our offer to young people. After the pledge event in April 2022, we were able to establish a training programme with partners Amey and Social Enterprise Kent, called the elevate programme, this has resulted in four young people successfully completing the course to be offered apprenticeships with Amey and we are hoping to repeat this success.

The elevate programme has expanded and we are about to launch our National Health Service elevate programme for young people in partnership between National Health staff, KCC and Social Enterprise Kent.

## **Care Leavers Summer Event**

In June 2024, we hosted a care leavers summer event at Mote Park in Maidstone. This was supported by a number of partnering agencies including YLF, British Army and Goal 17; a care leavers mentoring service. There were a wide range of activities and sports for our young people to try ranging from tie dying, which was run by our colleagues from the participation team, to water sports including fishing and paddle boarding. The feedback we had from our young people was very

positive, with a number of them saying they had an opportunity to try something new. We hope to run this again in 2025.



## Kent Supported Homes

In February 2021, we took over responsibility for running the supported lodgings scheme previously managed by Catch22. When this contract ended the service came in-house and we changed the name to Kent Supported Homes (KSH). A change of Ofsted regulations in October 2023, meant all supported accommodation for 16-17-year-olds were required to become regulated by Ofsted. In the Autumn of 2023, we registered with Ofsted as part of the compliance with the new regulatory framework. This required providing documentary evidence to Ofsted including producing a young person's handbook, a statement of purpose for the service and the required policies and procedures to comply with the regulatory framework. These procedures can be found on Kent procedures online (KPON). At the end of July 2024, we were notified that we would be receiving our registration visit from Ofsted, to complete the registration process. Caroline Smith, as the nominated individual and Mark Weinel, as the registered service manager were subject to a fit person interview. Registration was confirmed in October 2024. We will be launching our Step Across to KSH in October 2024 which is a pilot project to provide an alternative step down within a family environment for young people ready to move on from semi-independent or residential accommodation.

## Foodbank Project

Our 18+ Foodbank Project was launched in April 2023 by a small group of personal advisors from the 18+ Care Leavers Service; the aim of the project is to support our care experienced young adults in times of need. The project works in collaboration with The Family Foodbank and The Hygiene Bank Medway to offer an in-house food and hygiene bank service to young people within the service and is available to all Kent care leavers.

In November 2024, our 18+ Foodbank Project won the **National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum Team of The Year Award!** The NLCBF noted that: *“The Kent team recognised and responded to the cost-of-living crisis, and so the 18+ Food Project was developed to support young people through this critically important time.”*



## Kent Fostering Service

In April 2024 we successfully implemented a realignment of the service to include the Kinship Service providing support to, and the assessment of, kinship carers and special guardians. Extensive work on the development of a new fostering service began in the spring of 2023. The numbers of approved foster carers had been declining despite extensive recruitment activity in Kent. Over the previous three years, this has been compounded by the covid pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis which resulted in a further reduction in applications.

In addition, there was a need to support the children's social work teams to meet the agenda outlined in the Government document 'stable homes built on love' whilst also aiming to reduce the number of children becoming looked after and the subsequent need for expensive care provisions this caused. We therefore reviewed our existing staffing structure to help meet these challenges. Following a review of other local authority structures and practices, we based our structure on the Essex model of practice and learning from their implementation in 2022.

Our kinship assessment teams main function is the completion of viability and full assessments for:

- Kinship foster carers (connected persons Regulation 24 and 25).
- Special guardianship orders (SGO).
- Child arrangement orders.

Our kinship support teams include a team for the support of kinship foster carers and one for special guardians. Their roles include:

- Taking direct referrals from the front door from special guardians and professionals relating to children who are on an SGO, to offer support identified within existing SGO support plans.
- Taking kinship cases from early help teams where there is an active involvement of support to special guardians.
- Working with families who have an open referral to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) and oversight of maximising applications to the ASGSF.
- Providing supervision and support to kinship foster carers.
- Working with the children's allowance review team (CART) to support families with SGO allowances. Budget responsibility of this has moved to the assistant director for corporate parenting with line management of CART moving to business support.

Our aim of the new service includes:

- The reduction in the numbers of children coming into care that require a mainstream foster carer.
- To improve the use of family group conferences to identify potential care arrangements and consider use of Section 17 funding to avoid children coming into care.
- Increasing the number of applications made to the ASGSF for therapeutic services to support families with children on an SGO.
- Reduce the workload for children's social workers by moving the function for completing viability and full assessments into our service.
- Strengthen the support offered to kinship carers by centralising this to a structure that includes a team for kinship support, which helps both kinship foster carers and special guardians. The aim is that this will also help give confidence to existing kinship carers to apply for SGO's by improving the support offer, particularly during the early years of having an SGO and as children enter adolescence.
- Prevent the breakdown in SGO arrangements which are seeing several children return to the care system in their teenage years.
- Maximise the use of mainstream carers by ensuring that only those children that have no kinship offer available are placed with in house or independent fostering agency (IFA) carers. This will help reduce the number of residential placements being used due to the level of mainstream fostering provision.

As of 30 September 2024, we had 617 approved foster carer households, including kinship foster carers. They were looking after 680 Kent's children in care and 129 children were living with a family relative or friend under an interim or full care order, known as a connected person arrangement, including Section 20.

## **Fostering and Kinship Support Teams**

Our service still has five area fostering support teams. We have one mainstream fostering team in each of the North, South and West area districts with two more in the East district. Alongside this, there is one kinship support team which provides support to kinship carers who care for Kent children throughout the country.

Each of the mainstream support teams has the full time equivalent (FTE) of one team manager, two senior practitioners (SP), five fostering social workers (FSW) and two fostering social work assistants (FSWA). The kinship support team has one team manager, one senior practitioner and three FTE fostering social workers.

We continue to identify ongoing areas for improvement around the utilisation of foster carers, including maximising the use of our in-house vacancies and to enhance the processes in place to match children both locally and across the county. We continue to work closely with the TPS who centrally identify care provisions for all children and young people in Kent.

## **Kinship Carers**

There are currently 63 kinship carer fostering households. The team facilitates face to face and virtual support groups for kinship carers, as well as a virtual support group for those who are still in the assessment process.

## **Special Guardian Support and Therapeutic Fostering Team**

This new team now supports 90 special guardian families. They also attend family group conferences, facilitate support groups for special guardians and co-ordinate the sessional carer support scheme to provide further support to foster carers caring for their children and young people.

In addition to this, the team provides a support group for carers who are offering step across to foster placements, which are supported through the special guardian support and therapeutic fostering team. These placements are for children and young people who are coming back to live with a family after staying in a residential provision.

The team advocates reflective fostering throughout all aspects of its work, seeking to support carers and professionals in gaining a shared understanding of why children and young people might present the way they do. The aim being to respond, rather than react, to the needs of children and young people.

VSK's participation team are currently looking at supporting us to gain a clearer voice for our children and young people who are supported by kinship foster carer families.

## **Disabled Children's Fostering Team**

Our disabled children's fostering team was integrated with the main fostering support teams in April 2024. The experienced fostering staff continue to support foster carers to provide both full time care and short breaks for disabled children.

There are 25 foster carers for disabled children, including kinship carers, and approximately 11 are approved to provide short breaks care. Over the year we have seen carers continuing to support young people by transitioning to shared lives when they turn 18-years-old.

Support groups continue to be face to face and WhatsApp groups remain as an extension of the support groups. Four support groups are held across Kent with carers who live outside of the county linking into the face-to-face group via Microsoft teams.

Following the changes, social workers still work closely with our colleagues in the Strengthening Independence Service to support disabled children and their carers. They also attend events and

activities which enables them to see the children and young people in a different environment where they are having fun and enjoying themselves.

## Fostering and Kent Supported Homes Development Team

The team was restructured in April 2024 to complete the assessments of applicants to become mainstream foster carers and carers for disabled children. Now called the recruitment, assessment, panels and training team (RAPTT) it continues to have the responsibility for recruitment including marketing, initial enquiries, the processing of applications, mainstream fostering assessments, fostering panels and training for both foster carers and KSH hosts. However, since 01<sup>st</sup> April 2024 the assessment of KSH hosts is completed by the 18+ Care Leavers Service.

Over the last year, close working relationships continue to be embedded between the fostering teams and the 18+ accommodation team to develop our fostering community. We continue to achieve this through a shared delivery of our host training and attendance at panel.

This year 40 new KSH hosts were approved, which does not include those whose approvals changed so that they could continue to support their young person following their 18th birthday under a staying put arrangement. We have seen a steady increase in requests to assess connected hosts for our young people and we have created clear business processes to ensure these assessments progress safely and swiftly.

## Training and Learning

We delivered our annual foster carer conference in line with our 2023-2024 objective to deliver new skills and strategies to support foster carers day to day role and this was reflective of the needs of our children and young people. The conference, 'Relational Practice: Positive Approaches Towards Behaviour Management in the Home' was led by Hannah Hall, an experienced school improvement partner, consultant, coach and trainer specialising in behaviour, social, emotional and mental health, SEND and trauma. Feedback of the conference was overwhelmingly positive in all areas from the course content, delivery and learning outcomes.

In line with our other learning and development objectives, we delivered a comprehensive foster carer training program which was also available to our staff and encouraged good and consistent practice. This continued to be informed by regular consultation with carers and staff through the county advisory board and ambassador group, as well as feedback from foster carer annual reviews and as a result new training courses for the reporting year were introduced as follows:

- Introduction to therapeutic parenting and the playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy model.
- Baby and toddler first aid training.
- Safe sleep for babies.
- Introduction to the national counter trafficking service.
- Working for the department.
- Confident, happy, independent, resilient, proud training.
- Drugs awareness.

For KSH hosts, training has evolved over the last year to enable hosts to have a more targeted support in line with their training requirements and as recommended by their Accommodation Officers as part of ongoing support and review within the 18+ accommodation team.

The Incredible Adolescent Brain was delivered with success and received positively and moving forward into the next year adverse childhood experiences and attachment training will be developed following feedback from hosts that they need to understand the impact of trauma and how best to support young people through the relationship, to process and understand their experiences.

This year also saw us move towards delivery of more virtual training. This is because despite initial feedback from foster carers in 2022-2023 that they wanted in person delivery to be reintroduced,

attendance remained very low when this was facilitated. This contrasted with virtual training where all courses had waiting lists.

Another objective was for us to ensure our training program included mandatory learning for all linked carers. This was achieved through providing all linked carers with the opportunity to attend safer care training, understanding trauma and safeguarding against radicalisation the PREVENT duty. We endeavour to facilitate maximum uptake by holding evening courses as well as daytime, as many linked carers work full time outside of their fostering role.



*Image is of our Foster Carers Annual Awards 2024*





# Recruitment and Marketing

In 2023-2024, our primary message emphasized inclusivity, welcoming individuals of all ages, marital statuses, religions, ethnicities, cultures, sexual orientations, disabilities, and genders. This message was consistently communicated through our marketing and recruitment activities to foster a diverse network of foster carers, particularly attracting applications from minority ethnic and LGBTQ+ communities.

We utilised a content calendar to plan and schedule social media posts, manage campaigns, and review our strategy, ensuring our audience remained engaged. Our campaigns were aligned with key dates such as Foster Care Fortnight, LGBTQ+ Week, Black History Month, and Refugee Week. Contributions from foster carers received positive engagement on Facebook, supported by a strong network of foster carers, hosts, and partners who actively shared our content. As a result, we have established a distinct identity and narrative that sets us apart from other local authorities and independent fostering agencies.



Earlier this year, we launched an innovative programme with a pilot starting in autumn. The first Kent Mockingbird Constellation will be operational by November 2024, with an experienced social worker assistant recruited as the Liaison Worker. The first Home Hub Carer for Constellation 1 is from South Kent, and the second Home Hub Carers for Constellation 2, launching in early 2025, are from East Kent.

On July 15, key figures from Kent's Children's Services, along with partners from 19 other Southeast Local Authorities, visited Bracknell Forest Council to launch the DfE-funded 'Local Authority Fostering Southeast' initiative.

Bracknell Forest Council leads the Southeast Fostering Recruitment Hub, collaborating to increase local fostering and reduce reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies.

Key features of the hub include a shared website and phone number, sub-clusters for support, a service lead, standardized peer support, dedicated recruitment staff, data analysis, regional communications, and targeted campaigns. The VSK participation team and care leavers shared insights on fostering, and we anticipate positive outcomes from the hub's creation.

## E-mail

By the end of the reporting year, 686 people had opted in to receive marketing communications from us, which continued to assist in keeping enquirers engaged with us when at the time of their first enquiry they might not have been ready to foster or chosen another agency with whom to work.

We also requested that all services across the local authority use our e-mail banner as part of their signature to further our reach and take every opportunity possible to advertise our message to both internal staff and all partner agencies who we communicate with, as part of the authority's day to day work.



## Television, Radio and Film

We have joined forces with other local authorities and the council advertising network to collaborate on and commission a film about fostering called 'any of us' which gave an insight into the lives of different people, doing different jobs and at different stages of their lives, who made the decision to become foster carers, which was then featured on our website and Facebook page.

## Information Events

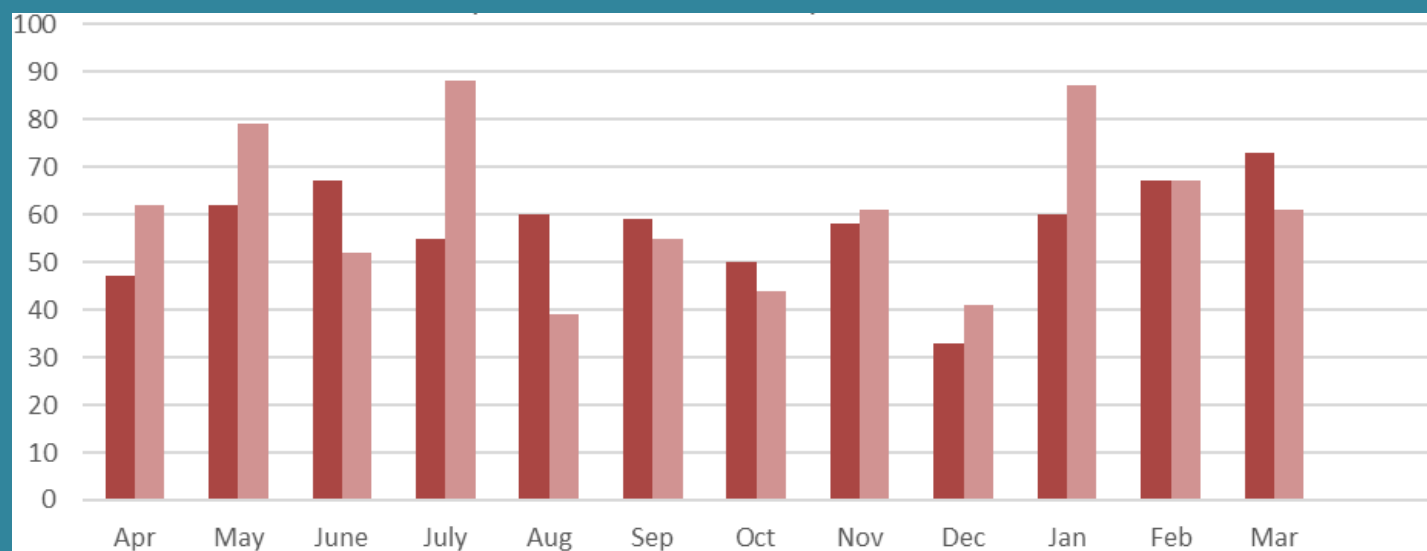
Information events continued virtually throughout 2023–2024. Approximately one was held every month, the majority of which took place in the evening and also at a weekend. This was the fourth year of we held regular events through Microsoft teams and across the year 320 people signed up and 155 attended. For those who registered to attend and then did not we followed up with them and maintained links and their interest through the sending of quarterly pre-approval newsletters.

Following each information event and throughout the enquiries process, enquirers continued to be offered the opportunity to speak to carers and hosts about their roles to make an application as fully informed as possible. Foster carers and KSH hosts continued to support the delivery of the information events alongside the fostering assessment managers, recruitment manager and the accommodation team manager. Following each information event, attendee feedback was gathered and scrutinised to enable changes to the presentation and delivery of information to be adapted.

## Enquiries

Our initial enquiries advisors maintained a reputation for delivering a professional, responsive, and expedient enquiries service to people interested in fostering, which saw us consistently scored in the top three of all Southeast local authorities 'mystery shopped' by partners in the Southeast sector led improvement programme (SESLIP).

We saw a 7% increase in people contacting us to express their interest in becoming a foster carer compared to the previous year. This is a significant achievement given the national downward trend in people expressing an interest in becoming foster carers. 328 Initial enquiry forms were completed, a 9% increase on 2022-2023. 318 of these were sent application packs, also an increase of 9% and 146 of these were returned, which is a 7% increase on the previous year.



**Enquiry Data** from 2022-2023 compared to 2023-2024

2022-2023

2023-2024

## Communication and Inclusive Practice

We work alongside the fostering ambassadors who continue to undertake the following roles:

- Attending meetings with the Head of Service to review, update and develop policy and guidance.
- Consult on developing new services for foster carers and children.

We actively engage in service development, particularly in relation to inclusion, equality and diversity for our carers, raising awareness of unconscious bias and micro-aggressions, to grow an inclusive fostering community that is confident to challenge and intervene when these are then identified. Equality, diversity and inclusion groups are now established within each of the areas, meeting bi-monthly to discuss current issues.

## Partnership Working

- Development and delivery of joint training to foster carers, adopters and children, young people and education (CYPE) staff on the University of East Anglia Adoption Transitions Model in partnership with APSE.
- With partners in public health and child and family training services a nomination for a 'children and young people's now award' for training designed and delivered to foster carers for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to help them identify needs, deal with distress, support low mood and anxiety and help children tell their stories.

We have introduced and reviewed policies and practices to clarify and enhance the services we offer. We have involved our foster carer ambassadors and staff in this work and consulted with our care experienced young people through VSK to ensure the voice of the child is considered throughout. The work includes:

- Revision and Publication of the Payment for Skills Policy.
- Diary Records Policy, incorporating guidance around writing directly to the child.
- Passports for Children in Care, following feedback from carers and children in care that children did not receive their passports expediently and challenges within business support processes.
- DBS Policy.
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy and Emergency Bed Care for Newly Arrived Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Policy and Guidance.

## Kent Association of Foster Carers

2024-2025 saw us continue to work closely with KAFC, who have social committees in each foster support team area, with a clear hierarchy and accountability to fundraise for various local and countywide events for fostering families. Two Summerfest events were held this year, one at Dreamland in Margate and the other at Kent Life in Maidstone. Positive feedback was received for both events which had excellent turnouts of foster carers, and they are now looking at holding this year's Christmas event at Kent Life also. Our partnership with KAFC continues to be significant in attracting and retaining people to foster for Kent.

## Annual Foster Carer Awards Ceremony

Our event took place on 8th November 2024 and included awards for KSH hosts to acknowledge the exceptional work they undertake along with our foster carers. We had an amazing 348 nominations for carers and staff across a range of categories with each winner receiving a certificate and hamper. We were privileged to have the awards presented by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Sue Chandler and Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Gary Cooke. Our Corporate Director for CYPE, Sarah Hammond, brought the ceremony to a close by expressing her own personal thank you to all of Kent's foster carers.

## Adoption Partnership Southeast

In 2015 the Government set out its vision and commitment to deliver a regional adoption system where adoption agencies would come together to deliver adoption services on a larger scale. We are a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) comprising of the London Borough of Bexley, Kent County Council and Medway Council, and it launched on 1st November 2020 and delivers adoption services on behalf of the three local authorities.

The regional adoption agency is operated under the terms of a partnership agreement, which confirms the legal and governance arrangements; the budget; staffing and funding contributions for the three local authorities.

There are now 33 RAAs across England which are supported by Adoption England. Adoption England is a collaboration of regional adoption agencies working together, supported by a small central team working nationally. RAA leaders work collaboratively on developing and improving practice and delivering improved outcomes for children and families nationally and they developed a 3-year plan with 3 key priorities: recruitment, child's journey and adoption support.

The Head of service is engaged in the national forum of RAA leaders and involved in several work streams with a view to delivering on the priority areas identified.

Managers from within APSE are involved at several levels with the work of the national team. The Head of Service (HOS) sits on the governance board and both they and the service managers are involved in several of the practice working groups in place to deliver on the national priorities.

### Governing of Our Service

Care Planning  
Regulations 2010

Adoption Agency  
Regulations 2005  
(amended 2011)

Education and  
Adoption Act 2016

Local Authority  
Regulations 2005

Care planning,  
placement and case and  
fostering services  
(Miscellaneous  
Amendments)  
Regulations 2013

Care Standards Act  
2000

Adoption and  
Children Act 2002

Adoption National  
Minimum Standards  
2011

### Governance

- Our HOS reports quarterly to a partnership management board, which is comprised of director of children's services and senior officers from each partner local authority with representation drawn from the wider professional network. The chair is rotated on an annual basis and for a 12-month period.

- An operational managers group meets quarterly which includes our HOS, service managers for APSE, HOS and service managers for children in care teams from Bexley, Kent & Medway and Independent Reviewing Officer leads.

## Management

We are managed by a HOS, two service managers, one of whom is responsible for the pre-adoption order work streams and one who is responsible for overseeing family finding and adoption support. There are nine teams within our service and each team is supported by business support officers. The agency has 90 members of staff.

- One advisory team.
- One panel team.
- One early permanence team.
- Two recruitment, assessment and support teams.
- One family finding team.
- Three adoption support teams.
- Each team is supported by business support officers who are line managed by two (1.5 FTE) business support leads.

KCC is committed to ensuring that children and young people can remain in the care of their parents and birth families wherever possible. However, where it is not possible to achieve stability for the child or young person within the birth family, the local authority works to achieve alternative permanent arrangements for the child or young person within a family setting and these include adoption.

## What We Offer

We provide an adoption service directly and indirectly to:

- Children in need of an adoptive family.
- Birth families.
- People wishing to become parents of a non-related child through adoption.
- Reconstituted families wishing to adopt a related child.
- Support to prospective and approved adopters.
- Services to adults who have been adopted seeking their records.

## Service for Children Whom Adoption is or May Be Their Care Plan

- The permanency planning leads and family finding adoption social workers become involved with every child for whom adoption may be the plan.
- Adoption social workers take a lead in family finding at the earliest point possible.
- This may result in an early permanence placement for a child with approved adopters, who are considered foster carers at the point of placement, until the court has decided about the child's future.
- Alternatively, we aim to place a child with adopters as quickly as possible, following the court's agreement to the local authority care plan of adoption and the granting of a placement order.

## What is Available to Adopted Children and Young People

- Social groups and activities, delivered by VSK's participation and engagement team.
- Offering training and advice for schools to help teachers understand adopted children's needs.
- Working with children in their adoptive families around understanding their life stories.

## What is Available to Prospective Adopters and Approved Adopters

- The recruitment of prospective adoptive families.
- The assessment and preparation of adoptive families, including visits to the home, a home assessment, taking up references and statutory checks and running preparation training.
- The running of weekly adoption panels which consider and make recommendations regarding adopter approvals and matches for children with adopters. These recommendations are then shared with the agency decision maker (ADM), who makes the final decision.
- The provision of advice, guidance, and support to adoptive families whilst waiting for a child to be placed with them, during the matching process and after placement. This includes facilitating workshops, training, and support groups.
- Peer support for adopters.
- The commissioning of an external service for those wishing to adopt from abroad.
- The assessment and support of relative/stepparent adoption assessments.

## What is Available to Adoptive Families

- Access to a support and advice line service to respond in a timely way to requests for support.
- Access to an assessment of need, resulting in a support package based on the family's identified needs, including consideration of making an application to the adoption support fund.
- Access to support groups, both internal and external.
- Access to a learning and development programme and workshops.
- Access to therapeutic support groups.
- Access to therapists and a range of therapeutic interventions.
- Access to support with education through virtual schools in each local authority.
- Assistance and review of contact arrangements between adopters and birth relatives.
- Adopter led community support groups.

## What is Available to Those Affected by Adoption

The RAA commissions independent services from Barnardo's to support those affected by adoption. Their service is bespoke to families eligible to receive support from us. It is called 'Connecting Adoptive Families Independent Service' (CAFIS). Services are provided to four groups of people affected by adoption:

- Service for birth parents
- Support for birth relatives
- Access to information and intermediary services
- Keeping in touch contact service

APSE and CAFIS are working closely with the national campaign for a culture of change around staying in touch arrangements for children with their birth families post adoption order.

All our work and support with families right from the preparation of prospective adopters through the support adoptive families with teenager works toward creating an open culture for adoptive and birth families to interact in ways which best meet the needs of the children involved. This is evidenced in an increase of in person staying in touch arrangements taking place.

## Commissioning Support Programme

In support of the national adoption strategy<sup>5</sup>, the DfE has made grant funding available over a two-year period to explore whether national or pan-regional commissioning arrangements would facilitate better access and value for money when commissioning services for adoption support.

We are working with Adopt South and Adoption Southeast to achieve the following goals:

- To provide additional commissioning capacity across the region.
- To improve the collective understanding of the need of adoptive families, now and in the future.
- To increase pan-regional commissioning arrangements on the ground.
- To share best practice and increase consistency.

Assessing needs and understanding the gap between those needs and existing services informs local priorities and service development. The overall aim is to improve the speed of service and provide a better quality and consistency of adoption support across the region and for our three RAAs to understand how joint working can practically happen.

## Performance

A comprehensive outline of performance is contained within our Annual Report 2023-2024.

## The Adopter Journey

We seek to recruit, assess, and support adopters who can meet the needs of children from within the three partner local authorities.

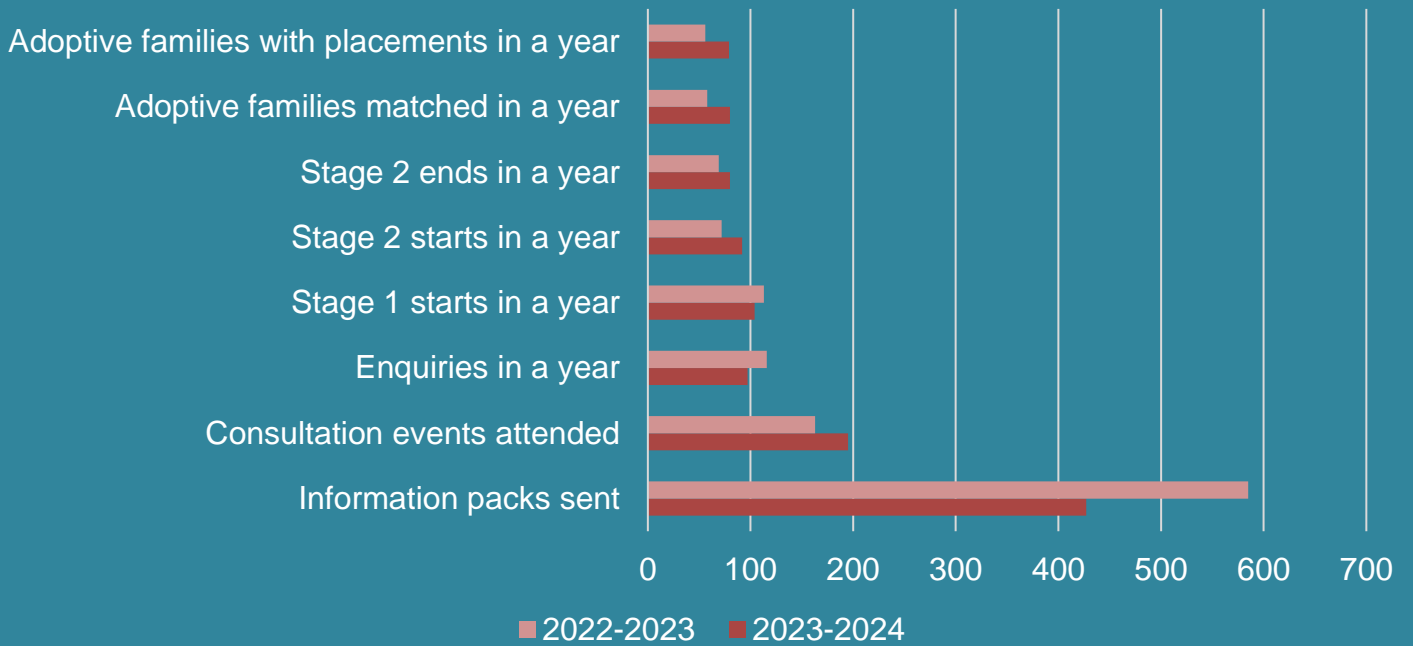
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<sup>5</sup> July 2021.

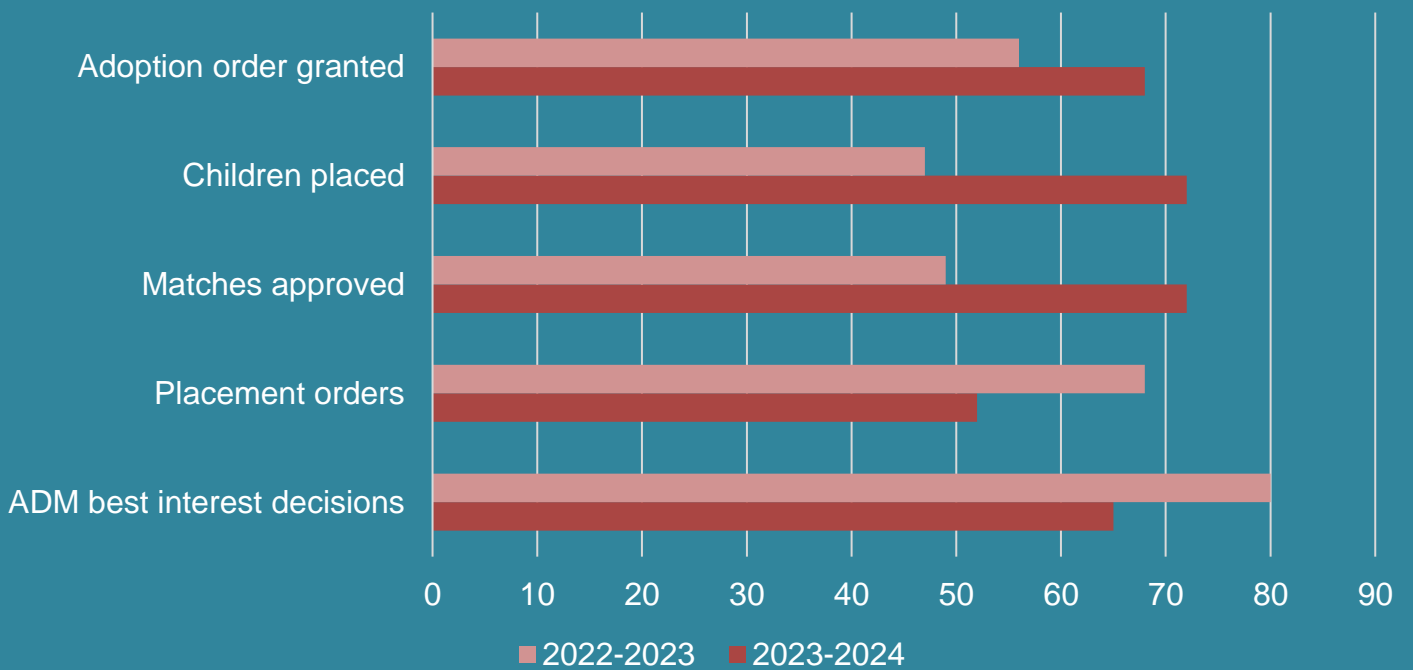


# Children's Data

## Adopter Activity as Households

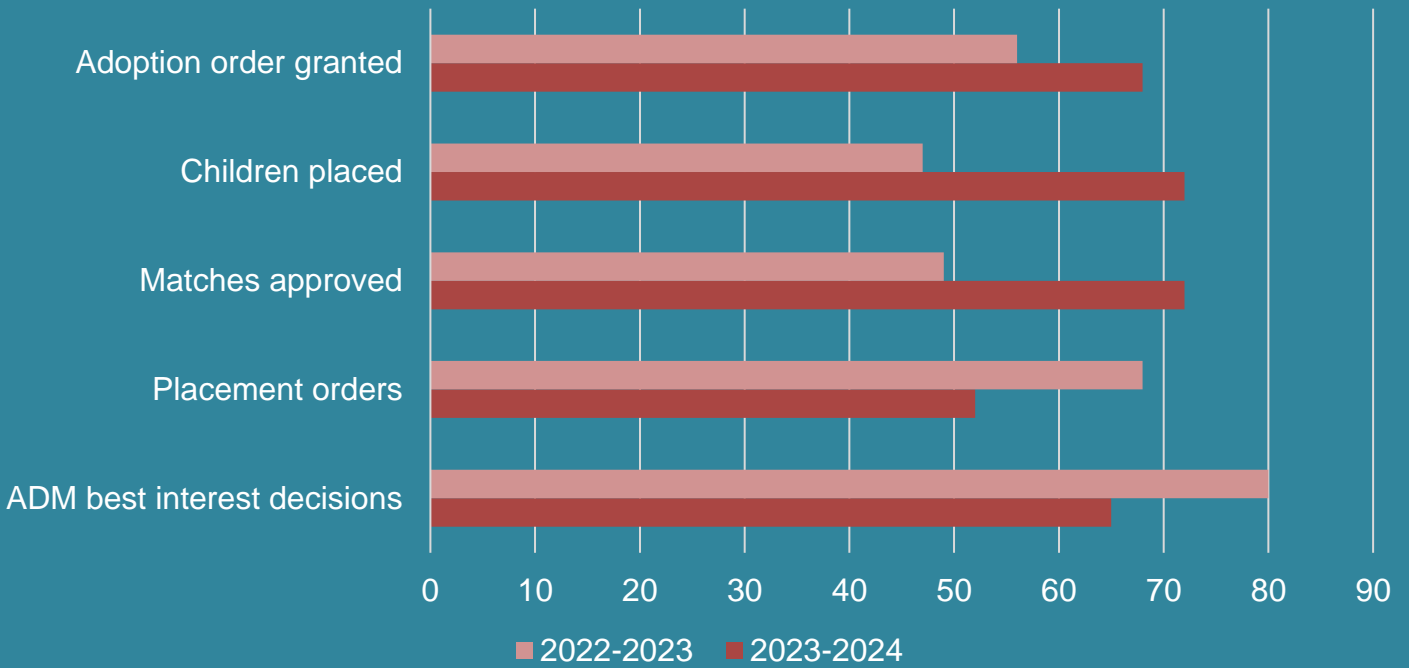


## Indicator

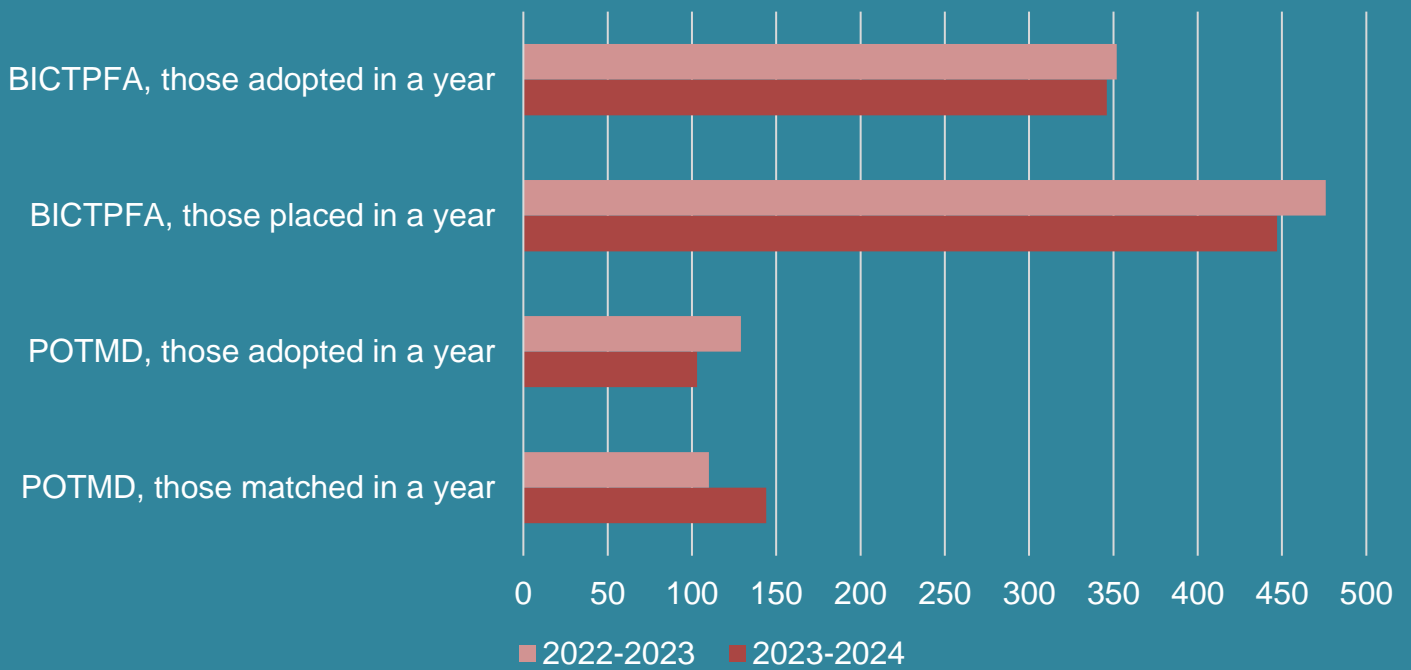




### Timescale Indicator



### Timescale Indicator



Placement order to matching decision (POTMD).

Became in care to placed for adoption (BICTPFA).

During this period, 80 households were approved as adopters which ensured sufficiency of adopters for Bexley, Kent, and Medway children. In total, 97 children were placed with adopters during 2023-2024 and 88 of these children were placed with the RAA assessed and approved adopters. Between April 2023 and March 2024, six adopter households had children from outside of the RAA placed for adoption with them.

## **Agency Decision Maker Best Interest Decisions**

The ADM is usually a Director of Children's Services or an Assistant Director who agrees adoption would be in a child's best interest and should be presented to a court as the local authority's care plan.

In 2020-2021, there was an increase in the number of adoption plans agreed by the ADM. KCC agreed the plan for adoption for 80 children in 2022-2023, this decreased in 2023-2024 to 65 children.

## **Placement Orders**

A placement order is the legal order granted when a court agrees adoption should be the care plan for a child. 68 placement orders were granted for our children in 2022-2023 but fell to 52 in 2023-2024.

## **Matches Approved**

In 2022-2023, there were 49 matches and in 2023-2024 this rose to 72.

## **Children Placed for Adoption**

In 2022-2023 there were 47 children placed, in 2023-2024 this rose to 72 placements that began with adoptive families.



## Total Placement Service

We are part of CYPE's children's commissioning working for our children in care and care leavers to find them safe, stable, and appropriate homes. We provide a one-stop shop for Social Workers and Personal Advisers to access good quality homes for the children and young people in our care, prioritising our in-house provision where possible.

Our service is compliant with Ofsted and the Quality Care Commission (QCC) requirements, and our work is governed by a range of legislation and regulations, including the Children's Homes Regulation (2015), Fostering Services Regulation (2011) and The Children Act (1989).

We are managed by a service manager and there are three permanent teams. Each team has a manager, senior placement officer and placement officers who try to find a variety of different homes. We have 17 placement officers and three senior placement officers. We are supported by three business support officers.

This year we have a 9-month temporary unaccompanied asylum-seeking children's placement team to work with the Reception and Safe Care Service (RSCS) to find homes for children and young people who are new arrivals. This has been invaluable in managing the often-unpredictable numbers of new arrivals enabling us to continue focusing on finding homes for all children and young people. We have streamlined processes within this team to support and enable the new timescales within the National Transfer Service (NTS).

The residential team look for homes in secure accommodation, Ofsted regulated children's homes and group living homes regulated by the CQC primarily for those over 16 years into adulthood. Exceptionally, where we are unable to find a regulated home for a child the team try to identify an unregistered home there is more about this later. Finally, the team undertake all searches for both fostering and residential family centre placements for parent(s) and child(ren).

The fostering team look for homes with our in-house foster carers and homes with foster carers with IFA's. Kent's in house fostering service now lead on the work in delivering the Step-Across to Fostering Scheme (SATFS) with us exploring potential IFA options when in house options are exhausted. The scheme finds foster homes for children who are living in residential settings and are ready to move on to a family setting.

When seeking a home from IFA's our team use the IFA framework. An additional IFA framework has been developed to support and enable newly arrived unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors to have a home whilst they await transfer to another local authority on the NTS. This was originally 13 placements but has been extended to 21 beds. This is further enhanced by 39 in house placements being set aside for new arrivals, giving a total of 60 placements. There is significant pressure locally, regionally, and nationally in terms of the limited number of foster homes and this is certainly the case in Kent. This means that we must purchase homes outside of the framework and outside of Kent.

The 16+ team identifies homes for those young people who are aged 16-19-years-old. The umbrella term for all provision is supported accommodation and is regulated by the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations (2023). The provision includes:

- KSH: an in-house provision that provides homes with a host within the host's home.
- Supported accommodation: which was previously known as semi-independent accommodation where varying levels of support are provided to the young person dependent on their independent living skills and is spot purchased.
- Low and medium need shared accommodation both of which are purchased via a block contract with existing providers.

Supported accommodation is designed to support young people in their journey to full independent living giving them the tools and ability to achieve this. Levels of support generally range from 5-35 hours per week. However, it is recognised that for short periods young people may require additional

support, but this should be for a limited period. Providers who continue to offer homes for children and young people and who are not registered are deemed unregulated and therefore unlawful.

On a positive note, we have a good number of local supported accommodation semi-independent provisions available to us. The 16+ team also manage the process for staying put arrangements with foster carers allowing young people to remain with their carers post-18.

Nationally and locally placement pressures continue irrespective of the type of home that is required. Issues that are affecting growth and sufficiency are:

- Whilst there are vacancies in children's homes there is considerable focus on ensuring children who live together are 'matched' to promote and deliver effect group living and care. This limits the number of accessible vacancies available for a child. There have been increases in costs and the requirement for additional resources such as one to one staffing within this provision.
- There continue to be significant difficulties in the recruitment of foster carers both for KCC's Fostering Service but also for IFA's. KCC are involved in work with the DfE's regional fostering hub for recruitment as a pilot scheme.
- Secure accommodation availability continues to be problematic with referrals and demands significantly outstripping provision. The referral system has now been streamlined through a portal.
- A lack of residential solo provision or residential provision that has multi-location. Multi-location provision is where a home can have up to six placements in up to four locations allowing for solo placements moving towards group living.

These sufficiency issues are further exacerbated by the very complex and diverse needs some of our children have, for very few, even if only for a very short while they may require a solo home. This provision is very scarce locally and nationally. Unfortunately, often after extensive searching where we have been unable to identify a regulated home for one of our children, we have no option but to use a home that falls outside of regulation and is referred to as an unregistered home. Historically, we have used semi-independent providers however, there is an increasing paucity of this accommodation given the requirement for these providers to be registered under the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations (2023).

The operation and use of unregistered homes is a breach of Ofsted regulations. However, the policy, processes and practices that are employed to manage this with KCC are robust and effective providing excellent oversight within the service, CYPE and to Ofsted and where applicable, the courts. The focus, as always, is absolutely on the welfare and needs of the child.

The other area that impacts on sufficiency is the continued year on year increase in the number newly arrived unaccompanied minors particularly in the case of foster homes and semi-independent accommodation. There are 60 ring fenced foster placements and nine ring fenced supported accommodation semi-independent placements to meet the current demand. This will be reviewed, in line with KCC opening its own supported accommodation and children's homes for new arrivals.

Our service and its managers, seniors and placement officers supported by colleagues in commissioning, work hard to build and maintain effective working relationships with our foster carers and providers in the external market to optimise offers of homes against a backdrop of increasing demand regionally and nationally.

There has been a decrease of 11% in search activity across all TPS teams when searching for homes of non-unaccompanied asylum-seeking children between the two previous financial years. Placement activity for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children has increased in the same period by over 100%. The service has begun to see a very slow decline in placement finding for the 18+ Care Leavers Service because of in the main, no longer needing to find homes for those aged 19-years-old and above.

Currently performance reported in the Corporate Parenting Scorecard for June 2024 is marginally improved from last year when considering the two key performance indicators related to stable homes.

The first indicator to consider is where a child has had 3 or more moves in the last 12 months. The current report shows that 10.6% of our children and young people had been subject to this number of moves, and improvement on last year which showed 10.9%. The target is 10%.

We have 71.8% of our children and young people who have lived in their current home for more than 2 years, this is below the figure for the same time last year which was 73.4%. Our target is 70% so it is pleasing to report that we have met and exceeded this. We continue to prioritise and support effective matching between children and young people and their carers to promote stability and permanence where possible.

An area that requires ongoing focus is that of children and young people who live more than 20 miles from home. The target is 80% and performance is currently at 70.8%, due to the number of foster families providing emergency homes to newly arrived children.



# Aims and Priorities

A restructure or re-alignment of our service to ensure it is fit for purpose now and in the future, it is anticipated that this will be concluded by January 2025.

Automation of the processes within the service to support efficiencies and a focus on supporting colleagues in effective cost negotiations at the start of and the duration of any placement.

The two yearly review and revision of processes to ensure effective and efficient systems are in place to find homes optimising the use of in-house foster carers and reducing delays.

In conjunction with Children's Commissioning Service, developing SharePoint information to support key stakeholders in accessing and using our services.

Building effective relationships with carers and providers to ensure we can provide the best value homes for our children that give stability and meet the needs of our children and young people.

Supporting effective matching between homes and our children and in doing so promoting stability and supporting children and young people to realise their potential.

Continuous building of effective working relationships with colleagues and key stakeholders through secondments to and from the team.

## How Our Elected Members Can Get Involved

Our services welcome visits from elected members especially at our activity and celebration events when there is an opportunity to meet the children and young people in our care, for whom we are acting as their corporate parent. The Corporate Parenting Panel receive regular performance updates and we welcome questions from members to support their understanding of the role of a corporate parent. Kent Fostering Service would appreciate any support that members can provide in promoting the recruitment of foster carers for KCC within their local constituency.

### Christmas Campaign

Our Christmas campaign has now become a yearly event. In December 2023 the campaign raised more than our £20k target, reaching £21,014.45. Changing our campaign to broaden it out to both local and national businesses, ensured we met the target more quickly than in previous years. This meant on Christmas day every one of our young people who are care leavers received a Christmas card from their Corporate Parents with either a £10 gift voucher for them to treat themselves or a gift to the value of £10. These were well received by our young people, who said it made them feel very special to receive this in the post. The success of the campaign left some additional funding for welcome gift boxes to be provided to young people moving into their first accommodation in 2024.

### Our 2024 Christmas Campaign

This year's campaign will again focus on asking local businesses to support with financial donations. Due to the current financial pressures society is facing, we recognise we need to be sensitive about asking our KCC staff for financial donations, whilst still giving those who can donate, the opportunity to do this. The target for 2024, is £25,000, an additional £5,000 to be used to give 50 young adult care leavers a Christmas Day to remember - those that would otherwise be on their own, will be invited for Christmas dinner, with transport, gifts and entertainment provided. £20,000 is needed to give each of our young adults a £10 gift voucher for them to treat themselves or a gift to the value of £10.

Text XMASGIFT24 to  
70201 to donate £1  
70331 to donate £3  
70970 to donate £5  
70191 to donate £10

Click here to find  
out more or  
donate online

This Christmas  
Consider donating to Corporate  
Parenting's Christmas campaign for  
care leavers

Kent County Council  
kent.gov.uk

the Young Lives Foundation

The above banner link will direct you to <https://ylf.org.uk/christmas/>

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From: Neil Baker – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation  
Simon Jones – Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: County Council 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Subject: Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5)

Status: Unrestricted

Past pathway of paper: n/a

Electoral division: All

**Summary:**

The new Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) sets out a balanced approach to improving transport across Kent within the context of the Council's overarching strategies for *Securing Kent's Future* and the longer term *Framing Kent's Future*. By taking a balanced approach, the plan should remain relevant to any further shifts in policy and focus affecting the Council's future work. For example, LTP5 recognises the need to address the condition of the highway network but also includes the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Strategic Road Network schemes, Local Road Network schemes and active travel. We can be confident that by delivering across the whole transport mix we can ensure journeys are joined up and cohesive, delivering on the government's emerging Integrated National Transport Strategy.

LTP5 acknowledges that its funding needs to be sought externally and calculates the likely range required. Therefore, LTP5 does not commit the Council to additional expenditure from existing or future budgets.

LTP5 has been through a comprehensive development process, including a consultation on the emerging plan (ambition and policy objectives) in 2023 and a statutory consultation on the full plan between July and October 2024. A total of 990 responses were received across the two consultations (475 in the most recent), as well as a response from each of the twelve district councils. A number of other stakeholders responded, such as a range of parish councils, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England.

Following analysis of the responses received, key themes from the consultation and suggested significant changes (such as new proposals) were presented to the Cabinet Member and Member Task and Finish Group. Following consideration at that meeting, changes were made to LTP5. There have also been some changes to the wording in the plan to ensure clarity for the public audience, but this has not changed the content.

**Recommendation:**

**Mr Baker, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, proposes the**

**motion, seconded by Mr Gough, the Leader of Kent County Council, that:**

***“The County Council is asked to approve and adopt Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the Balance.”***

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 A Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document set out in the 2000 Transport Act (and as amended by the 2008 Local Transport Act). The LTP is the only transport policy document that requires the approval of the full County Council. As a statutory plan, it carries weight in the planning system and is therefore given regard by government in its decision making.
- 1.2 The plan is a critical instrument to attract government transport funding as it establishes a long term capital transport programme justified by the strategic outcomes it aims to deliver. LTPs have further become a mechanism built into government devolution agreements such as County deals, for supporting determination of transport settlements.
- 1.3 *Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth Without Gridlock* (LTP4) was adopted in 2017 with the intention of remaining as Kent’s statutory LTP for the period 2016 – 2031.
- 1.4 Substantial delivery of the proposals within LTP4 has been achieved, supported by the Local Growth Fund (LGF) through the former South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), a range of match funding and other bespoke government funds (often through competitive bidding). The new LTP will restock the depleted pipeline of transport proposals, with a new long-term transport capital programme for the future.
- 1.5 The reasons for embarking on a new LTP were presented to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee (ETCC) in [September 2021](#). A report on LTP to the County Council in [July 2022](#) detailed the progress on developing the ambition, outcomes, and objectives for the plan. A further update was provided to County Council in [May 2024](#). Both non-statutory and statutory consultations were undertaken in 2023 and 2024, respectively, preceded by All Member briefings.
- 1.6 Development of the plan has been supported by a cross-party Member Task and Finish group. Since the statutory consultation closed on 8 October, the plan has been updated to take into consideration the consultation feedback and Members were informed of these changes at an All Member Briefing on 9 December 2024, prior to the County Council to vote on its adoption.

## **2. LTP5’s ambition and planned outcomes**

- 2.1 As detailed in previous reports to the County Council in 2022 and 2024, the LTP sets an ambition and series of planned outcomes for journeys and the transport system. These were the focus of the consultation in 2023 and further opportunity was provided for comment in 2024. Based on the feedback and

issues raised, along with the level of support for the plan, the ambition and outcomes have been retained with no substantive changes. They provide a good foundation for the Council's future work delivering the proposals developed for the plan and any other new opportunities that the Council may subsequently identify.

The ambition and outcomes of the LTP are included in Appendix 1 for ease of reference.

### **3. LTP5's main proposals and costs**

- 3.1 The proposed final Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) is in Appendix 2 to this report (and a summary of the proposals is contained within Appendix 1). The plan strikes a balance by ensuring the Council has a clear position and stated next steps for all parts of the transport mix across the county, including for emerging and new technologies and services. We can be confident that by delivering across the whole transport mix we can ensure journeys are joined up and cohesive, delivering on the government's emerging Integrated National Transport Strategy.
- 3.2 The plan also reaffirms the need for sustained and sufficient funding for both highway maintenance and the bus network to enable the Council to continue to deliver on its Highways Asset Management Plan and Bus Service Improvement Plan, as important foundations for travel in the county. Estimates for the level of funding required for proposals KCC would be responsible for delivering are included in the plan.
- 3.3 Building on the foundations of highway maintenance and the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), the focus of the proposals is on the Strategic and Local Road Networks as a reflection of their catering for the vast majority (over one billion) journeys a year in Kent. Importantly for balance, the LTP also has a clear set of ambitious proposals for public and shared transport, walking and cycling journeys.
- 3.4 The Strategic Road Network (SRN) proposals are designed to provide resilience and new routes through the county and across the Thames, along with addressing pinch points at junctions. KCC is not the highway authority for the SRN (motorways and trunk roads) as this is the remit of the government owned company, National Highways. Therefore these proposals would not be directly delivered by KCC, but as priorities within our statutory LTP, National Highways will need to consider these schemes when defining its Route Strategies that make up the Department for Transport's Road Investment Strategy (RIS).
- 3.5 On the Local Road Network (LRN), the LTP includes progressing our existing major proposals to delivery. These schemes (such as the North Thanet Link and A229 Blue Bell Hill) will provide additional capacity on busy sections of the road network that are expected to face further pressure in the future from changing journey patterns and growth.

- 3.6 In the public and active travel sections of LTP5, it identifies the existing Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which provides a detailed plan of initiatives the Council could aim to deliver over the period to 2029. The Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP) adds further balance, having established where the Council aims to further develop initial improvements to those networks. Both the BSIP and KCWIP require funding to deliver their aims. Therefore, KCC's success in these areas will depend on what funding government provides and its focus across the transport mix.
- 3.7 The plan also sets out clear proposals for making best use of the rail network for passengers. As with the motorway and trunk road network, KCC has no powers to directly deliver improvements to the railways, but scheme priorities in our statutory LTP will help to influence government investment (which has been through grant funding via KCC in some instances in the past) with delivery by Network Rail, the train operating company Southeastern Trains, or the new body Great British Railways.
- 3.8 The rail network has huge potential to reduce carbon emissions from travel given it is already substantially electrified and well-suited as an alternative for mid to longer distance journeys that are the main source of road-based carbon emissions. The LTP also sets out proposals for making greater use of the international rail assets, both for a resumption of passenger services from Ebbsfleet and Ashford International stations, and also for freight as this can particularly further address the traffic burden on the road network associated with the Eurotunnel and Port of Dover terminals.
- 3.9 The range of funding needed over the next decade is estimated at £205m to £345m per year – or £2.1bn to £3.5bn over the next decade. This estimate is only for the funding the Council would require for those proposals it would deliver or commission. New and sustained funding would also address some of the lost confidence and reduced public trust arising from underinvestment in road maintenance and diminished public transport services.
- 3.10 The costs that would be borne by Network Rail, Southeastern Trains, National Highways and bus operators as part of their future investment plans are not included in the LTP estimate. This funding requirement for the LTP5 is in addition to the funding we already received and so LTP5 does not commit KCC to any additional capital expenditure from its existing budgets. Delivery of the proposals within LTP5 is entirely dependent on KCC receiving additional external funding.

#### **4. Consultation feedback**

- 4.1 The plan received a good level of engagement and feedback from the public and stakeholders. The two consultations collectively received 990 written responses, and engagement with the plan has been very strong. A total of 4,621 downloads of the draft LTP were made during our 2024 consultation, along with 376 discussions held with the public at drop-in sessions across all 12 districts that took place during the consultation period from 17 July to 8 October 2024.

- 4.2 The recent consultation also included substantial awareness raising efforts by the Council. Briefing papers were provided to all Joint Transportation Boards in the county, with four verbal briefings supplementing that, and briefings provided to Councils at request, including area committees in Swale and the Dover cabinet. Prior to the consultation, workshops were held with district council officers. Organisations such as the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, its Business Advisory Board, the Kent Association of Local Councils, the county-wide public health whole system group on policy and planning, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, National Highways and Network Rail, and KCC's DfT liaison on local transport, amongst others, were all engaged prior to or during the 2024 consultation exercise.
- 4.3 The headline findings from the consultations were that 80% of respondents either partly or fully supported the ambition of the plan in the 2023 consultation and in 2024, 72% either fully or partly support the whole plan with its proposals. The full consultation report is published – a link is provided in section 12 of this report.
- 4.4 In response to the consultation issues raised in 2023 and 2024, some changes were made to the proposed outcomes and objectives of the plan and the proposals. The 'You said, we did' document is in Appendix 3 to this report, summarises the main issues and how the plan has been changed to take account of this feedback.
- 4.5 The main themes / issues raised from the consultation were that there need to be improved public transport services, with bus services the focus within those comments. There were also competing views over whether the LTP5 was ambitious enough or too ambitious and a number of comments about how the Council spends the capital funds it receives for transport. Regarding proposals, the Lower Thames Crossing, maintaining the road network and road safety were the most commented on proposals in the LTP5.
- 4.6 The most significant amendments have been summarised below.
- 4.6.1 The addition of the proposal "M25 Junction 3 improvements" in the Strategic Road Network section of the plan, highlighting short term improvements and long term options development that we consider National Highways should progress to support traffic and local growth.
- 4.6.2 The addition of the proposal "Local road freight management" in the Local Road Network section of the plan to support effective management of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) across the local road network to mitigate impacts on local communities, whilst ensuring Kent's businesses and their freight and logistics needs are supported. This highlights the existing activity the Council undertakes, including measures to tackle HGVs from using unsuitable rural routes and support for private sector led lorry parks in appropriate locations subject to the planning merits of specific proposals, and a plan to consider whether the aims and actions set out in the existing Freight Action Plan need to be

updated. Support for the shift from road to rail and waterborne freight is also strengthened in the Strategic Road Network section of the plan.

- 4.6.3 The addition of the proposal “A226 Galley Hill Road” in the Local Road Network section of the plan, highlighting the Council’s aims to find a solution for traffic along this important road corridor.
- 4.6.4 The addition of the proposal “Local access to rail stations” in the Public and Shared Transport section of the plan, highlighting the Council’s aim to see greater consultation and involvement from the rail industry to enable local stakeholders to support prioritisation and obtaining investment in improving access (including step free stations).
- 4.7 Further to the added proposals, some minor changes to the plan’s content have been undertaken to: make the description of proposals clearer; to provide more information on the existing Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP); to amend the presentation of the Kent Cycling and Walking Plan (KCWIP) cycling corridors to better reflect the maturity of design development; to provide more information about the way the Council receives funding for transport and how funding is often ringfenced for certain modes; and also general amendments to the wording that do not materially alter the content but improve the flow or clarity of the text.

## **5. Implementing the Local Transport Plan**

- 5.1 LTP5 includes entirely new proposals alongside existing schemes from the previous LTP4 that the Council has been developing but where there are still significant hurdles to pass to reach delivery. Following adoption of LTP5, the Council will continue activity on the proposals already underway and will determine what new proposals to begin progressing. This is subject to the available funding for this activity as part of the normal annual business planning process and KCC’s decision making and governance procedures. To support these decisions, the proposals of the LTP will be assessed against the planned outcomes and objectives using the framework set out in the Annexe of the LTP document.
- 5.2 It is important to recognise that the proposals in the LTP are far from the limit of the work the Council undertakes in transport. There are a wide range of important business-as-usual activities across the transport mix that the Council undertakes each year, funded by existing revenue and capital budgets and recurring grants. The LTP sets out the most significant proposals that will require dedicated efforts to secure funding from government as the LTP sets the policy for seeking such funding.
- 5.3 As proposals are progressed, future executive decisions will continue to make clear where they will enable delivery of LTP proposals. Officers will monitor the plan’s delivery and report to the Cabinet Member concerning any significant changes affecting delivery of the LTP, as appropriate.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 Spend on developing the new LTP has all come from a government grant of £178,671.43 awarded under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. The grant was made for the purpose of preparing a new LTP and developing the proposals it contains. Adoption of the LTP by County Council will not commit the Council to funding the delivery of the plan, which clearly states it is dependent on securing external funding. This would then be subject to the Council's executive decision process.
- 6.2 A financial challenge for delivery of the plan will be not only the capital funding challenge for delivery, but also the ability to progress schemes to that stage given they need costs to be committed prior, for planning and design and other forward funding activities. How the government manages the delivery of capital funding and the conditions associated with it for local transport authorities will be informative to this future financial challenge for delivery of the plan.

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1 As a statutory plan, the LTP must fulfil legislative requirements concerning Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The LTP has been prepared with a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), to consider the potential impact of the proposals on the environment. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has also been undertaken.
- 7.2 These assessments were consulted on alongside the plan and consideration of the feedback has determined that they are sound for the purpose of plan adoption. Where proposals have been assessed as having risks, this will be informative to future planning and development of that proposal should it receive the funding to progress. Detailed environmental assessments at the appropriate level for each proposal will be a part of their future development and delivery.
- 7.3 The SEA regulations require that at this point of plan adoption the Council produce an SEA adoption statement which summarises the SEA, how feedback was considered, and the reasons for choosing to adopt the LTP given the alternatives. The SEA adoption statement is included in Appendix 4.

## **8. Equalities implications**

- 8.1 The new LTP has been prepared with input from an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA). The proposed LTP is assessed as having a likely positive impact owing to the range improvements it aims to see delivered across the transport mix, which would benefit a wide range of users including those people with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Individual proposals would be subject to their own detailed EqIA as part of scheme development. The EqIA is attached as Appendix 5 to this report.

## **9. Governance**

- 9.1 The Local Transport Plan is a 'Policy Framework Document' which means it is one of a range of reserved matters that may only be approved by Full Council. All decisions taken by the Council are expected to align with those plans or strategies which make up the Policy Framework. This Plan therefore formalises some of the key parameters, factors and objectives which must be considered as part of any future Executive decision-making related to transport matters. Implementation and progression of the plan will involve future decisions relating to individual programmes or projects and these will be subject to the normal governance and decision-making processes of the Council.
- 9.2 The Cabinet Member will be responsible for determining whether to seek revision or replacement of the Plan and will engage the Council membership on that in accordance with the constitution.

## **10. Conclusion**

- 10.1 The LTP provides an essential but ambitious long-term transport programme that delivers on the ambition of the Council and its strategy *Framing Kent's Future*. The LTP is balanced to ensure that all parts of the transport mix are covered and so puts the Council in the best position to take opportunities for further funding as they arise. This also makes it adaptable to changing policy focus over its lifetime. The current funding deficits will be the main risk to delivery of the LTP but it sets the policy foundation to seek future external funding.

## **11. Recommendation**

- 11.1 Mr Baker, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, proposes the motion, seconded by Mr Gough, the Leader of Kent County Council, that:  
*"The County Council is asked to approve and adopt Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the Balance."*

## **12. Background Documents**

- 12.1 Local Transport Plan 4 published on the Council website at [https://www.kent.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/72668/Local-transport-plan-4.pdf](https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/72668/Local-transport-plan-4.pdf) .
- 12.2 ETCC report September 2021 at <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk:9071/documents/s105548/LTP5 Report.pdf>
- 12.3 Update to County Council 2022 at <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk:9071/documents/s112786/LTP5 July 2022 CountyCouncil.pdf>



- 12.4 County Council update paper May 2024 at <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk:9071/documents/s125072/LTP5%20May%2024%20County%20Council.pdf>
- 12.5 Results of the 2023 public consultation. <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/23735/widgets/70451/documents/52605>
- 12.6 Results of the 2024 public consultation. <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/34081/widgets/99380/documents/74453>

**13. Appendices**

- 13.1 Appendix 1 – LTP5 Ambition, Outcomes and main proposals
- 13.2 Appendix 2 – Full LTP proposed for adoption
- 13.3 Appendix 3 – 2024 LTP Consultation - You Said We Did report
- 13.4 Appendix 4 – SEA Adoption Statement
- 13.5 Appendix 5 – Equalities Impact Assessment

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# Appendix 1 - LTP5 Ambition, Outcomes, and main proposals

## Ambition

We want to improve the health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity of lives in Kent by delivering a safe, reliable, efficient and affordable transport network across the county and as an international gateway. We will plan for growth in Kent in a way that enables us to combat climate change and preserve Kent's environment.

We will do this by delivering emission-free travel by getting effective dedicated infrastructure to electrify vehicles, increase public transport use and make walking and cycling attractive. This will be enabled by maintaining our highway network and delivering our Vision Zero road safety strategy. These priorities will ensure our networks are future-proof, resilient and meet user needs.

## Outcomes

POLICY OUTCOME 1: The condition of our managed highway networks is brought up to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel and trade.

POLICY OUTCOME 2: Deliver our Vision Zero road safety strategy through all the work we do.

POLICY OUTCOME 3: International travel becomes a more positive part of Kent's economy, facilitated by the county's transport network, with the negative effects of haulage traffic decreased.

POLICY OUTCOME 4: International rail travel returns to Kent and there are improved public transport connections to international hubs.

POLICY OUTCOME 5: Deliver a transport network that is quick to recover from disruptions and future-proofed for growth and innovation, aiming for an infrastructure-first approach to reduce the risk of highways and public transport congestion due to development.

POLICY OUTCOME 6: Journeys to access and experience Kent's historic and natural environments are improved.

POLICY OUTCOME 7: Road-side air quality improves as decarbonisation of travel accelerates, contributing towards the pursuit of carbon budget targets and net zero in 2050.

POLICY OUTCOME 8: A growing public transport system supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased ridership, helping operators to invest in and provide better services.

POLICY OUTCOME 9: Health, air quality, public transport use, congestion and the prosperity of Kent's high streets and communities will be improved by supporting increasing numbers of people to use a growing network of dedicated walking and cycling routes.

POLICY OUTCOME 10: The quality of life in Kent is protected from the risk of worsening noise disturbance from aviation.

## Main proposals in the Local Transport Plan

Type	Proposal
Local Road Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining the road network</li> <li>• Road Safety Vision Zero</li> <li>• A229 Blue Bell Hill</li> <li>• North Thanet Link</li> <li>• Alkham Valley Spitfire Way junction improvements</li> <li>• Sandwich bypass improvements</li> <li>• A2 Gravesend Local Junctions</li> <li>• A226 Galley Hill Road</li> <li>• A228-A264 corridor improvements – West Malling to Tunbridge Wells</li> <li>• Development Management principles</li> <li>• Supporting the shift to electric vehicles through new charging points</li> <li>• Local Road Freight Management</li> </ul>
Strategic (Trunk and Motorway) Road Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Thames Crossing</li> <li>• M2 Junction 1 capacity enhancement</li> <li>• A282 (M25) Junction 1A capacity enhancement</li> <li>• M2 Junction 4 capacity and local development connections</li> <li>• M2 road capacity enhancement</li> <li>• M2 Junction 7 (Brenley Corner) capacity enhancement</li> <li>• South Canterbury A2 junction access enhancements</li> <li>• A2 Dover Access / Duke of York and Whitfield improvements</li> <li>• International haulage traffic management</li> <li>• M25-M26-A21 East-facing slips</li> <li>• A21 enhancements</li> <li>• Trunking: A229 and A249 between M2 and M20</li> <li>• M25 Junction 3 improvements</li> </ul>
Public transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rail freight gauge enhancement for international traffic</li> <li>• Maidstone rail journey time improvements</li> <li>• Gatwick rail access improvements</li> <li>• Dover / Folkestone High Speed rail journey time improvements</li> <li>• International rail passenger services for Kent</li> <li>• Sturry and Canterbury West rail corridor improvements</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local rail services</li> <li>• Improve local access to rail stations</li> <li>• Bus Service Improvement Plan (county-wide)</li> <li>• Thameside Fastrack network growth</li> <li>• Dover Fastrack network growth</li> <li>• 'Hopplit' Mobility as a Service platform</li> <li>• Cycle Hire trials</li> <li>• Shared transport hubs (Mobility Hubs)</li> <li>• Elizabeth line extension to Ebbsfleet</li> <li>• Opposition to Gatwick expansion</li> </ul>
Walking and cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Rights of Way Improvements</li> <li>• Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 15 initial route corridors for focusing improvements on cycling</li> <li>➤ 15 initial walking zones for focusing improvements on walking and wheeling</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 5

## STRIKING THE BALANCE

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DECEMBER 2024







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# 1. FOREWORD



I am pleased to introduce our new Local Transport Plan (LTP), which has been developed taking into consideration the views of all stakeholders and members of the public who took part in our two consultations. Our plan sets out our ambition and outcomes for transport and the proposals we have identified to deliver them. We have a successful track record of ensuring we have a clear plan that can steer delivery across the transport mix.

Whether you drive, catch a bus, take the train, cycle, wheel or walk, we have aimed to strike a balance across our proposals so that delivering our plan should make your journeys better. We can be confident that by delivering across the whole transport mix we can ensure journeys are joined up and cohesive, delivering on the government's emerging Integrated National Transport Strategy.

Kent has a unique position acting as the main gateway for international road and rail travel to Europe. This means Kent's transport networks have an especially important role to play in enabling a growing national economy. Kent is also one of the largest and most populous counties, shortly behind some of the city regions and their combined authorities. With an estimated 1.6 billion trips made across the transport network each year, generated by the county's 1.6 million residents, 70,000 businesses, and the 60 million annual visitors to Kent and Medway, improvements to the network can have a very positive and widespread impact.

I know that many of you will ask how this plan will be delivered given the current challenging financial circumstances and I want to be clear – we will need new funding from government and other external sources to make it a reality. We need funding not only to get schemes built and operating, but also to develop, plan and design options in the first place. What we need to do for each of our proposals is set out in our plan. Some proposals are well developed and can be delivered as soon as we can get funding, whereas others are at much earlier

stages and will need to be developed and options designed so we can deliver value for money and consider local views.

Importantly, our plan is set upon the foundation of seeking the appropriate level of funding to maintain our existing road network. This will ensure it can cope with the demands of growing usage, but also enable it to withstand a changing climate with more extreme weather events.

What we can deliver from this plan will in large part depend on what funding we can secure from government and other sources. What type of proposals that funding can be used on is also often not entirely within our control. However, it has always been the case that we have to work hard to secure funding. Our past successes show that being clear about why and how we want transport networks in Kent to change gives us the greatest likelihood of securing new funding. Our focus on this supports us towards having a fundamentally safe road network that plays its role in the safe-system approach we established in our existing road safety strategy.

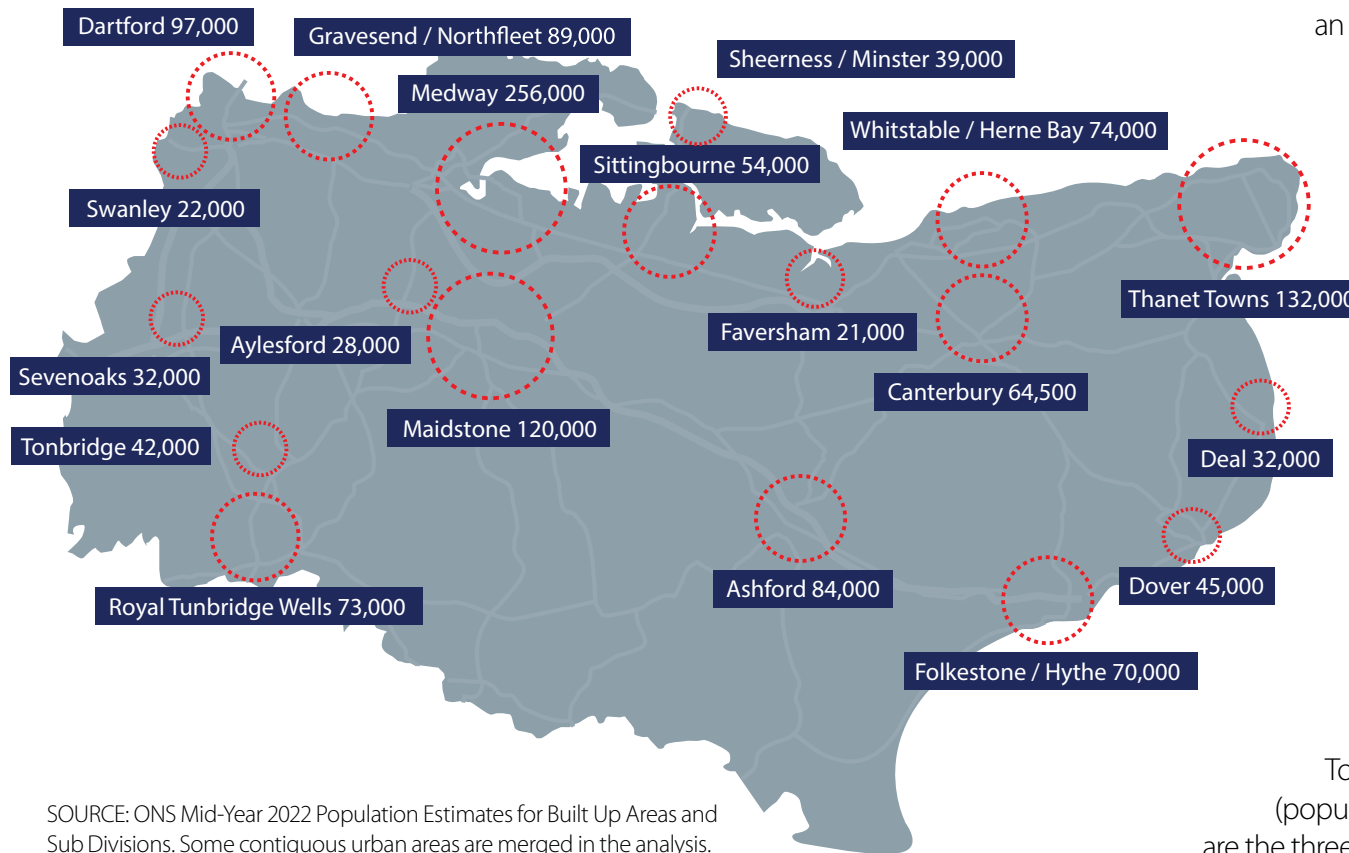
The plan sets the overall strategy and direction for the full transport mix for the coming years and will be delivered in part by the more detailed strategies and plans that sit under its umbrella, allowing us to adapt and focus resources as needed. I am very happy to present our fifth Local Transport Plan to you, and I look forward to the challenge of working to deliver it and fulfil our ambition for Kent.

**Neil Baker,**  
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport  
December 2024

# 2. INTRODUCTION

This LTP, Striking the Balance (2024 – 2037), replaces our fourth plan, Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-2031) following an early review of that plan. We consulted on the emerging LTP in 2023 and again on the full draft plan in 2024. All comments were considered and the plan was updated before being put to

**Figure 1 – Map of Kent showing towns with populations over 20,000. Note that Medway does not form part of the KCC administrative area.**



SOURCE: ONS Mid-Year 2022 Population Estimates for Built Up Areas and Sub Divisions. Some contiguous urban areas are merged in the analysis.

the County Council for adoption. The LTP provides the overarching strategy for the full transport mix in Kent. The ambitions, outcomes and objectives will be delivered by the proposals in this plan, as well as by the sub-strategies and plans that sit under it. These include the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP), and it is generally in these documents that you will find more detailed proposals for specific modes of transport or geographical areas.

The LTP covers the Kent County Council (KCC) administrative area – an area home to circa 1.6 million people with an economy greater in size than several of the Mayoral combined authority regions. As the UK's primary gateway to continental Europe, we are a major centre for innovation in food, life sciences and manufacturing, with a vibrant cultural and creative scene. We are growing rapidly and home to some of Britain's most important locations for regeneration and investment. Kent is an area of strategic importance to the whole country, playing a crucial role in the national economy.

The county has a large number of medium sized towns and conurbations with no single large high density urban centre. This makes travel patterns in the county complex, especially when mixed with the high burden of international road traffic and London orbital traffic. The Thanet Towns (combined population of 132,000), Maidstone (population 120,000) and Dartford (population 97,000) are the three biggest urban areas in the county.

## 2. INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

We also enjoy a rich history and a distinctive environment, including the Kent Downs and High Weald National Landscapes, protected marshes and coastline, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites at Canterbury and the White Cliffs of Dover. These sit alongside the challenges and opportunities from our position at the heart of the UK's European trade flows as well as being closely integrated with the dynamic economy of London and the wider South East.

With rapid population, business and employment growth in recent years, we are a place where people want to live, and businesses want to invest. This creates

challenges for transport but also underlines our reliance on it. However, we are not the local planning authority and therefore we cannot control where most development takes place, notably housing. Our role here is to work with the district and borough councils to mitigate the impact of new development on our road network and help ensure that new residents and businesses have access to sustainable travel options.



Photo credit: Network Rail

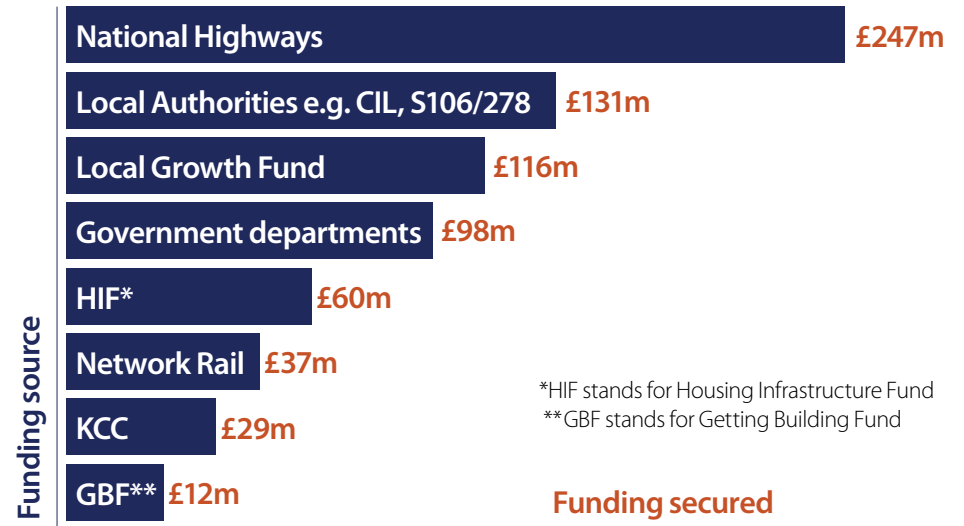
## 2. INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

We know that sustaining investment in our transport networks can improve the county's economy and quality of life, enhancing the prospects of businesses and residents. With partners, we successfully secured investments totalling over £400m to deliver proposals in our fourth Local Transport Plan. We also supported the case for significant further investment in networks we do not manage, such as the motorway and rail networks. Overall, more than £700m has been invested – see Figure 2, delivering the completed schemes detailed in Table 1, whilst further schemes are substantially progressed and soon to be constructed.

The investment we secured was additional to our annual funding for public transport and highway maintenance, and our success demonstrates the impact of a clear plan with clear priorities. It also demonstrates the scale of investment needed, and costs have only risen since this period.

Although there are some priorities carried over from our previous LTP, much has changed since adopting it. The UK has left the European Union, new government policies have been introduced, there have been changes to the funding available to us, and we are seeing the longer-term impacts of the Covid pandemic on how people work and travel. These are just some of the significant changes that have occurred.

**Figure 2 – Funding sources for our last Local Transport Plan (Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031)**



**Table 1 - Schemes delivered from our fourth (last) Local Transport Plan: *Delivering Growth without Gridlock***

- M2 Junction 5 Improvements
- A20 junction improvements between A228 and M20 junctions
- Maidstone to the city of London rail services
- A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junction improvements
- Elements of the Maidstone Integrated Transport package
- M20 Junction 10a
- Sandwich station upgrade
- Herne Relief Road
- Ashford to Ramsgate Rail Journey Time Improvement Program
- Dartford town centre urban realm improvements
- Thanet Parkway Railway Station
- Expansion of Fastrack network in north Kent
- Improvements to A2500 Lower Road and Barton Hill Drive junction
- Ashford International Station Spurs Signalling project
- BRT (Fastrack) network in Dover
- Grovehurst Road and interchange junction with the A249 (under construction)
- Urban Traffic Control improvements across Kent's towns
- Gravesend transport interchange & Rathmore Road link
- Ashford town centre – Station Access junction and crossings improvement
- Maidstone East station redevelopment
- Deal Improvements including new link road
- Folkestone Seafront improvements
- Sittingbourne town centre improvements and transport interchange
- Tonbridge town centre regeneration and urban realm improvements
- Kent Thameside local sustainable transport and St Clements Way junction improvements

## 2. INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

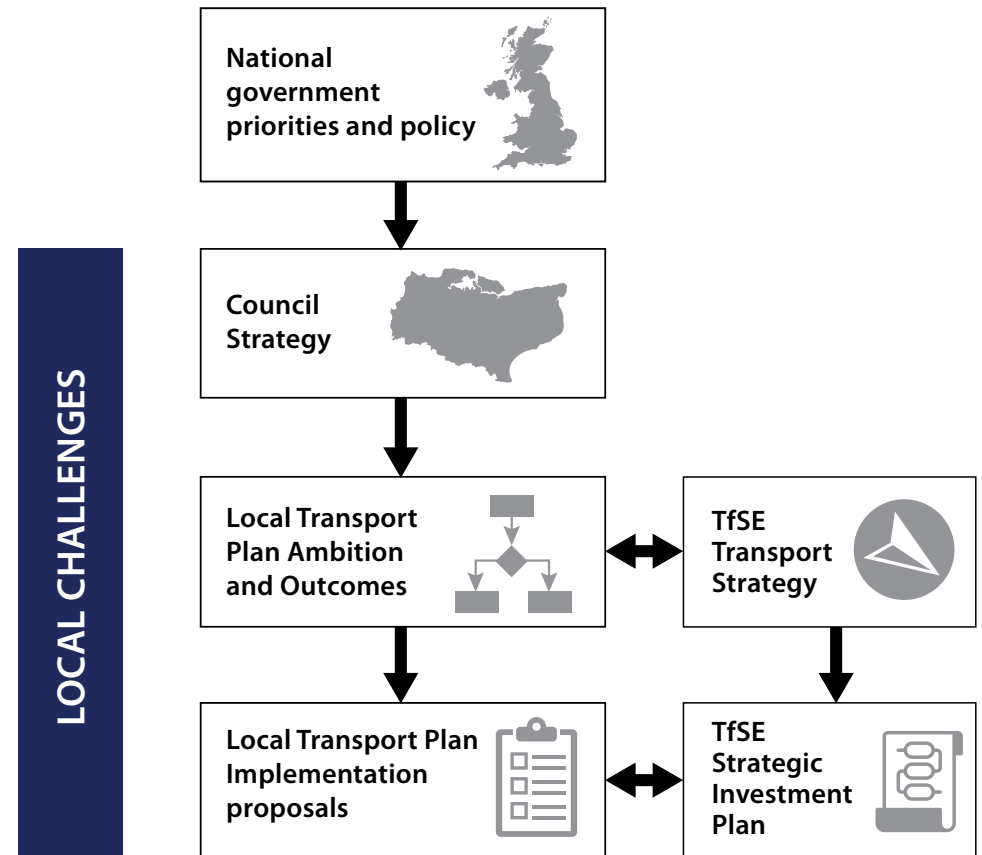
These changes have affected how and when people travel, why they travel, what transport operators and networks can provide, and also the priorities that national and local government have for travel and transport. The challenges arising for transport in our county are summarised in section 5 of our LTP and more detail is provided in our Evidence Base report, where you can also find a review of our previous Local Transport Plan Delivering Growth without Gridlock.

We have a range of policies and proposals to address the challenges and opportunities that these changes present. These proposals cover the local highway network that the Council is responsible for, but also the networks that other operators manage, such as the motorway and trunk road network run by National Highways and the rail network managed by Network Rail and Train Operating Companies (in Kent, this is predominantly Southeastern). Our Local Transport Plan must look at the whole transport network because the different modes of travel (by car, on foot, by train. . .) need to work together to enable many journeys to be completed.

*Framing Kent's Future*, our Council-wide strategy established in May 2022, sets clear commitments that the Council will focus on and so this LTP has been developed with them in mind. Our Supporting Evidence Base explains how our LTP can directly support Framing Kent's Future's three priorities of Levelling Up, Infrastructure for Communities and an Environmental Step Change.

We have developed our plan to ensure that the detailed proposals follow the "golden thread" of policy and strategy that is weaved down from the national level, through our own Council Strategy, and our plan's relationship to the strategy for the region's Sub-national Transport Body (STB), Transport for the South East's (TfSE). These detailed assessments are set out in our Supporting Evidence Base.

**Figure 3 – The golden thread - aligning the LTP with government and council policy**



**In our LTP, you can read in more detail about what it is designed to do, the challenges we think we need to address, and what our ambition is for transport in the county. It then sets out a series of proposals to enable the ambition to be achieved. We have assessed the carbon impacts of our plan and the level of funding needed.**

# 3. WHAT DOES A LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN DO?

## Our responsibility as a Local Transport Authority

Our responsibilities as a County Council (also known as an upper tier local authority) include a role as the Local Transport Authority (LTA). National legislation, such as the Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008, places a duty on Local Transport Authorities to:

- Develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area, and;
- Carry out their functions to implement those policies.

### Due to the acts of Parliament concerning the subject of climate change, we must:

- Take into account any policies announced by the government, and;
- Consider any guidance issued by the Secretary of State concerning mitigation of, or adaptation to, climate change and the protection or improvement of the environment.

We therefore have a statutory requirement to produce a Local Transport Plan, and this is our fifth iteration since the Transport Act in the year 2000.

The legislation also specifies that we must consider any relevant policies established by government and other relevant statutory bodies and have regard to any guidance government has established for the purpose of developing local transport policies. Figure 4 shows the current policy landscape that we have had regard to in developing this Local Transport Plan.

The LTP is for the whole county, but there are differing needs and opportunities across the twelve districts that make up Kent as a whole. Delivering our ambition will mean different things in different places. This is why our proposals are set out in two geographical levels – the county-wide or network-wide proposals (typically larger in scale and impact) and the district-wide proposals (typically more local in scale and impact).

Figure 4– Policy context of our draft Local Transport Plan



\*TfSE stands for *Transport for the South East*

### 3. WHAT DOES A LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN DO? CONTINUED

We understand that Local Transport Authorities have a role to play in helping the government with its aims to decarbonise transport and travel. Given the government is focused on the trajectory of emissions between now and 2050 (known as the carbon budgets, which are interim UK-wide emissions targets to reach net zero in 2050), we have considered how our proposals might contribute to decarbonisation over that timescale. However, our plan period is up to 2037 as this is the most common time horizon that Local Planning Authorities (the district and borough councils) have set out their plans for changes in land use and new development.

#### A costed plan to inform future funding requirements

We have considered the likely funding requirements for delivering this plan. This is essential because everyone needs to understand that the proposals necessary to improve transport networks in Kent will need sustained and significant funding given directly to the Council, transport providers or other delivery bodies. The funding requirements for delivery of the plan are set out in section 11.

It is clear that the scale of change needed cannot be funded by Kent County Council alone. To have certainty in what we can deliver, we are reliant on receiving long-term funding from government that is ring-fenced for transport.





## 4. DELIVERING OUR COUNCIL-WIDE STRATEGIES: *FRAMING KENT'S FUTURE* AND *SECURING KENT'S FUTURE*

Our Council Strategy has a horizon to 2026; however, the commitments set out in *Framing Kent's Future* will no doubt hold true and require sustained work past this point. In the short term, we are delivering on *Securing Kent's Future* to ensure that the services we deliver are sustainable given our expected budgets. Our Local Transport Plan reflects the financial challenges we face and the proposals we have set out are dependent on external funding being provided, such as from government. We have also taken a precautionary approach to new opportunities – therefore we have set out clear next steps for new proposals that are proportionate to our financial circumstances.

Our priorities set out in Framing Kent's Future are:

- Priority 1: Levelling up Kent
- Priority 2: Infrastructure for communities
- Priority 3: Environmental step change
- Priority 4: New models of care and support

Within each priority we have set ourselves a range of commitments, many that directly concern our work to make journeys in Kent better or will be supported by the outcomes that a good transport network can deliver. For each priority and its commitments, *Framing Kent's Future* clearly describes what actions we will take. Our Supporting Evidence Base report details what this LTP proposes to address those actions, therefore delivering our overarching Council strategy.

**Figure 5 (right) – The Council-wide priorities of Framing Kent's Future**



# 5. THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

In developing this plan, we considered evidence about travel in the county now and how it might change in the future. We also know that in Kent we face some key challenges that we will need to act on. There is more detail about how we identified these challenges in our Supporting Evidence Base.

## CHALLENGE 1

Our highway assets do not receive all the funding they need, which risks them becoming less resilient to new pressures, such as greater use and changes to the climate.

## CHALLENGE 2

Following a decline in the number of injuries and fatalities on Kent's roads, these levels rose in 2021 and remained elevated in 2022 against an intended declining trend given our Vision Zero strategy.

## CHALLENGE 3

Traffic is causing congestion, poor air quality and negatively impacting Kent's economy.

## CHALLENGE 4

Transport challenges in Kent arise from how the existing population of 1.6 million people and 70,000 businesses in the county choose to travel as well as traffic generated by new developments.

## CHALLENGE 5

Some indicators of public health, such as obesity and life expectancy, have been worsening.

## CHALLENGE 6

The financial viability of the public transport service has declined due to cost pressures and changes in passenger demand, requiring increased levels of public funding support.

## CHALLENGE 7

Kent's international gateways need government leadership – the impacts that arise and affect our local communities and the national economy cannot be resolved entirely by us.

## CHALLENGE 8

Related to all the previous points, carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) emissions reductions from management and use of the road network are forecast to remain at too high a level to adequately contribute towards reducing the worst effects of climate change.

## CHALLENGE 9

We need higher levels of funding and need to know what funding we will have over the coming years so we can improve transport in Kent.

## 6. OUR AMBITION FOR TRANSPORT IN THE COUNTY

**Our ambition for what our Plan will achieve and how we intend to do that is:**

- **We want to improve the health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity of lives in Kent by delivering a safe, reliable, efficient and affordable transport network across the county and as an international gateway. We will plan for growth in Kent in a way that enables us to combat climate change and preserve Kent's environment.**
- **We will do this by delivering emission-free travel by getting effective dedicated infrastructure to electrify vehicles, increase public transport use and make walking and cycling attractive. This will be enabled by maintaining our highway network and delivering our Vision Zero road safety strategy. These priorities will ensure our networks are future-proof, resilient and meet user needs.**

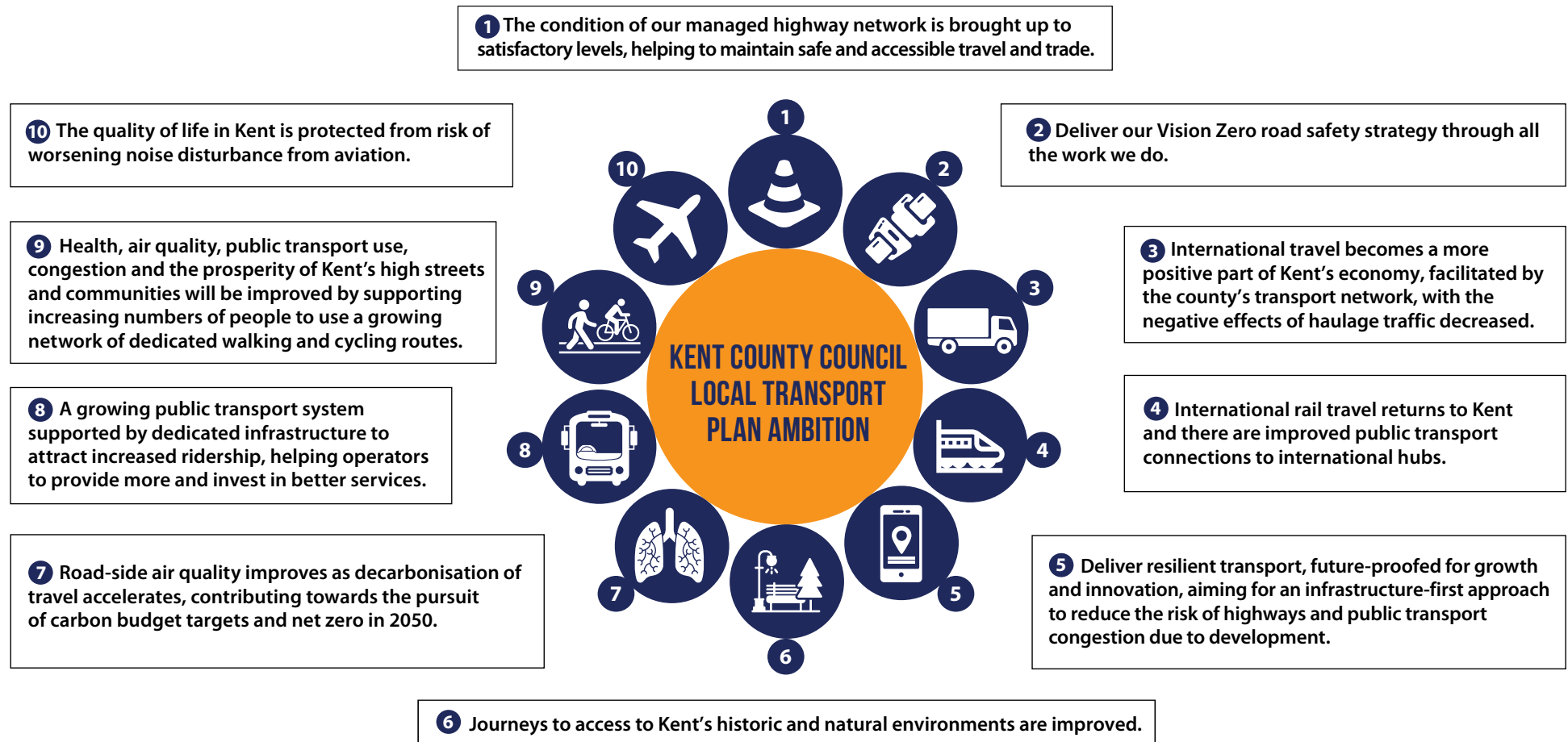
**Further detail on the policies we considered and the alignment of our ambition with those is set out in the Supporting Evidence Base report.**

# 7. OUR PLANNED OUTCOMES

We have developed ten policy outcomes that will drive our focus and efforts to fulfil our ambition and tackle the challenges we face. Our planned policy outcomes are shown in Figure 6.

Our planned outcomes are not in any priority order, but they cover all parts of the transport mix so that we can strike the balance across the different modes and needs for journeys in Kent. Delivering them will not be easy but the objectives we have set for each outcome demonstrate the types of actions we will pursue and help us to monitor our progress, to give us the best chance of having a positive impact.

**Figure 6 – Planned policy outcomes from our draft Local Transport Plan**





## POLICY OUTCOME 1:

The condition of our managed transport network is brought up to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel and trade.



## POLICY OUTCOME 2:

Deliver our Vision Zero road safety strategy through all the work we do.



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 1:

- A) Achieve the funding necessary to deliver a sustained fall in the value of the backlog of maintenance work over the life of our Local Transport Plan.

We currently receive funding to maintain our highway network from the government and council tax. However, the competing pressures on our County Council budget from all the other services we provide, as well as the scale of the work required on our highways compared to the annual funding we receive, means that further funding will need to come from government.



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 2:

- A) Achieve a fall over time in the volume of people killed or very seriously injured on KCC's managed road network, working towards the trajectory set by Vision Zero for 2050.

Our Vision Zero strategy sets specific objectives for a reduction in deaths and very serious (life-changing) injuries on our managed highway network considering all users of the highway (motorists, pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists, wheelchair, mobility aid users, and so on). The emphasis is on working towards sustained reductions over time, but this is challenging. The Vision Zero approach is designed to set a stretching target that drives activity through the Safe System Approach so that our actions consider all the different areas that affect safety outcomes for highway users.



## POLICY OUTCOME 3:

International travel becomes a more positive part of Kent's economy, facilitated by the county's transport network, with the negative effects of haulage traffic decreased.



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 3:

- A) Increase resilience of the road network serving the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel by adding holding capacity for HGVs across the southeast region to support establishment of a long term alternative to Operation Brock.
- B) Increase resilience of the road network servicing the Port of Dover through delivery of the bifurcation strategy including improvements to the M2 / A2 road corridor and its links to the M20 and a new Lower Thames Crossing for traffic towards the north, and utilising further non-road freight opportunities.



Photo credit: Getlink Ltd



## POLICY OUTCOME 4:

International rail travel returns to Kent and there are improved public transport connections to international hubs.

Our objectives aim to ensure that the stations in Kent do not become barriers in themselves to future international rail operations, either because they do not meet the new border control requirements or because connectivity from Kent and the wider region stop them from being attractive locations for international rail operators to serve.



Sergii Figurnyi - stock.adobe.com



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 4:

- A) International rail travel returns to Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International stations, supported by the infrastructure investment needed at Kent's stations to ensure they provide secure and straightforward journeys across the UK-EU border within the entry exit system.
- B) There is a reduction in the time it takes to reach international rail stations by public transport compared to conditions in 2023.

We know that the requirements on international travel between the UK and Europe are going to continue to change as new border controls are introduced by the European Commission. We have seen that the impact of changes to border controls coupled with the impact of the pandemic has prevented international rail services from operating in Kent.



## POLICY OUTCOME 5:

Deliver a transport network that is quick to recover from disruptions and future-proofed for growth and innovation, aiming for an infrastructure-first approach to reduce the risk of highways and public transport congestion due to development.



## POLICY OUTCOME 6:

Journeys to access and experience Kent's historic and natural environments are improved.



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 5:

- A) Strengthen delivery of our Network Management Duty to deliver the expeditious movement of traffic by using our new moving traffic enforcement powers and modernising the provision of on-street parking enforcement.
- B) Reduce the amount of forecast future congestion and crowding on highways and public transport that is associated with demand from development by securing funding and delivery of our Local Transport Plan.
- C) The prospects for the future of transport increase across the whole county, with new innovations in transport services having a clear pathway to trial or delivery in Kent.



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 6:

- A) Proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution to providing new, quicker, or more inclusive access to historic and natural environment destinations in the county, with proposals targeting access to such locations where appropriate.

Our overall ambition is to improve the health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity of Kent. The transport network has a vital role to play in this and it can be achieved alongside other co-benefits and outcomes outlined in this strategy. After all, the unique historic and natural environment in Kent is often why people choose to live, work and study in our county.





## POLICY OUTCOME 7:

Road-side air quality improves as decarbonisation of travel accelerates, contributing towards the pursuit of carbon budget targets and net zero in 2050.

These objectives focus on the close co-benefits of decarbonisation and improved air quality from reduced emissions at the tailpipe and is aligned with the government's Decarbonising Transport strategy



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 7:

- A) Reduce the volume of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions entering the atmosphere associated with surface transport activity on the KCC managed highway network by an amount greater than our forecast "business as usual" scenario. This means achieving a greater fall than those currently forecast of 9% by 2027, 19% by 2032 and 29% by 2037.
- B) No area in Kent is left behind by the revolution in electric motoring, with charging infrastructure deployed close to residential areas, to reduce barriers to adoption.
- C) Proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution to providing lower emissions from transport in Air Quality Management Areas in the county.





## POLICY OUTCOME 8:

A growing public transport system supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased ridership, helping operators to invest in and provide better services.



## POLICY OUTCOME 9:

Health, air quality, public transport use, congestion and the prosperity of Kent’s high streets and communities will be improved by supporting increasing numbers of people to use a growing network of dedicated walking and cycling routes.



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 8:

- A) We will aim to obtain further funding to deliver the outcomes of our Bus Service Improvement Plan (or its successor) beyond its current horizon of 2024/25. We will ensure that our Local Transport Plan proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution towards achieving our Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- B) We will identify and support industry delivery of priority railway stations for accessibility improvements and route improvements to reduce journey times and improve reliability.

Our objectives for public transport address the main challenges facing bus and rail transport. For the former, it is the need for long-term sustained and sufficient funding from government to ensure services attract passengers.

Although rail services have less flexibility than buses, the advantage of dedicated tracks means they can be highly reliable and efficient. But to make rail an attractive option means removing barriers to their use, such as long wait times due to low frequencies, high ticket prices, and physical barriers such as outdated stations on a rail network that established itself in the Victorian era.



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 9:

- A) We will aim to deliver walking and cycling improvements at prioritised locations in Kent to increase activity levels and support Kent’s diverse economy, presented in a Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Walking and cycling are already essential parts of people’s journeys in Kent. Almost everyone walks or wheels for at least some part of their journeys, whether it’s to shop around the town centre, get from the train station to the beach, or from the bus stop to the GP surgery. Supporting everyone to be able to walk, wheel and cycle with confidence will help meet Active Travel England’s target of 50% trips walked, wheeled or cycled in towns and cities by 2030.



## POLICY OUTCOME 10:

The quality of life in Kent is protected from the risk of worsening noise disturbance from aviation.



## POLICY OBJECTIVE 10:

- A) Where there is evidence of impacts on our communities, we will make representations on airport expansion proposals and argue for measures to mitigate their effects.**

In recent years there have been a series of airport proposals that could affect communities in Kent. Our former LTP set out our strategic approach and we continue to ensure that negative impacts of any new proposals can be addressed. Significant noise disturbance from flight paths has been shown to have detrimental impacts on health and wellbeing, and therefore we will try to impact any proposals to avoid them worsening the noise environment.

### *Delivering our outcomes.*

Our proposals are set out in the next sections. They each have a positive impact on one or more of the ten outcomes that we want to achieve, which is why they form part of our plan. Some of our proposals may have a negative impact on an outcome but on balance have been judged to make an overall positive contribution to achieving our ambition.

Our Supporting Evidence Base report sets out in more detail how each of the proposals in our LTP delivers against the outcomes and objectives.

# 8. NETWORK-WIDE PROPOSALS

We have identified a series of network-wide proposals that deliver on the ambition and outcomes of our plan. These network-wide proposals are so called because they have either or both of the following characteristics:

- A scheme of a scale that will require action by KCC across more than one district in Kent, or beyond the boundary of Kent itself.
- A scheme with an impact that is likely to affect the way people or goods travel, or has impacts across more than one district.

Whilst these are the focus of our LTP, we recognise that there are also a series of smaller scale proposals where their delivery or impact is likely to be isolated within the district they are based. Nevertheless, these proposals have the potential to make a positive contribution towards achieving the ambition and outcomes of our plan. These local proposals are covered in the district-specific sections.

## Completing delivery of our last Local Transport Plan's proposals

These proposals remain priorities for us, and we have already taken decisions as a Council concerning the delivery of some of them. In some instances, such as the A20 junction proposal, further development work and new decisions by the Cabinet Member may be required. We will continue working with developers, Local Planning Authorities, National Highways, and government to ensure the proposals are delivered. They are:

- Bearsted Road
- The Paddock Wood junction improvements at Mascalls Court Road with Badsell Road
- The Sturry Link Road in Canterbury
- The A2-A249 Key Street junction in Sittingbourne
- The A20 London Road junction with Mills Road and Hall Road in Aylesford

## Working with partners across the region through Transport for the South East

We work within a collective of local authorities called Transport for the South East (TfSE). Primarily funded by the government, with some funding support also from its member authorities, TfSE is responsible for championing the needs of the region and is well-placed to make the argument for proposals with a cross-boundary impact.

The transport schemes TfSE are focused on progressing are:

- Cross-boundary rail services from Kent towards locations like Gatwick Airport in West Sussex.
- Improvements to the rail line from Ashford International towards Hastings in East Sussex.
- Extension of Elizabeth line services into north Kent from the line's current terminus at Abbey Wood.
- The A21 National Highways corridor through southern Kent and into East Sussex.
- Freight gauge enhancements to benefit freight transport from the Midlands and north all the way to the Channel crossing in Kent.

Some of these schemes could have a positive impact on Kent and, we think, significant progress can be made in the coming years. Therefore, we have set out further proposals for some of them in this plan.

We will work with TfSE to direct their resources, expertise, and representation on behalf of our county towards further progress on these schemes. This will include building a case for investment that demonstrates the benefits beyond Kent alone.

### A balanced set of proposals

Our network-wide proposals aim to strike a balance across the mix of transport in Kent. This is in recognition of the needs of all users and the different types of places where people live and work.

We think a balanced approach is the right approach because it gives us the best opportunity to secure improvements to deliver on our ambition and outcomes. No part of the transport mix is overlooked, with clear specific proposals for each part waiting to be developed and delivered when we obtain suitable funding.

Some of the proposals, if funded, would deliver a more detailed programme of actions both county-wide and tailored for different places. This is particularly the case for proposals such as further road maintenance, delivery of our Vision Zero road safety strategy, or delivery of our Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The full range of network-wide proposals are shown in Table 2. They are presented for each part of the transport network:

- Strategic Road Network (motorways and trunk roads managed by National Highways);
- Local Road Network (all roads managed by Kent County Council);
- Public transport (buses, rail services and other types of shared mobility);
- Walking and cycling.



Table 2 - Balance of network-wide proposals across the transport mix

Strategic Road Network	Local Road Network	Public Transport Network	Walking and Cycling Network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Thames Crossing</li> <li>• M2 Junction 1 capacity enhancement</li> <li>• A282 (M25) Junction 1A capacity enhancement</li> <li>• M2 Junction 4 capacity and local development connections</li> <li>• M2 road capacity enhancement</li> <li>• A2 Brenley Corner (M2 Junction 7) capacity enhancement</li> <li>• South Canterbury A2 junction access enhancements</li> <li>• A2 Dover Access / Duke of York and Whitfield improvements</li> <li>• International haulage traffic management</li> <li>• M25-M26-A21 East-facing slips</li> <li>• M25 Junction 3 improvements</li> <li>• A21 enhancements</li> <li>• Trunking: A229 and A249 between M2 and M20</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining the road network</li> <li>• Road Safety Vision Zero</li> <li>• A229 Blue Bell Hill</li> <li>• North Thanet Link</li> <li>• Alkham Valley Spitfire Way junction improvements</li> <li>• Sandwich bypass improvements</li> <li>• A2 Gravesend local junctions</li> <li>• A226 Galley Hill Road</li> <li>• A228-A264 corridor improvements – West Malling to Tunbridge Wells</li> <li>• Development management principles</li> <li>• Supporting the shift to electric vehicles through new charging points</li> <li>• Local road freight management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rail freight gauge enhancement for international traffic</li> <li>• Maidstone rail journey time improvements</li> <li>• Gatwick rail access improvements</li> <li>• Dover / Folkestone High Speed rail journey time improvements</li> <li>• International rail passenger services for Kent</li> <li>• Sturry and Canterbury West rail corridor improvements</li> <li>• Local rail services</li> <li>• Improve local access to rail stations</li> <li>• Bus Service Improvement Plan (county-wide)</li> <li>• Thameside Fastrack network growth</li> <li>• Dover Fastrack network growth</li> <li>• 'Hoppit' Mobility as a Service platform</li> <li>• Cycle Hire trials</li> <li>• Shared transport hubs (Mobility Hubs)</li> <li>• Elizabeth line extension to Ebbsfleet</li> <li>• Opposition to Gatwick expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Rights of Way Improvements</li> <li>• Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 initial route corridors for focusing improvements on cycling</li> <li>15 initial walking zones for focusing improvements on walking and wheeling</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 8.1 STRATEGIC ROAD NETWORK PROPOSALS

In this section each proposal concerning the Strategic Road Network (SRN) nationally important motorways and trunk roads – is detailed. We would not deliver the proposals in this section ourselves, rather they would be the responsibility of National Highways, who manage the SRN. The proposals we have identified are centred on ensuring that the A2/M2 and M20 enable local journeys to be made effectively by ensuring they have the capacity and resilience to cope with national and international traffic.

The proposals are designed to ensure that traffic using the SRN accesses it in the most effective and efficient way possible. This is to limit the burden on the local highway network in our towns and villages where congestion can occur.

### LOWER THAMES CROSSING

LOCATION: GRAVESHAM, NORTH KENT, TO THURROCK AND THROUGH ESSEX TO THE M25

#### Strategic aims:

- To add resilience to the Kent highway network by providing new capacity on an alternative route to the Dartford Crossing – supporting the bifurcation strategy of splitting traffic across the A2/M2 and M20 corridors.
- To support the movement of traffic across the county, including between the Channel crossing terminals and the Midlands and the North.
- To minimise adverse impacts from the growth in traffic as the population and economy grows.

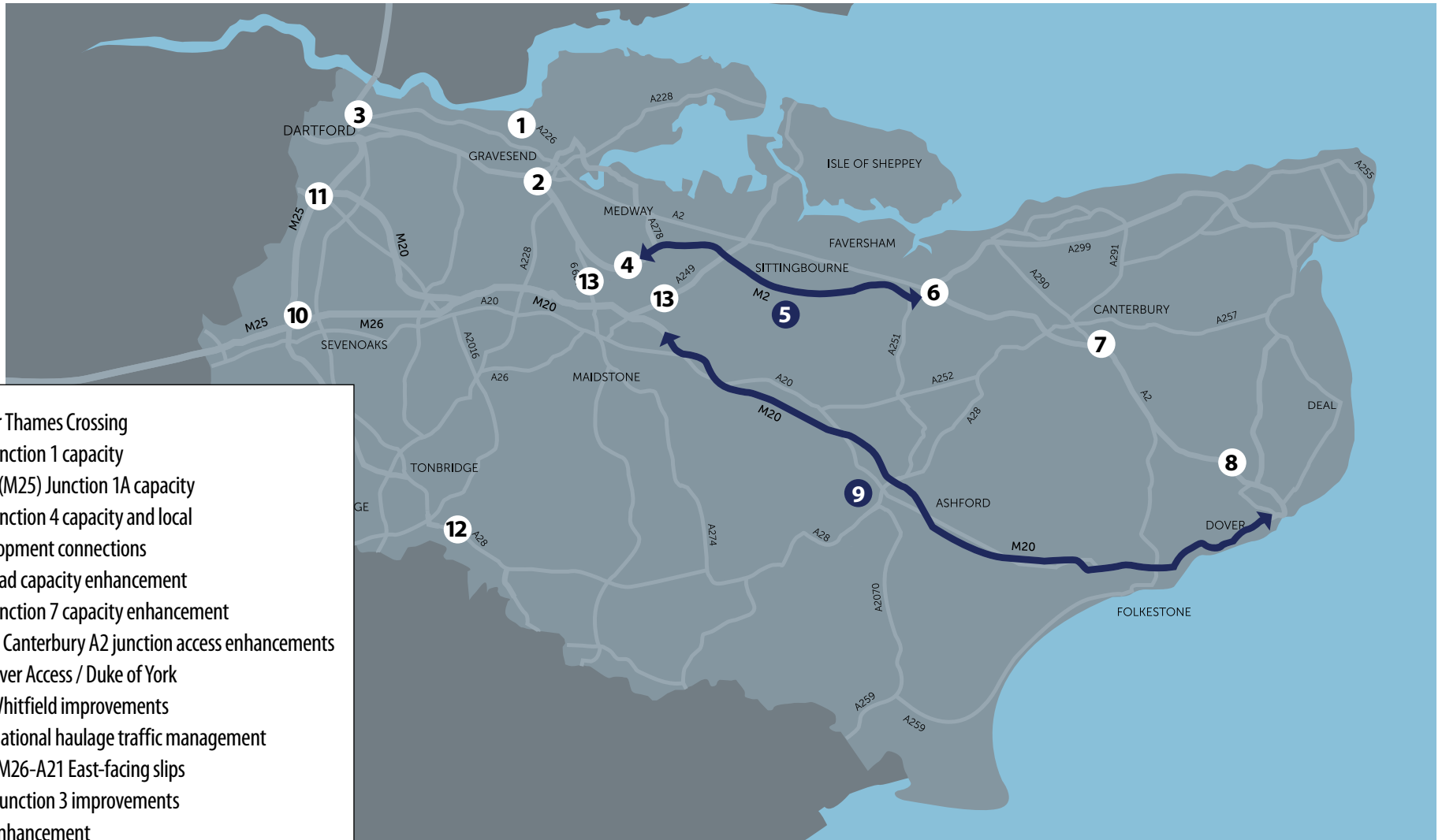
#### What needs to happen?

The Lower Thames Crossing and the wider road network mitigations needed to realise its benefits must be funded, consented, and delivered. The scheme is critical to Kent and the nation's wider highway network – funding must be forthcoming by National Highways and the government to guarantee its delivery.



Photo credit: National Highways

Figure 7 - Strategic Road Network proposals



1. Lower Thames Crossing
2. M2 Junction 1 capacity
3. A282 (M25) Junction 1A capacity
4. M2 Junction 4 capacity and local development connections
5. M2 road capacity enhancement
6. M2 Junction 7 capacity enhancement
7. South Canterbury A2 junction access enhancements
8. A2 Dover Access / Duke of York and Whitfield improvements
9. International haulage traffic management
10. M25-M26-A21 East-facing slips
11. M25 Junction 3 improvements
12. A21 enhancement
13. Trunking: A229 and A249 between M2 and M20



## M2 JUNCTION 1

LOCATION: GRAVESHAM – EASTERN SIDE OF THE DISTRICT, CLOSE TO THE BOUNDARY WITH MEDWAY COUNCIL.

### Strategic aims:

- To ensure the junction avoids delays for the Strategic Road Network, to maintain the planned benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing and KCC's proposed bifurcation strategy which concerns the A2/M2 strategic road corridor.

### What needs to happen?

National Highways needs to establish the capacity shortfall at Junction 1 and the primary drivers of that over future years. National Highways should at a minimum complete the assessment of scheme options to inform planning of future Road Investment Strategies and identify any dependency associated with development growth pressures.

## A282 JUNCTION 1A (M25) CAPACITY

LOCATION: DARTFORD – ON APPROACH TO DARTFORD CROSSING OVER THE THAMES.

### Strategic aims:

- To reduce the disruptive effect of the Dartford Crossing traffic and delays on local traffic in Dartford.
- Enable the A282 Junction 1a to fulfil its role for local movement on the A206, addressing severance caused by the Dartford Crossing approach.
- To reduce the incidences of congestion and therefore its contribution towards poor air quality.

### What needs to happen?

The challenges are current, associated with existing cross-river traffic and the performance of the Dartford Crossing. Options need to be developed for the design of works to achieve the strategic aims and full funding found to deliver them. The timing of the works needs to be carefully planned around the Lower Thames Crossing project's delivery programme.



## M2 JUNCTION 4 CAPACITY

LOCATION: MEDWAY, ON THE BORDER WITH MAIDSTONE BOROUGH

### Strategic aims:

- To ensure the junction avoids delays for the Strategic Road Network, to maintain the planned benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing and the bifurcation strategy which concerns the A2/M2 strategic road corridor.

### What needs to happen?

National Highways needs to establish the capacity shortfall at Junction 4 and the primary drivers of that over future years. National Highways should commence the project lifecycle process to inform planning of future Road Investment Strategy activity and any dependency associated with development growth pressures.

## M2 CORRIDOR CAPACITY

LOCATION: MEDWAY TO SWALE, FROM JUNCTION 4 TO JUNCTION 7 OF THE M2

### Strategic aims:

- To ensure the corridor avoids delays for the Strategic Road Network, to maintain the planned benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing and the bifurcation strategy which concerns the A2/M2 strategic road corridor.

### What needs to happen?

National Highways needs to diagnose the capacity shortfall based on planned changes to the wider road network and growth impacts over time. National Highways should at a minimum complete the 'Options Phase' to inform planning of future Road Investment Strategy activity and any dependency associated with development growth pressures.

## A2 BRENLEY CORNER (M2 JUNCTION 7) CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT

LOCATION: SWALE BOROUGH, EAST OF FAVERSHAM

### Strategic aims:

- To ensure the junction avoids delays for the Strategic Road Network, to maintain the planned benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing and the bifurcation strategy which concerns the A2/M2 strategic road corridor.
- To ensure the junction avoids delays for the strategic and local road network associated with future traffic levels, including from development growth.
- To ensure safety at the junction is improved and supports achievement of KCC's and National Highways Road Safety strategies.
- To improve local connectivity through the junction area for all types of travel.

### What needs to happen?

The scheme needs to be progressed within the third investment cycle of the Road Investment Strategy, achieving planning consent and ready for construction by the end of the cycle in 2030. This will enable the scheme to be delivered and open in time for the completion of the Lower Thames Crossing.



Photo credit © N Chadwick (cc-by-sa/2.0)

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## A2 SOUTH CANTERBURY ACCESS

LOCATION: CANTERBURY, BETWEEN A2 WINCHEAP INTERCHANGE AND A2 BRIDGE INTERCHANGE

### Strategic aims:

- To improve journey times and reduce delays from congestion by enabling more direct access to the A2 from southern Canterbury.
- To reduce the requirement for traffic joining the A2 London-bound and leaving the A2 coast-bound to use less suitable local rural roads and undertake multiple junction movements.
- To support traffic from the strategic road network to access public transport for onward journeys into historic city of Canterbury.
- To support growth in the Canterbury area by reducing the traffic burden on the existing junctions which lack all-movement purpose built on and off slips.

### What needs to happen?

The scheme needs to be designed and funded for delivery, with necessary approvals from National Highways. The scheme needs to provide an effective link to the local road network to achieve all the intended benefits.

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## A2 DOVER ACCESS / DUKE OF YORK AND WHITFIELD IMPROVEMENTS

LOCATION: DOVER DISTRICT, BETWEEN A2 LYDDEN HILL JUNCTION TO A2 DUKE OF YORK JUNCTION

### Strategic aims:

- To increase resilience on the A2 corridor to the Port of Dover, supporting the bifurcation strategy and delivering national economic benefits by enabling international trade and travel.
- To relieve congestion on the approach to the Port of Dover, avoiding disrupting local traffic for the benefit of the quality of life of Dover residents, businesses and visitors.
- To improve the safety of the Strategic Road Network into Dover.
- To ensure the local road network and its junctions with the A2 are able to efficiently serve travel from the existing community and increased travel demand from local growth sites.

### What needs to happen?

National Highways needs to resume planning and design of options and set out a plan for when delivery will occur, subject to any necessary planning consents being obtained. We propose that National Highways should target planning approval in the third Road Investment Strategy cycle which runs from 2025-2030, with delivery in the following cycle running from 2030-2035. The required works to the local road junctions need to be designed and co-ordinated to support local growth and cater for potential long term delay in delivery by National Highways.

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## INTERNATIONAL HAULAGE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

LOCATION: COUNTYWIDE, WITH A FOCUS ON THE APPROACHES TO THE CHANNEL CROSSING TERMINALS OF DOVER AND EUROTUNNEL

### Strategic aims:

- To increase resilience on the M2/A2 and M20/A20 road corridors to the Port of Dover, to support the KCC bifurcation strategy.
- To relieve congestion on the approach to the Port of Dover and Channel Tunnel rail terminal at Folkestone, to support international trade and travel and avoid disrupting local traffic for the benefit of the quality of life of Kent residents, businesses, and visitors.
- To reduce the need for traffic management on-highway, including a permanent solution to remove the need for Operation Brock, by ensuring suitable vehicle management facilities exist across the corridor including at the international terminals.
- To ensure that international traffic is kept to the correct routes to reduce disruption and disturbance in local communities in Kent.

### What needs to happen?

We will continue to work with the government in developing and assessing traffic management interventions, from on-the-ground infrastructure through to digital communications and applications. This is to help ensure changes to border controls and goods checks are delivered smoothly and effectively. These efforts will include establishing increased capacity to manage and process traffic off the road network, including at the international terminals.

We will work through Transport for the South East to ensure the burden of requirements for lorry facilities are shared across the region. We will continue to work with the existing HGV parking providers to support them in obtaining funding when opportunities arise from government to improve existing welfare facilities.

## M25 – M26 – A21 JUNCTION – EAST FACING SLIPS

LOCATION: SEVENOAKS DISTRICT, NORTH WEST OF SEVENOAKS TOWN AT M25 JUNCTION 5

### Strategic aims:

- To reduce traffic volumes along the A25 associated with west to east movements from the M25 to the M26 (for the M20), with requisite improvements to road safety, air quality and junction performance given significant growth along this corridor.
- To remove heavy traffic from inappropriate rural roads through villages such as Seal, Kemsing, Otford and Halstead.

### What needs to happen?

Given past work and lack of progress, it is proposed that the scheme be kept under review, to identify any new imperative and critical new drivers for the scheme's case which would justify National Highways reconsidering options.

## A21 ENHANCEMENT

LOCATION: TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH, A21 ROUTE BETWEEN PEMBURY AND LAMBERHURST

### Strategic aims:

- To reduce traffic congestion and delay and ensure the route can accommodate growth within southern Kent and East Sussex.

### What needs to happen?

There needs to be a clear plan by National Highways for how planning and optioneering can take place, setting a clear timescale for progressing the scheme through the Road Investment Strategy. As the only trunk road route from Tunbridge Wells towards Hastings, this scheme would enhance the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury dualling that opened in September 2017.



### M25 JUNCTION 3

LOCATION: SEVENOAKS – SWANLEY INTERCHANGE – JUNCTION WITH THE M20 AND A20

**Strategic aims:**

- To ensure the junction avoids delays for the Strategic and Local Road Networks, especially at times of incident at the Dartford Crossing.
- To ensure the junction can serve travel from the existing community and increased travel demand from local growth sites.

**What needs to happen?**

National Highways needs to establish the capacity shortfall at Junction 3, including working with promoters of local growth sites to determine potential options to address constraints. As a short-term measure, the lane markings need to be reviewed and improved.

### FURTHER TRUNKING THE LOCAL ROAD NETWORK

LOCATION: MAIDSTONE DISTRICT, A229 BETWEEN M20 JUNCTION 6 TO M2 JUNCTION 3; AND A249 BETWEEN M20 JUNCTION 7 AND M2 JUNCTION 5

**Strategic aims:**

- To obtain national recognition of the high volume of local and longer distance traffic using the routes, the criticality of their role in enabling strategic movement of traffic within and through Kent.
- To ensure that the roads receive long term and sustained investment for their maintenance, renewal, operation and upgrade as part of the national Road Investment Strategy delivered by National Highways, including delivery of National Highway policy aims concerning safety and the environment.

**What needs to happen?**

The Department for Transport needs to determine whether trunking of the routes should proceed, and we will support National Highways in any remaining business case development it may need to undertake to complete the trunking process. The A229 improvement scheme that we are developing remains necessary for delivery and must proceed regardless of which highway body is responsible for the road (see our Local Road Network proposal for the A229).



## 8.2 LOCAL ROAD NETWORK PROPOSALS

This section details each network-wide proposal concerning the Local Road Network, which are the roads that we manage. These proposals, that we would deliver in our capacity as the local highway authority, are designed to ensure that we can best fulfil our network management duty and respond to the variety of pressures on our local roads, ranging from new housing development through to the interface with the Strategic Road Network. The proposals also concern how we can best utilise our highway assets to ensure that the shift to electric vehicles is facilitated by better access to on-street charging infrastructure for as many people as possible.

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### MAINTAINING THE ROAD NETWORK

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE.

#### Strategic aims:

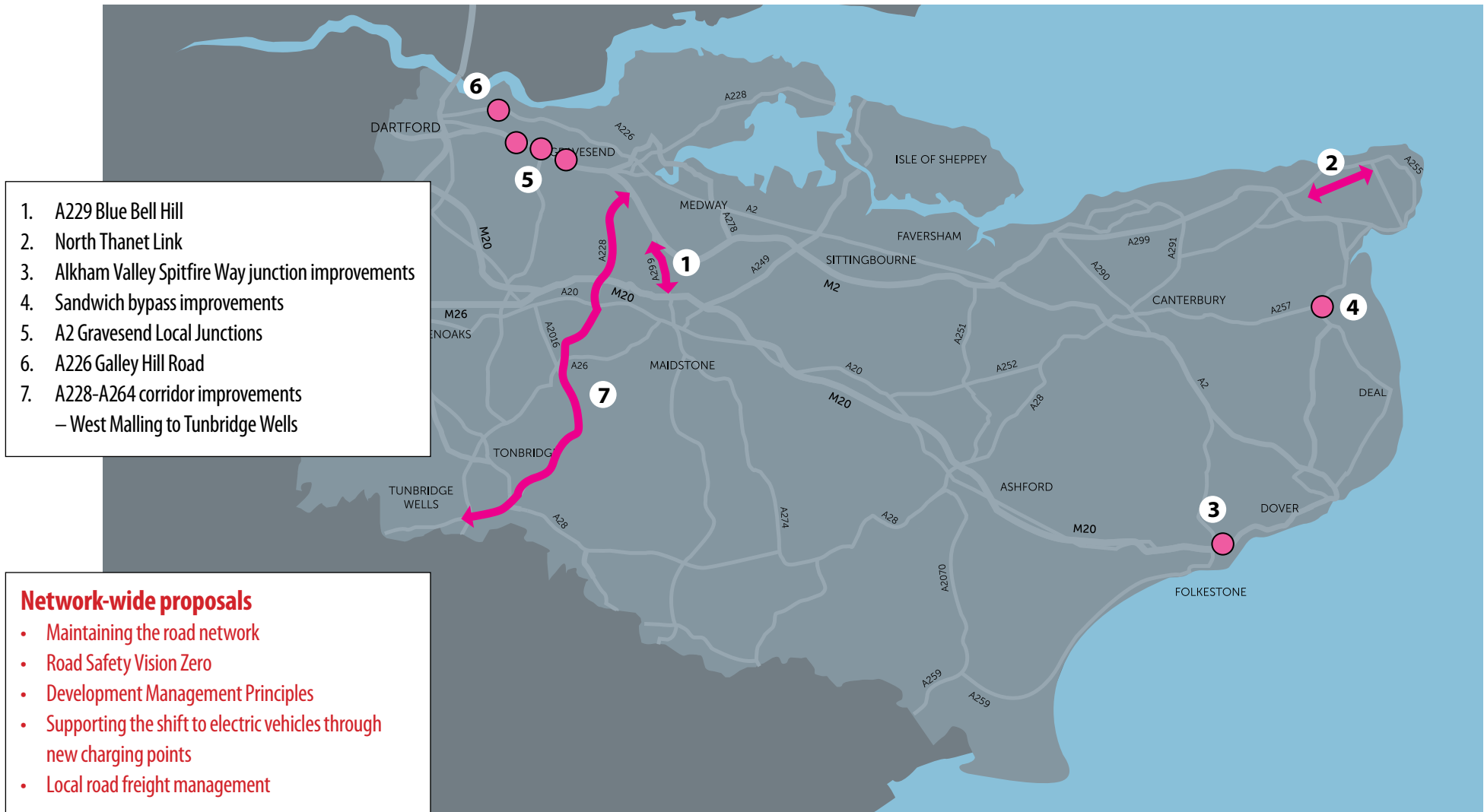
- To deliver our Highways Asset Management Plan and achieve safe and reliable journeys to be made around and through the county.
- To reduce the backlog of maintenance work over a long-term sustained period.
- To ensure our highways network enables Kent's businesses and residents to complete the journeys they need to support a growing economy and improving quality of life.

#### What needs to happen?

We need to secure funding over the next decade equivalent to c.£1 billion, to further improve the condition of our managed highway network and reduce the backlog of maintenance work.



Figure 8 - Local Road Network proposals



1. A229 Blue Bell Hill
2. North Thanet Link
3. Alkham Valley Spitfire Way junction improvements
4. Sandwich bypass improvements
5. A2 Gravesend Local Junctions
6. A226 Galley Hill Road
7. A228-A264 corridor improvements  
– West Malling to Tunbridge Wells

- Network-wide proposals**
- Maintaining the road network
  - Road Safety Vision Zero
  - Development Management Principles
  - Supporting the shift to electric vehicles through new charging points
  - Local road freight management

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## ROAD SAFETY VISION ZERO

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE.

### Strategic aims:

- To take a safe system approach, which understands that people make mistakes and therefore aims to ensure these mistakes do not cause a death or life changing injury.
- To improve safety in collaboration with Kent's local communities.
- To improve the quality of life by making Kent's highways safer for whatever choice of travel is used.

### What needs to happen?

We will continue to deliver our Vision Zero strategy, implementing changes to our network and evaluating their impact, whilst working with local communities to explore their road safety concerns. Many of the proposals in our Local Transport Plan will have a role to play, with the new investment they bring providing opportunities to build safe systems into their design and operation. The more funding we can secure from government, the more we will be able to act.



## A229 BLUE BELL HILL

LOCATION: MAIDSTONE BOROUGH

### Strategic aims:

- To improve the reliability of journey times and reduce congestion so that this critical route between the M2 and M20 can accommodate growth in traffic from new land uses and the Lower Thames Crossing's impact on the routing of traffic.
- To make best use of the existing road network, by enhancing it to deliver better outcomes for road safety, public transport, pedestrians and cyclists, and air quality.
- To ensure the effects of the Lower Thames Crossing on traffic movements are addressed on Blue Bell Hill and its junctions.

### What needs to happen?

The scheme needs to be funded by the government so that we can complete its development, planning and construction, subject to the necessary planning consents. A scheme to address capacity on this vital link is needed regardless of whether the Lower Thames Crossing is delivered.





## NORTH THANET LINK

LOCATION: THANET DISTRICT

### Strategic aims:

- To improve the local road network resilience, capacity and reliability to help support development of new land uses and to manage seasonal traffic peaks associated with the visitor economy to the coast and other attractions.
- To improve access to the Manston airport site.
- To improve road safety and provide new pedestrian and cycle links and offer new public transport route opportunities.
- To improve access to Manston Business Park.

### What needs to happen?

The government needs to swiftly determine whether the scheme should proceed following our submission of its business case. We will then require further funding from the government to undertake the remaining stages of scheme development and construction, subject to the necessary planning consents.



## ALKHAM VALLEY SPITFIRE JUNCTION

LOCATION: FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT

### Strategic aims:

- To ensure the junction can cater for local traffic between Hawkinge, Folkestone and Dover, whilst meeting the needs of Port-bound traffic resulting from diversions during traffic management events.
- To improve road safety and provide new pedestrian and cycle facilities as necessary as part of any junction improvements.

### What needs to happen?

Development of a scheme and its future delivery will be dependent on monitoring of the junction which will inform potential solutions and the timescales required. A potential scheme for the junction needs to be considered alongside a wider objective to encourage traffic between Folkestone and Dover to use the A20, which is designed for heavy volumes of traffic through the North Downs National Landscape area (formerly called an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), rather than the Alkham Valley Road.

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## SANDWICH BYPASS

LOCATION: DOVER DISTRICT

### Strategic aims:

- To ensure the junctions along the bypass can accommodate the impact of local development and its effect on growing traffic volumes.
- To ensure that the corridor as a whole has sufficient capacity to realise the benefits of any junction upgrades and to provide reliable and safe journeys along its length.

### What needs to happen?

Surveys and computer models of the junctions and stretch of road are required to determine the extent of works needed. The delivery and funding of the schemes will be influenced by the timing of consented development at Discovery Park, which would deliver improvements for the A256-A257 junction.

---

## GRAVESEND LOCAL JUNCTIONS

LOCATION: GRAVESHAM BOROUGH

### Strategic aims:

- To ensure the junctions for access to and from the A2 can accommodate the impact of local development and strategic changes to the road network, such as the Lower Thames Crossing.
- Where works occur, to deliver improvements to safety for all road users including better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

### What needs to happen?

National Highways needs to evaluate the junctions and monitor their performance as part of assessing the impact of the new Lower Thames Crossing, which KCC can use to identify options that meet the strategic aims and other objectives that arise over the course of this work. Consideration needs to be given to phasing the works, taking account of the timeframe for delivering of the Lower Thames Crossing and any disruption that may cause in the area.

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## A226 GALLEY HILL ROAD

LOCATION: DARTFORD BOROUGH

### Strategic aims:

- To improve east-west journey times for trips across the Swanscombe, Ebbsfleet and Northfleet areas.
- To reduce pressure on the remaining network and enable a return of bus and Fastrack routes along the road corridor.
- To consider if improvements can be made to pedestrian and cycling links in the solution for this stretch of highway.

### What needs to happen?

KCC will complete the development of the options for this stretch of road and share those with the government. Given the scale of the challenge to reinstate the road, we expect to need financial support to implement a solution for this important part of the road network.

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## A228-A264 CORRIDOR BETWEEN WEST MALLING TO TUNBRIDGE WELLS

LOCATION: TONBRIDGE AND MALLING AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGHES

### Strategic aims:

- To ensure the corridor delivers reliable journey times and sufficient capacity to meet the needs of its users and from future land uses along the corridor.
- To co-ordinate the design of interventions along the corridor to ensure they work effectively together, across District boundaries, to meet user needs.
- To find opportunities to deliver improvements for public transport, road safety and walking and cycling along the corridor.

### What needs to happen?

An A228-A264 corridor plan needs to be developed by KCC, to ensure that the site-specific pressures, arising in part from local growth are addressed in a co-ordinated way to deliver a sum greater than its parts. KCC should develop proposals within a single continuous programme for the corridor for development and delivery subject to securing developer and government funding. This should include a further review of the case for a Colts Hill bypass.

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## LOCAL ROAD FREIGHT MANAGEMENT

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- To support effective management of HGVs across the local road network to mitigate impacts on local communities, whilst ensuring Kent's businesses and their freight and logistics needs are supported.
- To support the private sector led delivery of new parking capacity and welfare facilities, subject to the merits of each specific proposal that comes forward through the planning system.
- To promote the use of alternatives to road haulage to reduce the burden on Kent's local roads, such as rail and water-borne freight.

### What needs to happen?

We already undertaken substantial activity to address the issues caused by HGVs on our local road network and gather evidence to support the need for interventions and mitigations. To support our future work, we will consider whether the aims and actions detailed in the Kent County Council Freight Action Plan need to be updated to take account of current trends and challenges on our network.

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- To ensure Local Planning Authorities and developers work effectively with KCC to effectively design development and local transport so as to reduce its pressure on the existing road network and embed sustainable travel from the start.
- To implement an infrastructure-first approach to secure initial improvements to the whole transport system to reduce pressure on the road network.
- To recognise the uncertainty in how occupants of new developments will travel by assessing a range of outcomes and ensuring the right mitigations are implemented in response to observed impacts.

### What needs to happen?

Further to our existing Developer Contributions Guidance, we reiterate that we will deliver with district planning authorities a 'decide and provide' (also known as 'vision and validate') approach to planning and site development. This approach supports achieving a greater choice of transport modes to help reduce traffic generation onto the existing highway network whilst also addressing impacts that do require mitigation. This will be delivered by ensuring planning agreements for sites make provisions for uncertainty in transport impacts by applying a monitor and manage approach.



## LOCAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- Improving access to Electric Vehicle Charging Points across rural and urban areas, particularly areas where the market is least likely to address and where inequality to access could arise.
- To support, and potentially accelerate the transition to electric vehicles to fulfil the national Decarbonising Transport strategy.
- To support delivery of better air quality across Kent by providing the charging infrastructure that enables vehicles with zero tailpipe emissions.

### What needs to happen?

We will deliver a long term programme of on street electric vehicle charging sockets once the required funding is in place and procurement completed, working with private sector charge point operators to ensure satisfactory delivery across our highway estate. We will monitor and engage with the market as new technology and opportunities arise.



## 8.3 PUBLIC AND SHARED TRANSPORT NETWORK PROPOSALS

In this section, each network-wide proposal concerning the public transport network is explained. We do not operate the public transport network in Kent, with the exception of the Fastrack system for which we specify and manage the contract alongside the subsidy we provide for supported bus services. Almost all bus services are privately run whilst the rail network is currently operated by the private sector through contracts with government or by the government's own company.

Our highways are important assets that enable bus operators to provide their services effectively and for rail users to reach the station. Our roads are important for other potential future forms of shared transport that are being trialled.

As the Local Transport Authority, we have a role in representing the views and interests of our constituents concerning bus and rail services. We have secured funding in the past to improve both the bus and rail networks and we anticipate that there could be new funding opportunities in the future, so we have set out priorities for how public transport and shared transport could evolve to meet the ambition and outcomes of our Local Transport Plan.

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### KENT'S BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

#### Strategic aims:

Our BSIP is a comprehensive and long-term plan detailing how the county's bus network could be improved. It covers infrastructure (such as bus stops, bus priority and real time information) and proposes an indicative future timetable all subject to the funding we receive to deliver it. Due to its size, we cannot repeat the full BSIP here but more information about our plans for buses is available at [kent.gov.uk](http://kent.gov.uk).

The strategic aims set out below are a re-iteration of those established in the KCC Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which we have begun delivering with funding from government.

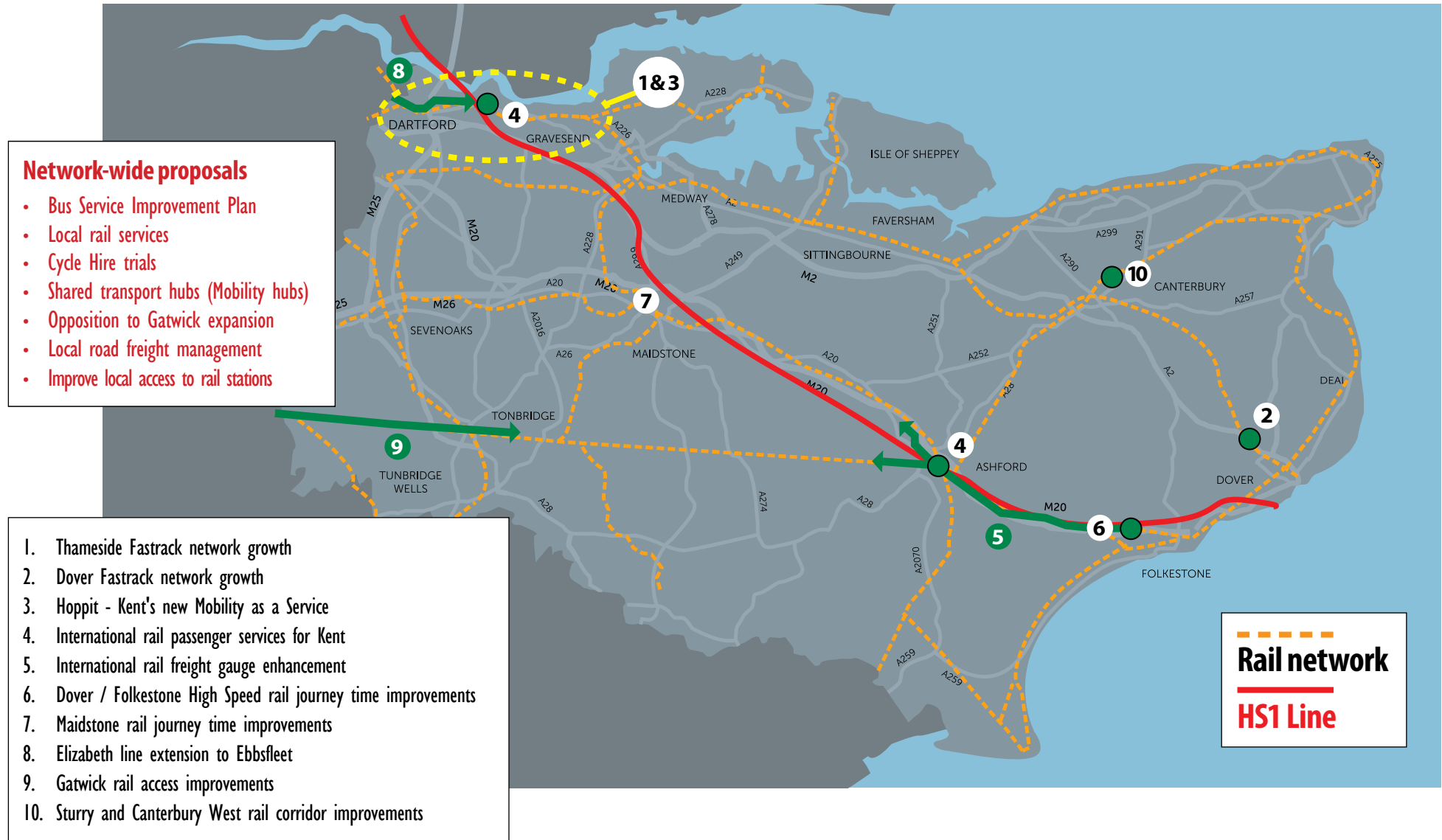
- To place the customer at the heart of everything we do through an established passenger charter, to help us work with operators on customer's behalf.
- Put buses at the centre of decision making in respect of new road schemes, planning and developments, and support bus operators and services in KCC's role as the highway authority.
- To Improve the quality and accessibility of public transport information and services, including flexible and better value ticketing options.
- Consider and embrace innovative transport solutions such as Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service (MaaS) models as possible alternatives to the private car, make use of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) where appropriate, and continue to support the community transport sector in Kent.

#### What needs to happen?

The KCC BSIP needs to be further funded by government beyond March 2025. We have set out a detailed program of investment into all aspects of bus services, working in partnership with local authorities and the bus operators. The total estimated cost of those improvements over the period of 2025/26 to 2028/29 is £240m – equivalent to £60m per year. Stabilising and improving bus networks across the county will need KCC to demonstrate that buses are a strategic priority on all parts of its road network, to help operators in improving journey times, service reliability and reducing the cost of their operations.

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Figure 9 - Public and shared transport network proposals



## KENT THAMESIDE FASTRACK

LOCATION: GRAVESHAM AND DARTFORD BOROUGHES

### Strategic aims:

- To build on the success of the current Fastrack network by identifying how it can serve communities in the future by delivering bus transit oriented development along new routes.
- To increase access to fast, reliable and zero carbon (at the tail pipe) public transport.

### What needs to happen?

We will develop plans for where the Fastrack network in north Kent could be extended based on an assessment of corridor options and their relation to local growth proposals and make the case for funding to deliver our preferred option(s).



## KENT DOVER FASTRACK

LOCATION: DOVER DISTRICT

### Strategic aims:

- To serve the Whitfield Urban Extension and connect it to Dover town centre and rail station.
- To increase access to fast, reliable and zero carbon (at the tail pipe) public transport.

### What needs to happen?

We will develop and seek to deliver network extensions of Dover Fastrack by working with Dover District Council and developers to ensure Fastrack access is at the heart of the Whitfield urban extension and future local development that it could serve where the opportunity exists to integrate bus priority for the network.



## 'HOPPIT' – KENT'S NEW MOBILITY AS A SERVICE (MAAS) PLATFORM

LOCATION: THAMESIDE FASTRACK AREA, WITH POTENTIAL FOR COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- To improve the range of travel choices and access to those, to make it easier to make journeys.
- To make easier use of public transport and future shared transport, by providing a service that can manage and pay for multiple fares and charges.
- To improve access to travel information and journey planning, to help users make informed choices suited to their needs or preferences.

### What needs to happen?

Subject to the funding we can secure, we will aim to further develop and deliver a MaaS platform trial, called 'Hoppit' to evaluate its effectiveness, alongside learning from other MaaS roll-outs across the UK (such in the Solent Future Transport Zone). We will work to find opportunities more widely in Kent to apply the 'Hoppit' MaaS platform. Subject to the outcomes of the initial 'Hoppit' MaaS Ebbsfleet pilot, KCC will explore establishing a county-wide 'Hoppit' MaaS platform phased by Enhanced Bus Partnership areas with potential to also expand to Medway.

## CYCLE HIRE PILOTS IN DEVELOPMENT AREAS

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- To evaluate the potential for cycle hire to form part of the transport mix in appropriate locations in Kent.
- To improve access to cycles to take advantage of cycle routes and infrastructure in place in the county.
- To realise the health benefits of cycling and support improved air quality in urban areas.
- To increase choice and meet the needs for those who cycling is a preferred means of travel but who do not have easy access to cycles.

### What needs to happen?

KCC will work with developers and district councils on the delivery of planned cycle hire schemes and monitor their impact. Performance of the pilots will assist KCC with any future consideration of cycle hire schemes in new developments and existing communities.





## SHARED TRANSPORT HUBS (KNOWN AS MOBILITY HUBS)

### LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

#### Strategic aims:

- To evaluate the potential for shared transport mobility hubs to form part of the transport mix in appropriate locations in Kent in the future.
- To improve access to shared transport, including car clubs, public transport, cycle hire, etc.
- To increase choice and meet the needs of those for whom ownership of private transport is more difficult.

#### What needs to happen?

KCC will work with developers and district councils on the planning of mobility hub networks where they are proposed. It is anticipated that hubs would be

deliverable first in new developments, funded and delivered by development, which provides the opportunity to learn lessons and evaluate their suitability for other parts of Kent.

Where proposals do come forward in Kent, KCC proposes that those are anchored around electric car hire clubs given motorised travel is the most common type of transport in the county. These should be located to form part of a hub with existing public transport access points. Any mobility hub proposals in Kent should seek to achieve CoMoUK accreditation.

Subject to implementation of a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platform in Kent, mobility hubs should be operated and managed so that their use is purchasable through the MaaS platform.



Photo credit: CoMoUK

## OPPOSITION TO GATWICK EXPANSION

LOCATION: TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH AND SEVENOAKS DISTRICT

### Strategic aims:

- To oppose a second runway at Gatwick Airport due to risk of noise disturbance and its impact on the quality of life for residents of Kent.

### What needs to happen?

The decision about whether Gatwick Airport can be expanded will be taken by the government. We will continue to set out clearly our concerns and work with the Airport and other stakeholders to explore if there are mitigations that can avoid adverse effects on our residents from the noise of being overflown.



Photo credit: Jan Rosalino

## GATWICK RAIL ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- To better connect the county to the international gateway of Gatwick Airport.
- To reduce reliance on the busy road network.
- To make the impact of growth at Gatwick Airport more sustainable.

### What needs to happen?

We will work to progress the strategic advice for Gatwick Airport rail services to Kent (published by Network Rail in 2024) with the aim of increasing the prospect of bringing a service into operation. We will make representations on Gatwick Airport growth through the planning process to ensure that new rail access is considered as a mitigation to reduce pressure on the road network.



Photo credit: Network Rail

## INCREASING RAIL FREIGHT FOR INTERNATIONAL GOODS MOVEMENTS

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- To reduce the burden of haulage traffic on Kent's roads and communities by making better use of the rail network for freight transport between Europe and the UK.
- To support the decarbonisation of transport to deliver the government's Decarbonising Transport strategy – CO2 emissions per tonne of cargo delivered by rail can be 76% lower than by road, whilst also creating 10 times less particulate matter and 15 times less Nitrogen Oxides.
- For the rail freight network to be planned and managed in a coordinated manner across the regions of England.

Changing rail gauges would enable containerised loads to fit through tunnels in Kent and serve the Midlands and the North. As Network Rail stated in 2023<sup>1</sup>, "Gauge clearance of the classic routes to W12 is still the rail freight industry's firm aspiration for the longer term and will be needed for anything like the extent and diversity of market enjoyed by Channel Tunnel rail freight in the late 1990s to ultimately return."

### What needs to happen?

KCC will work to provide its rich intelligence about the impact of road freight haulage on the county to Network Rail and the government so that they can fully consider this in determining whether to make the necessary investments in the rail freight network. KCC will work within Transport for the South East to ensure that the benefits to the region and other Sub-national Transport Bodies can be promoted.



Photo credit: Getlink Ltd

<sup>1</sup> See Network Rail published report *International Rail Freight: Opportunities for Growth*, February 2023 at [www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/International-Rail-Freight-Opportunities-for-Growth.pdf](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/International-Rail-Freight-Opportunities-for-Growth.pdf)

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## MAIDSTONE RAIL MAINLINE JOURNEY TIME IMPROVEMENTS

LOCATION: MAIDSTONE BOROUGH

### Strategic aims:

- To better connect the county town across Kent and beyond.
- To encourage growth in use of a fully electrified, carbon-efficient rail network
- To help reduce traffic on the town's road network.
- To reduce the time it takes to make journeys on train to provide a more attractive service to prospective passengers.

### What needs to happen?

A series of improvements are proposed below, that the rail industry and government should seek to deliver through the current specification of services, future replacement of rolling stock across the domestic and high speed rail fleets, and any further reforms to the management and delivery of services.

- Maidstone's county town status recognised through the return of a 3rd peak High Speed rail service.
  - Establish the case for further High Speed services to Maidstone West.
  - The Charing Cross via London Bridge service provided over the whole week.
  - Avoid any worsening of journey times for services between Maidstone and Ashford if a new station is built on the route to serve development.
  - Establish the case for reinstatement of direct services between Maidstone and Canterbury.
  - Re-establish services across the week to Tonbridge, to better connect Maidstone with Tunbridge Wells.
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## ELIZABETH LINE EXTENSION TO EBBSFLEET

LOCATION: DARTFORD AND GRAVESHAM BOROUGH

**The strategic aims for this proposal were made to government in 2021 as part of a Strategic Outline Business Case and are remain the aim at this time. They are:**

- Support ambitious and sustainable housing growth and regeneration in the north Kent corridor.
- Support employment growth, intensification and productivity.
- Deliver an uplift in the quality and capacity of public transport to address current and future travel demands in the corridor.
- Support climate change and zero carbon goals and targets an environmentally sustainable growth.
- Improve connectivity from the corridor to key strategic and international gateways.
- The proposal must be affordable and have realistic funding prospects.

### What needs to happen?

Government have been considering the business case that the partnership submitted. A decision by the government is needed about whether any of the options in the business case should be progressed and, if so, provide funding for the appropriate transport authorities to progress more detailed planning, design, and an outline business case. Any scheme will need to be funded by the government given the very high cost of extending the Elizabeth line.

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## DOVER AND FOLKESTONE HIGH SPEED RAIL ENHANCEMENTS

LOCATION: DOVER, FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE AND THANET DISTRICTS

### Strategic aims:

- To better connect east Kent coastal communities by reducing their journey times to west Kent and London, focused on getting Dover within an hour of London.
- To enable the High Speed rail network to support the growth of east Kent by ensuring that future rolling stock caters for the service opportunities that could be delivered.
- To support levelling up of the priority 1 areas of Thanet, Dover and Folkestone and Hythe by maximising the advantages of the High Speed 1 rail link.

### What needs to happen?

The rail industry and government will need to fund and develop the business case for the associated enhancements to determine the requirements from future rolling stock replacement. We will support that process and ensure the case reflects the challenges and opportunities faced by the local communities in east Kent.



## CANTERBURY WEST AND STURRY STATION IMPROVEMENTS

LOCATION: CANTERBURY DISTRICT

### Strategic aims:

- To take advantage of signalling upgrades along the rail corridor through Canterbury West to support delivery of regeneration and improvement of the station and its local surroundings.
- To take advantage of signalling upgrades along the rail corridor through Canterbury West and Sturry to deliver a reduced need for closure of the levelling crossing, to reduce highways congestion, improve journey times and improve air quality by reducing queuing and idling traffic.

### What needs to happen?

We will work with Canterbury City Council and the rail industry in their development of proposals, to obtain the necessary funding to deliver the schemes.



## INTERNATIONAL RAIL SERVICES FOR KENT

LOCATION: DARTFORD (EBBSFLEET) AND ASHFORD BOROUGHS

### Strategic aims:

- To obtain a resumption of international rail services stopping at Ebbsfleet and Ashford International stations.
- To support the economic opportunities and prosperity of business sectors and improve the quality of life for Kent residents who have based decisions on where they locate owing to the ability to travel with ease internationally on the rail network.

- To ensure that the Kent stations are managed and maintained to a standard that enables them to be brought swiftly back into operation for international rail operators.
- To ensure the public funding invested in the international rail stations is delivering the intended benefits to the county and country's economy.

### What needs to happen?

KCC will develop the public-interest case for international rail services stopping in Kent to help support decision makers in securing future services at Kent's stations. KCC will also ensure the case for Kent can be pitched to potential new international rail service operators.



Photo credit: Eurostar Ltd

## LOCAL RAIL SERVICES

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- An approach to planning and delivery of rail services and infrastructure that is more balanced towards the needs within Kent and less focused on services to and from London so as to better connect towns across Kent.
- To substantially grow use of the rail network by making service frequencies far more attractive across the whole week, exploiting the high number of stations that means Kent has some of the best access to the rail network nationally.
- To enable the almost entirely electrified rail network in Kent to make a far higher contribution towards realising reductions in carbon emissions.
- To learn lessons from the National Bus Strategy and use of government funding to lower travel costs including through targeted local initiatives.

**Status:** Examples of the system providing very low frequency services are:

- Canterbury to Faversham / Sittingbourne – 1 tph
- Sittingbourne <> Sheerness – 1 tph
- Maidstone <> Ashford / Dover / Folkestone – 1 tph
- Ramsgate <> Dover – 1 tph
- Canterbury <> Dover – 1 tph

### What needs to happen?

The rail network needs to move towards providing half hourly services on every mainline across the whole week to drive growth in its use. The fares pricing structure and cost of using services must be addressed, drawing lessons from the approach taken for the bus network. This includes the potential for offers on fares to support rail travel for local events.



Photo credit: Southeastern Trains

## IMPROVE LOCAL ACCESS TO RAIL STATIONS

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- Enable use of the rail network by removing barriers to its access at stations.
- To help provide more choice for journeys by catering for different means of access to and from the station for rail journeys.

### What needs to happen?

The rail industry should set out its current ranking of station priorities for Kent to provide clarity on when changes could be forthcoming. This will enable local stakeholders, including ourselves, to work with the rail industry to understand what actions can be taken to support a delivery of improvements at locations across the county.

## 8.4 WALKING, CYCLING AND OTHER FORMS OF NON-MOTORISED TRAVEL PROPOSALS

In this section we have set out our proposals for walking, cycling and other non-motorised travel (including equestrianism and wheeled transport like mobility aids). The proposals are focused on further improving the networks we have so that they become increasingly easy, attractive, and safe to use, helping to encourage active journeys. Active journeys have the highest range of benefits and are the most accessible form of transport. They improve health, reduce noise, air pollution and carbon emissions, add footfall back to high streets, reduce wear and tear to the road network, and increase the propensity to use bus and rail transport which in turn helps to make those services more popular and improve the range and quality provided by operators in the future.

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### KENT CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

#### Strategic aims:

- To make clear about where our priorities are for improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling across the county.
- To establish a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements that we can seek funding for, contributing towards delivery of the national strategy led by Active Travel England.
- To complement district-led Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) to find opportunities where infrastructure investment can deliver benefits for both short distance trips within a neighbourhood, and form part of a long distance continuous network across the county.

#### What needs to happen?

A draft Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP) has been developed, setting out 15 cycling corridors and 15 walking zones where we could focus future planning and design work to make the case for funding. Each of the corridors and zones are indicative and the final route options will be determined when proposals are subject to development, design and consultation. For example, the corridor on the Isle of Sheppey could include parts of the Sheppey Light Railway Greenway, subject to design and consultation with local communities.

To do this, we will seek the funding necessary to further develop the KCWIP and its proposals to improve infrastructure in the corridors and zones it details. We have set out in the district sections of this LTP how our KCWIP proposals would complement proposals in the existing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) that have been produced by the district and borough councils across Kent. We will continue to work with stakeholders, including the districts and borough councils, to develop and deliver LCWIPs and we will consider potential new priorities that may emerge for incorporation into our county plan.

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Figure 10 - Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan priority corridors

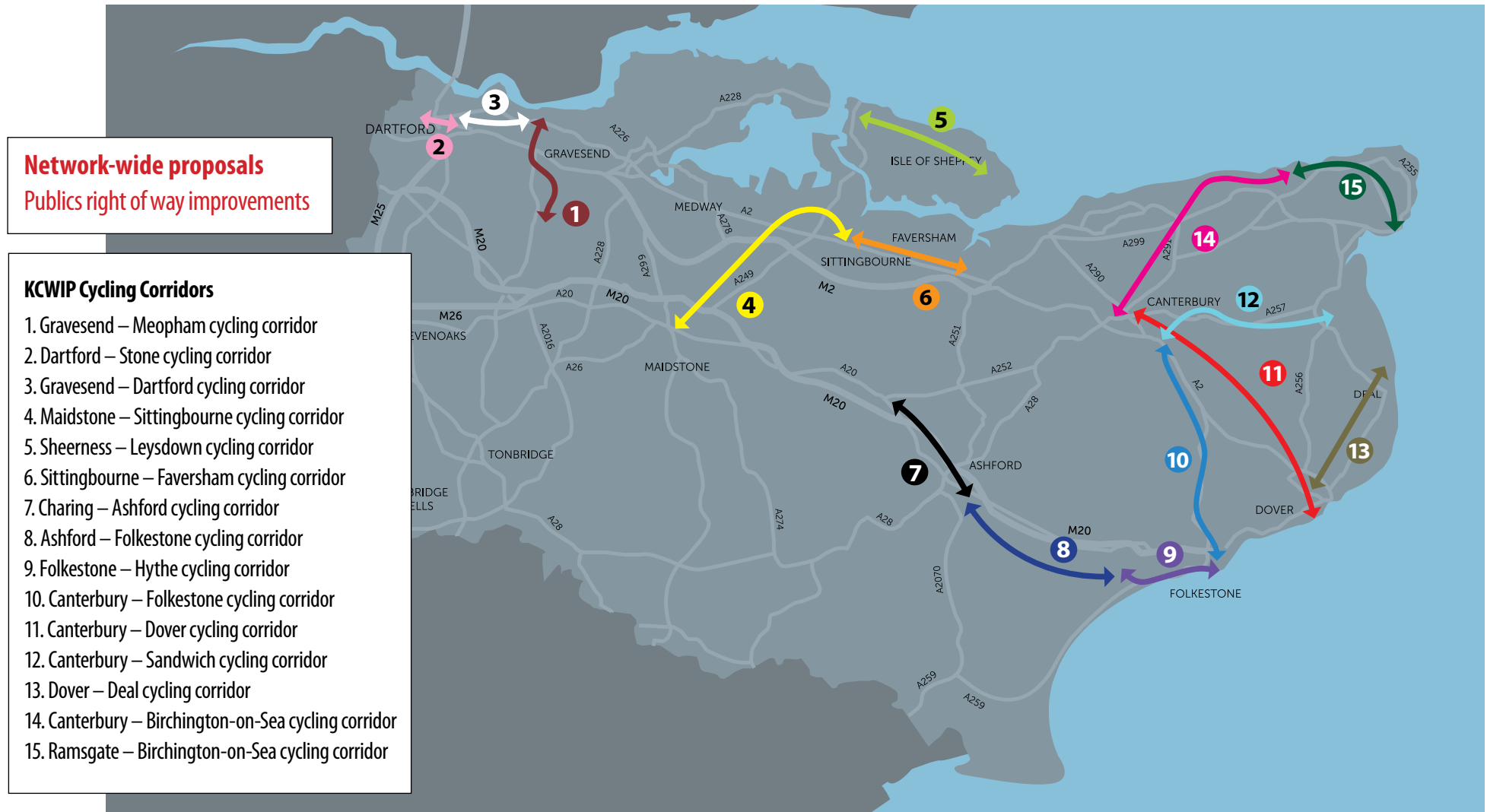
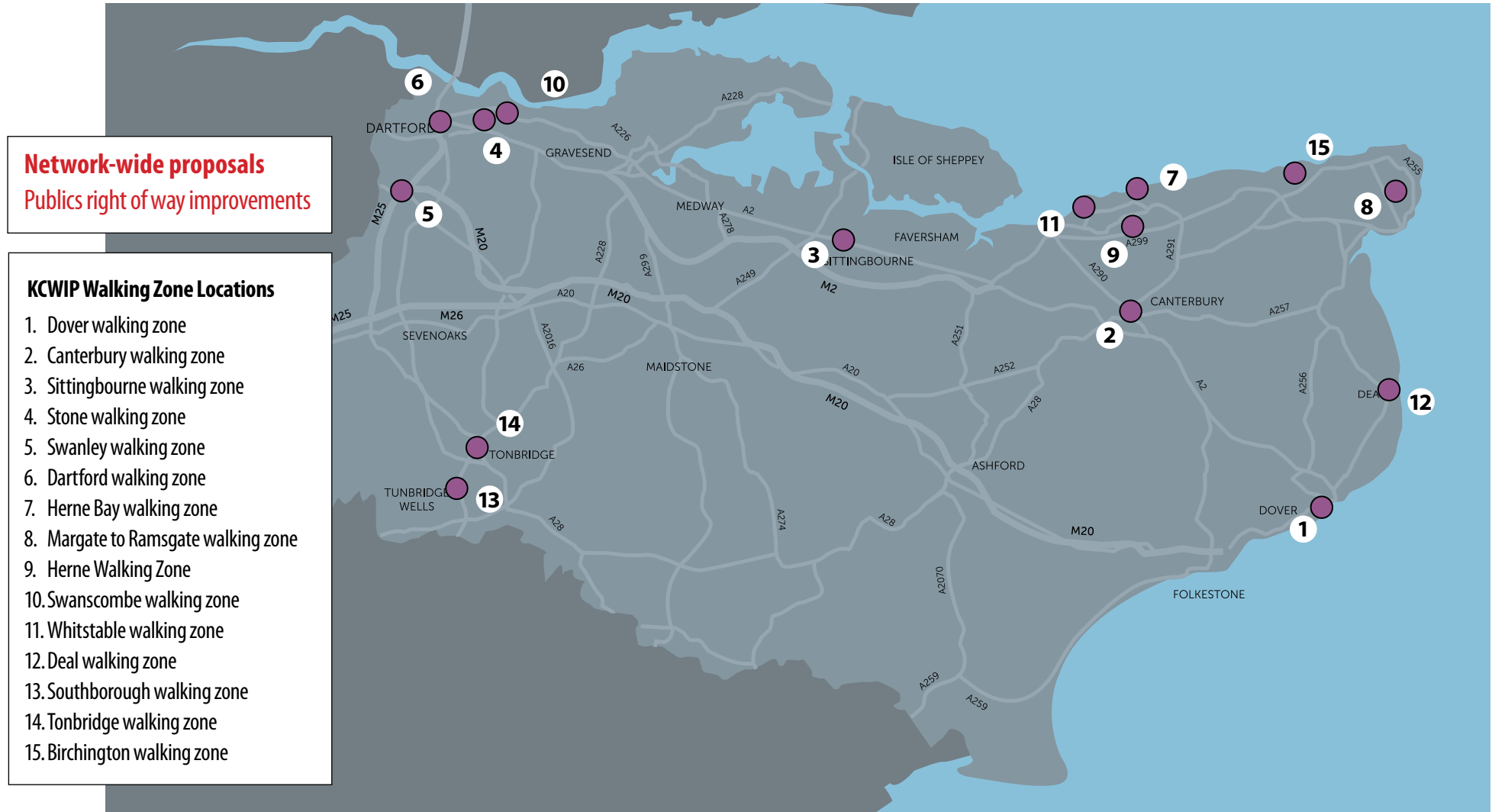


Figure 11 - Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan priority zones



## PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

LOCATION: COUNTY-WIDE

### Strategic aims:

- To provide a high quality, well-maintained Public Rights of Way network, that is well used and enjoyed.
- Encourage active lifestyles by providing essential links within urban and rural communities to support safe walking, cycling, wheeling and riding.
- To have a well-maintained network that evolves to meet the needs of a growing Kent.

### What needs to happen?

Delivering the wide-ranging and detailed actions in the KCC Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan to exploit the network and deliver better journeys and access across our urban and rural communities will need further funding to be secured. We need at least £26m over the next 10 years to undertake structural improvements to the existing network. When we undertake planning and design of detailed proposals for the corridors set out in the KCWIP, options for making best use of and upgrading Public Rights of Way will be part of our approach.

Figure 12 – Improvement scheme to an existing public right of way

*BEFORE*



*AFTER*



*BEFORE*



*AFTER*

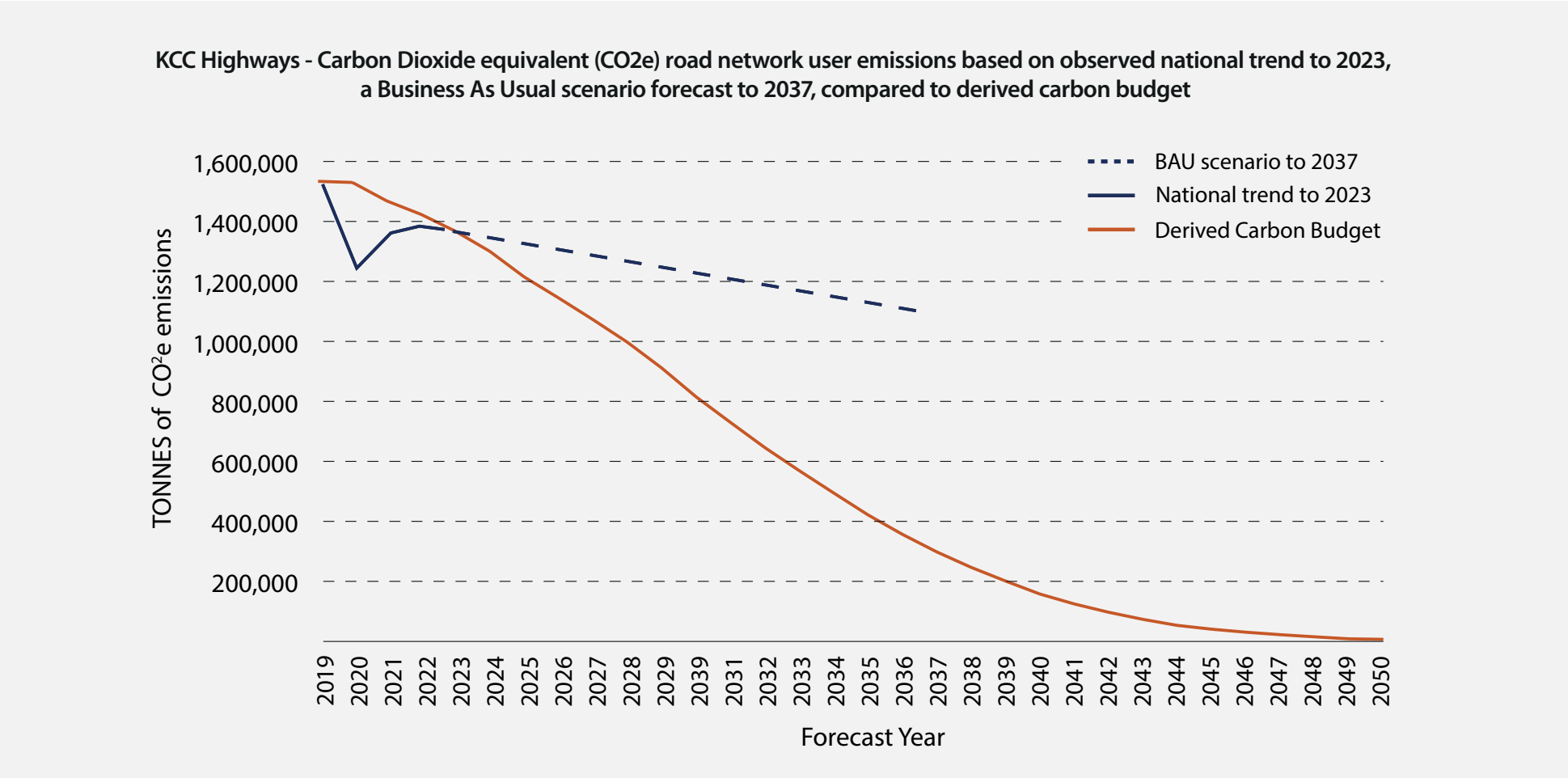


# 9. CONSIDERING THE EFFECT OF OUR PLAN ON CARBON EMISSIONS

In 2019 we recognised the climate emergency and committed to continuing to use our resources and align our policies to address it. This commitment has continued, with *Framing Kent's Future: Our Council Strategy 2022-2026* widening

our focus to include turning the curve on transport emissions and road pollution. Although the horizon year for our plan is 2037, our carbon assessment looks ahead to 2050 to align with the national net zero policy.

**Figure 13 - Estimated and forecast Carbon Dioxide Equivalent emissions from transport activity on the Kent County Council managed road network.**



**9. CONSIDERING THE EFFECT OF OUR PLAN ON CARBON EMISSIONS** CONTINUED

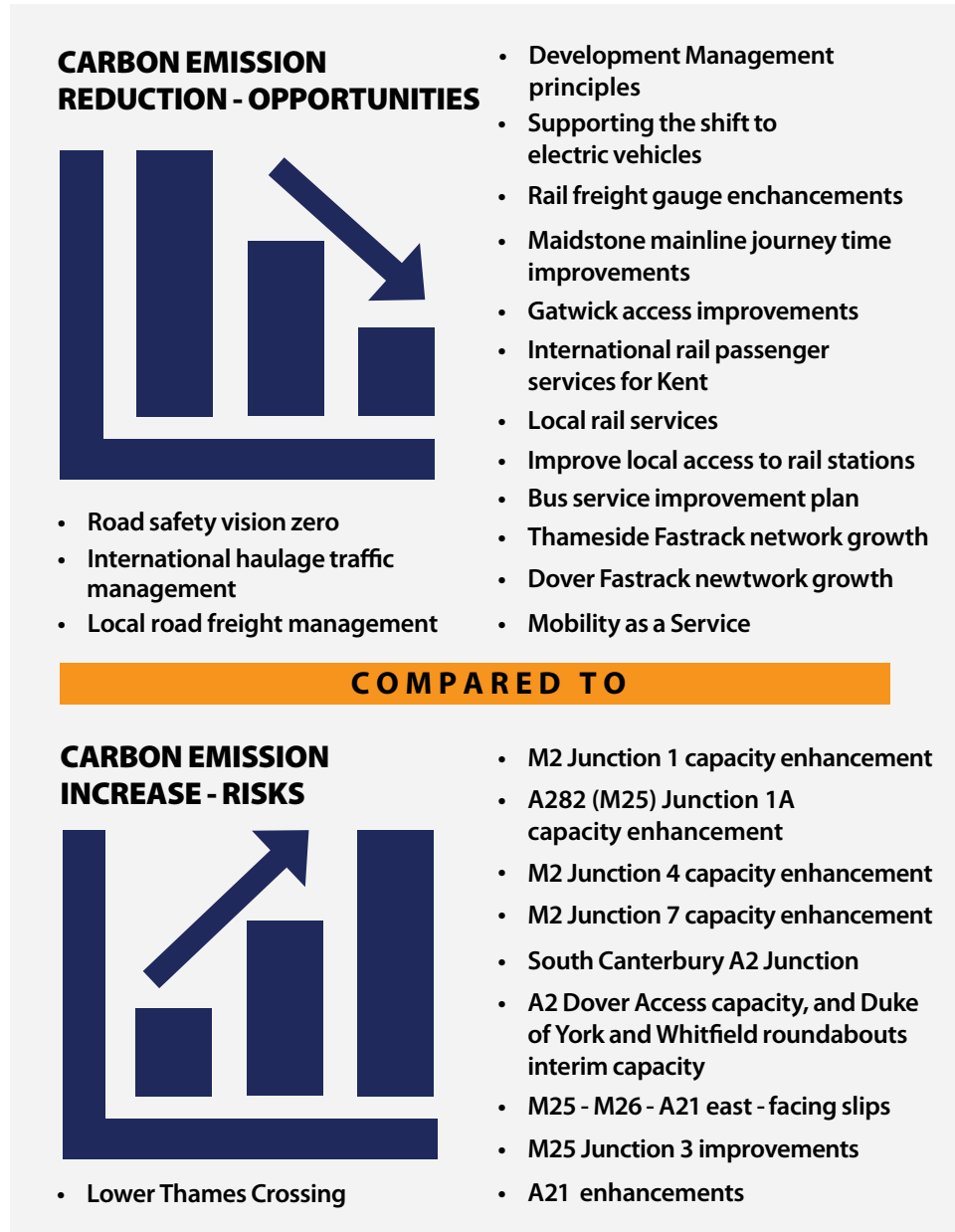
We estimate that vehicles on the KCC-managed road network are producing around 1.35 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) a year based on national observed traffic up to the end of 2023. This estimate considers the number of electric vehicles in use, based on national averages produced by government. We have looked ahead at what the level of emissions from vehicles using our road network might be if we assume that we continue with our day-to-day investment on the network. This is called our “business as usual” (BAU) scenario. In our BAU scenario, the proposals in our new local transport plan are assumed not to have been implemented.

Figure 13 shows carbon dioxide equivalent emissions on the KCC-managed road network over time, with observed data to 2023 followed by our BAU scenario. Also shown is the quantity of emissions from our network that would be permitted based on the national carbon budget.

The carbon budget is a pathway to net zero in 2050 that is set at the national level by government and so we have calculated what it might mean for transport emissions at the county level. It is designed to keep emissions to a level that reduces the likelihood of average global temperatures increasing above two degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. More detail on the national carbon budget and its pathway is available from the Government’s Committee on Climate Change and its published sixth Carbon Budget.

Figure 13 shows that Kent’s emissions fell significantly during the Covid period (as they did nationally), which means that emissions to the end of 2023 have met the carbon budget requirements. This is due to restrictions on travel that were in place but also the increase in zero emission vehicle ownership. However, our BAU scenario shows an increasing and significant gap between our forecast emissions and the lower level required to meet the derived carbon budget up to 2037.

This is a forecast based on national trends that may or may not be reflective of the situation in Kent. We will need to carefully monitor actual emissions over time to assess more accurately what this gap might be, for example using Kent-specific traffic data and electric vehicle ownership data. Nevertheless, our forecast remains an informative guide as to the potential rate of decarbonisation for road-based transport under our BAU scenario.



**Figure 14 - Potential impact of the Local Transport Plan proposals on transport sector carbon emissions**

## 9. CONSIDERING THE EFFECT OF OUR PLAN ON CARBON EMISSIONS CONTINUED

You can find more detail on how we have forecast future carbon emissions in our Supporting Evidence Base published alongside this plan.

The key things to note are that we have accounted for:

- A growing population.
- An increase in the use of electric vehicles based on prescribed government assumptions.
- The planned changes to the highway network that are funded and committed for delivery (as were detailed at the time of our work based on KCC's Budget book for 2022/23 and by National Highways).
- The trend in emissions, assuming they follow the national trend reported to 2023.

The proposals in this LTP are not all developed enough to know with high accuracy what their effect on carbon emissions could be but we do know that making major changes to the road network that add capacity and reduce journey times often lead to new trips being made. This creates an upward pressure on carbon and risks increasing the gap between Kent's emissions and the carbon budget target - see Figure 15.

We have therefore considered whether the individual proposals have potential to reduce or increase carbon emissions so we can understand the balance of our plan - see Figure 14. We have looked at their opportunities and risks, but not all proposals have a clear likely impact towards either reducing or increasing emissions. For the full reasoning behind the conclusions reached on each proposal please see the Supporting Evidence Base.

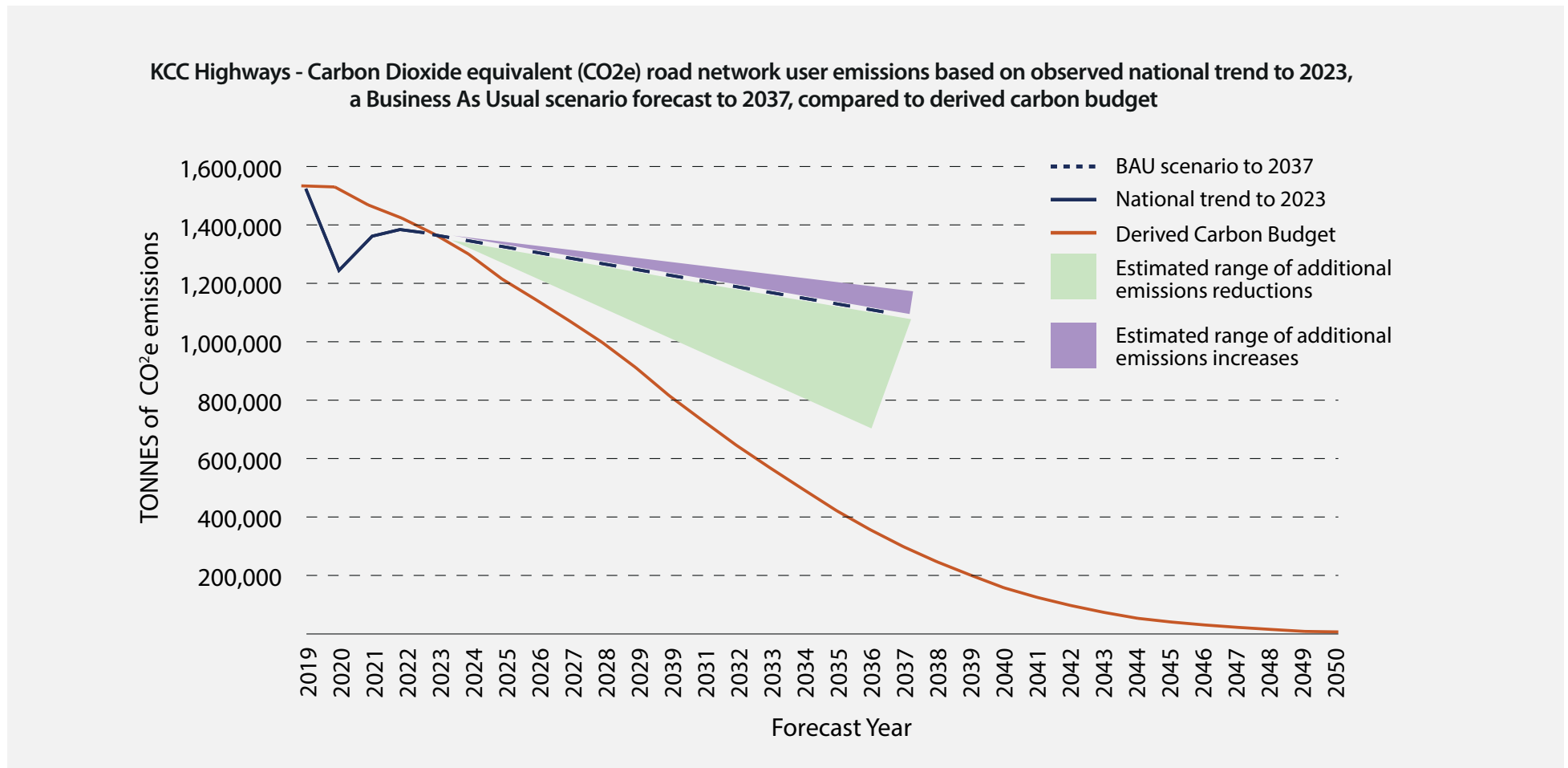


9. CONSIDERING THE EFFECT OF OUR PLAN ON CARBON EMISSIONS CONTINUED

As our proposals are developed, their contribution to carbon emissions will become clearer but at this point our future carbon trajectory is uncertain. We consider that the potential for emissions to be substantially higher than our current forecasts is unlikely because there are well-established push factors bearing down

on emissions now, driven by the legislated electric vehicle sales targets and future ban on sales of new petrol and diesel vehicles. These mean that the vehicle fleet will become increasingly low emission, which limits the extent that increasing vehicle mileage could lead to increased tailpipe emissions.

Figure 15 - Future uncertainty concerning transport carbon emissions



### What does this mean for our Local Transport Plan?

Our plan has a range of proposals that can make a positive contribution to reducing emissions if we and other delivery bodies are able to secure the funding needed to deliver them.

Private cars are the largest generator of carbon emissions but are an important part of how millions of journeys in Kent are made. In a county with dispersed low density communities, private vehicle use will remain an essential part of the transport mix. Our plan recognises this and it's why getting more access to public charging sockets is an important part of the long-term approach to reducing emissions. Our proposals also make it easier to choose to use alternatives, like trains and buses, that would lead to reductions in emissions. If those improvements can be delivered soon, then the impact could be greater and make transport's contribution to staying within the national carbon budget easier. This approach is aligned with the government's transport decarbonisation plan, *Decarbonising Transport: a better, greener Britain*.

By striking the balance across the transport mix, we think our plan can continue to deliver improvements that fulfil our wider ambitions and outcomes, whilst also furthering efforts to reduce carbon emissions from transport.







## **DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS**

# 10. DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

## ASHFORD

Ashford experiences unique impacts associated with international connectivity from Kent's proximity to mainland Europe. The outskirts of Ashford town host an inland border facility for processing goods vehicles' cargoes, and the town has an international rail station with potential for rail services to destinations across Europe. This connectivity has been an important advantage that has enabled some large businesses with international footprints to operate from Ashford.

Growth is currently focused on Ashford town, including urban extensions of residential developments and town centre commercial development. Some of the transport infrastructure needed to accommodate this growth is not yet delivered, awaiting funding from developers. The Borough Council is beginning work to review the Local Plan and consider delivery of growth sites up to 2042 – its current Local Plan horizon is to 2030.

Tenterden is the second largest town in the district and relies on road network connections both via private car and bus. Smaller villages to the north and south of Ashford town are connected into Ashford by the road and rail network. The high-speed rail link at Ashford has made the town and surrounding area an attractive location for commuting to the capital.

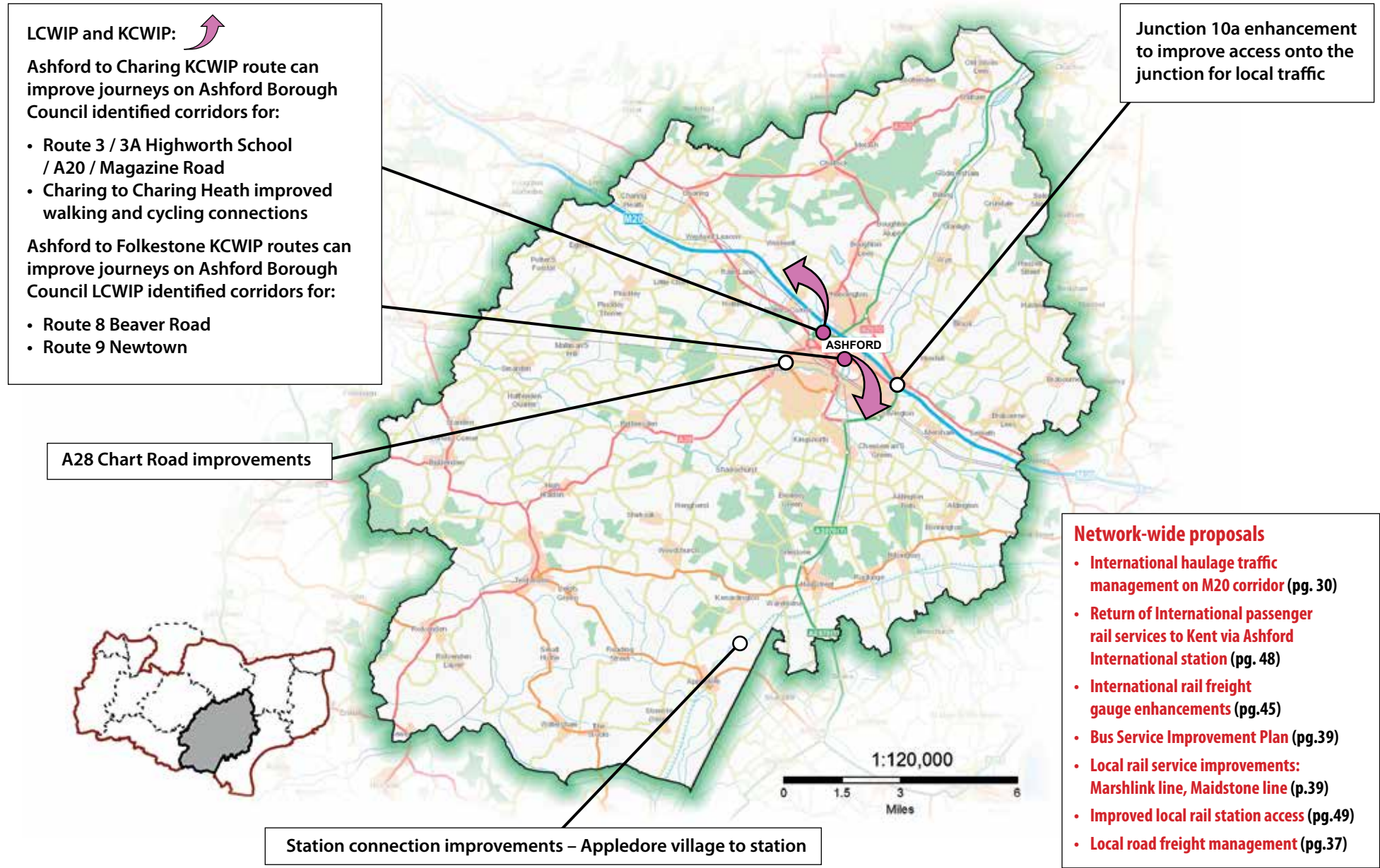
As our proposals indicate – the focus for Ashford is in ensuring the rail network continues to provide domestic, local and also international connectivity, and that the road network is upgraded to support growth from development and the pressures of international traffic on the M20 corridor. Within Ashford town and out towards areas across the borough and beyond, there are local transport improvements that could be developed and delivered if funding becomes available.



Ashford International Railway Station



Tenterden High Street



## CANTERBURY

Canterbury district includes varied places, from popular coastal towns to the historic city of Canterbury and small rural villages. The visitor economy is particularly important to the district both from its international and domestic connectivity .

The city is also home to the county's universities: the University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church University and the University for the Creative Arts. The universities bring a unique culture to the city and a population that can be more willing to utilise public and shared transport as well as walking and cycling networks. International students also add to the market for international connections by rail and air. This added passenger market can help make the case stronger for improvements that would benefit everyone in the district.

The focus of growth is on the outskirts of Canterbury, meaning the city will substantially grow in area and new journeys into the centre will be longer. Further potential growth sites are also under consideration by the new Local Plan, meaning the city will spread further still. Good connections for these new suburbs into the centre and to the nearby A2 corridor will be important to avoid deterioration in traffic conditions and reduce the burden on the ring road around the historic city.

The city has the advantage of being relatively flat and increased efforts have been made between us and the City Council to invest in walking and cycling to improve the visitor experience and support its UNESCO world heritage status. The opportunity to compound the benefits of recent investment are recognised through the complementary proposals within this plan. For example, some existing bus priority is in place around the city centre and the City Council has identified further improvements to better connect new developments, which our Bus Service Improvement Plan can support the delivery of.

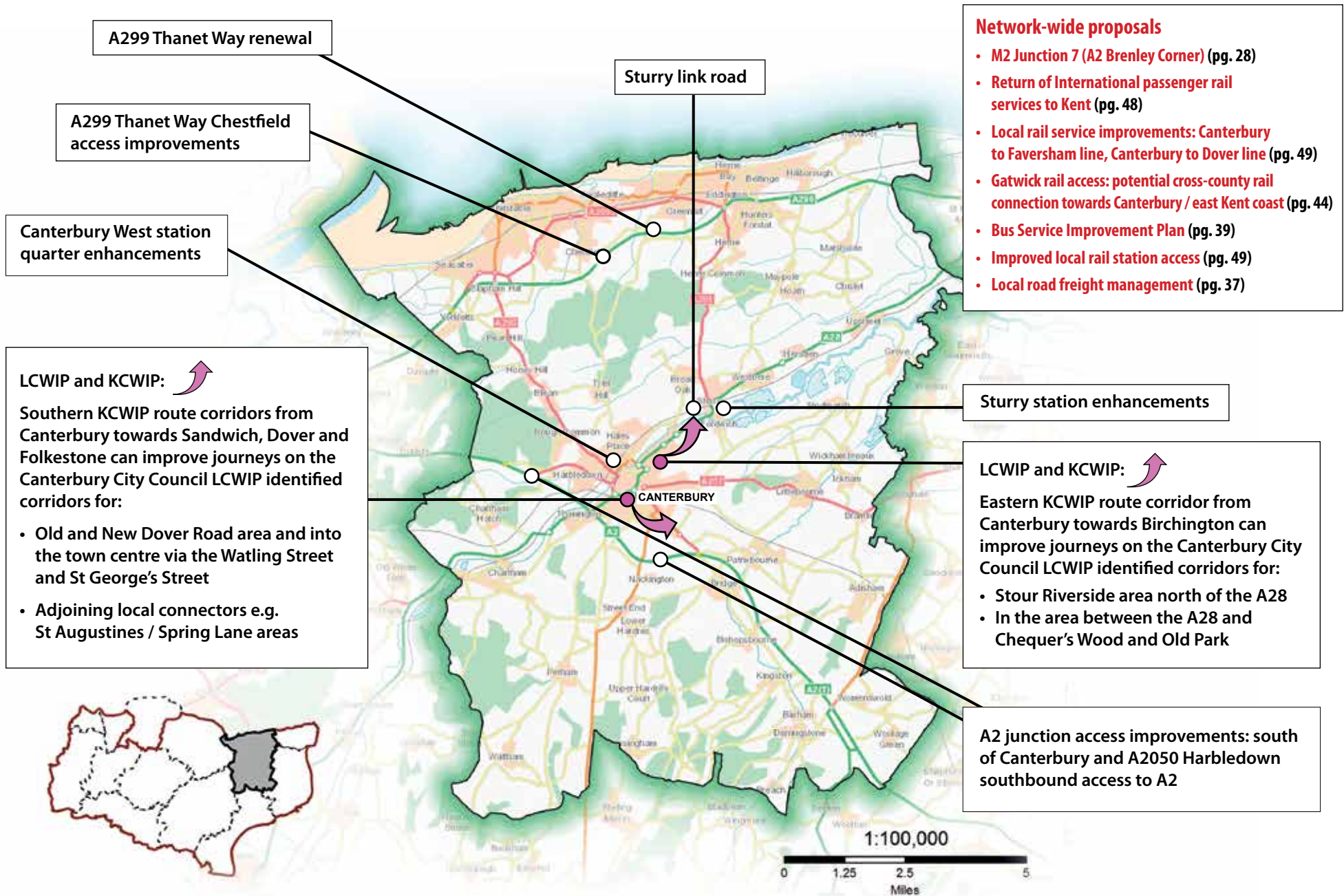
Coastal towns in the district are growing southwards as new development is built. The east-west road corridor of the Thanet Way is essential for enabling local traffic to circulate in the district and reducing traffic within the seafront town centre areas, helping to support the coastal amenities and culture that residents and visitors seek. Ensuring those routes can perform is recognised in our proposals.



Canterbury Town Centre

10. DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS CONTINUED

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## DARTFORD

Dartford's transport system is dominated by its position on the periphery of London, with the borough being dissected by two major corridors of the SRN, including the critical Dartford Crossing of the Thames. The heavy use of these strategic routes and their proximity to the local communities in the borough, generates challenges which this LTP sets out proposals to address.

The borough has seen some of the highest growth in the country through both housing and commercial development over the last two decades, and also hosts most of the large new Ebbsfleet Garden City. The growth in the area has enabled public transport to be integrated into new developments, with the Kent Thameside Fastrack network serving the heart of residential and commercial development areas, reducing some of the impact of general traffic on the road network. The continued expansion of, and improvements to, the Fastrack network alongside improvements to other bus services is key to the sustainable growth of the borough.

The Borough Council has developed a LCWIP that aims to improve cycling and pedestrian journeys across Dartford, Stone, Greenhithe and other urban areas. The initial phases of transport improvements to the town centre have been delivered, including an enhanced public realm to encourage regeneration. More opportunities exist for improvements to local transport to support the future growth of Dartford town centre.

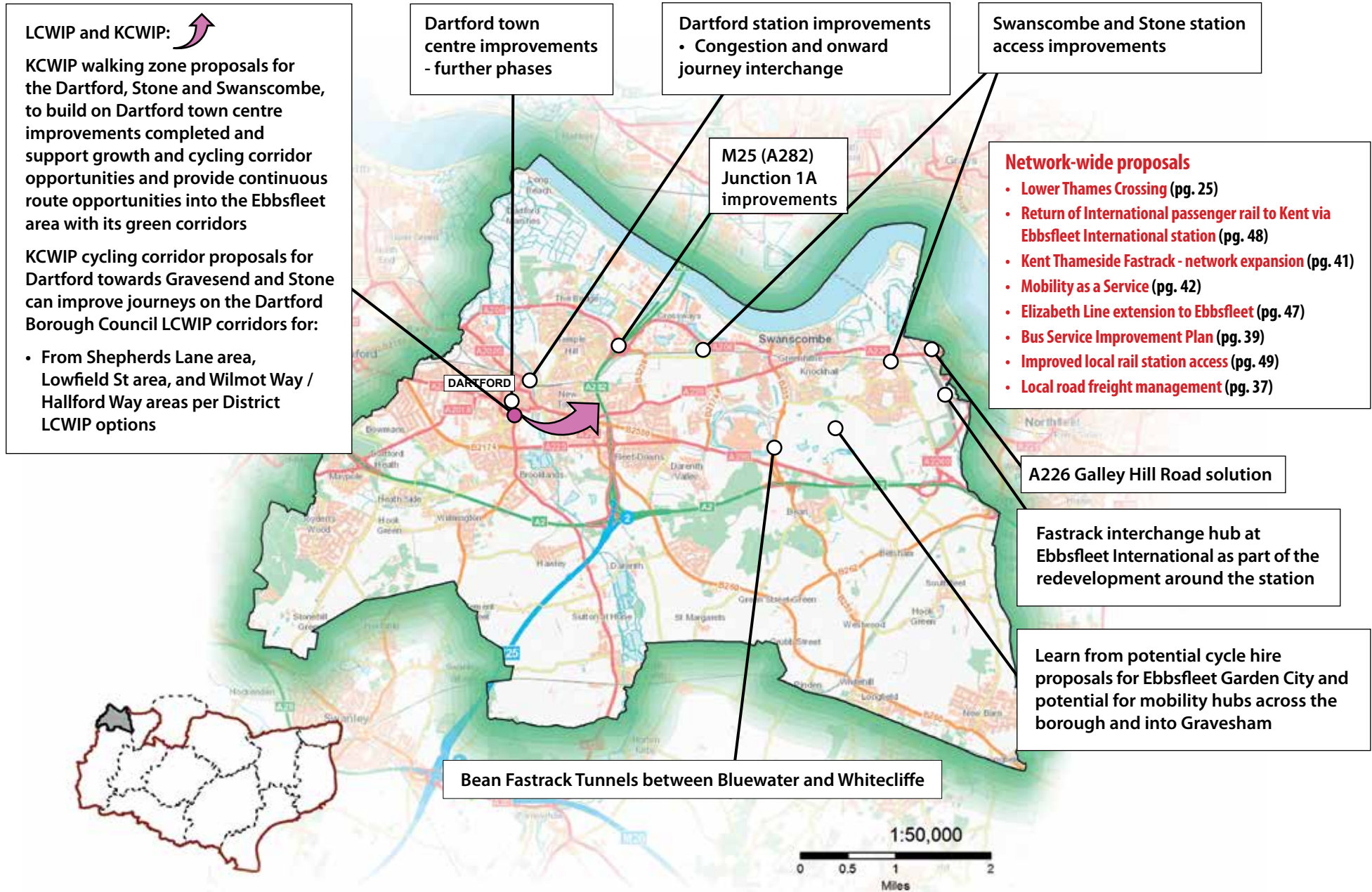
Dartford as a whole is relatively well served by rail, although some services in the peaks have returned to being crowded and journey times can sometimes be long. Growth in the borough will add weight to the case for improving the facilities and access at local stations, and an extension of the Elizabeth Line to Ebbsfleet remains a long term aim. The continued uncertainty of whether international rail services will return to stopping at Ebbsfleet International is damaging for business investment and growth opportunities in the area, as well as on the quality of life for residents in the borough and more widely.

Our plan's proposals for the borough reflect the opportunities to further improve the existing transport networks, alongside potential new and innovative approaches to transport as part of the Ebbsfleet Garden City. Our approach concerns ensuring that opportunities from the Garden City are learned from and that their benefits can be spread across the wider north Kent area where appropriate.



Approach to Dartford Crossing

10. DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS CONTINUED



## DOVER

Dover has a nationally significant transport challenge given the Port of Dover, which provides the UK's fastest water-borne crossing to Europe. The Port enables trade of c. £150 billion of goods each year, carried by two million freight vehicles. The Port provides employment opportunities to the area and supports over 20,000 jobs more widely.

Port-related traffic has a major influence on the town and wider district, with both the A2 and A20 trunk roads terminating at the Port's entrance. Peaks during the holidays and at times of disrupted cross-Channel flows cause disruption, and the A2 in particular is of a poor quality and requires improvement on the approach to Dover. Ensuring the impact of traffic to and from the Port is well-managed and that alternatives to road transport exist is essential so that local community can travel when they need to for school, their jobs, or to enjoy their leisure time.

The proposals in our plan to address this strategic challenge would need to be delivered within Dover to deliver this outcome, as well as proposals for the wider Strategic Road Network across the rest of the county, such is the scale of the challenge.

Aside from the challenge of the Port, the district is growing with expansion of the Whitfield area supported by a new Fastrack network with dedicated new highway leading towards the town centre and rail station. Dover serves as an example of how, with careful planning, new development in other districts could deliver transport-oriented development with bus priority to offer improved travel options.

New homes are also being delivered in smaller towns and villages such as Aylesham, Deal, Sandwich and at the Discovery Park science park area alongside employment uses. The rail network serves several of these locations and along the coast it hosts the High Speed (HS1) rail service which provides fast connections to north Kent and London.

The District Council is preparing a LCWIP, which will help us to deliver improvements that make short journeys easier to do. At the same time these improvements will help to build a larger continuous network that supports the corridors identified in our KCWIP. Our proposals seek to make further improvements in addition to those already delivered or planned through former schemes such as the Market Square, and existing Levelling Up Funded projects.



Port of Dover

Photo credit: Dover Harbour Board



A2 Dover Access, and interim improvements to Duke of York and Whitfield roundabouts

Sandwich bypass improvements

Dover Fastrack – network development

**LCWIP and KCWIP:**

KCWIP route corridors from Dover towards Canterbury and Deal can improve journeys on the Dover District Council LCWIP corridors for:

- New routes through the Whitfield growth area connecting to the town centre, capitalising on the Dover Fastrack scheme delivering more cycling infrastructure
- Improved infrastructure on Dover Road into the town centre, to better connect existing suburbs and new development and support easier use of the longer distance Skylark trial towards Walmer

KCWIP proposed walking zone improvements for Dover Town Centre to:

- Improve access from town to seafront
- Access to town attractions to support visitor economy
- Support the high street
- Improve journeys to schools

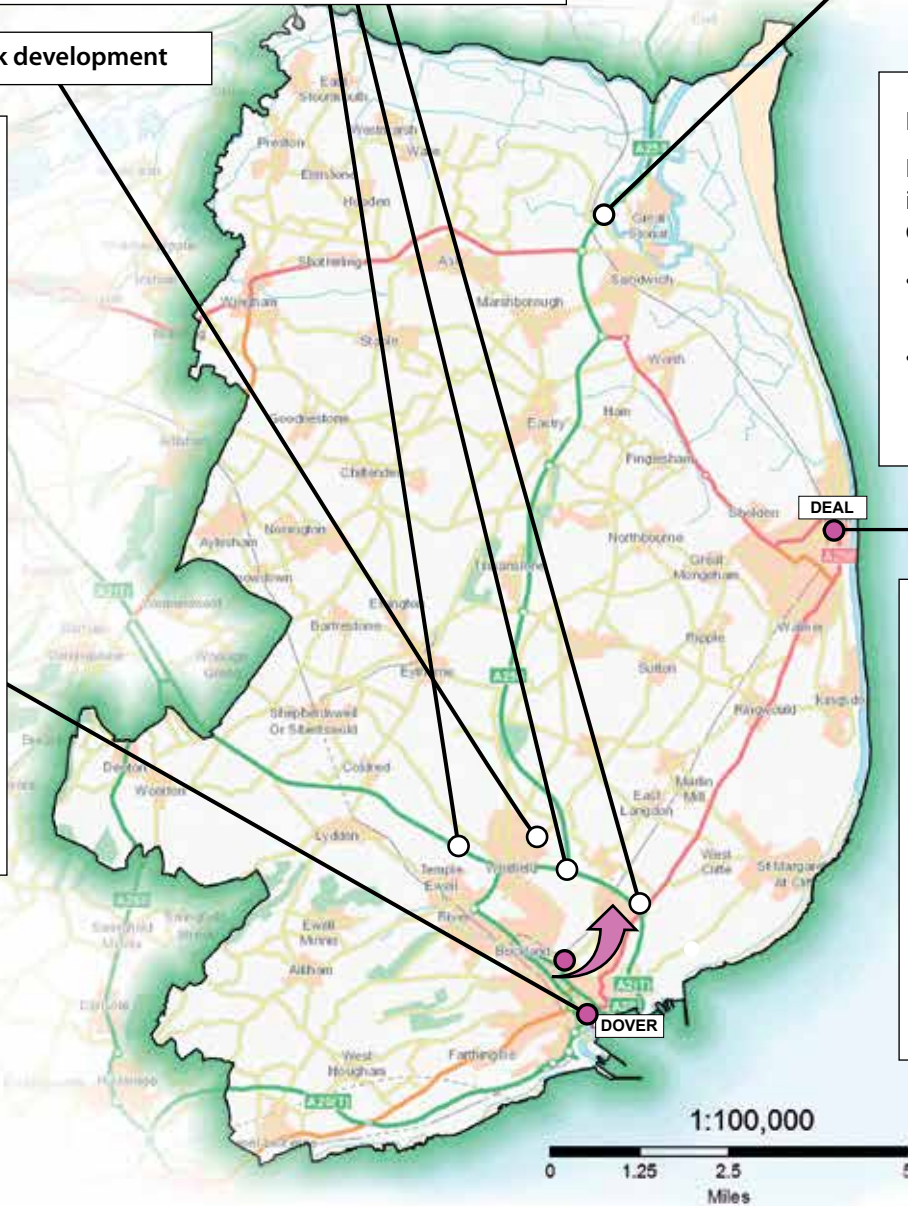
**LCWIP and KCWIP:**

KCWIP proposes walking zone improvements for Deal Town Centre to:

- Improve routes from station to seafront and highstreet
- Create higher quality street environments for residents and businesses

**Network-wide proposals**

- International haulage traffic management on M20 corridor (pg. 30)
- International rail freight gauge enhancements (pg. 45)
- Dover / Folkestone High Speed rail journey time improvements (pg. 45)
- Local rail service improvements: Dover to Canterbury East line (pg. 49)
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (pg. 39)
- Improved local rail station access (pg. 49)
- Local road freight management (pg. 37)



## FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE

Like neighbouring Dover, the district hosts one of the UK's most important international gateways, with the Channel Tunnel providing the fastest crossing to the continent (just 35 minutes). Folkestone and Hythe's challenge is not just the traffic impacts associated with passenger and freight traffic at Eurotunnel, but the knock-on effects of traffic management for vehicles destined for the Port of Dover. Our plan is focused on a range of proposals to reduce the burden of international traffic on the district and local journeys, including ensuring the Alkham Valley Spitfire Way junction interchange can meet future demands from growth and international traffic diversions.

Otterpool Park, located to the northwest of Hythe, is one of the largest new development proposals in the south east. The new town would provide around 8,500 homes and 9,000 new jobs, capitalising on the fast rail links towards London through a significant upgrade of Westenhanger station to enable full length High Speed rail services to stop at a fully accessible station, as well as the local and strategic road access from the A20 and M20.

Folkestone town is experiencing a renaissance with regeneration efforts by the District Council underway. The long distance road and rail connections towards London have attracted new residents within the flexible working culture that has built up since the pandemic. The district has internationally recognised protected landscapes such as the Romney Marsh and Dungeness, providing coastal attractions for walking and cycling by both residents and visitors. Our plan reflects the cross-boundary opportunities into East Sussex that stakeholders including Transport for the South East have identified. Our comprehensive Bus Service Improvement Plan would provide improvements within the district, helping to further improve choice in local transport.

The proposals in our plan can make a positive contribution to local transport, whilst also having a positive effect by helping to address the impacts of the high

international traffic flows through the district. Partnership working with National Highways and Network Rail will be important to realise some of the proposals for the district.



Folkestone town centre

10. DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS CONTINUED

LCWIP and KCWIP: 

KCWIP route corridor towards Canterbury can improve journeys on the Folkestone and Hythe District Council LCWIP corridors for:

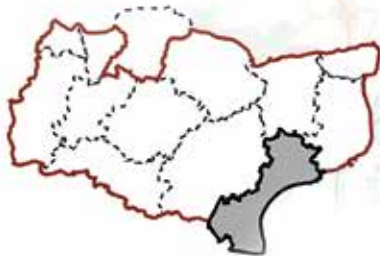
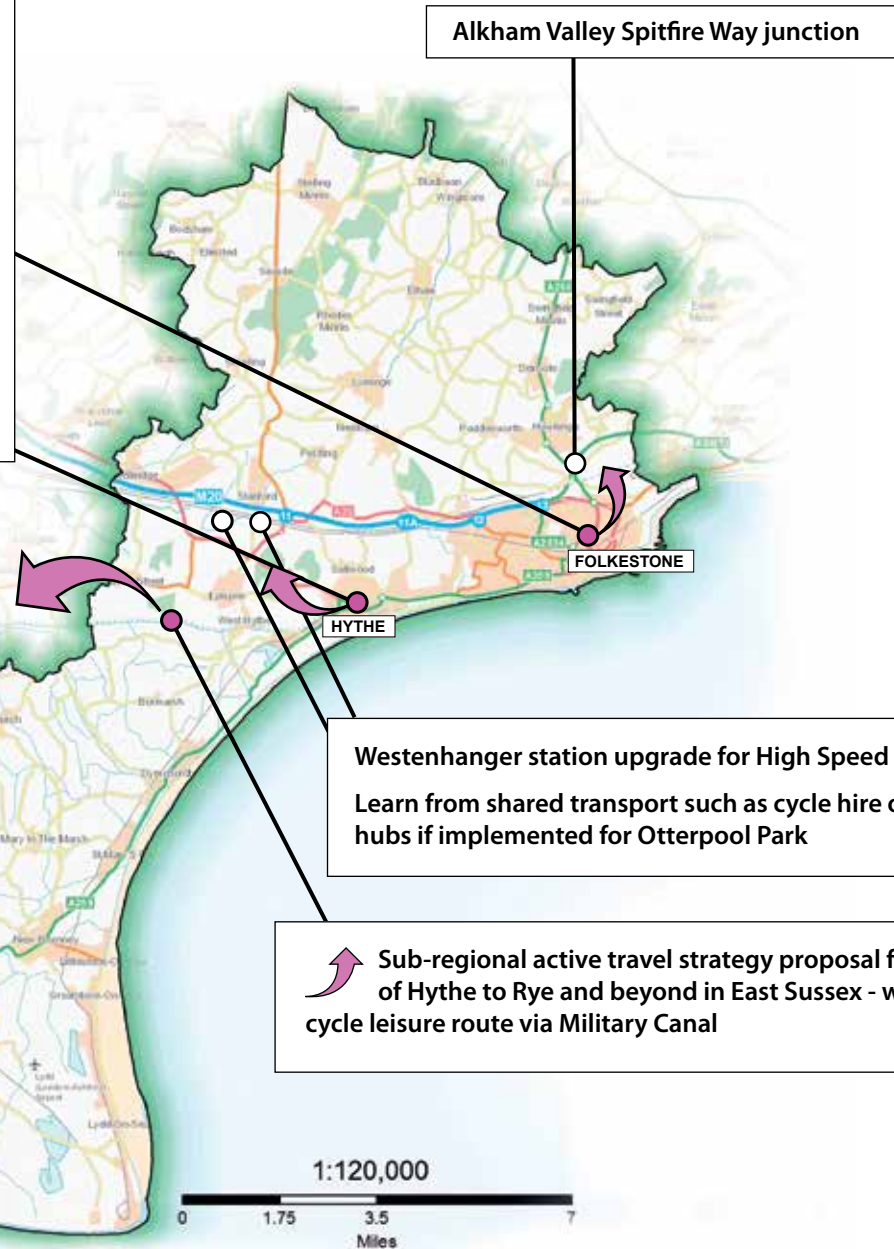
- LCWIP route D in the area around the A259 and A260, potentially including the former Harbour branch line between the town centre and towards Hawkinge

KCWIP route corridor towards Ashford and Hythe can improve journeys on the Folkestone and Hythe District Council LCWIP corridors for:

- LCWIP routes within Hythe potentially including E, F, G, H and I, T, Q and R, covering the east-west corridors of the Marine Parade, north-south between there to across Military Canal towards the A259 corridor for route options towards Lympe

**Network-wide proposals**

- International haulage traffic management on M20 corridor (pg. 30)
- International rail freight gauge enhancements (pg. 45)
- Folkestone / Dover High Speed rail journey time improvements (pg. 47)
- Return of International passenger rail services to Kent via Ashford International station (pg. 48)
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (pg. 39)
- Improved local rail station access (pg. 49)
- Local road freight management (pg. 37)



## GRAVESHAM

The site of National Highway's proposed new crossing of the Thames, known as the Lower Thames Crossing, is to the east of Gravesend. The borough therefore has the potential to play a critical future role in the strategic movements of millions of vehicles across the nation each year, as the crossing will improve access between Kent's international terminals and the Midlands and North of England.

The impact of such a large-scale construction project will need to be balanced alongside the planned regeneration of Gravesend town centre and new development, including the transformation of the Ebbsfleet and Northfleet areas associated with the progress of the Garden City. Gravesham also borders Medway, which needs to accommodate its own growth and some of this may be rely on the highways and public transport networks within the borough.

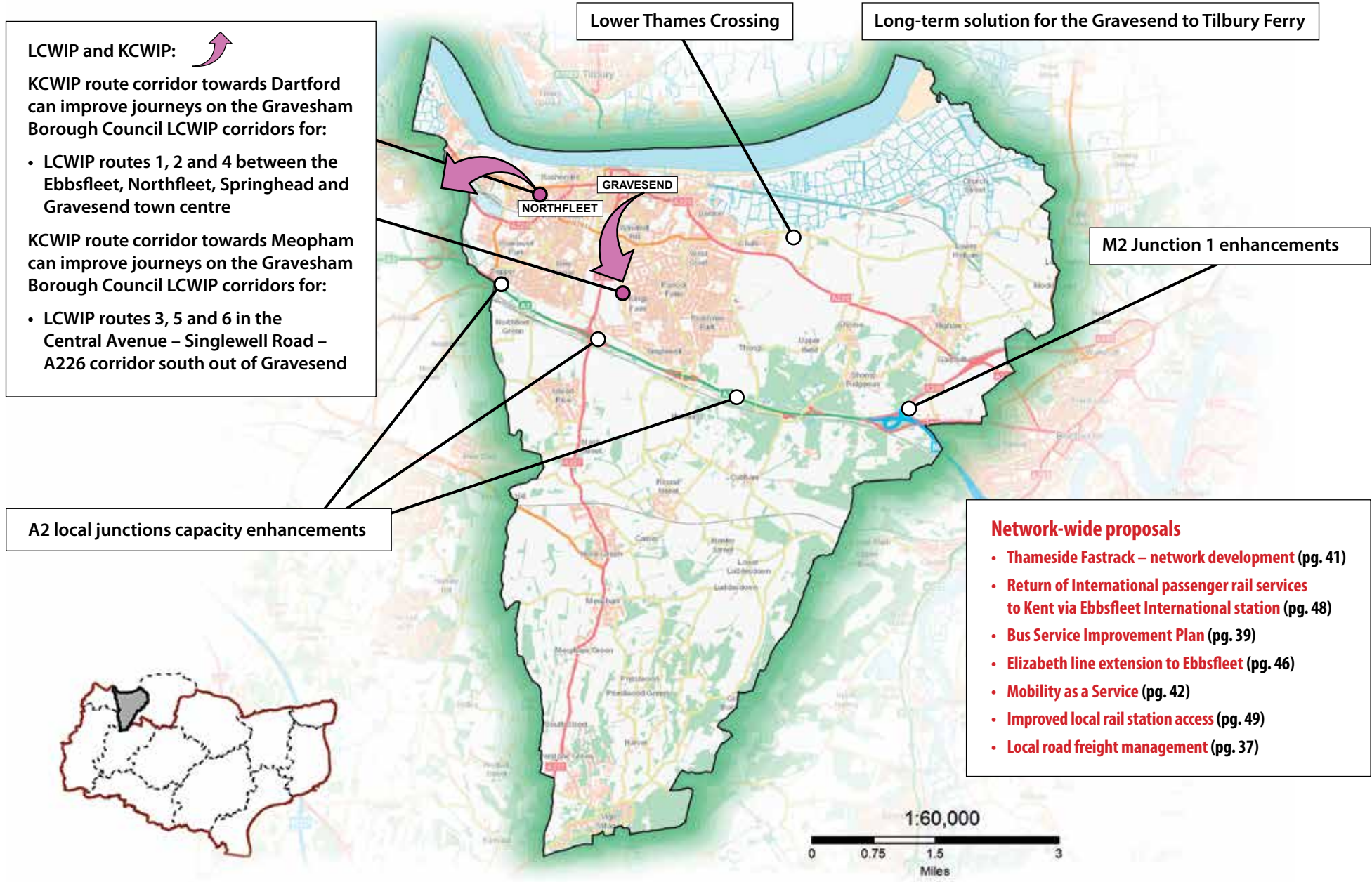
The A2 corridor cuts across the district east-west, with north-south routes between Gravesend to the north and the smaller communities such as Sole Street, Meopham and Vigo to the south. Gravesend has the benefit of the Thameside Fastrack network for connections towards Ebbsfleet and Dartford. Rail services provide good east-west connections between those same locations as well as the Kent coast and Medway. The new Thames crossing may provide the opportunity for potential new public transport connections, although KCC continues to seek a long term funding solution for the Gravesend to Tilbury Ferry.

The proposals in our plan aim to ensure that the benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing can be fully realised across the county, as well as seeking appropriate mitigation for the negative impacts arising from the new crossing. Our plan aims to achieve that by ensuring the M2/A2 corridor and access on and off of it can cater for the new route options and the growth in travel from new communities and businesses.

Our proposals for Gravesham aim to ensure that the Fastrack network can take advantage of opportunities to expand so that more journeys can be made by fast and reliable public transport. Complementing that, we seek to pilot new and innovative approaches to accessing and paying for transport services through a Mobility as a Service initiative as well as learning from new shared transport options that could be provided within the Ebbsfleet Garden City. Walking and cycling improvements can build on the improved connections being delivered within the Ebbsfleet Garden City, helping to provide a more complete network through north Kent.



Rathmore Road completed improvements in Gravesend



## MAIDSTONE

Maidstone sits at the heart of the county, at the intersection of busy north-south highway routes in the A229 and A249, and the east-west strategic roads of the M20 and M2. These key highway routes attract much traffic through Maidstone, additional to the local traffic. Maidstone is one of Kent's largest towns with a wide range of destinations for retail, work and services leading to high traffic volumes, queuing and slow journeys through the town and on its approaches (such as the A274 and A20). As a result, narrower residential roads are relied upon for journeys that ordinarily would be made on the main routes.

There are no easy solutions to the congestion in Maidstone – the built up urban environment and topography of the Medway valley create constraints. A rising population will inevitably bring more vehicle ownership and more travel (Maidstone has exceeded the county wide average level of total vehicles since 2017), so congestion will likely remain a long-term challenge. Delivery our proposals to address these challenges will require substantial funding, not just to be delivered but to be planned and designed in the first place.

The borough is developing a LCWIP, which will complement the county-wide KCWIP by supporting delivery of local schemes that also contribute to longer distance routes. The options for improving walking and cycling will be an important part of helping to reduce reliance on vehicle trips for short distance journeys around Maidstone town.

The Borough Council is building on its economic development strategy, with a focus on improving the town centre further in Maidstone. Further new development is planned, most notably the large Maidstone Barracks site, whilst new garden communities are proposed to the east of Lenham and near Lidsing and Bredhurst. These proposals will need substantial changes to the rail and highway network and the challenge for developers will be getting those delivered such that they do not worsen travel for local and longer distance journeys.

The county town is connected to other towns and villages in Kent by the rail mainline between the Kent coast and London via Ashford, and by the Medway Valley line between Strood and Paddock Wood. The town has some direct High Speed services to London limited to the weekday peaks from Maidstone West. The town has relatively long journey times to London compared to other towns with more frequent and regular High Speed services; however the return of services direct to London Bridge have helped to improve connections.

The borough is also affected by traffic management protocols for the Port of Dover – with Operation Brock reducing road capacity and lowering speeds along the M20 from Junction 8. Our plan sets out proposals to improve international traffic management which would have a positive impact on Maidstone as well as Ashford, Folkestone and Hythe and Dover.




Maidstone Bridge and High Street

10. DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS CONTINUED

A229 Blue Bell Hill including junctions with the M2 and M20

- Maidstone town centre improvements
- Improvements around Maidstone West station
  - Potential new links to the town centre over the River Medway
  - Improved pedestrian crossings
  - Town centre traffic relief including consideration of a new bypass
  - Fountain Lane junction performance
  - Willington Street junction performance
  - Bearsted Road junctions performance
  - Linton junction performance

M2 Junction 4 enhancements to support bifurcation strategy and local growth pressures

LCWIP and KCWIP: 

KCWIP route corridor towards Sittingbourne can improve journeys on the Maidstone Borough Council LCWIP corridor between the town centre and Penenden Heath and Newnham Court / Kent Medical Campus area

KCWIP route corridor Ashford to Charing can improve journeys on the Maidstone Borough Council LCWIP corridor towards Lenham and Bearsted

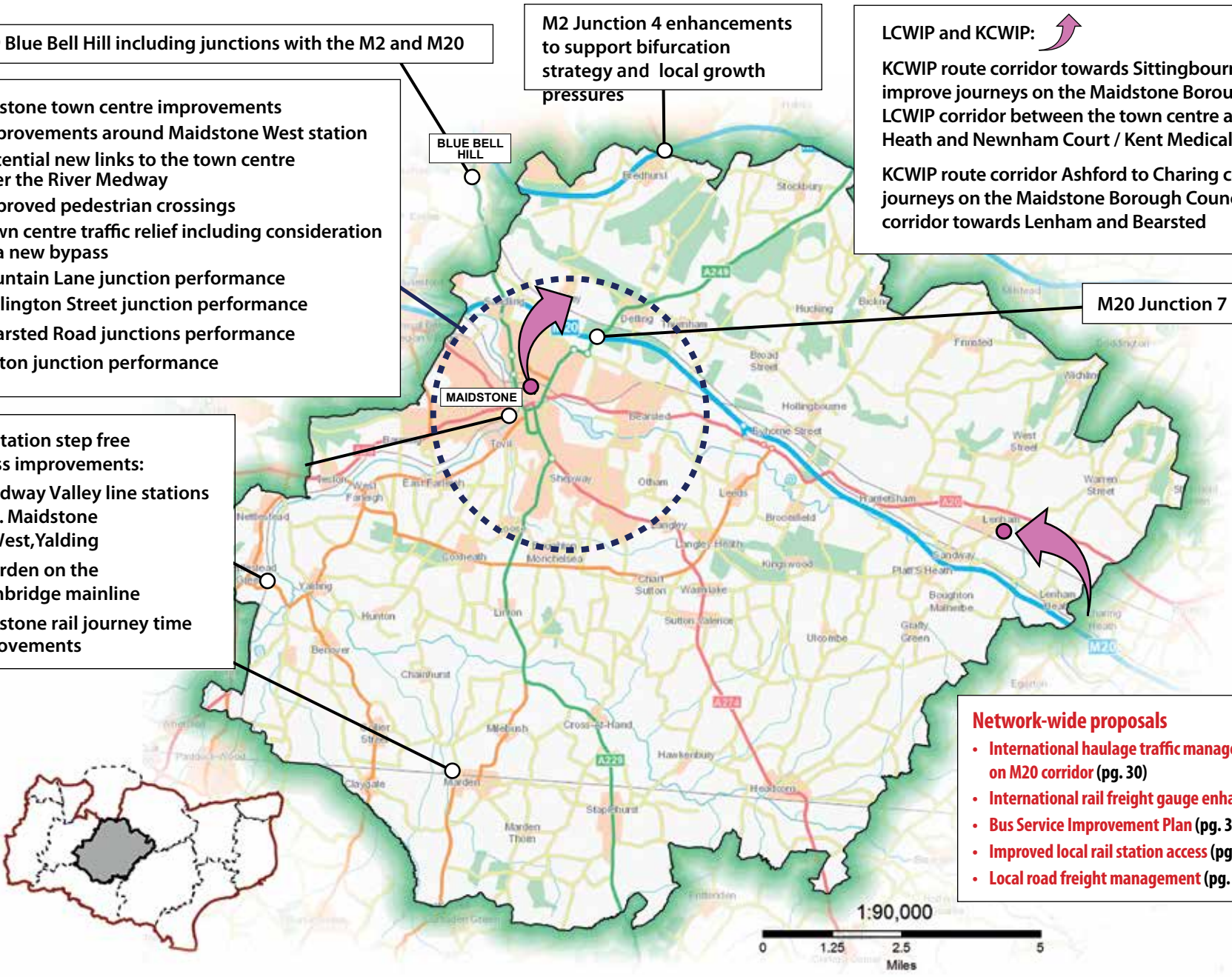
M20 Junction 7 improvements

Rail station step free access improvements:

- Medway Valley line stations e.g. Maidstone West, Yalding
- Marden on the Tonbridge mainline

Maidstone rail journey time improvements

- Network-wide proposals**
- International haulage traffic management on M20 corridor (pg. 30)
  - International rail freight gauge enhancements (pg. 45)
  - Bus Service Improvement Plan (pg. 39)
  - Improved local rail station access (pg. 49)
  - Local road freight management (pg. 37)



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## SEVENOAKS

Sevenoaks district is dominated by the London green belt, as such the urban area is predominantly comprised of two main towns at Sevenoaks and Swanley. Smaller towns at Westerham and Edenbridge are very close to the border with Surrey. The district will grow in the future, but the constraints mean this growth is likely to be focused around Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge. This means the existing transport network is unlikely to change substantially and the large rural population will remain reliant on private transport, though we aim to improve bus journeys if we can secure the funding to further deliver our Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The SRN provides north-south and east-west connections, although access to it is not ideal with traffic having to use local routes to make certain movements around Sevenoaks. In contrast the district's rail network is one of the best in the county owing to its proximity to London and routes for East Sussex and Medway / the Kent coast serving its towns. This means that services are high frequency and high capacity, and the district's towns are popular for commuting to London.

Being one of the most westerly districts, the district is closest to London Gatwick Airport and the flight paths generated by the east-west oriented runway and the potential new northern runway. Our plan sets out our proposals to try and protect the quality of life in Sevenoaks district from the noise impacts and disturbance from the airport's flight paths.

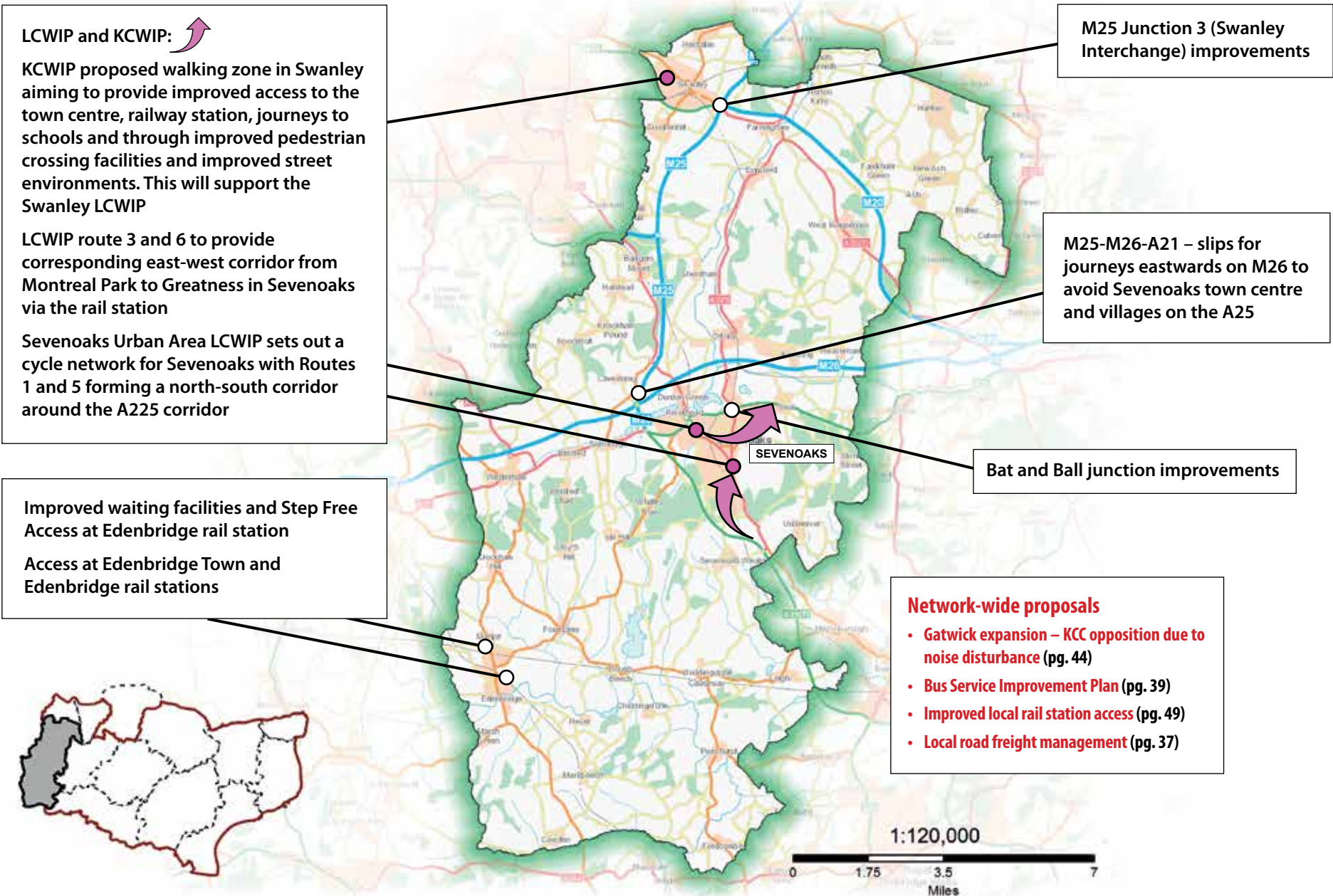
The district has LCWIPs for Sevenoaks and Swanley urban areas, which we have begun delivery of alongside the District Council, and our county-wide plan has complemented these with further priorities to help ensure that urban areas have more opportunities for non-vehicular travel.

Our plan sets out proposals for the district that reflect the constraints associated with the SRN and the prevalence of green belt land. The main opportunities at a local level, aside from the comprehensive Bus Service Improvement Plan we have, are improvements to local travel within Swanley and Sevenoaks as these locations are large enough that relatively short distance journeys are adding pressure to the road network. Our plan's proposals for walking and cycling improvements could increase choices so that people can easily avoid traffic congestion for short journeys.



Swanley Railway Station





**LCWIP and KCWIP:**

KCWIP proposed walking zone in Swanley aiming to provide improved access to the town centre, railway station, journeys to schools and through improved pedestrian crossing facilities and improved street environments. This will support the Swanley LCWIP

LCWIP route 3 and 6 to provide corresponding east-west corridor from Montreal Park to Greatness in Sevenoaks via the rail station

Sevenoaks Urban Area LCWIP sets out a cycle network for Sevenoaks with Routes 1 and 5 forming a north-south corridor around the A225 corridor

M25 Junction 3 (Swanley Interchange) improvements

M25-M26-A21 – slips for journeys eastwards on M26 to avoid Sevenoaks town centre and villages on the A25

SEVENOAKS

Bat and Ball junction improvements

Improved waiting facilities and Step Free Access at Edenbridge rail station

Access at Edenbridge Town and Edenbridge rail stations

- Network-wide proposals**
- Gatwick expansion – KCC opposition due to noise disturbance (pg. 44)
  - Bus Service Improvement Plan (pg. 39)
  - Improved local rail station access (pg. 49)
  - Local road freight management (pg. 37)

1:120,000



## SWALE

Swale is comprised of the Isle of Sheppey, connected by major road and rail bridges, as well as the large town of Sittingbourne situated on the A2, which leads to Faversham – a further main town at the eastern boundary of the district. The east-west A2 route is a dominant feature, which has become very busy due to the direct connections it provides locally compared to the M2 corridor. With communities situated facing the highway along much of its length, the route suffers from congestion and poor air quality, constraining growth in the area. The rail mainline runs parallel to the A2, serving the main towns along the route.

The Isle of Sheppey is populated mainly across its northern and western sides. Journeys converge onto the A249 or head to the rail stations at Sheerness or Queenborough to reach the mainland, and therefore the availability and performance of these transport routes are critical for enabling journeys to wider Kent. The main road link is managed by National Highways as a strategic road in recognition of its importance for conveying large volumes of traffic as well as trade from Sheerness Docks. The existing rail network provides potential for shifting road-based freight to rail. This will need to be led by the freight and logistics market in coordination with Network Rail but much of the infrastructure is in place already.

Sittingbourne has a constrained road network but continues to experience a rising population as homes and commercial developments are built across the area. Existing investment is delivering upgraded junctions along the A249 to improve access to the SRN, and M2 Junction 5 (Stockbury) is also being transformed by National Highways. Nonetheless, the focus of traffic movement towards the A249 on the western side of Sittingbourne means traffic pressures for the town and its centre, compounded by substantial and growing commercial activity on the northern and eastern sides of Sittingbourne. Plans have existed for new routes

to divert traffic away from the A2 road corridor and these are likely to remain beneficial given the limited remaining options for addressing traffic congestion.

Faversham is benefiting from efforts to deliver walking and cycling improvements with strong local community participation and the support of the Borough Council and us. The Borough has a LCWIP for the town. For the borough more widely, our county-wide KCWIP sets out some further opportunities for walking and cycling improvements.



Faversham Guildhall

10. DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS CONTINUED

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LCWIP and KCWIP: ↗  
 KCWIP route corridor across Sheppey complements and can improve the local cycle network including the Explore Kent Sheerness Way Ships and Chips circular route and Sheppey Light Railway Greenway

LCWIP and KCWIP: ↗  
 A walking zone in Sittingbourne is proposed in the KCWIP. It aims to improve access within the town centre, improve pedestrian safety, access to the retail to the north of the railway line, and to improve journeys to school

Key Street junction improvements

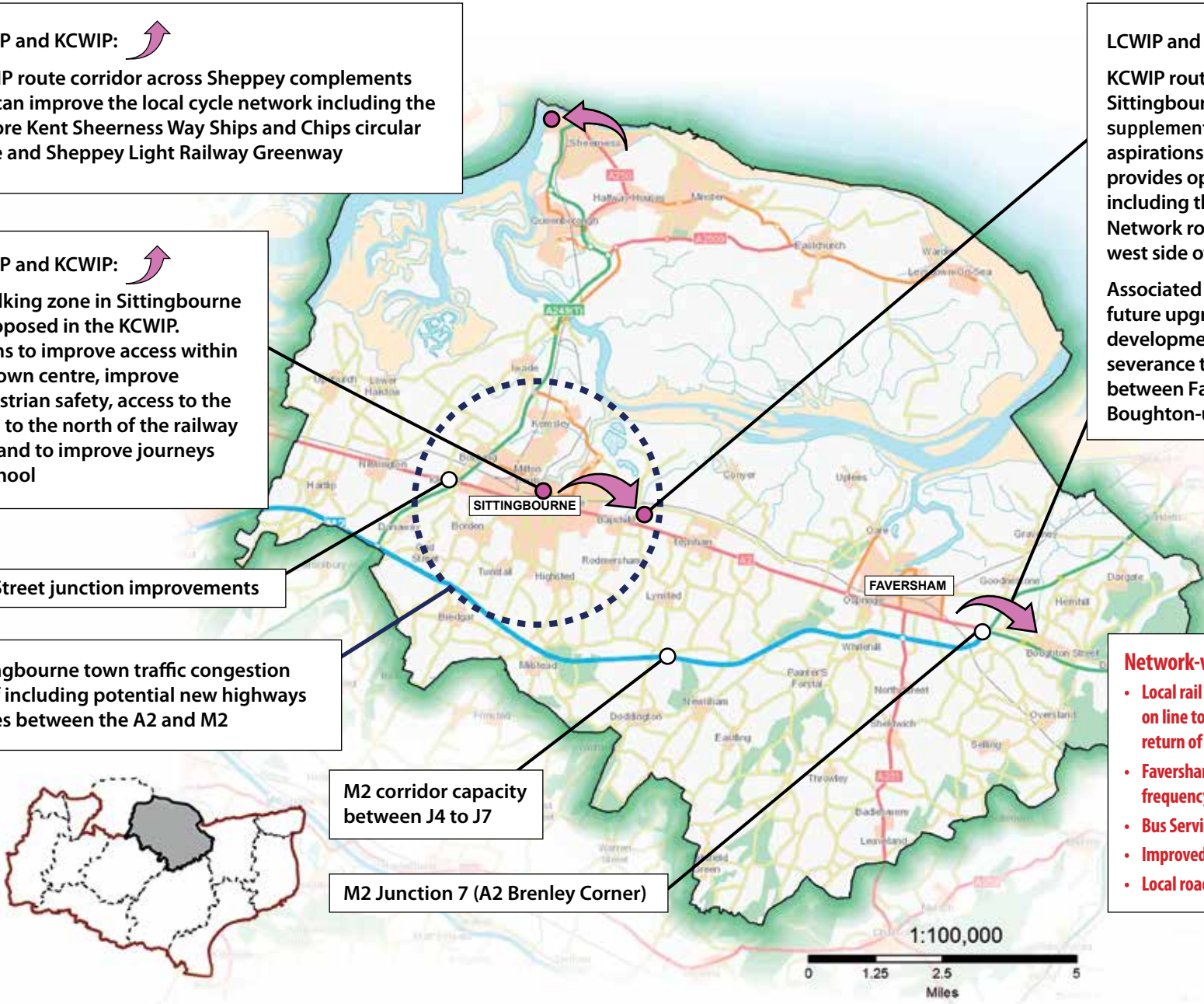
Sittingbourne town traffic congestion relief including potential new highways routes between the A2 and M2

M2 corridor capacity between J4 to J7

M2 Junction 7 (A2 Brenley Corner)

LCWIP and KCWIP: ↗  
 KCWIP route corridor Sittingbourne to Faversham supplements local Borough aspirations for Faversham and provides options complementing or including the National Cycle Network route to connect into the west side of Faversham  
 Associated with M2 Junction 7 future upgrade and local area development, improvements to severance to Public Rights of Way between Faversham and Boughton-under-Blean

- Network-wide proposals**
- Local rail services – half hourly frequency on line to Sheppey across the week and return of London direct services (pg. 49)
  - Faversham to Medway rail service frequency improvements (pg. 49)
  - Bus Service Improvement Plan (pg. 39)
  - Improved local rail station access (pg. 49)
  - Local road freight management (pg. 37)



## THANET

Thanet has a series of continuous coastal communities from Ramsgate around to Minnis, whilst the area between is filled with rural fields, villages, Manston Airport, and the industrial and big-box retail area of Westwood Cross. The district is changing though, with new development in the hinterland of these coastal communities set to provide both an increase in population and pressure on the transport links, but also opportunities for new road connections that could improve the ease of travelling for all.

Our proposals, some already in progress, include a new road to provide resilience and additional capacity, as well as investment in the bus network to support the well-used Thanet Loop. Development sites will also provide new link roads, bringing new connections across Thanet for local traffic and public transport. The plans will support future uses of the airport and some of the transport demand that arises from that.

Our previous LTP proposed a new rail station and that has been delivered, at Thanet Parkway. The station provides new access to High Speed and local rail services from the area including the airport, and the growing community at Cliffs End and in the north of Dover district. We will continue to build on its success in this LTP.

The transport improvements we have been able to attract funding for in Thanet are in part a reflection of the area's long-standing economic challenges, recognised by its classification as a Tier 1 authority (i.e. most in need of investment) in the government's Levelling Up programme.

The district has one of the longest continuous off-road cycle routes running along the coastal paths and promenades, and new roads delivered will provide further walking and cycling links. The district is developing a LCWIP that we

will support in its delivery, and we have the complementary KCWIP. Our LTP establishes proposals that address the main road network constraints for future growth in the district, along with opportunities for improving local transport by rail, walking, cycling or bus travel through our Bus Service Improvement Plan.



Ramsgate Harbour

10. DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS CONTINUED

**Network-wide proposals**

- New link roads delivered as part of local development to maximise connectivity and capacity benefits of the North Thanet Link and support the delivery of a new 'Inner Circuit' route in the district (pg. 35)
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (pg. 39)
- Improved local rail station access (pg. 49)
- Local road freight management (pg. 37)

**LCWIP and KCWIP:**

KCWIP route corridor Canterbury to Birchington and Birchington walking zone, aiming to deliver improvements and wayfinding to cycle routes from Birchington seafront to the rail station, and town centre, including improved rail station facilities

**LCWIP and KCWIP:**

KCWIP route corridor Birchington to Ramsgate, aiming to deliver improvements to sections of the coastal route and to make use of new links from development to improve access on the corridor between Margate and Ramsgate including through the Public Rights of Way network

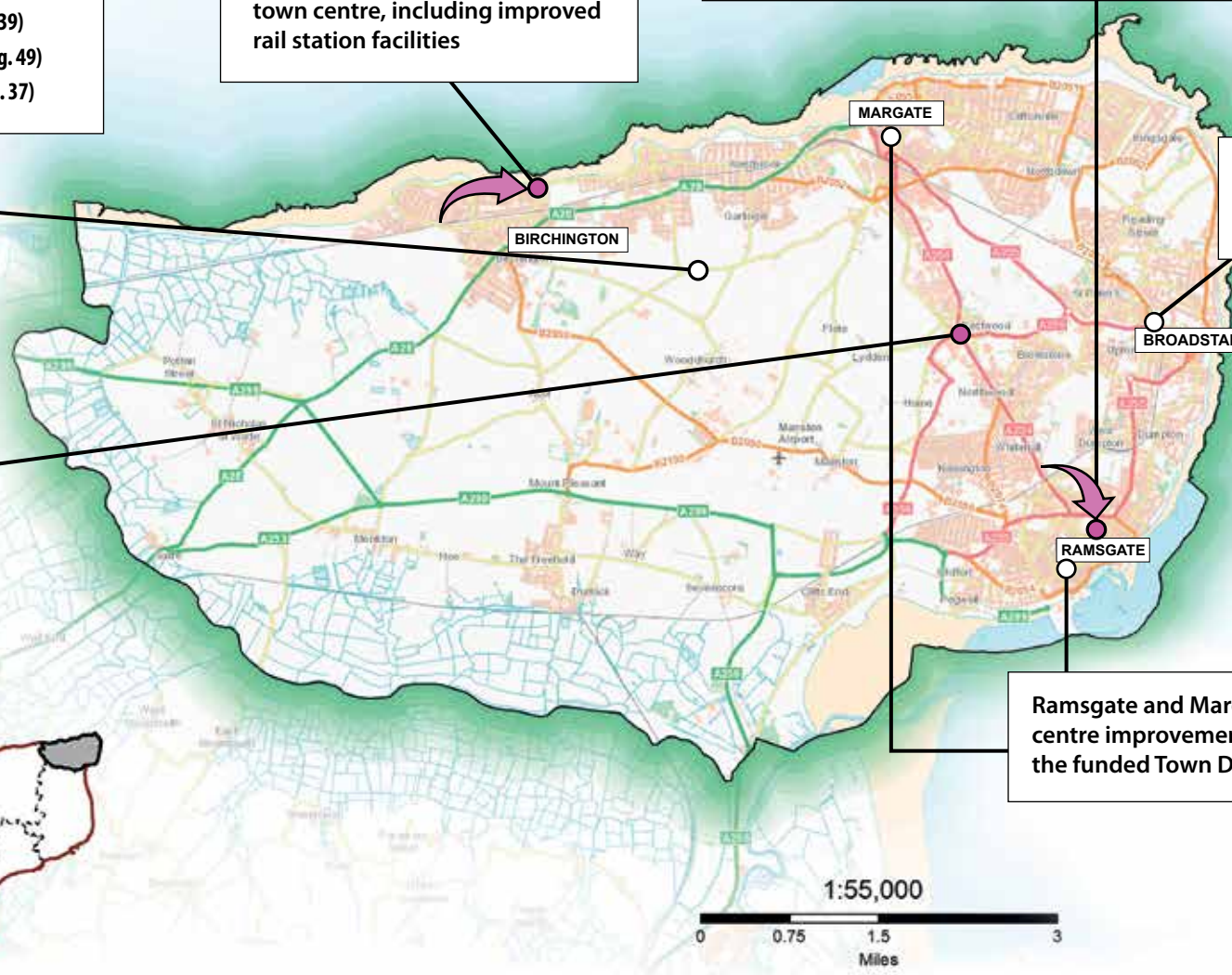
North Thanet Link Road

**LCWIP and KCWIP:**

KCWIP walking zone in Westwood, aiming to improve the walking environment for new communities to the commercial centre, and encourage walking journeys between commercial sites

Broadstairs step free access between platforms

Ramsgate and Margate town centre improvements as part of the funded Town Deals



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## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING

Tonbridge and Malling stretches from Medway towards Tunbridge Wells with the A228 – A264 road corridor acting as the main spine of the transport network between these locations and linking to the M20 and M2 motorways. The A227 provides a parallel north south route from Tonbridge towards Gravesham. The borough has substantial green belt and rural areas, with the main built-up areas being Tonbridge and its nearby villages, and King’s Hill and the Aylesford area towards the north of the borough.

The A228 is also paralleled by the Medway Valley rail line, which can provide rail services between Tonbridge and Strood via Aylesford and Maidstone. The service has changed since the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, being curtailed for most the day to Paddock Wood. Tonbridge town has a high volume of services from a variety of routes, providing fast journeys to central London – both the city and west end – and these also provide east-west connections towards Surrey and the east Kent coast. The borough also has east-west connections from the Maidstone mainline.

Due to the borough’s proximity to other major urban areas, such as Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone, Paddock Wood and Medway, the future pressure on its road network arises as much from wider changes to land uses beyond its boundary as from within.

The road network through the urban areas of Tonbridge, Leybourne, Ditton and Aylesford sees congestion and delays at junctions. Schemes have been implemented in some locations across these areas to improve performance of the road network, but the constraints of the built-up area prevent significant changes to the road network. As such, the increasing population will present challenges to reliability and journey times. Providing a wide range of choice and ease of access to public transport and walking and cycling routes will be an option for reducing the pressure on the road network from future traffic levels.

The borough has an adopted cycling strategy , which has proposed a series of cycling routes. These provide options in the Tonbridge, King’s Hill – West Malling, Borough Green and A20 corridor towards Maidstone (known as the Medway Gap). Our KCWIP complements the aims for Tonbridge and the Medway Gap proposals by pointing towards options to help reduce reliance on travel along the A20 in the local area via quiet ways through residential areas, and for journeys further on into Maidstone town centre.




Tonbridge High Street

10. DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS CONTINUED

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Improving journeys in the Medway Gap, including walking and cycling network connections to better link growth areas, and access towards Maidstone

A228-A264 road corridor improvements

LCWIP and KCWIP:   
 KCWIP walking zone in Tonbridge aiming to improve journeys to school and easier access to the high street by increasing pedestrian crossing provision and improving the walking environment. Supplements proposals in Borough strategy for cycle corridors:

- Lower Haysden
- Vauxhall
- Hildenborough

A229 Blue Bell Hill

WEST MALLING

A20 London Road junction with Mills Road and Hall Road

**Network-wide proposals**

- **Maidstone rail journey time improvements including improved links to Tonbridge on the Medway Valley Line and faster journeys on the Maidstone mainline via West Malling and Borough Green and Wrotham (pg. 46)**
- **Improved rail access to Gatwick from Tonbridge (pg. 44)**
- **Bus Service Improvement Plan (pg. 39)**
- **Improved local rail station access (pg. 49)**
- **Local road freight management (pg. 37)**



TONBRIDGE

1:80,000



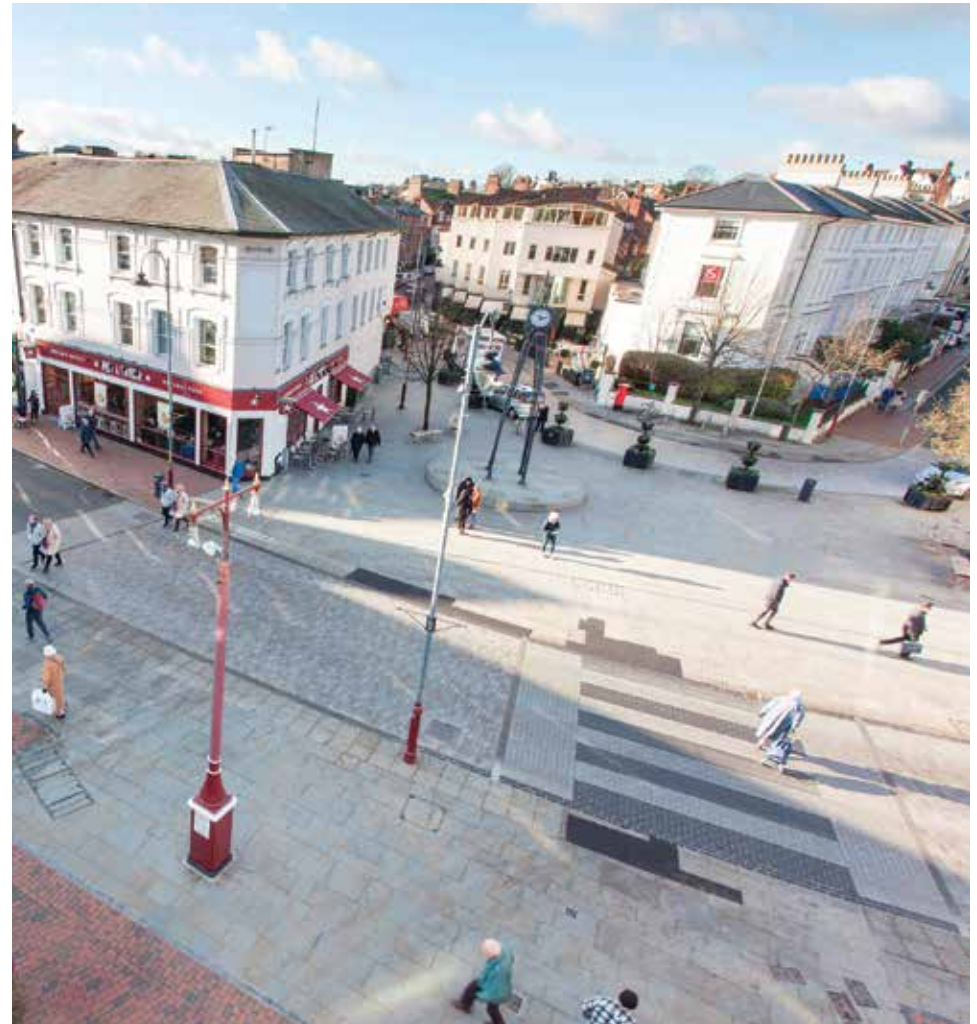
## TUNBRIDGE WELLS

The borough is largely rural with villages and market towns set within the High Weald National Landscape (formally Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Paddock Wood will be a focus for residential and employment growth through the Borough Council's Local Plan and so the A228 corridor, which skirts the western side of Paddock Wood, will be very important for accommodating new journeys. Development sites will likely provide new links directly onto the corridor.

The A228 leads to the A264 at a busy set of junctions around the Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury. The A264 route, especially into Tunbridge Wells, experiences queueing and congestion that creates overly long journeys for a comparatively short stretch and disadvantages the town centre. Our plan sets out proposals for addressing the pressures along the A228 and A264 corridor arising within the district and more widely. These would be beneficial for bus journeys too, further to the existing plans we have set out in our comprehensive Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The Borough Council has developed a LCWIP and has been working with us to plan and deliver schemes. Our KCWIP complements this with its focus on the ease and quality of the walking environment in Southborough on the outskirts of Tunbridge Wells.

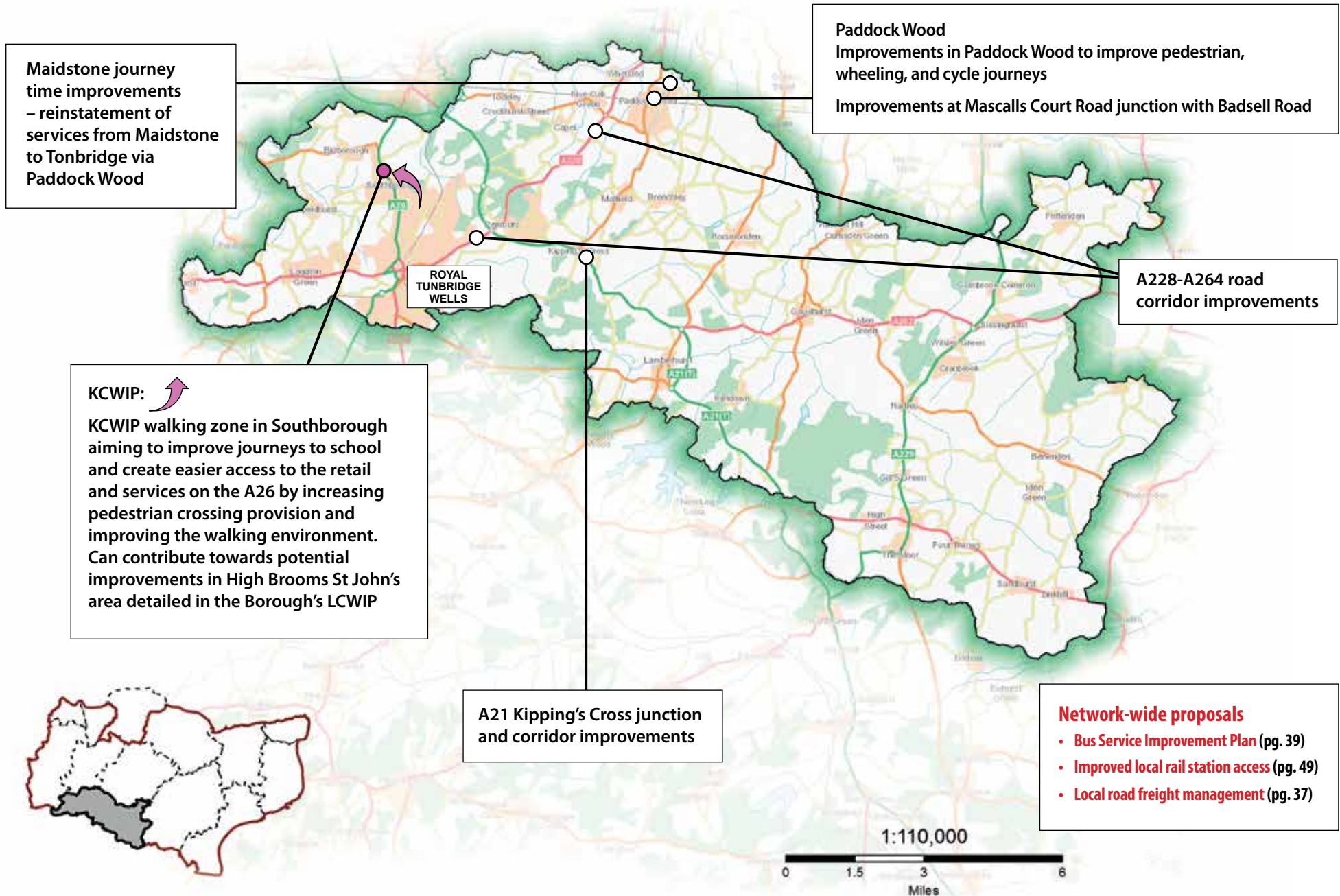
The main towns in the borough are served by rail lines with frequent services, although the eastern rural areas have no rail network, instead residents travel to stations such as Staplehurst and Etchingham. Connections from the east towards Tunbridge Wells are reliant on the road network and the A21 corridor is designated as part of the national SRN. This designation recognises the important strategic role it provides as the main road corridor carrying high traffic volumes from the coastal area around Hastings towards the M25. The A21 corridor is important for both strategic and local traffic and our plan includes proposals to ensure that the A21 supports the growing number of both in the future.



Public realm improvements at Fiveways, Tunbridge Wells



10. DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS CONTINUED



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# 11. THE FUNDING WE NEED FOR OUR PLAN

One of the key aims of this LTP is to clearly set out what level of funding is needed to invest in our existing highway network, as well as funding new transport infrastructure on both the highway and public transport networks. Our plan will help us, the government and our residents to understand what we can and cannot deliver dependent on the level of funding we receive.

If we want to make substantial progress to deliver our plan’s proposals and achieve our ambition and outcomes, we estimate that we will need an additional c.£2.6bn to c.£3.1bn for those transport improvements that we are responsible for delivering.

It is important to note that this is not all the funding we need. The current expected baseline budget set out in our annual budget book (available at [kent.gov.uk/budget](http://kent.gov.uk/budget)) details the funding we expect to have for maintenance and other improvements to the network based on existing funding plans and so is not included in this estimate.

Our estimate also excludes the funding required for the improvements that our plan proposes to the SRN and rail network, which would need to be funded through National Highways, the train operators, and Network Rail. If that funding were included, the total investment we estimate is needed for transport as a whole in Kent would be substantially larger. For example, the Lower Thames Crossing alone is expected to cost at least c.£9bn.

We have built our estimate through benchmarking against the cost of schemes we have delivered or already have developed designs for, as well as considering inflation over time. Nevertheless, this is a simplified approach – the true cost of planning, designing, and constructing proposals cannot be known with accuracy until we can work at designing proposals in more detail, which itself requires funding.

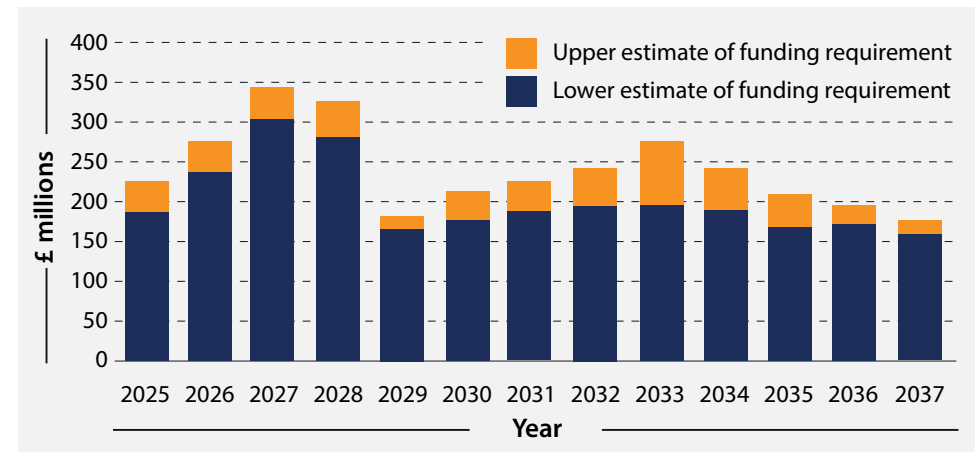
If we average our estimate of the total funding needed over the time period of our Plan, we can say that it equates to between c.£200m to c.£240m per year.

Of this, highway maintenance funding is c.£100m per year, leaving a requirement of c.£100m to c.£140m for our proposals for new or upgraded transport infrastructure.

Although £240m is an annual average up to 2037, we have forecast a peak funding requirement of around £300m in 2027 due to the expected timing of delivery of two major schemes – the A229 Blue Bell Hill and the North Thanet Link – and the Bus Service Improvement Plan initiatives. The timing of these is subject to us achieving the required funding and consents.

As we have developed our LTP, we have also identified some major transport schemes that are currently either being planned by developers (such as for new homes and commercial land uses) or which have been proposed by private transport operators but where there is not a sufficient commercial case for them to fully fund an improvement. These schemes would also provide benefits to existing users of the transport system.

**Figure 16 - Additional funding required to deliver Local Transport Plan schemes that are the responsibility of Kent County Council**



However, such development-led schemes have challenges. These include how they are delivered (major schemes are usually led by KCC, National Highways or Network Rail), their potential high cost becoming a barrier to growth, and ensuring new roads are effectively integrated into the existing highway network. We have considered what further funding these schemes may need if we use our role as the Local Transport Authority in securing government funding support for them, alongside the planned funding from the developments. We have acted in this way in the past, such as by supporting delivery of Dover Fastrack by securing government funding through the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

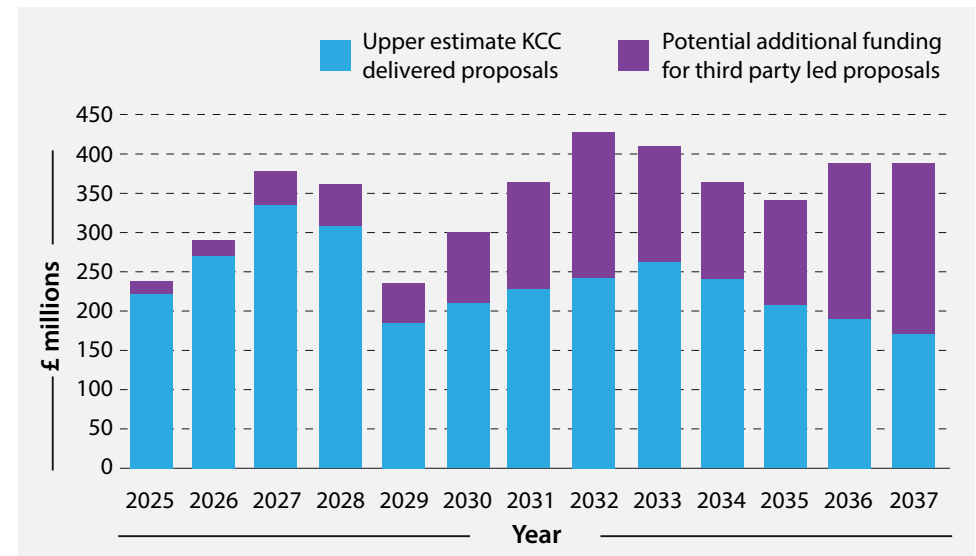
We estimate that the additional cost of these schemes could be between c.£0.9bn to c.£1.4bn, including an allowance for inflation. This would equate to a further c.£100m per year of funding needed and so our annual average funding required (on top of our anticipated usual budget) would be c.£320m per year. In this scenario, there would be a peak funding requirement in 2032 of around £410m.

The funding we will need is substantial. If we exclude maintenance funding, the annual requirement of c. £100m to c. £140m is not dissimilar to the funding we secured through the former devolved Local Growth Fund. That funding supported investment of around £66m a year on new transport infrastructure, including the match funding we secured alongside it. Our new LTP’s estimate is higher but this also reflects the inflation that has occurred over the period 2015 to 2023, during which the Local Growth Fund was available. New and sustained funding would also address some of the lost confidence and reduced public trust arising from underinvestment in road maintenance and diminished public transport services.

Funding of local transport has been going through a substantial change since 2021. There have been an increasing number of authorities across the country receiving substantial funding settlements through new or devolved local government arrangements or structures.

When considering the scale of transport settlements that some parts of the country have secured from government as part of devolution, we consider it is realistic and proportionate that we should receive funding that is of a similar scale to our estimate of c.£200m to c.£240m a year. If we can secure such a level of funding, then which specific proposals we would deliver first would be dependent on any constraints related to the funding (for example, it might only be available for use on active travel measures) and judged on the contribution to delivery of the outcomes and objectives. We will also work to secure funding from development where proposals mitigate the impact of that. To assess this, we have set out an implementation and prioritisation framework in the Annexe to this plan.

**Figure 17 - Further potential funding requirement to deliver major schemes currently led by third parties (such as developers)**



## 12. TO CONCLUDE

Our LTP proposes how we would like to achieve improved journeys for all the different parts of the transport system across Kent. It is designed to strike a balance between the investment needed to improve the county's economy and make living and working here better, whilst also preparing our transport networks to meet the environmental challenges and commitments facing the country. Striking a balance across the whole transport mix gives us the opportunity to ensure that journeys are joined up and cohesive, delivering on the government's emerging Integrated National Transport Strategy.

What is clear is that the proposals will require sustained and sufficient funding from government, not just for construction but for their design and development. With such funding, we would also be able to support and drive

progress with partners, such as National Highways and Network Rail, who are responsible for critical parts of the transport network in Kent and who themselves will have a major bearing on our ability to achieve our ambition. Where proposals have an impact across the region, we will work with Transport for the South East to progress them.

We will focus our delivery on the proposals in this LTP, confident that our activity will be contributing to the needs of Kent and supporting national government in the delivery of its own policy objectives. However, we recognise that in the coming years new priorities and proposals may come to the fore and we will adapt to deliver them provided they meet the policy objectives set out in this LTP.

# GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
<b>Air Quality Management Plans</b>	Plans held by District and Borough authorities setting out actions to reduce air pollution to within legal limits.
<b>Bifurcation</b>	The division of the Strategic Road Network route to Dover into two main corridors, comprising the A2/M2 corridor and the M20 corridor.
<b>Borough authorities</b>	Borough authorities are the same as District authorities but cover predominantly urban areas e.g. Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils.
<b>Business-as-usual scenario</b>	This scenario considers what may happen to the volume and nature of travel in Kent if our current funded and committed schemes for transport occur and Kent's population grows.
<b>Carbon pathway</b>	This is the trajectory of future emissions of carbon dioxide equivalent, the trajectory dependent on the scenario considered.
<b>Climate change</b>	Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns.
<b>CO<sup>2</sup>e</b>	Carbon dioxide equivalent – a metric used to cover all greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. Methane, Nitrous Oxide) by converting greenhouse gas emissions into carbon dioxide using scientific conversion factors.
<b>Department for Transport</b>	The government department that has responsibility for transport policy for local transport and for national networks.
<b>DfT</b>	See Department for Transport.
<b>District authorities</b>	District authorities are the local planning authorities in Kent, of which there are twelve. Some Districts have a formal title of being a Borough.
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment</b>	An assessment of the expected impacts of the plan's policies and proposals on people with protected characteristics classed within the Equalities Act 2010, required to be undertaken to inform decision making on the adoption of the plan.
<b>Framing Kent's Future</b>	Kent County Council's strategy covering all its functions for the period of 2022 to 2026.
<b>Gear Change</b>	The Government's vision for Walking and Cycling in England.

Term	Definition
<b>Getting Building Fund</b>	This is the name of a government provided fund to support the economy through infrastructure investment during the Covid-19 pandemic.
<b>Health Impact Assessment</b>	An assessment of the expected impacts of the plan’s policies and proposals required to be undertaken to inform decision making on the adoption of the plan.
<b>HGV</b>	Heavy Goods Vehicle
<b>High Speed 1 / HS1</b>	This is the name of the high speed rail link running to London St Pancras International from Kent, via Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International.
<b>Housing Infrastructure Fund</b>	This is the name of a government fund designed to support delivery of housing and the infrastructure housing needs.
<b>Infrastructure Delivery Plans</b>	Plans help by District and Borough authorities setting out proposed infrastructure, including transport, needed to support delivery and mitigate the impact of changes to land use including new development.
<b>Local Growth Fund</b>	This was a fund government established in 2013, bringing funds from several government departments into a ‘single pot’ that was provided to Local Enterprise Partnership who had responsibility for determining how the funding should best be spent to meet local needs.
<b>Local Plan</b>	A document held by District and Borough authorities which details policies to manage the use of land and its development.
<b>Local Transport Authority</b>	This is the name for a local government authority, such as a County Council, who has responsibility for local transport policy and delivery based on law which includes the Local Transport Act and Highways Act.
<b>LTP</b>	Stands for Local Transport Plan.
<b>National Highways</b>	The government company which plans, designs, builds, operates, and maintains England’s motorways and major A roads, known as the Strategic Road Network (SRN).
<b>Net Zero</b>	This is a target the UK has of reducing its net carbon emission to zero by 2050.

Term	Definition
<b>Network Rail</b>	The government company which plans, designs, builds, operates and maintains England’s rail network, aside from those elements managed day to day by the train operating companies.
<b>Public Rights of Way</b>	A right of way is a path that anyone has the legal right to use on foot, and sometimes using other forms of transport. Kent County Council is the responsible authority in Kent for Public Rights of Way.
<b>Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan</b>	This is a statutory plan that Kent County Council must have explained how improvements to the public rights of way network in the authority’s area will provide a better experience for its users including walkers, cyclists, horse riders, horse and carriage drivers, people with mobility problems, and people using motorised vehicles.
<b>Securing Kent’s Future</b>	This is a Kent County Council corporate budget recovery strategy which aims to address in-year and future years’ financial pressures the council is facing.
<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment</b>	An assessment of the expected impacts of the plan’s policies and proposals required to be undertaken to inform decision making on the adoption of the plan.
<b>Strategic Road Network</b>	The strategic road network comprises the motorways and trunk roads in England.
<b>Sub National Transport Body</b>	An organisation established under or for the purpose set out in The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act, which makes provision for the establishment and constitution of a Sub-national Transport Body for any area in England (outside of Greater London). Sub-national Transport Bodies are designed to address regional, cross boundary transport challenges and opportunities to support the work of Local Transport Authorities and national government within their region.
<b>Transport for the South East (TfSE)</b>	This is the name of the Sub National Transport Body for the region that includes Kent. See Sub National Transport Body glossary entry for further information.
<b>Trunk road</b>	A road designated by National Highways as a route of strategic importance.
<b>Trunking</b>	This is the term used to describe the changing of the status of a locally managed road to a road of strategic importance which will therefore be managed by National Highways.
<b>Vision Zero</b>	Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries.

# ANNEX

## IMPLEMENTATION AND PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

Our Local Transport Plan will be successful if the investments and actions to improve transport that are taken by us year after year have been determined based on the likelihood of their positive impact on the plan’s outcomes and objectives. In doing so, the ambition we have set for the future of transport in Kent stands the best chance of being realised.

Our investments and actions are funded from a range of different sources. Those different sources of funding can have specific targeted outcomes that have been set by the funders themselves. For example, the government may establish funding aimed at investment in transport to support new housing delivery. We therefore need to ensure that future transport improvements we seek funding to invest in are going to maintain delivery of our plan’s ambition whilst delivering on the aims of funders too. This will help ensure that the actions we take to obtain funding have a lower likelihood of undermining the ambition of our Local Transport Plan.

The next section describes how we will aim to implement our plan and determine what the best options are to deliver the outcomes as we explore options within a proposal.

### Assessing the impact of proposals to support prioritisation

The strategic proposals in our Local Transport Plan have been assessed against the outcomes of the plan, using a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) assessment. As new proposals are identified, we will aim to ensure that they are initially assessed on a similar basis, with each proposal considering its likely impact on each outcome at the early stages of its development and optioneering.

A proposal’s RAG assessment should aim to be undertaken on the basis of the following guidance in Table A1 for estimating the likely impact.

**Table A1 - Red-Amber-Green assessment guidance**

Red-Amber-Green Assessment Rating	Guidance for determining rating
<b>RED</b>	Very likely or clear negative impact – proposal is likely to result in changes to the transport system and / or journeys that lead to an increase in impacts that are contrary to the aim of the assessed outcome (and given the type of effects covered within the outcomes’ associated objectives).
<b>AMBER</b>	Clear potential for risk of impact but indeterminate at the stage the RAG assessment is undertaken whether the impact is likely to be overwhelmingly positive or negative.
<b>GREEN</b>	Very likely or clear positive impact – proposal is likely to result in changes to the transport system and / or journeys that lead to an increase in impacts that are supportive to the aim of the assessed outcome (and given the type of effects covered within the outcomes’ associated objectives).



Within a proposal, there will be multiple options. Determining which option or options to progress can be undertaken in a variety of ways. For proposals where we will require government funding, we are highly likely to need to follow government transport analysis guidance which already sets out a comprehensive approach to assessing the impact of proposals. More information on that can be found on the Department for Transport website.

Whatever approach is taken, we will aim to maintain consideration of a proposal's options against our Local Transport Plan outcomes. This may include incorporating the specific outcomes or all of them into a multi-criteria assessment framework which may include weightings, depending on what is determined as the best approach given the nature of the proposal and its options.

We will aim to use the approach set out here to inform our optioneering but it should not be taken as the limit of what we will consider on any proposal. Nor should it be interpreted or inferred that there is a pass mark or threshold that any proposal should necessarily achieve in terms of the balance of performance against the outcomes and objectives. The aim is that the approach outlined in this Annex is informative to decision making.

As proposals are further developed, and the outcomes they will impact become clearer, we will aim to include in our assessments the impact on the objectives. The objectives that are relevant may be lifted and incorporated into the overarching objectives for the proposal and be directly assessed. This will help to ensure proposals directly address the Local Transport Plan's outcomes and will supplement the detailed quantified analysis we undertake to meet the government's guidance. It will enable the RAG assessment to be developed further.

When appropriate and when we can achieve the required detailed assessment given the resources available to us, we will aim to analyse the effect of a proposal against the Local Transport Plan objectives on the basis shown in Table A2.

The project managers responsible for developing each proposal will be responsible for determining whether to apply a RAG assessment or use a different type (e.g. a scored system). The RAG assessment itself may be sufficient to enable prioritisation of a selection of options within a single proposal or across a number of proposals, however in some instances the project manager may determine to use further criteria to assist with the prioritisation. The key aim is that consideration of the proposal's contribution towards delivery of the Local Transport Plan is part of the prioritisation process.

Please note that Objective 10 A) is excluded from the implementation and prioritisation framework as it concerns a part of the network which we have no role in the optioneering or delivery of and therefore we will not need to consider the effect of our proposals on the delivery or the impacts of airport expansion.



Table A2 – Red-Amber-Green Assessment Framework for LTP objectives

Objective	Red rated effect of proposal	Amber rated effect of proposal	Green rated effect of proposal
<p><b>1 A) Achieve the funding necessary to deliver a sustained fall in the value of the backlog of maintenance work over the life of our Local Transport Plan.</b></p>	<p>The proposal would clearly increase the amount of maintenance required to highways assets, most likely due to increased volumes of vehicles using the assets, increasing the amount of funding needed to achieve the objective.</p>	<p>There is a risk the proposal may increase the amount of maintenance required to highways assets, due to potential but not definite increased volumes of vehicles using the assets, which could increase the amount of funding needed to achieve the objective.</p>	<p>The proposal can improve the condition of highways assets by delivering new investment that upgrades their condition or provides new assets that reduces the usage of existing assets.</p>
<p><b>2 A) Achieve a fall over time in the volume of people killed or very seriously (life-changing) injured occurring on KCC’s managed road network, working towards the trajectory set by Vision Zero for 2050.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a direct effect on increasing the likelihood of fatalities or very serious injuries occurring on the KCC managed road network.</p>	<p>The impact of the proposal on road safety cannot be clearly determined, meaning there is a risk that the likelihood of fatalities or very serious injuries that occur on the KCC managed road network could increase. Due to the impact being unclear, there is therefore also a corresponding possibility that the likelihood may fall.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a direct effect on decreasing the likelihood of fatalities or very serious injuries occurring on the KCC managed road network.</p>
<p><b>3 A) Increase resilience of the road network serving the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel crossing, by adding holding capacity for HGVs across the southeast region to support establishment of a long term alternative to Operation Brock.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to increase the volume of traffic or traffic congestion, delays, or unreliability of journey times, or reduce capacity on the M20-A20 corridor such that the impacts of international traffic on Kent could be exacerbated.</p>	<p>The proposal may have an impact on the M20-A20 corridor however it is not clear either whether the impact will be positive or negative, or whether it will be significant enough to have a clear impact on whether international traffic will affect Kent differently compared to without the proposal.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to decrease the volume of traffic or traffic congestion, delays, or unreliability of journey times, or increase capacity on the M20-A20 corridor such that the impacts of international traffic on Kent could be reduced.</p>

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Objective	Red rated effect of proposal	Amber rated effect of proposal	Green rated effect of proposal
<p><b>3 B) Increase resilience of the road network servicing the Port of Dover through delivery of the bifurcation strategy including improvements to the M2 / A2 road corridor and its links to the M20 and a new Lower Thames Crossing for traffic towards the north, and utilising further non-road freight opportunities.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to increase the volume of traffic or traffic congestion, delays or unreliability of journey times, or reduce capacity on the M2-A2 road corridor or its connections to the M20 corridor such that the impacts of international traffic on Kent could be exacerbated.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an impact on the M2-A2 corridor or its connections with the M20 corridor however it is not clear either whether the impact will be positive or negative, or whether it will be significant enough to have a clear impact on whether international traffic will affect Kent differently compared to without the proposal.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to decrease the volume of traffic or traffic congestion, delays, or unreliability of journey times, or increase capacity on the M2-A2 corridor or its connections to the M20 corridor such that the impacts of international traffic on Kent could be reduced.</p>
<p><b>4 A) International rail travel returns to Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International stations, supported by the infrastructure investment needed at Kent’s stations to ensure they provide secure and straightforward journeys across the UK-EU border within the entry exit system.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to reduce the capability and capacity of the international rail route and its stations in Kent.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an impact on the international rail route and stations in Kent but whether the impact is likely to be negative or positive is not clear.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to improve the capability and capacity of the international rail route and its stations in Kent.</p>
<p><b>4 B) There is a reduction in the time it takes to reach international rail stations by public transport compared to conditions in 2023.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to increase the time it takes to travel on public transport from a built up urban area (given they represent the largest generators of a travel market) in Kent or the wider region to either Ebbsfleet or Ashford International stations.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an impact on travel times from a built up urban area (given they represent the largest generators of a travel market) in Kent to Ebbsfleet or Ashford International stations, however it is not clear whether it will be positive or negative.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to decrease the time it takes to travel on public transport from a built up urban area (given they represent the largest generators of a travel market) in Kent or the wider region to either Ebbsfleet or Ashford International stations.</p>

Objective	Red rated effect of proposal	Amber rated effect of proposal	Green rated effect of proposal
<p><b>5 A) Strengthen delivery of our Network Management Duty to deliver the expeditious movement of traffic by using our new moving traffic enforcement powers and modernising the provision of on-street parking enforcement.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear negative impact on our ability to deliver our Network Management Duty.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an impact on our ability to delivery our Network Management Duty however it is not clear whether it will be positive or negative.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear impact on our ability to deliver our Network Management Duty.</p>
<p><b>5 B) Reduce the amount of forecast future congestion and crowding on highways and public transport that is associated with demand from development by securing funding and delivery of our Local Transport Plan.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear likelihood of increasing traffic congestion on highways or increasing crowding on public transport past satisfactory levels.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to affect congestion on highways or crowding on public transport however it is not clear whether it will be positive or negative.</p>	<p>The proposal would have a clear impact on reducing congestion on highways or reducing crowding on public transport towards toward satisfactory levels.</p>
<p><b>5 C) The prospects for the future of transport increase across the whole county, with new innovations in transport services having a clear pathway to trial or delivery in Kent.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear negative impact on delivery of emerging, innovative, or new approaches to transport delivery and operation.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to affect emerging, innovative, or new approaches to transport delivery and operation however it is not clear whether it will be positive or negative.</p>	<p>The proposal would have a clear positive impact on delivery of emerging, innovative, or new approaches to transport delivery and operation.</p>

Objective	Red rated effect of proposal	Amber rated effect of proposal	Green rated effect of proposal
<p><b>6 A) Proposals in our Local Transport Plan are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing new, quicker, or more inclusive access to historic and natural environment destinations in the county, with proposals targeting access to such locations where appropriate.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear negative impact on the time taken or ease of journeys to historic and natural environment destinations in the county.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to affect the time taken or ease of journeys to historic and natural environment destinations in the county, however it is not clear whether the impact will be positive or negative.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear positive impact on the time taken or ease of journeys to historic and natural environment destinations in the county.</p>
<p><b>7 A) Reduce the volume of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions entering the atmosphere associated with surface transport activity on the KCC managed highway network by an amount greater than our forecast “business as usual” scenario. This means achieving a greater fall than those currently forecast of 9% by 2027, 19% by 2032 and 29% by 2037.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear negative impact as it is forecast to generate a net-increase in the volume of carbon emissions from road user activity.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an effect on road user activity however it is not clear whether the effects will result in a net-positive or net-negative volume of carbon emissions.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear positive impact as it is forecast to generate a net-reduction in the volume of carbon emissions from road user activity.</p>

Objective	Red rated effect of proposal	Amber rated effect of proposal	Green rated effect of proposal
<p><b>7 B) No area in Kent is left behind by the revolution in electric motoring, with charging infrastructure deployed close to residential areas, reducing barriers to adoption.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear negative impact on access to and the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an impact on access to and the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, however it is not clear whether the effect will create an improvement or make conditions worse.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear positive impact on access to and the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>7 C) Proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing lower emissions from transport in Air Quality Management Areas in the county.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear negative impact on road-based emissions which can affect air quality in Air Quality Management Areas.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an impact on road-based emissions in Air Quality Management Areas, however it is not clear whether the effect will be to reduce emissions or increase emissions.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear positive impact on road-based emissions which can affect air quality in Air Quality Management Areas</p>
<p><b>8 A) We will aim to obtain further funding to deliver the outcomes of our Bus Service Improvement Plan (or its replacement) beyond its current horizon of 2024/25. We will ensure that our Local Transport Plan proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution towards achieving our Bus Service Improvement Plan.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear negative impact on delivering the Bus Service Improvement Plan.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an impact on the bus network and bus journeys, however it is not clear whether the effect will be positive or negative in terms of the impact on delivering the Bus Service Improvement Plan.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear positive impact on delivering the Bus Service Improvement Plan.</p>

Objective	Red rated effect of proposal	Amber rated effect of proposal	Green rated effect of proposal
<p><b>8 B) We will identify and support industry delivery of priority railway stations for accessibility improvements and route improvements to reduce journey times and improve reliability.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear negative including worse accessibility at rail stations, longer journey times, or lower reliability of services.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an impact on rail stations, journeys, and their reliability, however it is not clear whether the impact will be positive or negative.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear positive impact including better accessibility at rail stations, shorter journey times, or lower reliability of services.</p>
<p><b>9 A) We will aim to deliver walking and cycling improvements at prioritised locations in Kent to deliver increased levels of activity towards the Active Travel England target and support Kent’s diverse economy, presented in a Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.</b></p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear negative impact on walking and cycling networks or on levels of walking and cycling activity in Kent.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have an impact on walking and cycling networks or activity levels in Kent however it is unclear whether the impact is likely to be positive or negative.</p>	<p>The proposal is likely to have a clear positive impact on walking and cycling networks or on levels of walking and cycling activity in Kent.</p>







# LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 5

## STRIKING THE BALANCE

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# **Local Transport Plan 5 - Consultation 2024**

**You Said, We Did – How your  
views have shaped our Local  
Transport Plan 5**

**December 2024**

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation



### **Please note:**

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### 1 Why do we need a Local Transport Plan?

- 1.1. Our responsibilities as Kent County Council (KCC) (also known as an upper tier Local Authority) include a role as the Local Transport Authority. National legislation requires us to develop policies to promote and encourage safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport. We also have responsibilities to align with government policies and guidance on climate change.
- 1.2. The Local Transport Plan (LYP) fulfils these responsibilities and develops and longer-term investment strategy for getting the funding we need to improve and expand our transport networks, improving journeys for residents, businesses, and visitors in Kent.

### 2 The 2024 consultation on our draft Local Transport Plan

- 1.3. Between July and October 2024, we undertook a public consultation on our draft LTP. This was further to an initial consultation undertaken in summer 2023 on our Emerging LTP (primarily the ambition, objectives, and outcomes).
- 1.4. We started recording and analysing the responses to our consultation as soon as we began to receive them into the project email inbox, via the online Let's Talk Kent website, or as we heard the public's views during drop-in sessions that were held across the county. All responses to our consultation have been considered in developing the final LTP.

### 3 You Said, We Did

- 1.5. We appreciate the time respondents took to reply to the consultation. We have read every response and considered every comment made, but we cannot respond to each individually and so we have addressed the key themes that emerged across consultation responses. This section sets out what those main themes were and explains what we have done to the LTP to take account of those comments.
- 1.6. We have split these out across the overarching issues raised on the plan and the proposals we set out in the plan.

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

### Main overarching issues raised

You said	We did
<p>The plan is not ambitious enough or needs to be delivered quicker.</p> <p>The plan is too ambitious and won't be achieved.</p>	<p>Our plan is designed to be ambitious in what we want to achieve, whilst also striking a balance across all the modes of transport, including emerging parts of the transport sector. But we have been very clear that its delivery is contingent on a number of factors, most importantly funding.</p> <p>For every county-wide proposal, we have set out a statement of “what needs to happen next” to set expectations about how much we can deliver and by when. For example, many of our proposals need to be developed, with all the options looked at to determine the right scheme to deliver.</p> <p>In covering all modes, we have ensured the plan is adaptable to the changing priorities of government funding streams. To address these comments, we have described how government funding will affect the delivery of our plan more clearly.</p>
<p>Prioritise public transport and especially local bus services (both urban and rural) due to the improvement they need.</p>	<p>Our Local Transport Plan considers how all parts of the transport system can be improved. Every comment on bus services we received on our plan has provided further evidence to us about the extent to which bus services in general are a concern, which helps to inform our future work. Our plan already made clear that we have a comprehensive and ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to deliver the government's National Bus Strategy. Our BSIP contains much greater detail than can be replicated in our Local Transport Plan. We have therefore more clearly described the remit of our BSIP in our final plan.</p>
<p>Concern about traffic congestion in Kent and the need to fix it.</p>	<p>This has been identified as a challenge and our plan already sets out a series of proposals across the transport mix to increase choice and provide alternatives to road-based travel for both the movement of people and goods. We have also set out a range of proposals to help address significant congestion pinch-points or where there is a need to develop options for how to reduce congestion in specific areas, such as town centres. We have considered feedback about congestion on the network and made additions to the plan.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>Prioritise walking and cycling and make these forms of transport safer.</p> <p>Too much focus on cycling or too much money spent on it.</p>	<p>Our plan already includes a number of proposals that will benefit cycling and walking, including the Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP), our Road Safety Strategy (called Vision Zero), as well as highways maintenance (which will benefit all highway users). Our KCWIP has been prepared using government <a href="#">guidance</a> on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and consideration given to connectivity with District LCWIPs as well as key centres of activity for education, retail, leisure, etc.</p> <p>We also undertake a range of activities as part of our day-to-day work, such as providing school crossing patrols, cycle training, and working with Parish and Town Councils through the Highways Improvement Plan process, amongst others.</p> <p>As a proportion of the funding we received across modes of transport, walking and cycling schemes have generally received less. However, if the government make active travel more of a priority and provide funding for that then we will be able to focus more resources on it.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have provided more information on the KCWIP.</p>
<p>Not everyone can cycle or walk.</p> <p>The plan is too pro-car and building new roads / new roads proposals will only cause more car use and dependency.</p> <p>The plan does not do enough to encourage journeys to shift away from car use.</p>	<p>Our Local Transport Plan has been designed to strike a balance by considering how all parts of the transport system can be improved. The plan inevitably has a focus on the highway network because we are responsible for the Local Road Network (all roads aside from the motorway and trunk roads), and because private vehicles and goods vehicles make up the majority of journeys in Kent.</p> <p>The highways proposals we have set out in our plan can help make journeys better for all highways users and should be considered alongside the comprehensive and substantial proposals we have set out for improving public transport services. The scope for achieving a significant shift in journeys also varies place-by-place but we are confident that if our proposals for the public transport network were delivered, this would help to increase their use and encourage some journeys to shift away from the private car.</p> <p>Whatever funding becomes available, we are confident our plan contains proposals that will enable us to take opportunities to make journeys in Kent better, with a positive impact for the economy.</p> <p>Based on our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>The plan needs more detail, or the plan has too much detail / is too long.</p>	<p>We were asked to develop a new plan by the government and received funding from them to do that, on a similar basis to all other local transport authorities. The funding we received is insufficient to enable us to develop detailed proposals, such as designing specific options or undertaking traffic modelling. To do this would have required many millions of pounds. However, some of the proposals in our plan have already been funded to develop their detail, such as the North Thanet Link road scheme. Where a scheme has been developed like this, you will find more information about it on our website at <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-projects/planned-road-projects">www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-projects/planned-road-projects</a>.</p> <p>As we work on the individual proposals, we will undertake engagement with the local communities affected. More detail will become available in due course on specific schemes, but we have added clearer descriptions to the schemes listed on the district pages.</p> <p>After benchmarking against other Local Transport Plans, we consider that for a strategic, county-wide plan, LTP5 contains sufficient detail for its purpose.</p>



# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>Concern about the funding needed for the plan.</p> <p>The plan is overly reliant on government for funding the plan.</p> <p>Do not charge motorists more.</p> <p>Public transport is too expensive.</p>	<p>The Local Transport Plan is a costed but not funded plan. Its purpose is to set the ambition for what we want transport in the county to be like and set out proposals to achieve it. We do not have sufficient funding to deliver the whole plan, but it puts us in a strong position to lobby for increased funding and bid for external funding for schemes when it becomes available.</p> <p>Our situation is not unique amongst local authorities. We are also experiencing the impact of inflation in recent years, meaning that our finite funds buy less than they used to. Without exploring options such as road user charging / congestion charging, we rely on government for the money to deliver improvements to transport. We have described this more in our plan as a result of your comments.</p> <p>Public transport is largely operated by private companies who set their own fares (although some are regulated or subsidised by government, such as the bus fare caps or are supported by local transport authorities such as where they are deemed socially necessary). We have included proposals that would increase demand for public transport, and this should make them more viable and so reduce fares. However, we have no direct control over public transport fares and have therefore not made any changes to the plan on this aspect.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>There is poor transport and land use planning.</p> <p>There is too much housing which creates road congestion.</p> <p>There has not been consideration of housing growth.</p> <p>New development should have better public transport and walking and cycling links.</p>	<p>We are not the local planning authority for most development in Kent (we have responsibility for a relatively small number of developments associated with minerals and waste, schools, and transport, for example). The 12 district and borough authorities write Local Plans for where new development should be situated (although the government sets housing targets), as well as determining planning applications that are made in their areas. KCC is a statutory consultee to these processes and so we make representations on the impacts of development on transport and seek mitigations.</p> <p>We do have established policies for what we would require, such as walking and cycling links. However, sometimes what we ask for might not be delivered. This could be because the local planning authority must balance the requirements for transport with other factors, such as school and healthcare provision, or because planning decisions can be appealed to the Planning Inspectorate, and they may take a different view. Some applications can also be determined by the government if they are called-in.</p> <p>We have considered a growing population arising from housing growth in developing our plan, and you can read more about that in the Supporting Evidence Base. However, this increasing demand can also come from increased usage of existing housing stock (such as conversions to flats or house of multiple occupation, or multi-generational living). In these instances, there is not usually any financial contribution to manage the increased demand for transport.</p> <p>After consideration, we have made some changes to the plan to better explain the planning process regarding new developments and our role in that concerning transport.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>Electric vehicles are bad for the environment.</p> <p>Electric vehicles still create road congestion.</p> <p>The public sector should not be in the business of providing charging sockets – let the market do that.</p>	<p>Successive governments have placed electric vehicles at the heart of the national transport decarbonisation plan and have correspondingly asked local transport authorities to support the delivery of new charging sockets. We have been awarded funding for this purpose.</p> <p>Electric vehicles are positive for air quality and noise impacts, and Kent is seeing a reduction in the need for Air Quality Management Areas associated with roadside air quality.</p> <p>We recognise that electric vehicles will not address congestion or journey time reliability. This is why we have developed a balanced Local Transport Plan that sets out proposals across the transport mix, to support modal shift and options for making journeys.</p> <p>Based on our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
<p>Concern about carbon emissions and climate change, and the role of vehicles in contributing to climate change.</p>	<p>Our plan considers climate change and the challenge it presents. We have aligned our approach to the government’s Decarbonising Transport Strategy, which is why we have set out a plan that is balanced across the transport mix and aims to make significant improvements to buses, railways, walking and cycling networks, and to support the shift to electric vehicles. All these aspects can make a positive contribution towards lowering carbon emissions from transport.</p> <p>Our work indicates that there may still be a shortfall in the rate and amount of carbon reduced from the transport system, and we know that this is a finding consistent across local transport authorities. The evidence set out in our Local Transport Plan (and others) will help to inform the government about the likely contribution we can make at a local level, and then they will be able to determine if more needs to be done.</p> <p>As required, proposals will be subject to the necessary carbon assessments as part of their development. We therefore have not considered it necessary to make changes to the plan.</p>

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# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>Concern about air quality and lack of any specific proposals or actions by the plan in that regard.</p>	<p>We have considered air quality as part of the development of our plan. We understand why air quality is a concern given there are designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) associated with roadside pollution levels in parts of Kent. Kent also borders the London area where there have been high profile measures (such as the Ultra Low Emission Zone) used to charge more polluting vehicles.</p> <p>There has been a gradual improvement in air quality since we published our last Local Transport Plan 4, and the result has been a reduction in the number and/or extent of AQMAs across the county. The government has also not required the establishment of any Clean Air Zones in Kent given the levels of recorded pollution. Pollution from traffic has fallen likely due to an increase in cleaner vehicles on the roads (more hybrid and fully electric cars and vans), coupled with the volume of traffic using the network. As the vehicle fleet becomes increasingly low or zero emission in terms of the emissions generated directly from a vehicle (rather than how the energy the vehicle uses was generated i.e. renewables or non-renewable energy, in the first place), air quality as a result of transport will likely become less of a concern. Nevertheless, a range of our proposals have the potential to help improve air quality.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
<p>Support for return of international rail services to Kent.</p>	<p>We understand the concern about the loss of Eurostar services from Kent's international stations and the support expressed for their return through the consultation. We will continue to call for a return of services to Kent alongside partner organisations and have set out our concerns to the government. We have done this because Eurostar's decision to stop serving Kent has had a negative effect on the county's economy, causing much uncertainty to residents, businesses, and potential investors along with the loss of international passengers at Ashford and Ebbsfleet International stations.</p> <p>We are concerned that the taxpayer is not getting the full benefit that the billions of pounds invested in the High Speed 1 rail link and the Kent international stations were meant to achieve. We believe we are doing all we can and will keep engaging with the government and the rail industry to find a way to get international services back to stopping in Kent. Based on the consideration of this issue we have not made changes to the plan.</p>

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# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>Concern about Heavy Good Vehicles using roads through villages and towns.</p> <p>Ban Heavy Goods Vehicles from using particular roads through villages.</p>	<p>We understand the concerns that people have about Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), and our plan sets out proposals aimed to help ensure that those associated with international traffic to and from Europe are better managed and use the motorway and trunk road network as far as possible.</p> <p>HGVs are used by a wide range of industries and these form an important part of the county's economy. We have an obligation to consider their needs from the transport network as well. Many rural communities have developed around main roads and crossroads, meaning traffic routes through these places. Some responses have suggested building new roads to bypass villages, but often they are located in protected landscape areas (such as the High Weald National Landscape) and therefore new roads are unlikely to be permitted without strong justification. The viability of other measures will also vary from place-to-place. For example, a weight limit would not be appropriate on a cross-county A road where there are no suitable alternative routes. In any event, where these are put in for environmental reasons then HGVs can still access the restricted areas where they have a legitimate need, such as serving rural businesses.</p> <p>Day-to-day, we work with Parish and Town Councils through the Highways Improvement Plan process to determine suitable changes to the road network that could be funded to improve journeys and their safety. Our Traffic Management Team are also continually investigating methods of managing larger vehicle movements and are working with various freight organisations to find suitable solutions to Kent's concerns.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have added a proposal to the Local Road Network section of our plan on the management of local road freight.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

### Main issues raised concerning strategic and local proposals across the districts

You said	We did
<p>Support for the Lower Thames Crossing.</p> <p>Opposition to the Lower Thames Crossing.</p>	<p>This proposal received both the highest number of statements of support and the highest number of statements of opposition, showing it divides opinion. We have considered all of the issues raised by respondents. In terms of support, these were broadly that the lack of capacity and resultant congestion at Dartford warrants a new crossing. In opposition, broadly that the new crossing is too expensive, will have an adverse impact on the local area, and building new roads leads to more traffic rather than less. The concerns on both sides are not new and were covered in the Development Consent Order Examination, which was held by the Planning Inspectorate in 2023. Our position remains unchanged for the reasons set out in the Local Transport Plan and therefore given our consideration of this issue; we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
<p>Concern about congestion at M25 Junction 3 and its exclusion from the plan.</p>	<p>Following the consultation, we have further considered the junction and the challenges it faces. We have also considered the potential new development around the junction, which has been identified by the district planning authority, and the experience of the challenges the Junction 1A location now has and their relevance to this site. We have concluded that there may be some short-term improvements that National Highways could undertake to improve the junction, aside from any long-term, more significant works that may be justified.</p> <p>Following our consideration of this issue, we have added a proposal to the Strategic Road Network section of the plan.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p data-bbox="98 336 580 448">There is a need to shift freight from the Strategic Road Network to rail.</p> <p data-bbox="98 475 580 587">Shift freight to rail from road to and from Sheerness and Ridham Docks.</p>	<p data-bbox="584 336 2125 571">We agree that there is a need to shift freight from road to rail. In our Local Transport Plan, we have proposed improvements to the national rail network that would unlock significant capacity for goods to be carried to and from Europe via the rail network through the Channel Tunnel. This proposal is supported by the owners of the Channel Tunnel and the rail freight industry. It would have the added benefit of helping to address the significant challenges associated with international traffic management, which impacts a large number of communities along the M20-A20 corridor.</p> <p data-bbox="584 603 2125 837">Sheerness and Ridham Docks formerly had rail freight services; however, their use waned, and some infrastructure was removed by Network Rail in 2022 following consultation with the rail freight industry and service users. The mainline connections at Ridham Junction, Queenborough Down Yard, and Sheerness Dockyard remain operational. In 2023, Network Rail determined that it would work with the rail freight industry should it wish to reinstate freight services. This was set out in the Swale section of the draft Local Transport Plan.</p> <p data-bbox="584 869 2125 1070">The rail freight industry and its service users (the owners of the London Medway Port whose land would be required for the hosting of rail sidings) would need to work together and liaise with Network Rail to achieve operations. There is no clear role for our Council within that process, but we would be supportive of opportunities for increased rail freight, assuming that can be achieved alongside satisfactory passenger rail services.</p> <p data-bbox="584 1102 2125 1182">Having considered this issue, we have made it clearer we support shifting of freight to rail and river transport such as through the use of existing wharves and Ports.</p>
<p data-bbox="98 1230 580 1337">Concern about the condition of local roads and the lack of maintenance undertaken.</p>	<p data-bbox="584 1230 2125 1342">Respondents to the consultation had concerns about road maintenance. The Local Transport Plan has its first priority for the Local Road Network as ‘Maintaining the Road Network.’ We have described in our funding section what is needed above our baseline budgets to further deliver on this proposal.</p> <p data-bbox="584 1358 2125 1401">Given our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<b>A226 Galley Hill Road closure in Northfleet.</b>	<p>The A226 Galley Hill Road in Northfleet closed in 2023 due to a landslip. We agree that it is an important local road, and a solution is needed owing to its being an important link between the towns of Dartford and Gravesend, as well as Ebbsfleet, Northfleet, Stone and Swanscombe. Issues have been raised about how the road closure is lengthening the time it takes to do journeys and making it harder to reach local services for residents.</p> <p>We are already working to find a new solution to the road closure and welcomed the Future Roads Minister to view the close road and the issue affecting it on 13 September 2024.</p> <p>Following our consideration of this issue, we have added a new local road proposal in the plan.</p>
<p>Suggestions for 20 mph zones for a number of roads or areas across named locations in the County.</p> <p>Suggestions for 20 mph zones as a principle or in general.</p>	<p>We work with local communities to consider proposals for 20 mph zones and have established locations across Kent. Our plan has a proposal for the delivery of our Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy which already details our consideration of 20 mph zones as part of achieving better road safety outcomes (see section 4.3 of Vision Zero). We have also published a 20 mph toolkit through our Kent Road Safety campaign at <a href="https://kentroadsafety.info">https://kentroadsafety.info</a>, and we have guidance for local communities on how to evidence the need for 20 mph zones on our website in the Changing Roads in Your Area section at <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/roads/changing-roads-in-your-area">www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/roads/changing-roads-in-your-area</a> .</p> <p>Changes to speed limits may also be considered as part of the walking and cycling proposals that would take place from the Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>



# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>Suggestions of road corridors / new road proposals to be added to the plan.</p> <p>Statements that areas have been overlooked by the proposals.</p>	<p>The proposals we have selected deal with areas of congestion, journey time unreliability or delay, or are associated with future changes in traffic owing to major changes to the network planned by other organisations (such as National Highways). If a location does not feature in the Local Transport Plan it does not mean the prospect of improvements is ruled out. We will continue to monitor circumstances and consider factors that could change the need for improvements on roads across Kent. Such future proposals would still need to align with the ambition, objectives, and outcomes of our plan.</p> <p>Having considered this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
<p>Support for Gatwick Airport expansion.</p>	<p>Some respondents felt that a larger Gatwick Airport would provide more travel options, although others did express concern about the impact of additional flights / flight paths on communities on the approach to the airport. Our position remains per our published statement available at <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/roads-paths-and-transport-policies/aviation/gatwick-airport-position-statement">www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/roads-paths-and-transport-policies/aviation/gatwick-airport-position-statement</a>. We keep our position under review and if it changes, we will publish a new position statement.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
<p>Suggestions of a tram between Kent and Thurrock / Essex.</p> <p>Suggestions of a tram as an alternative to a new road crossing.</p>	<p>We are focused on the prospect of a new road crossing of the Thames as this is the best option for meeting the needs of local and national traffic volumes, and for relieving the Dartford Crossing. A local tram network would not be capable of providing the same impact to both local and national traffic flows.</p> <p>Nevertheless, whilst we will consider proposals that are forthcoming from any organisations or companies that choose to develop them, concerning this matter we have not made changes to the plan.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>Specific bus service proposals including Demand Responsive Transport services.</p>	<p>Our Local Transport Plan has been designed to strike a balance by considering how all parts of the transport system can be improved. Our plan already made clear that we have a comprehensive and ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to deliver the government’s National Bus Strategy. Our BSIP is not fully replicated in our Local Transport Plan, but it details each specific measure we would aim to undertake if we received the necessary funding from government.</p> <p>We can only deliver as much as government is prepared to fund and not all funding the government has provided in the past has been for the purpose of improving bus services. Those measures range from street signage and wayfinding to help people with bus journeys and changing to other forms such as rail, through to the cost of supporting electrification of commercially operated bus services across the county. Every bus route proposal we received in our plan has provided further evidence to us about the extent to which bus services in general are a concern, which helps to inform our future work as a Council.</p> <p>Following our consideration of this issue, we have described our existing Bus Service Improvement Plan more clearly in our final plan.</p>
<p>Specific rail service proposals.</p>	<p>Our Local Transport Plan has set out a series of proposals for how rail services should be improved in Kent, for a range of reasons. Our principles-based approach concerning weekday and weekend services becoming more frequent and more direct between major towns in Kent, sets out our clear expectations to the rail industry. We also take opportunities to provide feedback to the operator, such as through the annual Kent Rail Summit or other stakeholder engagement events. The decisions over detailed timetables and scheduling of services are a decision for the rail operator, funded by government.</p> <p>We would encourage detailed issues about rail services to be sent directly to the train operator (currently Southeastern) in the first instance.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>

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# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
Reintroduce the Gravesend to Tilbury Ferry link.	<p>We have existing ambitions to reinstate the link and its omission from the Local Transport Plan was not intended to give a different impression.</p> <p>We have therefore included reference to the ferry in the Gravesham section of the plan.</p>
Suggestions of specific cycle routes that should be improved or provided.	<p>The feedback we have received both through our Local Transport Plan and Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP) consultations is very helpful as we consider how the corridors and zones we have identified could be further designed in detailed. We will also consider the proposals within district Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. How many locations we are able to make improvements to will be dependent on the amount of funding we receive.</p> <p>Based on our consideration of this issue, we have made the text clearer about the KCWIP in the Local Transport Plan and made the map of the corridors more reflective of the stage of their development (i.e. no final route has been determined).</p>
The Sheppey Sheerness to Leysdown cycling proposal should consider the Sheppey Light Rail Greenway route and serve Queenborough.	<p>The proposals we presented in the draft Local Transport Plan were further to those set out and in the draft Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. At this stage, the corridors are indicative and subject to change – no final decisions have been made. As our draft Local Transport Plan stated, the next thing we need to do is progress the planning and detailed design of these corridors. Doing this next step will mean considering all the options, including the specific location of the route and where it serves.</p> <p>However, we also understand the need to provide reassurance that the Sheppey Light Rail Greenway option has not been ruled out. All of the corridors we have identified have the potential to be formed of both core routes and branches to help enable improvements to be used.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have clarified the text in the Local Transport Plan and made the map of the corridors reflective of the stage of their development.</p>

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# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>Concern that the walking proposals do not make improvements to travel for disabled / wheelchair users.</p>	<p>All our work to improve the transport network, including changes to the highway to facilitate easier and safer pedestrian journeys, also includes consideration of improvements that can be made for persons with reduced mobility. This approach is embedded into the design guidance we aim to follow. Our plan is also accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment and as future proposals are developed; they will continue to be assessed.</p> <p>Following our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
<p>Concern that the walking and cycling proposals will not benefit short trips in towns to and from services (e.g. supermarkets, schools etc).</p>	<p>The walking and cycling proposals we have set out all entail a start or end point in towns in Kent and this reflects that these are the most popular destinations, surrounded by suburbs that generate short distance trips that could be walked or cycled. The proposals we would aim to develop from our KCWIP would include considering how improvements can be made in these urban and suburban areas as well as considering their connectivity towards neighbouring towns and villages or attractions on their route. The opportunities for improvements identified in LCWIPs, where they exist, will also be considered as part of that process.</p> <p>We are pragmatic and flexible in our approach to improving the transport network. We cannot foresee all circumstances, including any new challenges and opportunities, that could arise. If circumstances change such that a new corridor or zone in a part of Kent not currently on our initial priority list becomes more important, then we will act accordingly to give it the consideration it may merit.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
Suggestion of a Swale Station parkway.	<p>This suggestion has been made owing to both a lack of station car parking at the existing Isle of Sheppey rail stations and because the station receives one of the lowest levels of use in the country (ranked 2,311th out of 2,575 stations according to latest Office of Rail and Road Station Usage statistics for 2022/23). We have considered the station's situation, including environmental designations concerning the area. The station is surrounded by land within a Ramsar and Special Protection Area, and these are likely to make delivery of the infrastructure for a parkway challenging.</p> <p>However, our plan has set out proposals to see local rail services improved and these would provide benefits to passengers at Swale, Queenborough and Sheerness. Swale Borough Council, which controls parking, could also explore the option of supporting parking for the stations through public car parking, if the train operator is not prepared to deliver further parking at stations.</p> <p>Based on our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
Suggestions for Park and Ride schemes in some Districts e.g. Canterbury, Maidstone.	<p>Park and Ride schemes have previously existed in Kent towns, but some sites have closed due a lack of passenger demand. Our Bus Service Improvement Plan sets out how we plan to improve the bus network across Kent to improve journeys. Improving the network so buses can run more reliably and have shorter journeys will have positive benefits for routes serving existing or future Park and Ride sites.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>

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# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

### *Main issues raised concerning the Supporting documentation (e.g. Evidence Base, EqIA, HIA, SEA, HRA)*

You said	We did
Regarding the Supporting Evidence Base: There is evidence missing or further evidence that needs to be considered.  Page 202	<p>Although this comment was the most frequent, the specific issues cited by responses varied greatly. Some of the comments concerned omission of details about proposals within the plan itself. Some of the comments concerned aspects which we are aware of but for which we do not have detailed information, such as the volume of traffic on the roads in the morning that is associated with school travel. Obtaining more detailed information would require funding for investment in surveys and traffic counts to collect data and would require consistent collection over a suitable period of time to ensure it was reliable and a good reflection of circumstances on our transport network. Doing this is beyond the funding and time available we have for completion of the plan, and we do not consider the additional evidence as essential to our ability to complete our plan.</p> <p>Having considered this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
Regarding the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): Disabled people need more consideration in transport.	<p>The proposals set out in our plan would make a positive contribution to the lives and journeys of disabled people. For example, our proposals for further implementation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan would help improve the accessibility of the bus system. Our proposals include step free access rail stations, which would remove barriers for disabled people. Development of our proposals for walking and cycling would include considering how wheeling can be supported. We also recognise that many people with reduced mobility will be users of, or rely on, vehicles to make journeys. Our proposals include ways to help enable the highway network to meet all journey needs.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have made an amendment to the walking and cycling section to make clear this includes wheeled journeys.</p>
Regarding the Health Impact Assessment (HIA): Concern about the impact of traffic on air pollution and health.	<p>Please see our response to the main issue raised ‘Concern about air quality and lack of any specific proposals or actions by the plan in that regard.’</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

You said	We did
<p>Regarding the Health Impact Assessment: Concern about the impact of road safety on health.</p>	<p>We recognise and understand the impact on health caused when journeys on the highway network lead to injury or death. The detailed considerations are set out in our existing Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy, available here <a href="http://www.kmscp.co.uk/vision-zero-kent/">www.kmscp.co.uk/vision-zero-kent/</a> along with the progress we are making towards achieving our vision. Working towards our ambition of Vision Zero is included in our LTP proposals.</p> <p>Following our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
<p>Regarding the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA): Concern about the environmental impacts of new roads.</p>	<p>We follow national guidance and legislation in the development of proposals. The inclusion of proposals in the Local Transport Plan does not constitute planning permission for a proposal. Where new roads are proposed and will require planning permission, we will be required to follow Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and the National Planning Policy Framework so that environmental impacts can be considered by the relevant planning authorities before determining whether to grant planning permission. Our Strategic Environmental Assessment has indicated where impacts may arise and hence may warrant mitigation. Our Habitats Regulation Assessment has indicated where proposals may pose risks to either Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, or Ramsar sites. Where we obtain funding to develop proposals, we will take the findings of our Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment into consideration as we develop more detailed Environmental Impact Assessments.</p> <p>Given our consideration of this issue, we have not made changes to the plan.</p>
<p>Regarding the Habitats Regulation Assessment:</p> <p>Concern about whether there has been consideration in the assessment of public access / disturbance and recreational pressure on protected sites.</p>	<p>In response to this issue we have updated our Habitats Regulation Assessment by including consideration of these issues and how they relate in general to transport and the proposed outcomes and proposals of the Plan.</p>

# Local Transport Plan 5

## You Said, We Did – 2024 consultation

To see the full consultation report please visit:

<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/local-transport-plan-5-2024>



# LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

SEA Adoption Statement

**FIFTH PLAN: *STRIKING THE BALANCE***  
**December 2024**



Highways and Transport  
[www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)



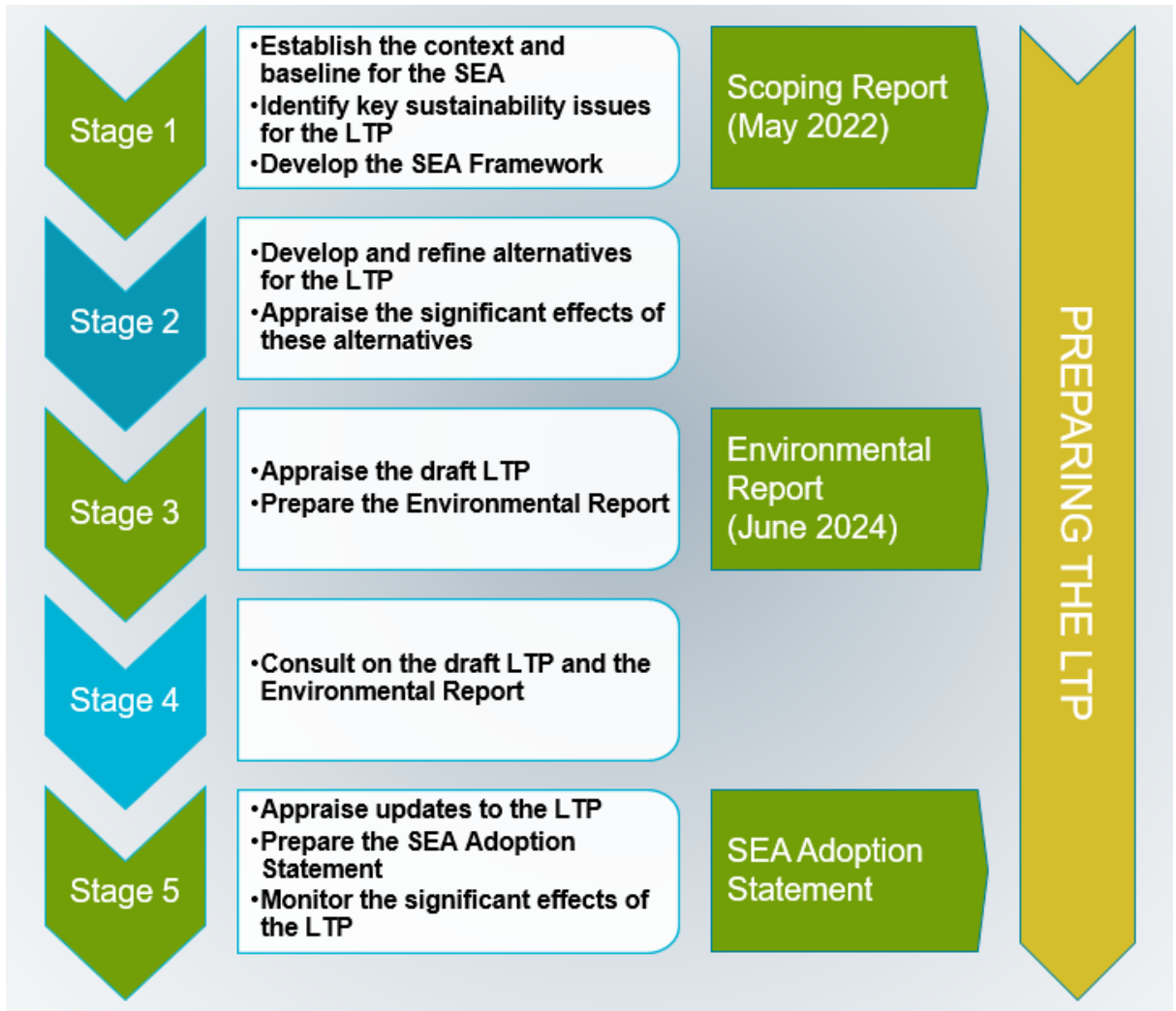
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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. We have a statutory duty to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP). Our new, fifth, Local Transport Plan is called *Striking the Balance*. The Strategic Environmental Assessment has been prepared by Aecom on behalf of the County Council as part of the process of developing the Plan.
- 1.2. The LTP is our main policy on transport and supports delivery of our long term Council-wide plan *Framing Kent's Future* and our financial strategy *Securing Kent's Future*. Our LTP details our ambition, the outcomes we want to achieve, and the proposals we aim to progress to deliver the LTP.
- 1.3. Our Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) fulfils the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations). The Strategic Environmental Assessment is a systematic process that aims to ensure that potential environmental effects are given consideration in the plan making process. We have published our Strategic Environmental Assessment on the Kent County Council website page that also provides access to the LTP.
- 1.4. This is the SEA Adoption Statement which, as the Plan-making authority, is a requirement for us to produce as the final output of the SEA process for our LTP. According to article 9 of the SEA Regulations, the statement must include a description of the following which is set out in the subsequent sections of this statement:
  - 1.4.1. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the LTP development process.
  - 1.4.2. How we have taken the SEA into account.
  - 1.4.3. How opinions expressed in response to our SEA have been taken into account.
  - 1.4.4. The reasons for our choosing the LTP as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternative options dealt with in our SEA.
  - 1.4.5. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan.

## 2. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the LTP

2.1. The SEA process for the LTP has been undertaken through a five stage process. The stages, and key outputs, are set out below.



2.2. Baseline data and a review of the plans, programmes and policies were presented in the SEA Scoping Report (released for consultation in January 2022 and updated in May 2022) with the information subsequently summarised in Appendix A of the SEA Environmental Report (June 2024). These formed the evidence base for the SEA, and comprised part of the evidence base for the LTP. These were used to develop an SEA Framework (contained in Table 2.2 (pg. 15) of the Environmental Report for assessing the impacts of proposals within our plan. The framework covers:

- 2.2.1. Biodiversity, flora and fauna
- 2.2.2. Air Quality
- 2.2.3. Population and human health

- 2.2.4. Climatic factors
- 2.2.5. Soil and water Quality
- 2.2.6. Cultural heritage
- 2.2.7. Landscape, noise and tranquillity
- 2.2.8. Material assets

2.3. The SEA has taken place in parallel with the Plan and its recommendations have been taken into account throughout the stages of development of the plan including consultation feedback on those as explained in further detail in section 3.

### **3. How we have taken the SEA into account.**

#### **3.1. At Scoping Stage**

3.2. At the scoping stage the policies and baseline data included in the SEA Scoping Report was used to inform the wider evidence base documentation (including the Health Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, and the Supporting Evidence Base document) and these are also published on our council webpage concerning the LTP. This ensured that the relevant environmental topics were identified and considered alongside other social and economic considerations.

3.3. This has meant factors such as human health associated with transport and movement, including the wider determinants of health and the role of transport within those, the impacts of noise from transport (including associated with aviation reflected by the LTP proposal concerning Gatwick Airport expansion) were considered.

3.4. Our Supporting Evidence Base and accompanying assessments and our LTP reference and demonstrate consideration of air quality considerations as well as climatic factors including a consideration of both flood risk areas across the county, carbon emissions from transport use and capital delivery, and landscape in the form of designated and protected areas such as the National Landscapes.

3.5. The scope of the SEA was identified at the scoping stage and consultation was undertaken with statutory bodies in early 2022 to seek their feedback.

#### **3.6. At SEA stage**

3.7. Our SEA Framework for assessing and informing development of our LTP was developed during the Scoping phase with conscious consideration of the consultation feedback, detailed in Table 2.1 (pg.8) of the Environmental Report and applied to the assessment of the LTP proposals during our formative stages of plan development including public consultation in 2024.

3.8. Our SEA included assessment of:

- 3.8.1. The reasonable alternatives for the LTP5
- 3.8.2. The strategic options for the built-up urban areas of Kent
- 3.8.3. The strategic options for the inter urban areas / rural swathe of Kent
- 3.8.4. The proposals developed for the Local Transport Plan.
- 3.8.5. Cumulative effects with other plans and programmes

3.9. A key requirement of the SEA Regulations is to assess 'reasonable alternatives' for the LTP5 which is why we considered reasonable alternatives through a two-stage approach of the strategic options for the built-up urban areas and the inter urban areas / rural swathe of Kent. This enabled us to consider whether the focus of our plan's ambition and outcomes were suitable taking into account the assessment of the options. It is important to note that a broad spectrum of options were considered – given the scope of our LTP it is not possible to distil the scope of the ambition and outcomes to be represented as a single appraisable option. Instead the spectrum we considered provided us an understanding of the types of impacts that could accrue depending on how extensive we chose to adopt a specific focus within our plan.

3.10. The strategic options for the built-up urban areas that we considered were as follows:

- 3.10.1. **Option U1 – Do minimum:** relying on committed investment, which would continue at a local and strategic level, and deliver limited additional investment. In practice the options would focus on the maintenance and enhancement of the local road network, with schemes likely to be of a limited scale. Such schemes are likely to include road safety schemes and basic network performance schemes, including and related to the programming of junction and signalling. In addition, the option would deliver local highway junction improvements and access schemes funded by third party development, including through planning applications.
- 3.10.2. **Option U2 – Network demand management through pricing mechanisms:** This option would seek to focus interventions on demand management measures. A key component of the options would be the introduction of direct charges on motorists for driving on public roads. These schemes would be designed to charge motorists for when and where they drive based on usage and could include area-based charging, where drivers pay a fee to enter a certain area with a certain vehicle, or road user charging, incorporating local road pricing schemes. The option would also seek to initiate other demand management measures such as parking restrictions.

- 3.10.3. **Option U3 – Optimise the use of existing infrastructure:** This option would have a strong focus on optimising the use of existing road infrastructure to enhance its performance. This would comprise a continuation and expansion of urban transport management systems, including network performance schemes, junction optimisation and other measures.
- 3.10.4. **Option U4 – Bus network and infrastructure enhancements:** This option would seek to initiate upgrades to the bus network, including through enhancements to bus stations and bus stops, reconfiguration of the urban road network to support bus priority, and where possible, support new and enhanced bus services. This would be supported in growth areas by network extension plans.
- 3.10.5. **Option U5 – Highway enhancements in urban areas:** This option would seek to facilitate significant new road infrastructure. Schemes would include new relief roads, junction capacity upgrades and new connections onto the Strategic Road Network.
- 3.11. The strategic options for the inter urban / rural swathe areas that we considered were as follows.
- 3.11.1. **Option R1 – Do minimum:** A ‘do minimum’ option would rely on committed investment, which would continue at a local and strategic level, and deliver limited additional investment. In practice the options would focus on the maintenance and enhancement of the existing inter urban road network, with schemes likely to be of a limited scale. Such schemes are likely to include road safety schemes and basic network performance schemes, including and related to the programming of junction and signalling. In addition, the option would deliver local highway junction improvements and access schemes funded by third party development, including through planning applications.
- 3.11.2. **Option R2 – Bus network and infrastructure enhancements:** This option would seek to initiate upgrades to the inter urban and rural bus network, including through enhancements to bus stops, reconfiguration of the road network to support bus priority, and where possible, support new and enhanced rural bus services.
- 3.11.3. **Option R3 – Optimise use of highways network:** This option would take a road safety approach, which would seek to deliver road safety schemes on the existing highways network, implement lower speed limits and enhance road safety for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and those travelling via other active travel modes.



- 3.11.4. **Option R4 – Rail service enhancements for rural communities:** The option would seek to deliver a range of schemes which deliver journey time and frequency improvements on the rail network, facilitate enhancements in access by rail to key regional and sub-regional centres and deliver enhancements to railway stations.
- 3.11.5. **Option R5 – Highway enhancements:** This option would seek to facilitate significant new road infrastructure. Schemes would include new bypasses, junction capacity upgrades and new connections onto the Strategic Road Network.
- 3.12. As detailed in the Environmental Report section 7, following this stage we made the following conclusions summarised as follows below. These conclusions lead to a re-framing of the LTP to “strike a balance” in recognition of the economic, social and environmental needs of the county relative to how people currently and are likely to travel in the future taking into account the realistic likelihood of the scale of funding we could expect to receive to change the transport system over that period.
- 3.12.1. Option U2 demonstrated the potential role of parking in demand management and accordingly KCC has established policy objective 5A which seeks to strengthen delivery of KCC network management duty to deliver the expeditious movement of traffic.
- 3.12.2. Option U3 concerning optimising the use of existing infrastructure has informed the development of policy objective 1A (concerning obtaining the funding necessary to deliver a sustained fall in the value of the backlog of maintenance work so that the existing highway network can better perform to service the needs of highways users) and also Policy objectives 4A (seeks the return of international rail services), and objective 3B (seeks to increase the resilience of the highway network for international traffic).
- 3.12.3. Concerning Option U4, we established policy objectives 8A and 8B, which seek to optimise use of existing public transport networks and services, to boost patronage and enable mode shift for those journeys that chose to.
- 3.12.4. Concerning Option U5 regarding highways enhancements in urban areas, the LTP5 has set out that there is an inevitable reliance on the road network and private and commercial vehicle use owing to the design, density, and scale of existing urban areas. The potential environmental impacts of these, proposal by proposal are not overlooked and have been considered in further detail as part of determining whether to retain those proposals in the adopted LTP.

- 3.12.5. Regarding Option R2, this informed our LTP5 policy objectives 8A and 8B concerning bus and rail transport, to ensure that future actions by the Council can aim to secure the funding to deliver a significant and comprehensive programme of improvements to the quality and reliability of bus services across the whole county.
- 3.12.6. Option R3 concerning optimising use of the highways network has been considered and informs KCC's LTP5 proposals and policy objectives 2A regarding our road safety strategy Vision Zero which can help to make the existing highway network safer for all types of users, including cyclists and pedestrians where safety is a major barrier to what is a very low environmental impact form of travel. Objectives 3A and 3B concern the inter-urban highways network and increasing its resilience and capability to accommodate the high international vehicle flows associated with the Eurotunnel and Port of Dover. These objectives recognise that the A2 / M2 and M20 corridors will remain the main highways network as it is not realistic for a new motorway route to be constructed across Kent to these international crossings given the environmental impacts of doing so.
- 3.12.7. We consider Option R4 and reflected this in the development of Outcome 8 and the proposals in the LTP5 including Local Rail Services. The Local Rail Services proposal aims to improve the frequency of rail services operating on inter-urban routes in the county, to avoid a minimum service of 1 train per hour which offers little flexibility or attraction towards using rail services in rural communities.
- 3.12.8. Option R5 was considered and informed LTP policy objectives 5A and 5B which recognise that in some instances the only viable approach due to the location, scale or nature of the challenge to the highway network, which can include from new development, may be the need to add capacity so that KCC can fulfil its network management duty and ensure that essential journeys including access to vital services and opportunities, such as employment, health and education can take place.
- 3.13. Our considerations are also made in the context of national policy which has, throughout the LTP development process, consistently made clear that the focus should be on providing journeys with choice, by delivering national strategic to improve the rail system, bus network, walking and cycling network, but also to deliver highways upgrades. The government has continued to fund all these types of transport improvements, which demonstrates the policy approach in transport we must also work within.

- 3.14. The next stage of the SEA entailed considering each proposal for site specific infrastructure across the county that we established as draft proposals and consulted on in 2024. They were assessed against the SEA Framework. They were updated following the 2024 consultation – see section 4 for further details. Not all proposals were taken forward into the final LTP – the SEA process assisted with the sifting of those proposals, although the exclusion of proposals was not limited to being on the basis of the results of the assessment contained in the Environmental Report (e.g. some proposals had become unnecessary due to changes in land use proposals set out in modified or updated Local Plans etc).
- 3.15. Those proposals where there was no change to or delivery of physical infrastructure proposed or service operations, such as Improve access to local rail stations, Development Management Proposals, Local Road Freight Management, Trunking proposals etc. were not subject to this stage of assessment – their impact having been considered within the overarching principles of the strategic options findings detailed above. In summary, we determined that these proposals were all developed on the basis of improving transport and its impacts, including the environmental impacts. We are satisfied these proposals would make a positive contribution to Kent’s environment and the outcomes of the plan, as detailed in our Supporting Evidence Base report.
- 3.16. The SEA findings demonstrated that there were a range of uncertain effects at this stage owing to many proposals being in concept form and requiring further planning and development of their design to establish more certainty on their potential effects. The SEA details the potential effects where uncertainty is concluded, which has informed us where risks exist for each proposal.
- 3.17. The SEA also considered cumulative effects that can arise as a result of the in-combination and synergistic effects of a plan’s policies and proposals. Comprising ‘intra-plan’ effects, these interactions have been discussed above in the evaluation of the in-combination and synergistic effects of the various policies of the LTP. Also considered were those that can result from the combined impacts of a plan with impacts of another plan, or the ‘inter-plan’ effects.
- 3.18. The cumulative effects assessment findings, in summary, were that:
- 3.18.1. Potential increases in traffic flows and congestion from the in-combination effects of development (local planning authority Local Plan effects) and transport capacity enhancements could occur, with potential impacts on air and noise quality, landscape and townscape character and the setting of the historic environment. However, the in-combination effects of proposals on enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure may help limit potential negative effects and secure positive effects in this regard.

- 3.18.2. That there could be cumulative impacts on ecological networks from the in-combination effects of new development and associated infrastructure such as transport on habitats and biodiversity corridors. However, enhancements to green infrastructure provision facilitated through plan proposals and other projects in the area, as well as an increased focus on biodiversity net gain also have significant potential to support local, sub-regional and regional ecological networks.
- 3.18.3. Cumulative and synergistic impacts on greenhouse gas emissions from growth areas and the LTP proposals which support them. This has been further considered in the LTP itself, in line with addressing the government's emerging aim for LTPs to consider quantifiable carbon impacts of the LTPs. The finding shows that there is a high dependency on national policy and plans as these will exert the highest impact on transport regulations and investment that drive production of greenhouse gas emissions, including across sectors associated with aspects such as energy production as a fuel input to transport operations.
- 3.18.4. Potential cumulative impacts from a release of induced demand for transport from the in-combination effects of the LTP and nationally significant road and rail enhancements delivered by government and its national bodies.
- 3.18.5. Potential impacts on flood risk from the in-combination effects of new development, including relating to surface water and fluvial flooding.
- 3.18.6. Potential enhancements to sub-regional green infrastructure networks.
- 3.18.7. Potential improvements in accessibility resulting from the in-combination effects of enhancements to public transport and walking and cycling networks and public realm enhancements.

3.19. A summary of the recommendations is shown below concerning the proposals and their future planning and development towards delivery.

3.19.1. Biodiversity, flora and fauna:

- Potential impacts on biodiversity habitats should be considered during scheme development, avoidance and mitigation measures implemented, and opportunities for maximising net gain explored.
- Opportunities to enhance ecological networks through appropriate planting and green infrastructure enhancements should be sought, supporting a premise of environmental net gain and delivering multifunctional benefits.
- New and improved lighting and signage should be designed to minimise impacts on nocturnal species.
- Development of a programme of works to help ensure that SSSIs and other important designated sites affected by the transport network are brought into favourable condition.

3.19.2. Air quality

- Green infrastructure enhancements should be delivered alongside new infrastructure and designed to support air quality improvements, with a view to reducing exposures of key pollutants.
- Comprehensive monitoring of emissions from transport should be undertaken.

3.19.3. Population and human health

- Incorporate road safety schemes within scheme development for vulnerable road users.
- Encourage design which supports the needs of mobility-impaired and vulnerable groups.
- Opportunities to encourage inward investment and growth in areas of improved sustainable transport access should be sought.

3.19.4. Climatic factors

- Transport proposals should seek to maintain carbon sequestered in soils and habitats and seek to increase carbon capture through provision of semi-natural habitats including trees, wetlands and grasslands.
- Comprehensive monitoring of emissions from transport should be undertaken.
- Proposals associated with the LTP5 should seek to increase the resilience of infrastructure to the anticipated impacts of climate change.
- The use of permeable surfacing should be prioritised in scheme design.

#### 3.19.5. Soil and water quality

- New infrastructure should be supported by permeable surfaces and appropriate drainage systems where necessary, to reduce surface water run-off and maintain or improve attenuation rates.
- Provision of sustainable drainage systems, including through green and blue infrastructure provision should be sought where possible alongside new transport infrastructure.

#### 3.19.6. Cultural heritage

- Potential impacts on the historic environment should be appropriately considered at scheme design.
- The significance of both designated and undesignated heritage assets should be a key consideration in scheme development.
- New transport infrastructure should be designed to facilitate enhancements to the fabric and setting of the historic environment.
- Opportunities for enhancing access to and promoting understanding of the historic environment should be sought.
- Maintenance regimes should seek to facilitate enhancements to the fabric and setting of designated and undesignated features and areas of historic environment interest.
- Kent's archaeological resource should be a key consideration in the development of transport schemes.

#### 3.19.7. Landscape, noise and tranquillity

- New infrastructure should be designed to facilitate enhancements to the quality of the public realm and landscape, townscape and village scape character.
- Transport infrastructure delivery should avoid the loss of existing trees and landscape features where possible.
- Green infrastructure enhancements should be sought alongside new and enhanced transport infrastructure provision.
- Maintenance regimes should seek to facilitate enhancements to local character.
- Low noise surfacing should be integrated in new transport provision and maintenance regimes.

#### 3.19.8. Material assets

- Schemes associated with proposals should seek to limit waste arisings during construction.
- Schemes should seek to incorporate the use of reused and recycled materials.
- Scheme design should seek to extend project life and reduce future maintenance requirements through the use of longer-life materials.

## **4. How opinions expressed in response to consultation on the draft LTP and SEA have been taken into account.**

- 4.1. Consultation on the SEA Scoping Report was undertaken at the beginning of 2022. The Scoping Report was subsequently updated in May 2022 to reflect comments. We received comments from Natural England and Historic England. We have detailed the actions we took in response to their feedback in Table 2.1 of the SEA. In summary the changes to the SEA consisted of:
  - 4.1.1. Incorporating and reflecting the most up to date planning and environmental policy and guidance at the time such as the NPPG and the then planned Local Nature Recovery Strategies that had recently been introduced as a requirement by the Environment Act 2021.
  - 4.1.2. To make clear that comments querying / requesting consideration of sites of special protection would be considered within a separate Habitats Regulation Assessment
  - 4.1.3. To reflect recommended inclusion of aspects in the assessment criteria, which were used to inform the generation of the SEA Framework that was used to assess the strategic options and site-specific proposals.
- 4.2. Following the scoping stage, our LTP and SEA Environmental Report was subject to a statutory consultation in July to October 2024. There were no substantive comments received on the SEA itself however KCC received comments concerning how it had taken the SEA into account and this aspect is addressed by way of this Adoption Statement, further to the detail already reflected in section 7 of the SEA.
- 4.3. The LTP received comments concerning new proposals, and these were initially sifted, taking into account environmental considerations that are set out in the SEA Framework. As detailed in our You Said We Did report, one proposal we received concerning a proposed parkway rail station at the site of the existing Swale Station we sifted out on environmental grounds. This was owing to the location of the proposal sitting in an area surrounded by sites of special protection and therefore making them unsuitable for the proposal and given we considered there were other options to achieve similar outcomes covered by the proposals within the consulted LTP.
- 4.4. Those remaining options not sifted out were incorporated into the SEA and assessed using the Framework. Those options were M25 Junction 3 enhancements and A226 Galley Hill Road solution. The findings from those assessments provided an indication that there were no obvious or discernible

significant environmental effects at this stage of their development and therefore they have been incorporated into the LTP and will be subject to our aim to progress the SEA recommendations.

## **5. The reasons for our choosing the LTP as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternative options dealt with in our SEA**

- 5.1. The SEA has helped inform our decision that the proposals we consulted on and have added further to the 2024 consultation should be retained in our plan owing to those potential positive and / or mitigable effects. Furthermore, these are balanced against the wider positive effects in transport terms, as detailed for each proposal in our Supporting Evidence Base.
- 5.2. As detailed in this adoption statement, and with reference to the findings of the SEA, we are confident that in adopting the LTP on the basis of a plan to progress these recommendations detailed in section 7.4 (pg. 73) of the Environmental Report. These will be acted upon, as necessary, for those proposals we secure funding to develop and deliver. In doing so, we will be able to mitigate adverse environmental impacts proposals could risk generating, and secure the positive environmental impacts they may offer, balanced against the wider impacts the LTP aims to deliver.
- 5.3. Our Plan is designed to strike a balance across the mix of transport, setting out how we would like to achieve improved journeys for all the different parts of the transport system across Kent. It is designed to strike a balance between the investment needed to improve the county economy, to make living and working better, whilst also preparing our transport networks to meet the environmental challenges facing the county.
- 5.4. What is clear from our LTP, and of relevance to implementing the recommendations of our SEA, is that delivery of the LTP will require sustained and sufficient funding from government, not just for construction but for the design and development of proposals. This will be important in ensuring we can sufficiently consider and mitigate environmental risks and seize opportunities, notwithstanding those actions we are obliged to take to fulfil legislative and regulatory requirements where a proposal is subject to those.



## **6. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan.**

- 6.1. Monitoring for the plans and programmes will be a key means of ensuring that unforeseen adverse environmental and socio-economic effects are highlighted, and remedial action can be taken where adverse effects arise.
- 6.2. Our primary measure will be to implement the recommendations in section 7.4 of the Environmental Report and as summarised in section 3.19 of this adoption statement. Following adoption of the LTP, we will aim to monitor our progress in delivering the outcomes and their requisite proposals, using the objectives set out in the LTP.
- 6.3. In doing so, we will aim to monitor the impact of the delivery of our proposals and evaluate whether their outcomes, including in environmental impacts, are consistent with the likelihood established during their planning and development. We will aim to implement the recommendations to reduce the risks early on in the planning and development process of proposals, in order to reduce the likelihood of significant environmental effects and aim to monitor whether we are successful in that.

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## EQIA Submission – ID Number

### Section A

**EQIA Title**

Local Transport Plan 5

**Responsible Officer**

Mark Welch - GT TRA

### Type of Activity

**Service Change**

No

**Service Redesign**

No

**Project/Programme**

No

**Commissioning/Procurement**

No

**Strategy/Policy**

Strategy/Policy

**Details of other Service Activity**

No

### Accountability and Responsibility

**Directorate**

Growth Environment and Transport

**Responsible Service**

Highways and Transport

**Responsible Head of Service**

Tim Read - GT TRA

**Responsible Director**

Haroona Chughtai - GT TRA

### Aims and Objectives

The EqIA concerns the Local Transport Plan and its ambition and policy outcomes and objectives. The EqIA has been prepared to accompany adoption and publication of the plan. The EqIA has been assembled following consultation on a draft plan and EqIA during 2024, following consideration of feedback on the plan and EqIA.

Our assessment concludes that the ambition and policies in the Local Transport Plan are expected to have a positive impact. This is to be expected as the ambition and policies are intended to improve transport in a wide range of ways across the transport mix, which should be beneficial for a wide range of users.

### Section B – Evidence

**Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?**

Yes

**It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?**

Yes

**Is there national evidence/data that you can use?**

Yes

**Have you consulted with stakeholders?**

Yes

**Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?**

The Local Transport Plan and its Equalities Impact Assessment was subject to a public consultation in 2024.

All protected groups had an opportunity to respond to both the plan and the Impact Assessment. The results have been reported within the 2024 Consultation Results Report published on KCC's Let's Talk website, and the issues raised concerning the Impact Assessment considered and detailed in the You Said We Did report published within the County Council report pack for the 19th December 2024 meeting. Any necessary updates were undertaken to the EqIA following amendments to the relevant sections of the plan.
<b>Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?</b>
Yes
<b>Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?</b>
Yes
<b>Section C – Impact</b>
<b>Who may be impacted by the activity?</b>
<b>Service Users/clients</b>
No
<b>Staff</b>
No
<b>Residents/Communities/Citizens</b>
Residents/communities/citizens
<b>Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?</b>
Yes
<b>Details of Positive Impacts</b>
In general all protected characteristics are expected to receive experience positive effects from delivery of the emerging draft Local Transport Plan because the ambition and policies aim to deliver safer, more reliable, more accessible, and wider choice of transport across the difference forms of transport in the county, including the Strategic and Local Road Networks, the Public Transport and Shared Mobility network, and for walking and cycling in the county.
<b>Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions</b>
<b>19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for age?</b>
No. Note: If Question 19a is "No", Questions 19b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Details of negative impacts for Age</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating Actions for Age</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age</b>
Not Completed
<b>20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Disability?</b>
No. Note: If Question 20a is "No", Questions 20b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating actions for Disability</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for Disability</b>
Not Completed
<b>21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sex</b>

No. Note: If Question 21a is "No", Questions 21b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Details of negative impacts for Sex</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for Sex</b>
Not Completed
<b>22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>
No. Note: If Question 22a is "No", Questions 22b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Completed
<b>23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Race</b>
No. Note: If Question 23a is "No", Questions 23b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Negative impacts for Race</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating actions for Race</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race</b>
Not Completed
<b>24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>
No. Note: If Question 24a is "No", Questions 24b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief</b>
Not Completed
<b>25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
No. Note: If Question 25a is "No", Questions 25b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Completed
<b>26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>

No. Note: If Question 26a is "No", Questions 26b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Completed
<b>27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
No. Note: If Question 27a is "No", Questions 27b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Completed
<b>28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>
No. Note: If Question 28a is "No", Questions 28b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
<b>Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Not Completed
<b>Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Not Completed
<b>Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Not Completed

**County Council Meeting – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024****Motion for Time Limited Debate**

**Proposer:** Mr. Alister Brady

**Seconder:** Ms. Jackie Meade

**Background Information Provided by the Labour Group:**

Kent County Council, along with Medway Council and the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, is a statutory partner within the Integrated Care Partnership. All three partners developed and approved the refreshed Integrated Care Strategy (ICS) earlier this year. The aim of the strategy is to improve the health and wellbeing of the Kent population, with a particular focus on prevention and addressing the wider determinants of health (including, but not limited to, access to education and employment, good quality housing and a clean environment).

As exemplified within the ICS, there are a wide range of issues that determine a person's health and wellbeing, 'with clinical care only accounting for 20 per cent of the impact'<sup>1</sup>, therefore decision making across Directorates at KCC regularly impacts the health of Kent residents and this should be acknowledged during this process. Currently, decision-making documents within the Council consider legal, financial and equalities implications and, where relevant, demonstrate how a decision meets the objectives of Securing Kent's Future and Framing Kent's Future. Similarly, this motion believes that decisions should be assessed through the Integrated Care Strategy and that this should be demonstrated on the relevant papers.

This motion acknowledges that Medway Council and the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board are statutory bodies in their own right, and as such, KCC cannot impose any decisions on these partners without their expressed approval. Therefore, this motion is explicitly in relation to how Kent County Council can act, within its remit, to deliver the outcomes set out within the Integrated Care Strategy. Although all partners are responsible for delivering the aims set out in the strategy, KCC should lead by example and do everything within its abilities to improve the health and wellbeing of Kent's residents.

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<sup>1</sup> Kent and Medway Integrated Care System (2024), *Integrated Care Strategy*, pg. 7. Available at: [https://www.kmhealthandcare.uk/application/files/8717/1267/5010/CS56370\\_Care\\_Strategy-final-accessible\\_v3.pdf](https://www.kmhealthandcare.uk/application/files/8717/1267/5010/CS56370_Care_Strategy-final-accessible_v3.pdf)

**Motion:**

This County Council resolves to:

- Agree that all decisions, where relevant, must align with the Integrated Care Strategy objectives and request that decision making documentation demonstrates this.
- Request that decision-making documentation, where relevant, will evidence how a decision is working towards achieving the Integrated Care Strategy's progress indicators.
- Request that if a decision is made which does none of the above, then a reason for this must be cited within the decision-making documentation.



## Motion for Time Limited Debate: Electoral reform in Kent

Proposer: Mr Richard Streatfeild, MBE

Seconder: Mr Antony Hook

This Council notes:

- a. Public trust in the UK Government and local government has sunk to its lowest-ever recorded level. In 2023, the Office for National Statistics published data from a survey of UK adults with 34% saying they trusted local government, and 27% the UK Government.
- b. The 2024 UK General Election was the most disproportionate ever, with the new Government winning 411 of the 650 available seats in the House of Commons, whilst only receiving 33.7% of the total number of votes.
- c. A majority of votes cast in the 2024 General Election were for candidates who were not elected - at 58%, the highest in seventy years.
- d. Turnout at the 2024 General Election in the South East was 64%, the lowest since 2001.
- e. Many Kent citizens have not registered to vote.
- f. In the previous Parliament, the former Conservative Government weakened the independence of the Electoral Commission, removed the right of people to express a 2<sup>nd</sup> preference for the vote systems for mayoral elections in England, and introduced the Voter ID scheme.
- g. The work of organisations like Make Votes Matter, Unlock Democracy and the Electoral Reform Society, amongst others, in building the case for electoral reform.
- h. The new Government has not committed to reform of the voting system.
- i. Other parts of the UK, use the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system, and have done so for many years. In Northern Ireland, STV has been used in local elections since 1973, and in Scotland STV has been used for council elections since 2007.

This Council believes that:

- a. The current electoral system used in English local elections, referred to as 'first past the post' underpins the adversarial and divisive nature of Kent politics, and feeds public disillusion.
- b. Kent's electoral system leaves thousands of people feeling that their votes are irrelevant and their views unrepresented.
- c. It is undemocratic that, under the electoral system in Kent, not all votes count the same, which leaves thousands of people feeling disempowered and without a proper say in how the county is run.
- d. Improving our democracy is an important end in itself, but also a necessary step to building a better county with good schools and hospitals, affordable housing and safe communities.

This Council resolves to:

Request that the Leader writes to the Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, requesting the following:

1. Replace the 'first past the post' system for Kent County Council elections, with proportional representation by the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.
2. Implement a system for elections for single positions such as directly elected mayors that enables voters to express an order of preference and require a winning candidate to achieve more than 50% of the vote after lower placed candidates are eliminated.
3. The UK adopts an automatic system of inclusion on the electoral register.
4. Scrap the Voter ID requirement.
5. Lower the age of universal suffrage to 16.
6. Extend the right to full participation in civic life, including the ability to stand for office or vote in UK referendums, local elections and general elections, to all EU citizens with settled status, and to anyone else who has lived in the UK for at least five years and has the right to stay permanently.
7. Extend political education in Kent secondary schools, to prepare future citizens to participate in public life.

## **Motion for Time Limited Debate**

Proposer: Mr Jordan Meade

Seconder: Mr Tom Cannon

### **Background information provided by the Conservative Group:**

The Government's changes to the long-established Inheritance Tax Relief for Agricultural Land as announced in the recent Budget, will introduce a 'Family Farm Tax' which will have a detrimental impact on the farming businesses of Kent. Farming is a key component of the local economy here in Kent, contributing in excess of £400m to the local economy and directly supporting jobs for over 13,250 people.

We believe that this taxation represents a breach of trust by the Government, as prior to the election, the Labour Party denied that any such tax would be introduced, and the prospect of this additional tax burden was not published within the Labour Party's Manifesto.

We believe that this new burden on family farms will have a hugely detrimental impact on the farming communities of Kent and more widely our local economy, by making it extremely difficult for our farmers to pass on their family farms to the next generation of skilled farmers. This undermines the rural way of life here in Kent and will negatively impact skilled employment prospects within our rural communities.

Kent is home to many long-established and successful farming communities and numerous family farms. We are the 'Garden of England' with 85% of our land classified as rural, and 62% of our land area is farmed. The total area of farmed land in the county stands at 224,535 hectares. At a time, when farmers in Kent are struggling profoundly with soaring costs and energy prices, this sudden and unanticipated tax rise will undermine the long-term security of land holdings across the County and negatively impact our local economy, our food security and the environmental sustainability of our County.

It is feared that this new burden on family farmers will inevitably force the sale of some family farms in Kent, which in turn will undermine our local economy and food security. Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, the impact of unpredictable seasonal weather on harvests and the prospect of agricultural land being destroyed through development and changes to the NPPF, we believe that the changes to the Inheritance Tax Relief for Agricultural Land come at a time when the Government should be supporting our farmers in the interest of our national security and therefore request that the County Council stands with Kent's framers in opposing the 'Family Farm Tax'.

### **Motion**

*The County Council resolves;*

1. To declare our complete solidarity with the farmers of Kent in opposing the Government's decision to change the long-established Inheritance Tax Relief for Agricultural Land as announced in the Government's October Budget.

2. To recognise the monumental importance of farming to the local economy of Kent, which contributes in excess of £405m annually to our local economy and supports over 13,250 jobs across the County.
3. To commend the hard work and resilience of Kent's farmers and to acknowledge the important contribution that Kent farms make to the overall food security of the United Kingdom.
4. To request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to outline the Council's dismay at this decision, and further to call on the Government to reverse this decision, noting the detrimental impact that the Family Farm Tax will have on Kent's farmers and our local economy.
5. To request that the Executive calls upon all Kent MPs to protect the Kentish rural way of life by supporting their farming constituents, and more widely the residents and businesses of Kent, by proactively opposing the Government's decision to tax family farms in this way.
6. To request that the Cabinet Member for Economic Development engages with Kent's farmers and community representatives to better understand the difficulties faced by the farming sector at this time and to explore what further written support the County Council can provide to assist their campaigns.

## **Motion for Time Limited Debate - Climate and Nature Bill**

**Proposer:** Jenni Hawkins

**Seconded:** Paul Stepto

### **Background information provided by the Green and Independents Group:**

Climate change is affecting us all. Kent is facing significant challenges due to climate change, including increased rainfall that leads to serious flooding in areas like Romney Marsh and the Medway Valley. Landslips and coastal erosion are becoming more frequent, especially in Folkestone and other vulnerable areas like Thanet and the North Downs. Extreme rainfall has heightened the risk of such events, endangering homes, infrastructure, and critical transport links like the M20 and key railways. Kent's agriculture has also been severely impacted. Rising temperatures, as seen in 2023 and 2024, are exacerbating droughts and threatening food security, vital ecosystems, and local biodiversity.

The average global temperature has already increased by 1.3°C above pre-industrial levels, and July 2024 marked the thirteenth consecutive month that the world exceeded the 1.5°C threshold. Above 1.5°C, we risk reaching climatic tipping points, meaning we could lose control of our climate for good.

Locally in Kent, the Climate Change Risk and Impact assessment (CCRIA) reported climate change projections for Kent including an increase in average summer temperature of 2 – 3°C by 2040 and 5 – 6°C by 2080, warmer winters with an increase in average winter temperature of 1 – 2°C by 2040 and 3 – 4°C by 2080 as well as drier summers with a reduction in average precipitation of 20 – 30% by 2040 and 30 – 50% by 2080, and wetter winters with an increase in average precipitation of 10 – 20% by 2040 and 20 – 30% by 2080.

Climate change remains a major concern for UK voters with 80% of people expressing they are 'very' or 'fairly' concerned about climate change. The natural world has also reached a crisis point, with 28% of plants and animals threatened with extinction. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, as more than one in seven of our plants and animals face extinction, and more than 40% are in decline. Alongside this, the popularity of Sir David Attenborough's Save Our Wild Isles initiative demonstrates public concern that UK wildlife is being destroyed at a terrifying speed.

### **Climate and Nature Bill**

The [Climate and Nature Bill](#), a private member's (ballot) bill currently passing through the House of Commons, would address the challenge that this greatest, long-term, global risk poses by delivering a whole-of-government approach to securing a net zero and nature positive future. Based on the latest scientific evidence, the Bill aims to align current UK environmental policy with the need to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, which was goal agreed to at COP15, via the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (22 December 2022); and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the UK's fair share of the remaining global carbon budget to give the strongest chance of limiting global heating to 1.5°C, which was the goal agreed to at COP21, via the [Paris Agreement](#) (12 December 2015). By

bridging the gap between the UK Government's current delivery, and what has been agreed at international levels, Britain has a chance to be a world leader on climate and the environment; seizing the opportunities of the clean energy transition, including green jobs and skills; reduced energy bills; boosting the UK's food and energy security and creating a nature-rich UK.

**Kent County Council notes that:**

The [Climate and Nature Bill](#) (formerly, the Climate and Ecology Bill) has been introduced in the UK Parliament on four occasions since 2020, including most recently in the House of Commons on 16 October 2024 by Dr Roz Savage MP. Its second reading will take place on 24 January 2025, and it is now progressing through the UK Parliament with cross-party support. The Bill is backed by **[250]** cross-party MPs and Peers; **[372]** local authorities and the London Assembly; **[1,240]** scientists, such as Prof Sir Partha Dasgupta and Prof Sir David King; NGOs, like The Wildlife Trusts, Doctors' Association UK, Friends of the Earth, The W.I., The Climate Coalition and CPRE; businesses, including The Co-operative Bank, Arup, JLL, SUEZ UK and Ecotricity; and 53,000 members of the public. The Bill would require the UK Government to develop and deliver an integrated climate and nature strategy, as part of:

1. Tackling the intertwined crises in climate and nature in a joined-up way;
2. Reducing emissions fairly and rapidly for the highest chance of meeting the UK's obligation to limiting global warming to 1.5°C;
3. Halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity by setting nature measurably on the path to recovery by 2030;
4. Taking responsibility for the UK's overseas emissions and ecological footprints;
5. Prioritising nature in decision-making, and ending fossil fuel imports and production as rapidly as possible;
6. Ensuring that no-one and no community is left behind in the just transition by providing retraining for those currently working in fossil fuel industries; and
7. Involving citizens in finding a fair way forward via an independent, representative and temporary 'Climate and Nature Assembly', in order to bring public opinion along with the pace of change required.

**This Council resolves to request that the Cabinet Member for Environment:**

1. Ensures that its policies align with the relevant sections of the Climate and Nature Bill;
2. Inform local residents, and local press/media, of our motion;
3. Write to all elected MPs in Kent to inform them that our motion has been passed, urging them to sign up to support the Bill, and requesting that they vote for the Bill at its second reading on 24 January 2025.
4. Write to [Zero Hour](#), the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the Bill, expressing our official support ([councils@zerohour.uk](mailto:councils@zerohour.uk)).