

From: David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Dan Watkins, Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

To: County Council – 14th July 2022

Subject: Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5)

Status: Unrestricted

Summary: KCC's Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) is in early stages of development, to replace the existing LTP4 '*Delivering Growth Without Gridlock*' as the statutory document for Kent County Council's transport vision. LTP4 (despite written with a horizon of 2016 up to 2031) was reviewed as a first task by the LTP5 Member Task and Finish Group and deemed to need replacement.

A draft ambition statement has been developed and agreed over a series of Member Task and Finish Group meetings, following review of the plan's evidence base. The draft ambition seeks to achieve balance across a range of focuses whilst making clear the Council's priorities, including those already adopted (e.g., Vision Zero, Energy & Low Emission Strategy, Bus Service Improvement Plan). Nine outcomes have also been drafted and cover key themes across society, economy, and the environment. The ambition and outcomes will provide the basis for the Plan's development of policies and proposals.

Government will consult on new guidance for Local Transport Plans in 2022 and, ahead of that, has been sharing the purpose and its key aspects. KCC's work to date fits well with the emerging guidance, including a new requirement to quantify carbon reductions forecast to accrue from LTP5's proposals.

Recommendation:

That the County Council notes progress on development of Local Transport Plan 5, the draft ambition and outcomes developed and the remaining steps to developing a full draft plan for consultation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document set out in the 2000 Transport Act which was then amended in the 2008 Local Transport Act removing the need for 5-year plans. LTP's are the only KCC transport policy document which require the approval of the full Council. As statutory plans they carry weight in the planning system and are therefore given regard by Government in its decision making. The plan is a critical instrument to attract Government transport funding and reduce transport carbon emissions in the future.
- 1.2 The Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth Without Gridlock (LTP4) was adopted in 2017 with the intention to remain as Kent Council's statutory Local

Transport Plan (LTP) for the period of 2016-2031. LTP4 pulls together transport policies, looking at local schemes and issues as well as those at a countywide and national significance.

- 1.3 In the previous report on LTP to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee in September 2021 it was agreed that LTP4 was to be reviewed and, if appropriate, the process of drawing up a new LTP was to begin. A Member Task and Finish Group was established after endorsement at ETCC (Appendix 1 contains an organogram of the group), chaired by Councillor Dan Watkins, Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.
- 1.4 The Group endorsed officers progressing a new LTP (LTP5). The primary reason was LTP4 was considered insufficient concerning the extent it addressed transport's contribution to climate change. In addition, new adopted local plans with revised growth challenges, pandemic-driven challenges to the travel market, and the centralisation of competitively bid-for funds for specific purposes (Bus, Cycling & Walking), following the end of the Local Growth Deal through SELEP, also drive the need for a new plan.
- 1.5 Government has communicated that it is drafting new LTP guidance because it plans to make LTPs a priority and increase their ties to future grant funding awards. With a funding landscape made up of multiple small pots targeting specific policies and modes, Government wants to put Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) in the best position to balance these competing priorities and asks with a single unifying plan. Government is encouraging LTAs to establish and use LTPs to promote a pipeline of local transport interventions, to increase LTAs readiness for bidding for future funds and implementing schemes where funding is awarded. Government's focus will be on seeing evidence in new LTPs of a pipeline that supports economic growth and levelling up, improves transport for users, and reduces environmental impacts, all with a place-based focus.
- 1.6 LTP5 must therefore reflect the ambitions held by KCC through existing programmes such as the Bus Service Improvement Plan and active travel and significant new changes in the mechanisms to support these such as the application for powers concerning Moving Traffic Violations, as per Section 6 of the Traffic Management Act (TMA). The BSIP allocation draw-down and a decision on KCCs application for Section 6 TMA powers are expected to complete over summer, providing important milestones from which LTP5 development can proceed.
- 1.7 The remaining development of LTP5 will be tied to development of these programmes. This will ensure that the plan can convincingly convey to bodies such as Active Travel England, National Highways and so on, that its components are integrated and what their total impact is estimated to be in delivering government policies in Kent.
- 1.8 Decarbonisation and net zero will have a more prominent role within the upcoming LTP5 as the new guidance will include a requirement for LTPs to demonstrate forecasting of the quantified carbon reductions the plan will deliver. In anticipation of this and reflecting KCC's own policy position, the ambition, and

outcomes for LTP5 reflect the prominence of climate change as a challenge to both combat and adapt to.

2. Ambitions and Outcomes

- 2.1 The Member Task and Finish Group was assembled to guide the direction of the ambition statement and outcomes for LTP5. Over the first 4 meetings, a review of LTP4 took place followed by consideration of the evidence base developed in support of LTP5. This enabled the ambition statement and outcomes to be finalised over the most recent meetings. The ambition statement that has been developed and proposed for LTP5 is as follows:

“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 achieve the delivery of 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 highways network and delivering our Vision Zero road safety strategy. These priorities will ensure our networks are future-proof, resilient and meet user needs.”

- 2.2 The draft outcomes that have been developed for LTP5 were also agreed by the Member Task and Finish Group. The outcomes, listed below, reflect existing adopted plans / strategies and challenges. The development of the LTP5 ambition and outcomes has been undertaken cognisant of the need to comply with Government policy. Once the draft ambition and outcomes have been considered by the Council, a new name for LTP5 will be developed.
- 2.3 SMART objectives will be put against the outcomes listed below, through liaison with subject experts in KCC, so that policies and proposals developed for the LTP can be measured in their impact on delivery of the objectives. In some instances, SMART objectives (targets) are already established through adopted KCC plans / strategies.
- 2.3.1 Outcome 1: Our highways network is kept to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel.
- 2.3.2 Outcome 2: Vision Zero delivery in road safety is supported.
- 2.3.3 Outcome 3: International travel becomes a more a positive feature facilitated by the county’s network, as negative externalities of road-based international travel are decreased.
- 2.3.4 Outcome 4: Established international rail travel from locations in Kent continue to be available, rail and public transport connections to points for international travel hubs are improved and the environmental impacts of aviation in Kent reduce compared to current levels.
- 2.3.5 Outcome 5: Deliver climate change resilient transport, 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.

- 2.3.6 Outcome 6: Access to Kent's historic and natural environment is enhanced.
- 2.3.7 Outcome 7: Road-side air quality improves as decarbonisation of travel accelerates, contributing towards the target of net zero and carbon budget targets.
- 2.3.8 Outcome 8: A comprehensive public transport network supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased patronage, with the consequent impact on improving service provision viability.
- 2.3.9 Outcome 9: Transport makes a positive contribution to public health due to increasing numbers of people using a growing cycling network with dedicated infrastructure, and an improving pedestrian network.

3. Evidence Base – the transport challenges in Kent that the new Plan needs to try and address

- 3.1 The Member Task and Finish Group considered the evidence base in the development of the new LTP. The evidence base provided insight on Kent's transport challenges, thematically and spatially and informed the crafting of the ambition and its outcomes. The headlines of the evidence base follow below.
- 3.2 KCC research illustrates that the public expect a high quality and frequent service from the public transport system if they are going to consider it as a substitute for their private motor vehicles. This is coupled with the (high / rising) cost of public transport options, frequently cited as an issue.
- 3.3 Safety is a priority for the public of Kent and is why KCC already has its ambitious Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy. Research shows that the public want to feel safe if they use the road for walking or cycling, and clearly favour means of achieving that such as 20 mph zones, and segregated cycle lanes.
- 3.4 Impacting a wide range of outcomes from transport in Kent is the quality of the highway. Research shows the main concern is that repairs do not keep up with the rate of deterioration, impacting safety and usability.
- 3.5 Our transport systems are still in a recovery phase as the pandemic continues. Rail and bus patronage remains far short of 2019 levels. The evidence base illustrates that given the volume of short-distance trips made in private vehicles, small mode shifts (in single percent figures) from private car could make a large contribution towards recovering patronage, with fares revenue able to support comprehensive network that becomes increasingly attractive.
- 3.6 KCC and national research shows the pandemic has embedded preferences for working from home. This is set against a risk of potential increased car use during weekdays for grocery, leisure, and home-delivery traffic locally rather than around their former place of work (e.g., London). This is adding pressure to the highway. National data indicates that since summer 2021 daily recorded volumes of motor vehicles are consistently exceeding 2019 levels.

- 3.7 Travel challenges on the Kent network arise from how the existing 1.6 million residents and 70,000 businesses operating in Kent either have to or chose to travel. Enabling Kent to accommodate new development growth will therefore rely on getting more sustainable outcomes from all travel – new and existing. Population is forecast to grow by 330,000 over the next 15 years, with District and Borough Local Plans setting out development strategies and sites to deliver c. 9,750 homes per annum over the same period, equivalent to delivering growth across the county equal to the size of the planned Otterpool Park garden settlement each year.
- 3.8 It will not be possible to grow the road network to accommodate all the increased trips from population growth. Some highways schemes will remain necessary though, given the nature of the county and the need for new development areas to be accessible and attractive to locate to. The challenge will be ensuring the infrastructure-first principle is applied, with highways schemes providing effective and dedicated infrastructure to reduce the negative effects of increased travel Kent’s highway and public transport network performance.
- 3.9 The Kent Transport Model forecasts growth from development up to 2037 and suggests that with travel habits from 2019 continuing, a typical inter peak hour on the roads could match today’s AM peak hour traffic levels, before we forecast the effect of mitigations that the LTP could promote. Journey speeds could decline, and variability or reliability of journey times could increase, with the time taken to complete journeys forecast to increase by c. 17% on average. The number of junctions that are classed as pinch points, is forecast to increase by c.35% adding to the locations already identified on the road network today. Congestion and stop-start conditions also risks worsening air quality locations.
- 3.10 Using the Kent Transport Model, we can forecast surface transport emissions on the KCC and / or National Highways networks. Our forecasts currently indicate that by 2027, emissions could fall by 8% and up to 33% by 2037 compared to 2019 levels. To meet the Government’s carbon budgets¹ on the pathway to net-zero, which were established by the Climate Change Committee chaired by Lord Deben, KCC needs to aim to achieve a far greater reduction of 30% in the next 5 years and 80% in the next 10 years.

4. Developing the Local Transport Plan’s policies and proposals

- 4.1 The consideration of policies and proposals to include in the draft LTP will focus on their contribution to achieving the outcomes and ambition. By extension, this will also include their impact on the challenges the evidence base has identified. Forecasting the quantified carbon reductions of LTP5 policies and proposals will also be a key feature of the next stage. Engagement will take place with a wide range of stakeholders to support the development of the plan’s content.

¹ **Note:** the carbon budgets are the most important aspect in ensuring carbon emissions decline to the volume and speed necessary to provide the best chance of limiting the global warming to well below 2 °C, with a target of 1.5 °C (associated with net zero in 2050) as intended by the Paris Climate Agreement. Technically net-zero in 2050 could be achieved whilst global warming exceeds the targets, for example if carbon emissions remain very high until a sudden sharp drop just before 2050.

4.2 The scheduled milestones that have been set for development of the plan, are listed below. They ensure KCC have a comfortable cushion between the current planned adoption date and the timeframe Government has set for completed plans by spring 2024.

4.2.1 Complete LTP4 Plan review – November 2021 – COMPLETED

4.2.2 Establish a new draft Ambition and outcomes for the plan: March 2022 - COMPLETED

4.2.3 Develop policies and proposals content for the LTP – summer / autumn 2022 through to winter 2023

4.2.4 Statutory consultation: Spring 2023.

4.2.5 Draft new LTP for Full Council vote on adoption: autumn 2023

5. District/Borough Council Engagement

5.1 Early engagement sessions were held with each of the 12 District/Borough Council officers, and Medway Council officers, to introduce plans for LTP5. Further sessions will inform development of policies and proposals for LTP5.

5.2 Key concerns repeatedly brought up in the engagement sessions included climate change and decarbonisation, bus services, schools generated car traffic, rate of active travel delivery, Local Plan (and associated local transport strategies) review and delivery challenges and timescales.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Spend to date has totalled c. £72,000, spent primarily on scoping for the SEA, Kent Transport Model use, and carbon emissions forecasting.

6.2 As of the 21st of March 2022, the Secretary of State for Transport has granted £178,671.43 under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 to Kent County Council for the primary purpose of preparing for the launch of the new Local Transport Plan guidance and updating of LTPs to abide by this new guidance. The funds must be spent or committed by January 2023.

7. Legal implications

7.1 As a statutory plan, the LTP must fulfil legislative requirements concerning Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The LTP will be prepared with support from a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), to measure the potential impact of the policies and proposals on the environment and will aim to reduce their impact where one may arise. The scoping stage of the SEA is nearing completion following consultation with statutory bodies, before receiving final approval from relevant specialists within KCC.

8. Equalities implications

8.1 The new LTP will be prepared with input from an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to ensure the consideration of the policies and proposals that the Council choses to promote in the new LTP and further KCC’s efforts in fulfilling its statutory public sector equalities duty. The EqIA will be published with the draft plan for the public consultation exercise.

9. Governance

9.1 The LTP will continue to be developed in collaboration with the Member Task and Finish Group. Later in 2022, an update will be provided to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on the progress of the plan along with KCC’s proposed response to the Governments consultation on the new LTP guidance.

10. Conclusions

10.1 KCC will continue to develop LTP5 and its draft policies and proposals, through work of the Member Task and Finish Group, and through consultation with stakeholders including District and Borough officers, local and County Members through Joint Transportation Boards (JTBs).

10.2 As a statutory plan, LTP5 is a critical opportunity to establish a new pipeline of proposals for transport in the county, that carry weight in the planning process and in Government’s decision making. Government is placing more onus on LTPs for determining grant funding awards to Local Transport Authorities, as they seek to ensure schemes deliver national policy on levelling up, decarbonisation and the environment, active travel, the bus network, and innovation for the future of transport. To fund our future pipeline, LTP5 must focus on further delivery of progressive policies and schemes that speak to this focus of government funding.

11. Recommendation

11.1 That the County Council notes progress on development of Local Transport Plan 5, the draft ambition and outcomes developed and the remaining steps to developing a full draft plan for consultation.

12. Background Documents

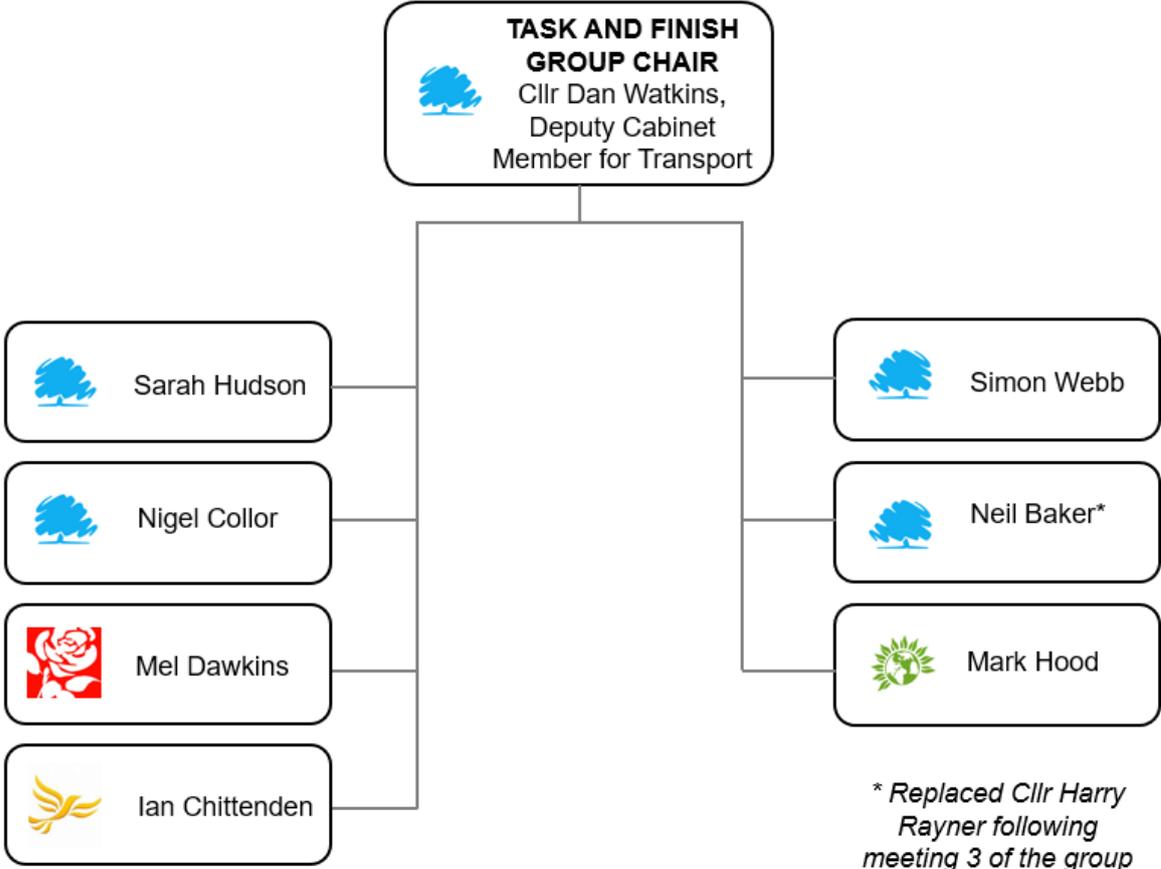
12.1 Local Transport Plan 4 published on KCC website at https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/72668/Local-transport-plan-4.pdf .

12.2 ETCC September 2021 paper on proposed early review of LTP4 published on KCC website at <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s105548/LTP5%20Report.pdf>

13. Officer Contact details

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Appendix 1 – Member Task and Finish Group Organogram



Note: Proposed representation from parties reflects broad balance of power on the Council as a whole

** Replaced Cllr Harry Rayner following meeting 3 of the group*