

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

To: County Council 19th 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 .
- 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%202024%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

14. Officer Contact details

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