From: Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Subject: JTB – future arrangements

Decision no: ***26/00061***

Key Decision: *It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions*

Classification: *Unrestricted*

Past Pathway of report: Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 10 November 2026

Future Pathway of report: *Cabinet Member Decision*

Electoral Division: County Wide

Is the decision eligible for call-in? *Yes*

Summary: Kent County Council (KCC) and district/boroughs established Joint Transportation Boards (JTBs) in 2005 to facilitate cooperation on local highway and transportation issues and to provide recommendations to the appropriate KCC or district/borough Cabinet Member on highways issues. A legal agreement underpins each JTB.

The operation and effectiveness of Joint Transportation Boards have previously been considered through reports to the KCC Scrutiny Committee. The Committee's findings and recommendations included a review of the current arrangements. This work has informed the development of the proposed decision to end current arrangements in favour of a new partnership working approach.

Recommendation:
The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to agree the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to end the current Joint Transportation Board arrangements and to establish replacement local engagement arrangements for highways and transport matters.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Joint Transportation Boards (JTBs) provide a forum for Kent County Council and district and borough councils to consider local highways and transport matters. However, the current arrangements are governed by separate agreements that have developed inconsistently over time and no longer provide a clear or uniform countywide framework.

1.2 This report sets out the case for bringing the existing JTB agreements to an end and replacing them with a more consistent, efficient and flexible approach to local highways and transport engagement.

1.3 It seeks the Cabinet Committee's views on the proposed decision before it is taken by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

2. Key Considerations

2.1 On how KCC should structure future local engagement on highways and transport matters that ensures consistency, democratic engagement, operational effectiveness and flexibility for future local government arrangements and devolution.

2.2 The proposal is to end the existing JTB agreements and develop replacement engagement arrangements with each district and borough council. This will provide a clearer and more consistent framework while retaining local flexibility, Member involvement and the ability to respond to devolution and local government reorganisation.

3. Background

3.1 Joint Transportation Boards (JTBs) were established in 2005 through separate agreements between Kent County Council (KCC) and each of Kent's district and borough councils. They were created as consultative, non-decision-making forums through which county, district and borough Members could consider local highways and transport matters and make recommendations to the authority responsible for taking the relevant decision.

3.2 The agreements set out the membership, governance and operation of each JTB. Although based on a broadly common model, the arrangements have developed differently across Kent over time. Amendments proposed in 2021 sought to update and improve the consistency of the arrangements; however, these were formally adopted by only six district and borough councils. Consequently, JTBs now operate under different versions of the agreements and with varying local practices.

3.3 In September 2023, KCC's Scrutiny Committee reviewed the operation and effectiveness of the JTBs. It identified inconsistencies in how the JTBs operated, a lack of clarity around governance and decision-making, and differing views about their purpose, effectiveness and efficiency. The Committee recommended that KCC consider replacing the existing arrangements with a revised model for local highways and transport engagement. The replacement arrangements will be developed to address concerns identified through previous reviews of the current model.

3.4 In 2026, KCC and Maidstone Borough Council mutually agreed to terminate their formal JTB agreement. The remaining agreements continue to operate, but the differing contractual and operational arrangements mean that there is no longer a consistent countywide approach to engagement on local highways and transport matters.

3.5 A decision is therefore required to bring the existing JTB arrangements to an end and enable officers to develop and implement a clearer, more efficient and flexible replacement model. The new arrangements will be developed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and counterpart district and borough Members across all Kent districts, providing an opportunity for their views to inform the future approach. The new model will maintain effective local engagement while allowing arrangements to respond to changing local needs and the evolving local government landscape.

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

- **Retain existing arrangements**.
  Continue with the existing arrangements, accepting that different agreements and operating practices would remain across Kent. This would provide continuity but would not address the inconsistencies or limitations identified through the Scrutiny review

- **Terminate the agreements without a replacement model**
  Rely solely on existing Member, officer and council engagement channels. This would be administratively simpler but could reduce transparency, consistency and opportunities for structured local discussion.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Administrative support for the current JTBs is provided by district and borough councils. The administrative responsibilities for the replacement arrangements will be agreed with each council as the new model is developed. The arrangements will be designed to be proportionate and to minimise additional demands on KCC services; any additional KCC responsibilities arising from the agreed model will be managed within existing budgets and officer resources.

6. Legal implications

6.1 The existing agreements must be ended in accordance with their respective termination provisions. Any replacement arrangements must be consistent with KCC's Constitution, statutory responsibilities and decision-making framework. Governance and Law will review the final arrangements before implementation.

7. Equalities implications

7.1 The decision relates to governance and engagement arrangements rather than service delivery.

7.2 No direct adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics have been identified. However, there is potential for indirect impacts if changes to membership, attendance arrangements, meeting timing, public participation opportunities or engagement mechanisms reduce the ability of particular groups to participate in local highways and transport discussions.

7.3 These risks will be mitigated through engagement with stakeholders, accessible meeting arrangements, publication of information, and continued opportunities for local input.

7.4 The Equality Impact Assessment will remain a live document and will be reviewed and updated, where necessary, as the replacement arrangements and associated Terms of Reference are developed and implemented.

8. Data Protection Implications

8.1 No personal data will be processed to implement this decision.

9. Other corporate implications

9.1 Implementation will require coordinated input from Highways and Transport, and Democratic Services in drafting terms of reference as new engagement models are developed.

9.2 Administrative responsibilities and officer capacity will depend on the practical arrangements agreed between KCC and each district or borough council. Transition arrangements will maintain Member engagement and ensure clear governance.

10. Governance

10.1 The proposed decision is to approve the termination of the existing Joint Transportation Board agreements and to delegate authority to the Director of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to develop, finalise and implement replacement local highways and transport engagement arrangements, including the approval of associated Terms of Reference required for their operation, and to take all necessary actions to give effect to this decision.

11. Delegations

11.1 The Director of Highways and Transport is authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to finalise and implement the replacement engagement arrangements, including agreeing terms of reference and making minor amendments where necessary, in accordance with the Officer Scheme of Delegation.

12 Conclusions

12.1 The current JTB agreements no longer provide a consistent or effective countywide basis for local highways and transport engagement. Ending the remaining agreements will enable KCC to work with districts and boroughs to introduce clearer, more flexible arrangements that maintain Member and partner involvement while supporting future changes to local government.

13. Recommendation:

13.1 The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to agree the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to end the current Joint Transportation Board arrangements and to establish replacement local engagement arrangements for highways and transport matters.

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14. Background Documents and Appendices

- Equality Impact Assessment
- Scrutiny Report 13.09.2023
- Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision

15. Contact details

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