

**From:** Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

**To:** Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 30 November 2017

**Subject:** Draft Thanet Transport Strategy

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Thanet Joint Transportation Board

**Electoral Division:** All Thanet District Divisions

**Summary:** The report sets out an overview of the draft Thanet District Transportation Strategy and its progress to date, including the future consultation and democratic process in relation to the emerging Thanet Local Plan.

**Recommendation(s):**

Members are asked to consider and endorse the principles of the draft Thanet Transport Strategy and confirm their support for the initial public consultation exercise to be progressed as part of the Thanet Local Plan process.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The proposed consultation draft of the Thanet Transport Strategy (TS) summarised in the plan at **Appendix 1**, has been jointly developed with Thanet District Council (TDC).
- 1.2 It is intended to replace the former Thanet Transport Plan (2005) and provides a framework of transport policy to the year 2031, to support planned growth within the Thanet District
- 1.3 The proposed TS earmarks considerable investment in highway infrastructure. It provides potential highway solutions to facilitate the proposed growth of 17,140 new dwellings and 5,000 new jobs, between 2015–2031.
- 1.4 This paper is being presented to Members in pre consultation form due to Thanet District Council recently amending its governance pathway to meet more recent requirements for local plans to be submitted to DCLG by end of March 2018. This submission deadline must be met to avoid a subsequent uplift in objectively assessed housing targets using a pre determined DCLG methodology.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The majority of the measures detailed in the Draft TS, and in particular the significant elements of road infrastructure estimated to circa £70m, are linked to the larger developments and therefore have potential sources of developer funding.
- 2.2 Further viability appraisal work is currently being completed by TDC to assess the financial headway available within the emerging site allocations. This in turn will inform a subsequent Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will be submitted as evidence to the local plan examination.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that necessary highway infrastructure will be funded by development with no financial commitment being placed on KCC. Further viability appraisal work by TDC will inform the specification and delivery of final infrastructure proposals, as will consideration of future consultation processes. It is possible that TDC will seek to impose a CIL on certain elements of infrastructure to ensure that the strategy is funded in a financially equitable way across the district.
- 2.4 It is expected that an element of external funding will be sought to encourage rapid delivery of housing. TDC have recently bid for £10million through the recently announced Housing Infrastructure Fund for highway infrastructure contained within emerging TS, other sources of external funding will be subject to competitive bidding process as and when they are announced.

## **3. Policy Framework**

- 3.1 The draft TS seeks to meet the objectives of 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)' by assisting in the delivery of the following outcomes.
  - Supporting business growth by enabling access to jobs through improved transport links;
  - Assisting in the delivery of well-planned housing growth by maximising the delivery of onsite infrastructure and appropriate off site highway improvements;
  - Protecting and enhancing Kent's physical and natural environment, by managing air quality concerns through the delivery of managed growth and improved access to local rural communities;
  - Helping children and young people have better physical and mental health and giving young people access to work, education and training opportunities through a package of new walking and cycling routes, including links to areas of public open space;
  - Helping older and vulnerable residents feel socially included, by providing scope for improved public transport coverage and appropriate highway connections between new and existing communities.
- 3.2 The Thanet TS is commensurate with the high level strategic outcomes that were identified within the recently adopted Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-31).

## 4. The Report

- 4.1 The existing Thanet Transport Plan was adopted in 2005. The majority of measures that were identified 12 years ago have been implemented successfully. The growth proposed within the emerging Thanet District Local Plan has however instigated a review of the existing transport challenges and a new TS is now required to meet the future needs of the local highway network.
- 4.2 The headline aim of the TS is that Thanet will have a safe, accessible, affordable, sustainable, reliable and integrated transport network incorporating improved road, public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes.
- 4.3 There are a number of individual interventions identified within the TS, however the major focus is the creation of an Inner Circuit Route Improvement Strategy (ICRIS), encompassing new and improved inner highway routes to complement the existing Primary Road Network. These improvements will enhance route choice and also provide the opportunity to deliver public transport access to new and existing residents within the district in a more commercially practical way. Positive engagement with a number of developers related to the potential delivery of on-site sections of highway infrastructure has already taken place.
- 4.4 To inform land use option testing, a Strategic Highway Model has been developed to test the impact of the local plan allocations and any identified road interventions. Early outputs from this modelling exercise suggest that travel demand will inevitably increase as more houses are delivered, however the incorporation of new highway routes will spread the impact across a wider area subsequently managing impacts on key links within the district.
- 4.5 In line with National Planning Policy, it is important to deliver development in a sustainable way, and as such in addition to the ICRIS, there are a number of other interventions which seek to improve walking and cycling facilities.
- 4.6 There are four key themes that underpin the Transport Strategy these are :

### Encourage Sustainable Travel Habits

- Introduction of new cycle and pedestrian routes.
- Improvements to existing cycle and pedestrian routes.
- Extend and improve access to bus travel through increased frequency and network coverage.
- Implement improvements to the highway network to improve bus journey time reliability.
- Provision of a new Parkway Rail Station at Cliffsend.
- Ensure that new and existing bus infrastructure is delivered or renewed with easy access in mind.
- Ensure that developments provide appropriate walking and cycling facilities.
- Car Parking Strategy

## Manage Journey Times

- Provision of new and improved inner highway routes to complement existing primary road network.
- Localised junction improvements to improve traffic flow and levels of service.
- Reduction in the need to travel

## Improve Network Resilience

- Provision of new and improved inner highway routes to complement existing primary road network.
- Improve journey time reliability within the local road network by providing new link roads and junction improvements to avoid congestion.
- Improved directional signage

## Reduce the Requirement to Travel

- Promotion of mixed use development where appropriate.
- Robust Travel Planning Measures to be implemented for new developments.
- Encourage car sharing.
- Improved communication infrastructure (High Speed Broadband).

## **5. Equalities Implications**

- 5.1 The final Draft TS document will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA), following consultation with necessary stakeholders and any potential impacts on fully considered.

## **6. Governance**

- 6.1 Subject to the recommendations of this committee, the draft TS will be presented to Thanet Joint Transportation Board on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017, for their initial consideration and feedback.
- 6.2 In tandem with this process, TDC will be referring the draft TS to their Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> November, closely followed by their Cabinet Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> December. A comprehensive report in relation to pre submission draft of the Local Plan will be referred to their Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> January at which point TDC officers will seek formal approval to undertake pre submission consultation.
- 6.5 Subject to the outcome of the Council meeting, a six week public consultation process will be undertaken for the local plan (referred to as Regulation 19). This will commence following the Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018, and will include the draft TS document.
- 6.6 Once public consultation has been completed (March 2018), the feedback from this process will inform any necessary amendments to the draft TS. The final draft of the document will then be reported to this Committee for consideration and endorsement as appropriate along with details of highway interventions contained within the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

6.7 It is anticipated that the Examination in Public (EiP) for the Thanet Local Plan will take place in Quarter 4 of 2018 (subject to Planning Inspectorate availability).

## 7. Conclusions

7.1 The Draft Transport Strategy for Thanet balances the needs of all road users and proposes a significant investment in highway infrastructure. It is anticipated that this will be funded by developer contributions, however it may also include a level of external funding (from sources such as Housing Infrastructure Fund and National Productivity Investment Fund). There will be no financial commitment placed on KCC.

7.2 The pending viability appraisal work by TDC and the outcome of subsequent stakeholder consultation will inform the specification and delivery of final infrastructure proposals. The final Draft TS will be subject to further governance processes and consideration through the Local Plan EiP.

## 8. Recommendation

### **Recommendation(s):**

Members are asked to consider and endorse the principles of the draft Thanet Transport Strategy and confirm their support for the initial public consultation exercise to be progressed as part of the Thanet Local Plan process.

## 9. Background Documents

- Appendix 1: Thanet District Transport Strategy Draft Infrastructure Plan:  
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD5275&ID=5275&RPID=18574054>
- Thanet District Transport Strategy 2015-2031 - Consultation Draft 30/10/2017 -  
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD5276&ID=5276&RPID=18574088>

## 10. Contact details

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