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To: Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Overview and
Scrutiny Committee 19th January 2010

Subject: Growth Without Gridlock – An Integrated Transport Strategy for Kent

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report provides an update to Members on Kent's Integrated Transport Strategy.

1. Introduction

1.1 With the publication of the County Council's framework for regeneration titled ***Unlocking Kent's Potential: opportunities and challenges***, the need for an Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) to support this framework was identified. In response, the County Council's Transport Policy Team has prepared an ITS, with input from a wide range of stakeholders and overseen by the KEB Transport Task Group, drawn from representatives of Kent's bus and train operators, the ports and airports, the district councils and Medway, government organisations and other bodies.

2. An Integrated Transport Strategy for Kent (ITS)

2.1 The ITS recognises the challenges facing Kent and that targets for economic growth and housing will put increasing pressure on Kent's transport network. Other factors including an ageing population, the threat of climate change and the introduction of new services like High Speed One mean that the transport network has to be able to meet the needs of Kent and its residents. The solution presented in the ITS is an integrated transport network which is sustainable and available to all, supports regeneration and enhanced economic prosperity and copes with the demand of housing growth. It also recognises the impact of transport emissions on climate change and looks to reduce carbon emissions as well as adapt the network to cope with wetter winters and hotter summers.

2.2 The ITS outlines a range of measures and proposals to deliver this integrated transport network but there are five key components that are vital to its success.

2.3

- *New Infrastructure* – there are still major bottlenecks on Kent's roads and railways where congestion is a barrier to regeneration and increased capacity through new infrastructure is needed

- *Maximising the Benefits of High Speed One* – the new high speed rail services which started on 13th December 2009 will greatly influence regeneration opportunities and the benefits need to be maximised through high quality sustainable access to these services
- *An Integrated Bus Network* – buses lie at the heart of the ITS and it looks to build on the success of routes like Fastrack and the Thanet Loop to create a bus network that meets people's needs
- *Making Public Transport Travel Easier* – many people find the public transport network difficult to use and understand; the ITS aims to make travelling easier, simpler and cheaper through initiatives like smartcard ticketing and real time information
- *Flexible Working* – the ITS aims to reduce the need to travel, especially during peak periods and will promote measures that allow Kent's residents to work flexibly

2.4 By providing a long term vision for transport, the ITS will be a key influence on the district's Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and they will take into account transport proposals in the ITS, whilst the ITS recognises and supports the aspirations of each district and borough as expressed through their LDFs. The ITS also provides a longer term vision and outline framework for the County Council's next Local Transport Plan which needs to be in place by 1st April 2011.

3. Consultation

3.1 Consultation on the Integrated Transport Strategy for Kent (Final Draft) was launched on 19th November 2009 and will close on 12th February 2010, after which the ITS will be revised in response to comments received and will be presented to Cabinet for approval during February/March 2010.

In addition, officers have met with each of the district councils (Leader, Chief Executive, Planning Officer etc.) to receive their feedback, especially on the specific page in the ITS which highlight's each district's transport challenges and proposals. Comments received during these meetings have been favourable and the overall vision for an integrated transport network has been welcomed.

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