

From: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

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To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 12 January 2017

Subject: Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock – consultation results

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: All divisions

Summary:

Kent County Council (KCC) has a statutory duty to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The current LTP3 (2011-16) needs replacing and so a new draft LTP, Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock, has been produced that incorporates a refresh of 2010's Growth without Gridlock. The draft LTP4 was taken to Cabinet Committee on 8th July, and has since been subject to a full 12 week public consultation. The consultation comments are still being reviewed before potential changes are made to the LTP4 but a high-level summary of the consultation results is provided in this report. The intention is to revise LTP4 prior to adoption by County Council.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to note the summary of consultation comments on the draft LTP4.

1. Background

1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) is in the process of replacing its current Local Transport Plan (LTP3), which is dated 2011-16. Under the Local Transport Act 2008, it is a statutory requirement for KCC to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP) in place, although the Act allows Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) the freedom to replace LTPs as and when they see fit rather than having a five year planning cycle as stipulated in the previous legislation (Transport Act 2000). The LTP is a critical tool in supporting and facilitating appropriate growth and in assisting Kent to attract investment from Government to its priority transport schemes. It is thus vital that KCC has a robust LTP in place.

1.2 The current refresh provides an opportunity for KCC to produce a new longer-term plan, enabling the Council to take a strategic view of transport along the

same timescales as those that have been used to set out the county's growth ambitions. The new LTP4 therefore spans the period 2017 to 2031 to align with the planning horizon of the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF).

- 1.3 It also integrates LTP4 with Kent's transport delivery plan, *Growth without Gridlock* (GwG). GwG was produced in December 2010 setting out the strategic aims for transport to support economic growth in Kent over a 20-year period. As many of the ambitions of this original plan have been achieved, these have been incorporated in the 'Strategic Transport Priorities' section of LTP4. KCC therefore has one document covering strategic and local transport priorities.

2. The consultation process

- 2.1 For a 12-week period from August to October, the consultation documents and questionnaire for LTP4 were available to view and respond to online, with hard copies available on request. Hard copies were available in all libraries, Gateways and district council offices across Kent. In addition, all KCC Members received a hard copy. The consultation draft LTP4 is attached in Appendix B. A report on LTP4 was also offered to each Joint Transportation Board (JTB), with only Ashford not including the item in one of their meetings. Six JTBs were attended by officers: Canterbury, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Swale, Thanet, Tonbridge and Malling, and Tunbridge Wells. The Maidstone Business Partnership meeting was also attended.
- 2.2 A total of 486 completed questionnaires were received. A further 41 letters and 39 emails were received making representations for the consultation. Twenty one emails and 2 letters were received as part of a campaign in Canterbury regarding access to Canterbury West Station. A further 6 emails were sent with supplementary information to a main response, and 2 letters were duplicates of online submissions – therefore there was a total of 16 unique email responses and 37 unique letters.
- 2.3 The profile of respondents was monitored throughout the consultation with publicity targeted to encourage underrepresented groups to respond. Analysis of the profile of those who responded as an individual shows that the LTP4 consultation was similar to other County Council consultations in that the older, more affluent groups were overrepresented and that the young and more deprived groups were underrepresented. More men than women responded but in terms of ethnicity and disability the profile was broadly similar to the Kent population as a whole.
- 2.4 A total of 36 parish councils responded online, with a further 4 parish councils and the Kent Association of Local Councils responding by letter. All of the district councils, Medway Council and the London Borough of Bromley, responded to the consultation. In addition, a range of other stakeholders responded including the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), High Weald AONB, Port of Dover, Port of London, Freight Transport Association, Highways England, and Natural England.

3 Overview of consultation responses

- 3.1 The draft consultation report is attached in Appendix A. Overall, the draft Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock was well received. There were a substantial number of responses for a consultation of this type, and this can at least partly be attributed to a number of significant transport infrastructure projects that have been in the media over the last year (for example, the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, Operation Stack lorry area, Heathrow's 3rd runway) as well as a number of substantial development sites across the county. The consultation was also used as a platform to raise a range of transport concerns.
- 3.2 The consultation responses showed broad agreement with the draft LTP4, in particular for the strategy elements of the plan – the Ambition, Outcomes and Supporting Policies. The named transport priorities at all levels (strategic, Kent-wide and district) proved more contentious but nevertheless there was a lot of agreement and calls for swift action to address transport problems in the county. The 12 district councils and Medway were all supportive of the plan, although all made suggestions for changes and additional priorities.

4 Summary of consultation responses - questionnaire

- 4.1 **The Ambition:** The majority of respondents (63%) agreed with the overall Ambition as set out in the draft LTP4: *“To deliver safe and effective transport, ensuring that all Kent’s communities and businesses benefit, the environment is enhanced and economic growth is supported.”* Only 23% disagreed. Comments made by those disagreeing generally related to specific schemes or transport issues, or a disagreement with the draft LTP4 as a whole rather than the Ambition specifically. Twenty-four comments were received that suggested some rewording of the Ambition; the most common requests were the inclusion of sustainable transport and greater emphasis on the environment and affordability. However, these form the individual Outcomes in LTP4 and adding further to the Ambition risks it becoming a ‘catch all’ and losing its meaning.
- 4.2 **The Outcomes and Supporting Policies:** Again, the majority of respondents agreed with the draft Outcomes and Supporting Policies, which are set out below:
1. Economic growth and minimised congestion:
Deliver resilient transport infrastructure and schemes that reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability to enable economic growth and appropriate development, meeting demand from a growing population.
 2. Affordable and accessible door-to-door journeys:
Promote affordable, accessible and connected transport to enable access for all to jobs, education, health and other services.

3. Safer travel:
Provide a safer road, footway and cycleway network to reduce the likelihood of casualties, and encourage other transport providers to improve safety on their networks.
4. Enhanced environment:
Deliver schemes to reduce the environmental footprint of transport, and enhance the historic and natural environment.
5. Better health and wellbeing:
Promote active travel choices for all members of the community to encourage good health and wellbeing, and implement measures to improve local air quality.

Over 70% of respondents agreed with each Outcome (except Outcome 4 where 66% of respondents agreed). Like the Ambition, most of the comments received related to a specific scheme or geographical area. Other common themes raised in response to the Outcomes were the need for modal shift, improvements to public transport, and active travel (mainly cycling). Other comments related to the challenge of enhancing transport and the environment simultaneously, the balance of the Outcomes and if they should be in priority order, and the feasibility of achieving growth without gridlock.

4.3 The Strategic Priorities: 53% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the Strategic Priorities, 20% neither agreed nor disagreed and 24% disagreed. These priorities are located across the county, with some being controversial and currently in the public eye. Some respondents agreed with some priorities but not all, which may be the reasoning behind selecting 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' (13%). The Strategic Priorities are:

- Enabling growth in the Thames Gateway
- New Lower Thames Crossing
- Bifurcation of port traffic
- Port expansion
- A solution to Operation Stack
- Provision for overnight lorry parking
- Ashford International Station signalling (Ashford Spurs)
- Journey Time Improvements and Thanet Parkway Station
- Rail and bus improvements

Further analysis shows that respondents disagreeing with specific priorities tended to be from the area affected. By far the most common theme coming from the comments related to the Rail and Bus priority, which although this priority is supported, respondents want it split into two separate priorities, one for bus and one for rail. There were also specific issues with services, such as integration between bus and rail and the affordability of fares. Where respondents commented on specific priorities, there was generally an even split between support and disagreement, for example 7% of comments were in agreement with the proposed Lower Thames Crossing priority whereas 6% disagreed. There were 20 suggestions for new strategic priorities, such as a

Medway Parkway on the HS1 line, Active Travel, Park and Ride, and air transport (Lydd and Manston).

4.4 **The Kent Wide Priorities:** Again, the majority of respondents agreed with the Kent Wide Priorities (55%) and only a small percentage disagreed (17%). These are:

- Road safety
- Highway maintenance and asset management
- Home to school transport
- Active travel
- Aviation

Analysing the comments made by those that selected 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' shows that they tended to have a specific reason; for example concern about the use of Killed and Seriously Injured data to determine Crash Remedial Measures schemes was a recurring comment. The most common themes from the comments were the support of the Active Travel priority and the importance of highway maintenance. In relation to highway maintenance, there was concern around pot holes as well as acknowledgement that government funding reductions compromise maintenance, and a feeling that maintenance of existing assets should have a higher priority. The aviation policy proved controversial because of the Development Consent Order and planning application at Manston. This section requires updating following the Heathrow announcement.

4.5 **The District Priorities:** Each district has a page describing transport in the area and a map with priority schemes that were agreed with the district councils in advance of the public consultation. The highest number of comments was made regarding the district priorities, including suggestions for new priorities. There was a spread across the responses to this question, which asked if respondents agreed or disagreed with the district priorities. A total of 42% of respondents agreed, 23% neither agreed nor disagreed and 31% disagreed. This is possibly because the priorities at this local level are more 'personal' to individuals; consequently, where respondents disagreed with only a minority of priorities, they nevertheless decided to select on the 'disagree' side of the scale or 'neither agree nor disagree'. All new scheme suggestions will be collated and assessed and considered for inclusion in the revised LTP4. Overall, respondents were much more likely to comment if they disagreed with the priorities rather than agreed so the comments were weighted toward disagreement.

4.6 **Equalities and Environmental Assessment:** The consultation also asked for comments on the draft Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). A number of additional considerations were raised, such as the impact of congestion on carers for the EqIA and the impact of road building on the environment for the SEA. Comments are informing the revised versions of these documents.

- 4.7 **Any other comments:** For the final 'Any Other Comments' question, comments included concern about the scale of development in Kent, 36 comments on the future of Manston Airport, requests for more detail, and similarly that the plan is too high-level. In this section, 29 comments were made in support of the plan and 38 were made to the contrary, however, given the tendency for negative comments to be made this is a good ratio. Finally, some respondents chose to comment on the consultation itself in this section, including suggesting that it had not been publicised enough and conversely others welcoming the opportunity to comment.
- 4.8 **Letters/emails received:** Some respondents opted to send written representation rather than complete the online questionnaire. These tended to be from organisations or specific interest groups. Comments made broadly reflected the points raised in the questionnaire responses. A total of 22 emails and 2 letters were made on the subject of the Canterbury Independent Traders Alliance request for sufficient affordable car parking in Canterbury, extended facilities at Canterbury West station from the north in Roper Road, and a second access from Roper Road.

5 Summary of consultation responses – districts and other key stakeholders

- 5.1 All district councils, and Medway, were supportive of the Ambition and the majority also supported the Outcomes and Supporting Policies, particularly the need to help drive economic growth and support development. However, Maidstone Borough Council felt there was too much emphasis on the achievement of Outcome 1 (economic growth and minimised congestion) and that LTP4 would benefit from clarification on how the other Outcomes were intended to be achieved. Gravesham Borough Council disagreed with Outcome 2 as they felt the wording implied a car-based solution and instead emphasis should be on increasing public transport provision.
- 5.2 Most councils agreed with the Strategic Priorities, but there was a feeling that active travel should receive more emphasis. Gravesham was the only authority to disagree with the Strategic Priorities due primarily to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. The Kent-Wide priorities were supported but Tunbridge Wells suggested they should be set out in order of importance, with active travel being of a higher priority. Medway were concerned at the insufficient reference to London commuter travel, and Dartford felt that an additional priority for modal shift should be included.
- 5.3 Owing to the pre-consultation engagement with the districts, most agreed with the district transport priorities; however, the London Borough of Bromley expressed disappointment and considered that there should be greater reference to the London Plan. Dartford and Gravesham requested the inclusion of Fastrack as a new Strategic Priority.
- 5.4 Consultation responses were received from a range of other key stakeholders, including Kent Police, Highways England, Port of Dover, Kent Wildlife Trust, Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), High Weald AONB,

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership, CPRE Kent, Natural England, Historic England, Freight Transport Association, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation and Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). Most stakeholders were supportive of the overall Ambition of the Plan. However, KALC felt there was a lack of detail with regards to how the Plan will be delivered, timescales and where the funding will come from. CPRE Kent expressed very strong concerns over major aspects of the plan, including that there is insufficient emphasis on sustainable modes of travel. However, generally stakeholders were supportive of the Outcomes and Supporting Policies although most wished to see more on Active Travel and enhancing the environment.

- 5.5 Stakeholders tended to agree with the Strategic Priorities with several (including the Port of Dover, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership and Kent Police) expressing strong support for the Lower Thames Crossing, a solution to Operation Stack, provision for overnight lorry parking, and bifurcation. Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, like the two boroughs in which it sits, asked for the ambition to radically enhance Fastrack to be reflected in LTP4. Kent Wildlife Trust was opposed to any scheme that is potentially harmful to wildlife and provided comments for each of the Strategic Priorities. Most stakeholders supported the Kent-Wide Priorities but tended not to comment on the most local-scale District Priorities.

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 Consideration will be given to all of the comments made in the consultation as the plan is revised. All of the suggestions for new transport priorities will be assessed to determine if there is a basis to include them in the revised LTP4. The comments made in the consultation about the SEA have been given to Amey, the consultant undertaking the work, and the SEA has been updated accordingly. Once LTP4 is itself revised, the SEA will be revisited again and revised where necessary. Likewise, the EqIA has been updated following the consultation comments and will be updated again to reflect the final version of LTP4.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The cost of the consultation was £3,330 (excluding officer time). This includes the cost of printing the consultation materials: LTP4 drafts, questionnaires, posters and postcards.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There is a legal requirement for KCC to have a Local Transport Plan and a legal requirement for KCC to consult on the proposed plan.

9 Equalities Implications

- 9.1 The draft LTP4 has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA), which has demonstrated that it will not have an adverse impact on any group with protected characteristics. This will be revised alongside the plan.

10 Other Corporate Implications

10.1 The Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-2031) meets the objectives of '*Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)*' in that it helps to achieve a number of the supporting outcomes:

- supporting Kent business growth by enabling access to jobs through improved transport;
- supporting well planned housing growth;
- protecting and enhancing Kent's physical and natural environment;
- helping children and young people have better physical and mental health;
- giving young people access to work, education and training opportunities; and
- helping older and vulnerable residents feel socially included.

11 Governance

11.1 A revised LTP4 will be adopted by County Council as specified in the Constitution.

12 Recommendation

12.1 Members are asked to note the summary of consultation comments on the draft LTP4.

13 Background Documents

- Appendix A: Draft LTP4 Consultation Report
- Appendix B: Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (Consultation Draft)

14 Contact details

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