

From: Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

Subject: Thanet Transport Strategy

Key Decision: 18/00073

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Thanet Joint Transportation Board

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: All Thanet District Divisions

Summary: The report sets out an overview of the proposed changes to the revised draft Thanet District Transport Strategy and its progress to date.

Recommendation(s):

As Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste, I agree the revised Thanet Transport Strategy for subsequent consideration through the Thanet Local Plan examination process.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The revised Thanet Transport Strategy (TTS) attached as **Appendix A**, has been jointly developed with Thanet District Council (TDC). This draft represents an updated version of the TTS document that was endorsed by the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee in November 2017.
- 1.2 It replaces 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, in line with the emerging Thanet Local Plan (TLP).
- 1.3 This revised TTS responds to a recent review of the TLP, which in turn followed the decision of TDC not to proceed with the former draft. A revised Local Plan document has since been produced, which was subsequently approved by TDC and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.
- 1.4 In line with the above, the revised TTS has also been endorsed by Thanet District Council and submitted as a supporting document to the Local Plan examination.

2 Financial Implications

- 2.1 The measures detailed in the TTS, including significant elements of road infrastructure, remain linked to the larger development allocations and therefore have potential sources of developer funding.

- 2.2 KCC has requested further clarification from TDC in relation to the viability appraisal work undertaken to assess the financial headway available within the emerging site allocations. This will inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which will evolve as the examination process progresses.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that necessary highway infrastructure will be funded by development with no financial commitment being placed on KCC. Further viability and technical appraisal work will inform the specification and delivery of final infrastructure proposals.
- 2.4 It is possible that TDC will seek to impose a CIL for certain elements of highway infrastructure to ensure that the strategy is funded in a financially equitable way across the district.
- 2.5 It is expected that an element of external funding will be sought to encourage rapid delivery of housing/employment growth, which are typically subject to competitive bidding process as and when funding streams are announced.

3 Policy Framework

- 3.1 The TTS meets 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 TTS is fully 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 TTS has evolved over the last couple of years, with collaboration between KCC and TDC. Due to the fluid nature of the emerging Local Plan, the TTS has been subject to several working revisions. Feedback has been

sought from both district & county members throughout the development process, via ongoing informal briefing sessions hosted by KCC officers.

- 4.2 A previous version of the TTS was presented to the E&T Cabinet Committee in November 2017, however the draft TLP that it aligned with, was not progressed to examination. Since then, a revised TLP document has been produced by the District Council and was submitted for examination to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2018. It is expected that the TLP will be subject to examination in Spring 2019.
- 4.3 The headline aims, and measures of the revised TTS remain unchanged from the previous draft that was endorsed by the E&T Cabinet Committee, however noteworthy changes are as follows: -
 - Removal of the local distributor road link between A299 Thanet Way and B2050 Manston Road (to reflect a change in designation at the Manston Airport Site through the latest draft Local Plan)
 - Inclusion of a new link road between Shottendane Road and Hartsdown Road, to provide alternative routes for traffic avoiding the busy Coffin House Corner Junction, in line with additional housing allocations earmarked through the latest draft Local Plan.
 - Provision of a new access route through the Strategic allocation in Westgate-on-Sea to link Shottendane Road to the A28 to more effectively disperse traffic from the strategic allocation site.
- 4.4 As per the previous draft, there are numerous interventions identified within the TTS, however the major focus remains the creation of an Inner Circuit Route Improvement Strategy (ICRIS), encompassing new & improved inner highway routes to complement the existing road network. These improvements are intended to enhance local route choice and provide the opportunity to deliver public transport access to new and existing residents within the district in a more commercially practical way.
- 4.5 Positive engagement with several developers relating to the potential delivery of ICRIS has already taken place, with planning applications for some sites already being progressed and aligning with the proposed methodology.
- 4.6 The previously developed Strategic Highway Model for Thanet was used to test the impact of the revised draft Local Plan allocations and any identified road interventions in the revised TTS. Outputs and reports from this modelling process continue to suggest that travel demand will inevitably increase as more houses are delivered, however the provision of new highway routes will help to spread traffic impact across a wider area, thus managing traffic impacts on key links within the district.
- 4.7 In line with National Planning Policy, it is important to deliver development in a sustainable way, as such in addition to the ICRIS, there are numerous other interventions which seek to improve walking and cycling facilities within the district.
- 4.8 One matter that has been raised by local members during the process of TTS engagement, is the status of the Northern Grass Road link between the B2050 Manston Road and A256 Haine Road, within the Manston Airport site

boundary. There is a concern over how this potentially aligns with the active Development Consent Order (DCO) which is currently in the process of being examined by the Planning Inspectorate. Positive dialogue is currently being held with the applicants in relation to this matter, to identify constraints within the Northern Grass and examine potential alternative approaches to delivery and funding of this essential piece of infrastructure.

- 4.9 It is important to highlight that the TTS is a fluid document and as such will be subject to periodic review, as local development planning decisions are made.

5 Equalities Implications

- 5.1 The associated EqIA is attached as **Appendix B**. It is relevant to note that the TTS is an overarching strategy document and, as such the detail of specific schemes/interventions will be progressed at a later stage. At this stage the impact of the TTS is expected to be low, with individual schemes being subject to their own EqIA at the time of inception. Any impacts that have identified at this stage can be managed appropriately as set out within the EqIA action plan.

6 Governance

- 6.1 The initial draft TTS was endorsed by E&T Cabinet Committee on the 30th November 2017. It was also endorsed by Thanet Joint Transportation Board (JTB) on the 12th December 2017.
- 6.2 The latest revision was reported to the JTB on the 11th December 2018. The JTB made no further comments in relation to the proposed changes.
- 6.3 The TTS was subject to a full stakeholder consultation process by TDC as part of their pre-submission consultation process for the draft Local Plan. It was published on the TDC website and in hard copy at numerous locations around the district such as libraries and other public buildings. A copy of responses registered in relation to the Local Plan can be found at the following link. <https://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/schedules-of-comments-received/>. Following a review of consultation responses, no further changes are proposed.
- 6.4 County members within the Thanet district have been subject to briefing sessions throughout the development of the TTS. The most recent briefing session was held on 6th December 2018, during which the strategy was positively received, except for clarification being sought as outlined in section 4.8 of this report.
- 6.5 Further technical design/assessment work and subsequent stakeholder consultation will inform the specification and delivery of final infrastructure proposals. The TTS will be subject to consideration by the Planning Inspectorate through the Examination in Public process for the draft Local Plan submission in Spring 2019 (TBC).

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The draft TTS 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. There is no financial commitment placed on KCC.

7.2 The TTS is a fluid strategy document and will be subject to periodic reviews to reflect relevant development planning decisions or material changes in local circumstances.

7.3 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 draft TTS will be subject to further consideration through the Local Plan examination process.

8 Recommendation

Recommendation(s):

As Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste, I agree the revised Thanet Transport Strategy for subsequent consideration through the Thanet Local Plan examination process.

9 Background Documents

- Thanet District Transport Strategy 2015-2031 Draft Version 2 – July 2018
- Thanet District Transport Strategy - EqIA

10 Contact details

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