

KCC Consultation: Local Transport Plan for Kent

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

Summary

Lead Member:	Cllr Hugo Pound – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning
Lead Director:	Lee Colyer – Director of Finance, Policy and Development (S151 Officer)
Head of Service:	Carlos Hone – Head of Planning
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Classification:	Public document (non-exempt)
Wards Affected:	All

Approval Timetable	
Management Board	04/09/23
Cabinet Member	11/09/23
Report Published	12/09/23
Decision due not before	20/09/23

Recommendations

Officer recommendations as supported by the Portfolio Holder:

1. That the Kent County Council (KCC) consultation on the Local Transport Plan for Kent be noted, and the consultation questionnaire response attached at **Appendix A** and **B** of this report be formally submitted to the consultation on or before the deadline of 18th of September 2023.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 This report relates to Kent County Councils (KCCs) Draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Kent, which is subject to public consultation between the 27th of June and the 18th of September 2023. This report provides a summary of the LTP and sets out the recommended formal response to be submitted to the consultation on behalf of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC).

1.2 Full details of the consultation can be found at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5>, with the Draft LTP document here file:///mkip/departamental/Planning/001%20Policy/Consultations%202023/KCC%20Local%20Transport%20Plan/cee340b3d002d00d89425200554b720e_KCC_Emerging_Local_Transport_Plan.pdf

1.3 The purpose of the consultation is to enable KCC to:

- understand the transport challenges faced in Kent.
- ensure its ambition for the transport network is stretching, but realistic.
- focus on the right outcomes and objectives to make journeys better.
- support the delivery of net zero by 2050.

Feedback will help KCC to develop proposals for how and where in Kent it will focus on improving transport. There will be further public consultation as the LTP progresses.

1.4 The emerging LTP will supersede the existing Kent Transport Plan adopted in 2017. The emerging LTP will set new transport priorities, guided by actions. The current consultation is the first consultation on the Draft LTP and as such no final decisions have been made about its content – representations to the current consultation will guide and inform its future content.

1.5 KCC intends to complete the Plan in 2024, after which, one of its uses will be to help Central Government understand Kent's pipeline of proposals, funding needed and the contributions these will make to national policy goals and targets, e.g., reducing carbon emissions.

- 1.6 As the LTP goes beyond a single service area of responsibility Planning Officers have led on the response, with input from officers in both Economic Development and Environmental Services.

2. Purpose of LTP

- 2.1 The LTP enables KCC to fulfil its statutory duty to develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within its area, and to carry out its functions to implement those policies. In addition, due to acts of Parliament concerning climate change, KCC must take account of any policies announced by the Government, and consider any guidance issued by the Secretary of State concerning mitigation of, or adaptation to, climate change and the protection or improvement of the environment.
- 2.2 It is a new requirement to show consideration of the volume of carbon emissions expected on the transport network in the future without the impact of the new LTP's policies and proposals, and to set out the impact of the new LTP's policies and proposals on lowering carbon emissions to help reach the national targets (carbon budgets) between now and 2050 (known as net zero 2050).
- 2.3 The Draft LTP seeks to fulfil these requirements.

3. Contents of LTP

- 3.1 The LTP sets out the ambition to deliver KCCs corporate strategy 'Framing Kent's Future', including levelling up Kent, infrastructure for communities and environmental step change commitments.
- 3.2 Highway challenges are identified. Examples include that the County's highways are in a phase of managed decline which risks them becoming less resilient to new pressures and traffic is causing congestion, poor air quality and negatively impacting Kent's economy. In addition, some indicators of public health, e.g., obesity and life expectancy, have been worsening and the financial viability of

the public transport service has declined – due to cost pressures and changes in passenger demand. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emission reductions - forecast to remain at too high a level compared to the reduced levels needed to contribute towards reducing the worst effects of climate change.

3.3 In 2019 KCC recognised the climate emergency and committed to continuing to use its resources and align its policies to address the climate emergency. KCC Strategy 2022-2026: Framing Kent’s Future, has widened focus to include ‘turning the curve’ on transport emissions and road pollution.

3.4 The LTP identifies that Carbon emissions are forecast to decline, but identifies that there are two key issues with the current rate of reduction:

- Net zero target for 2050 - would not be possible unless there is either a very large change in the rate of carbon emission reductions or, alternatively, a very large increase in offsetting of carbon emissions (by capturing and removing carbon from the atmosphere).
- Carbon budgets - set to drive reductions in emissions to achieve net zero by 2050, and to steadily reduce emissions by a large enough amount so that the country meets its international obligations to reduce emissions/amount of global warming. Highway improvements enable new demand by supporting new development, they also generate benefits for existing road users and so can lead to more vehicle trips.

3.5 The LTP identifies the following ambition:

“We want to improve the health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity of lives in Kent by delivering a safe, reliable, efficient, and affordable transport network across the county and as an international gateway. We will plan for growth in Kent in a way that enables us to combat climate change and preserve Kent’s environment.

We will do this by delivering emission-free travel by getting effective dedicated infrastructure to electrify vehicles, increase public transport use and make walking and cycling attractive. This will be enabled by maintaining our highways

network and delivering our Vision Zero road safety strategy. These priorities will ensure our networks are future-proof, resilient and meet user needs”.

3.6 To meet the ambition, there are nine proposed outcomes, each with associated policy objective(s). These are shown in **Table 1**:

Policy Outcome	Policy Objectives
1 - The condition of our managed transport network is kept to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel and trade.	1A) Achieve the funding necessary to deliver a sustained fall in the value of the backlog of maintenance work over the life of our Local Transport Plan.
2 - Deliver out Vision Zero road safety strategy through all the work we do.	2A) Achieve a fall over time in the volume of people killed or very seriously (life-changing) injured occurring on KCC’s managed road network, working towards the trajectory to reach zero by 2050.
3 - International travel becomes a positive part of Kent’s economy, facilitated by the county’s transport network, with the negative effects of international haulage traffic decreased.	3A) Increase resilience of the road network serving the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel crossing, by adding holding capacity for HGV parking across the southeast region equivalent in capacity to Operation Brock, to reduce reliance on these disruptive schemes and the burdens and impacts they create on the transport network and affected communities in Kent. 3B) Increase resilience of the road network servicing the Port of Dover through delivery of the KCC bifurcation strategy including improvements to the

	M2 / A2 road corridor and its links to the M20 and a new Lower Thames Crossing for traffic towards the north.
4 - International rail travel returns to Kent and there are improved rail and public transport connections to international hubs.	<p>4A) International rail travel returns to Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International stations, supported by the infrastructure investment needed at Kent's stations wherever necessary.</p> <p>4B) A fall in the time it takes by public transport to reach international travel hubs compared to conditions in 2023.</p>
5 - Deliver resilient transport, future-proofed for growth and innovation, aiming for an infrastructure-first approach to reduce the risk of highways and public transport congestion due to development.	<p>5A) Strengthen delivery of our Network Management Duty to deliver the expeditious movement of traffic by using our new moving traffic enforcement powers and keeping on-street parking enforcement, delegated to the Districts, under review.</p> <p>5B) Reduce the amount of forecast future congestion and crowding on highways and public transport that is associated with demand from development by securing funding and delivery of our Local Transport Plan.</p> <p>5C) The prospects for the future of transport increase across the whole county, with new innovations in transport services having a clear pathway to trial or delivery in Kent.</p>

<p>6 - Access to Kent's historic and natural environment is enhanced.</p>	<p>6A) Proposals in our Local Transport Plan are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing new, faster, or more inclusive access to historic and natural environment destinations in the county, with proposals targeting access to such locations where appropriate.</p>
<p>7 - Road-side air quality improves as decarbonisation of travel accelerates, contributing towards the pursuit of carbon budget targets and net zero in 2050.</p>	<p>7A) Reduce the volume of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions entering the atmosphere associated with surface transport activity on the KCC managed highway network by an amount greater than our forecast 'business as usual' scenario. This means achieving a greater fall than those currently forecast of 9% by 2027, 19% by 2032 and 29% by 2037.</p> <p>7B) No area in Kent is left behind by the revolution in electric motoring, with charging infrastructure deployed close to residential areas, reducing barriers to adoption.</p> <p>7C) Proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing lower emissions from transport in Air Quality Management Areas in the county.</p>
<p>8 - A growing public transport system supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased ridership, helping</p>	<p>8A) We will aim to obtain further funding to deliver the outcomes our Bus Service Improvement Plan (or its replacement) beyond its current horizon of 2024/25.</p>

<p>operators to provide more and invest in better services.</p>	<p>We will ensure that our Local Transport Plan proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution towards achieving our Bus Service Improvement Plan.</p> <p>8B) We will identify and support industry delivery of priority railway stations for accessibility improvements and route improvements to reduce journey times and improve reliability.</p>
<p>9 - Transport makes a positive contribution to public health due to increasing numbers of people using a growing cycling and pedestrian network with dedicated infrastructure, and any increase in disturbance from aviation noise is avoided.</p>	<p>9A) We will aim to deliver walking and cycling improvements at prioritised locations in Kent to deliver increased levels of activity towards the Active Travel England target and support Kent's diverse economy, presented in a Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.</p> <p>9B) Represent and protect Kent residents from the impact of noise disturbance arising from new and expanded airports including maintaining our opposition to a second runway at Gatwick and the need for a reduction in night flights.</p>

Table 1: KCC Draft LTP Policy Outcomes and Objectives.

3.7 For each policy objectives the Draft LTP goes on to specify an outcome for the rural and urban communities.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Following the consultation, KCC will consider the feedback received and use that to support the further work it does to develop proposals to deliver in the different places across Kent. As stated above, there will be further consultation(s) as the LTP develops.

5. TWBC Response to Consultation

- 5.1 Representations to the consultation are invited via a consultation questionnaire and TWBC officers have prepared the draft response to this, attached at **Appendix A** of this report. Officers have also prepared a set of additional comments to be submitted alongside the questionnaire, also attached at **Appendix B**.
- 5.2 Planning Officers have led on the response, with input from officers in both Economic Development and Environmental Services. Therefore, the response is more of a corporate rather than a pure planning response.
- 5.3 Key points from the representation to note are:
- TWBC wants KCC to be more aware/know that there are no zero emission vehicles.
 - KCC's statutory responsibilities about air quality are not mentioned. Additional text should be added to set out this statutory responsibility and impacts on the public from poor air quality.
 - The LTP should acknowledge that there are tensions between improving walking and cycling and making highway improvements for cars.
 - There is not much ambition to address carbon emissions in the county. A number of Borough Councils, including TWBC have a net zero target of 2030, whereas the LTP has a net zero target of 2050. This should be re-considered to align with district targets.
 - Reference to the KCC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is welcomed, however, it appears to be a low priority. It is also noted that TWBC officers have some concerns about the approach taken with the KCWIP work that is being undertaken.

- There is concern about an over reliance on EVs as the solution to all environmental problems.
- There is very little indication in the document of a significant ambition for modal shift to walking and cycling, even though active travel can help deliver a number of other priorities that KCC sets out.
- To deliver the expeditious movement of traffic, including in relation to on-street parking enforcement, it is considered that this should continue to be delegated to the Districts, rather than be dealt with at County level.

6. Options considered

- 6.1 Option 1: Do nothing – do not make representations to the consultation and consequently miss an important opportunity to input into Local Transport Plan for Kent.
- 6.2 Option 2: Agree to submit the representation attached at **Appendix A** and **B** to the KCC consultation on behalf of TWBC. This option ensures that TWBC has fully engaged with the consultation and the opportunity provided by it to inform the emerging Local Transport Plan for Kent.
- 6.3 Option 3: Agree to submit an alternative representation to that attached at **Appendix A** and **B**. This option would require further discussion with officers and or Councillors to inform the response, which could mean the consultation deadline is not met.

7 Preferred Option and Reason

- 7.1 The preferred option is Option 2, “Agree to submit the representation attached at **Appendix A** and **B** to the KCC consultation on behalf of TWBC”.
- 7.2 This option is favourable because it is considered to represent a corporate view having been prepared across different service areas, and it will ensure that

TWBC has engaged with the consultation process and made a representation that will inform the next stage/iteration of the Kent Local Transport Plan.

8 Consultation on Options

- 8.1 Officers gave a presentation to members at Planning Policy Working Group on the 01 August 2023. The PowerPoint and Draft LTP were circulated to all Borough Councillors who were invited to submit comments to the consultation directly or to the planning policy inbox (by 21 August) to inform the response attached at **Appendix A** and **B**. No comments were sent to the planning policy inbox.

9 Recommendation

- 9.1 The recommendation to the Cabinet Member is to agree and allow officers to formally submit the consultation response provided at **Appendix A** and **B** of this report to the consultation on or before the deadline of 18th of September 2023.

10 Implementation

- 10.1 Upon agreement by the Cabinet Member the Planning Policy Manager will submit the representation to the consultation on behalf of TWBC.

11 Appendices and Background Documents

Appendices:

- **Appendix A:** Draft Officer response to the KCC LTP consultation.
- **Appendix B:** Draft additional comments table

12 Cross Cutting Issues

A. Legal (including the Human Rights Act)

There are no specific legal issues arising from the content of this report.

There are no issues regarding the Human Rights Act.

Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning) 29/08/2023

B. Finance and Other Resources

No financial issues

Jane Fineman Head of Finance, Procurement & Parking 30/08/2023

C. Staffing

No Implications

Ellen Gilbert Planning Policy Manager 29/08/2023

D. Risk Management

No Implications

Ellen Gilbert Planning Policy Manager 29/08/2023

E. Environment and Sustainability

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) seeks to improve air quality and to achieve carbon budget targets and net zero. If targets are met, the LTP will benefit the environment and sustainability.

Ellen Gilbert Planning Policy Manager 29/08/2023

F. Community Safety

The LTP seeks to achieve policy outcomes that have positive impacts on community safety, including delivery of KCCs corporate strategy 'Vision Zero' on road safety, and to improve/maintain safe roads generally.

Ellen Gilbert Planning Policy Manager 29/08/2023

G. Equalities

One of the policy outcomes of the LTP seeks to ensure accessible transport, which will be a benefit of the Plan, as well as to increase/enhance other active travel modes of transport.

Ellen Gilbert Planning Policy Manager 29/08/2023

H. Data Protection

No Implications

Ellen Gilbert Planning Policy Manager 29/08/2023

I. Health and Safety

The LTP has potential to deliver outcomes that benefit health and safety, through increasing numbers of people using a growing cycling and pedestrian network with dedicated infrastructure.

Ellen Gilbert Planning Policy Manager 29/08/2023

J. Health and Wellbeing

The LTP has potential to deliver outcomes that benefit health and wellbeing, through increasing numbers of people using a growing cycling and pedestrian network with dedicated infrastructure.

Ellen Gilbert Planning Policy Manager 29/08/2023