

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Decision Made: 8 September 2023

#### **Kent County Council Local Transport Plan Consultation**

##### **Issue for Decision**

To agree a response to the Kent County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP5) consultation.

##### **Decision Made**

That the response to the consultation at appendix 1 to the report be approved.

##### **Reasons for Decision**

Kent County Council (KCC) has prepared an early draft Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5), as it starts the process of replacing the fourth plan, Delivering Growth without Gridlock, adopted in 2017. KCC are consulting on the emerging LTP5. The consultation runs from **27<sup>th</sup> June to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023**.

##### **Background**

KCC as the local transport authority is required by the Transport Act 2000 to produce a Local Transport Plan. Specifically, it has a duty to:

- Develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area, and;
- Carry out their functions to implement those policies.

The purpose of LTP5 is to help inform central government on the pipeline of proposals KCC have regarding transport schemes, the funding required, and the contribution these will make to national policy goals and targets. This proposed consultation is the first public consultation stage of the fifth Local Transport Plan for Kent.

The main reasons given for the review are the new transport challenges arising across the county and changing policy context since the adoption of the previous Local Transport Plan. Both mean a new plan and actions are needed.

##### **Content of the consultation**

The LTP5 consultation document (background document 1) is sets out in four parts:

- The context,
- The challenges,
- The ambition, and;
- Policy outcomes to be delivered.

It sets out the ambition and policy outcomes that KCC want to deliver regarding future transport schemes. The early draft LTP5 being consulted on is not a completed full Local Transport Plan. The consultation document does not contain detail of initiatives or proposals for local transport improvements for places across the county. Those details will be part of a draft full Local Transport Plan next year. At this stage, KCC is only seeking views on whether they are focused on the right challenges and the right outcomes for Kent, and what actions KCC should take, either on a countywide basis or in different places of Kent to meet its objectives.

The context section of the consultation document sets out the changes to local policy (borough and county) and national policy (central government) since the last Local Transport Plan was adopted.

The consultation sets out that there are 9 challenges that are currently being faced across the county. These include:

- CHALLENGE 1 - Our highways assets are in a phase of managed decline which in turn risks them becoming less resilient to new pressures.
- CHALLENGE 2 - Following a decline in the number of injuries and fatalities on Kent's roads, these levels have risen in 2021.
- CHALLENGE 3 - Traffic is causing congestion, poor air quality and negatively impacting Kent's economy.
- CHALLENGE 4 - Transport challenges in Kent arise from how the existing population of 1.6 million people and 70,000 businesses in the county choose to travel as well as traffic generated by new developments being built.
- CHALLENGE 5 - Some indicators of public health, such as obesity and life expectancy, have been worsening.
- CHALLENGE 6 - The financial viability of the public transport service has declined due to cost pressures and changes in passenger demand, leading to cuts in public transport services.
- CHALLENGE 7 - Kent's international gateways need government leadership – the impacts which arise and affect our local communities and the national economy cannot be resolved entirely by ourselves.
- CHALLENGE 8 - Related to all the previous points, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub> e) emission reductions from management and use of the road network are forecast to remain at too high a level compared to the reduced levels needed to contribute towards reducing the worst effects of climate change.
- CHALLENGE 9 - We need more funding and need to know what funding we will have over the next few years so we can improve transport in Kent.

Faced with these challenges KCC has developed an ambition for transport in the county, please see below:

*'The ambition for what our plan will achieve and how we plan to do that is:*

*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.'*

Based on the ambition and identified nine challenges across the county, KCC have proposed nine policy outcomes to address them. The policy outcomes are accompanied by seventeen detailed policy objectives. These are, as previously stated, not scheme specific but broad ideas that will help KCC to focus on proposals at the next stage of consultation. The policy outcomes include:

- POLICY OUTCOME 1: The condition of our managed transport network is kept to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel and trade.
- POLICY OUTCOME 2: Deliver out Vision Zero road safety strategy through all the work we do.
- POLICY OUTCOME 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.
- POLICY OUTCOME 4: International rail travel returns to Kent and there are improved rail and public transport connections to international hubs.
- POLICY OUTCOME 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.
- POLICY OUTCOME 6: Access to Kent's historic and natural environment is enhanced.
- POLICY OUTCOME 7: Road-side air quality improves as decarbonisation of travel accelerates, contributing towards the pursuit of carbon budget targets and net zero in 2050.
- POLICY OUTCOME 8: A growing public transport system supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased ridership, helping operators to provide more and invest in better services.
- POLICY OUTCOME 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.

### **Summary of proposed response**

The response to the consultation is via a template questionnaire and the proposed response is outlined in appendix 1 to the report. In preparing the

response officers have reviewed the existing plans and strategies in the Borough with relevance to transport. A second appendix (Appendix 2) has also been provided to specifically outline the challenges, outcomes and objectives identified by KCC and the proposed Council responses to these for ease. These responses have then been added to appendix 1 in the required points of the questionnaire.

Whilst MBC is supportive of the emerging LTP5 and its overall approach there are concerns. These include:

- The ambition is lacking with regard to: the tourism & leisure sectors, accessibility for all and timely delivery of infrastructure.
- Challenges 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9 need to be amended and a new challenge with regards to electric vehicles and zero carbon transport is needed. The council also feels that the LTP5 document is lacking on the changing context with regards to travel which needs to be addressed.
- Policy outcomes 1, 5, 6 and 8 need to be amended and new one added around emerging development growth in the county; and;
- Policy objectives 3A, 3B, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A, 7A, 7B, 7C, 8A, 8B, and 9A, need to be amended to see the retention of the Leeds Langley Relief Road as a scheme in the LTP and support the extension of Thameslink to Maidstone Railway Stations amongst other comments.

### **Next Steps**

Following the close of the consultation on the 18 September 2023 proposals will be developed and a further consultation on a full Local Transport Plan is expected in 2024.

The matter was reviewed by the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on 6 September 2023, and the Committee supported the report recommendation being approved.

### **Alternatives considered and Why Rejected**

Option 2: That the response at Appendix 1 of this report be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, subject to further comments and changes. The consultation deadline is 18th September 2023 and so comments and changes would need to be incorporated to meet the deadline.

Option 3: That a response to the consultation is not agreed. This would mean that KCC would continue production of its LTP5 without relevant input from Maidstone Borough Council at this stage.


These options were rejected as the proposed consultation response at Appendix 1 to the report was supported as drafted.

## **Background Papers**

EMERGING LOCALTRANSPORT PLAN: TURNING THE CURVE TOWARDS NET ZERO,  
Kent County Council (June 2023) - [Documents | Emerging Local Transport Plan | Let's talk Kent](#)

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons  
(including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic  
Development

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration  
by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of  
the [website](#)

Call-In: Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please  
submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Proper Officer by: **5pm  
on Friday 15 September 2023.**