

**CABINET MEMBER FOR
PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

8 September 2023

**MBC response to Kent County Council Emerging Local
Transport Plan Consultation**

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	06/09/23
Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	08/09/23

Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.
Lead Head of Service	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development)
Lead Officer and Report Author	Tom Gilbert (Principal Planner) & Thom Hoang (Principal Planner)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

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. The consultation on the emerging LTP5 commenced on the 27 June 2023 and will run through to 18 September 2023.

This report summarises the purpose of the LTP5 consultation (see background document 1) and what KCC is seeking views on.

It recommends that a formal response to the consultation be agreed, as drafted by officers and appended to this report in Appendix 1. It also provides a simplified list of Local Transport Plan Consultation challenges, policy outcomes and objectives, as well as associated MBC comments, in Appendix 2.

Purpose of Report

Decision

To inform members of the emerging LTP5 Consultation and to seek agreement to submit the response appended to this report.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development:

1. That the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be approved.
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MBC response to Kent County Council Emerging Local Transport Plan Consultation

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities and may contribute to the delivery of infrastructure associated with the first priority.</p>	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of the four, cross cutting objectives by ensuring that plans from the County authority do not materially harm the council's ability to achieve these objectives.</p>	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Risk Management	The recommendations seek to reduce the risk associated with alignment with the adopted Local Plan, as well as the emerging Local Plan Review by ensuring that plans produced by the county council are not in conflict with our own and those set out in government policy.	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation do not have any direct financial impact as it's a response to a consultation. Costs of responding are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	funding for implementation.	
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Legal	<i>There are no legal implications arising from the report.</i>	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. We recognise the recommendations will impact what personal information the Council processes and so have completed a separate data privacy impact assessment [at reference]. 	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Sarah Ward - Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder.	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Procurement	The recommendation has no immediate impact on budget headings or expenditure in the current year.	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and will become clearer in future consultations.	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 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.

2.2 Presently Kent County Council are consulting on the emerging LTP5. The consultation runs from **27th June to 18th September 2023**. This report sets out the context to the LTP5, summarises what the consultation involves and the proposed Maidstone Borough Council response.

Background

2.3 Kent County Council 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.

2.4 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.

2.5 This proposed consultation is the first public consultation stage of the fifth Local Transport Plan for Kent.

2.6 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

2.7 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.

2.8 It sets out the ambition and policy outcomes that KCC want to deliver regarding future transport schemes. It should be noted that 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.

2.9 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.

2.10 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 (CO₂e) 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.

2.11 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.'

2.12 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.

2.13 Further details on the policy outcomes and objectives can be found in background paper one.

Summary of proposed response

2.14 The response to the consultation is via a template questionnaire and the proposed response is outlined in appendix 1 of this 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.

2.15 In summary, 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.

2.16 A full list of the Council's comments on the challenges, outcomes and objectives is in appendix 2.

Next Steps

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

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Option 1: That the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be approved. This would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Option 1: That the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be approved. This would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline.

5. RISK

5.1 The risk associated with these proposals, as well as any risks should the Council not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within

the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The MBC response to the KCC consultation on the Emerging Local Transport Plan provided alongside this report has been considered by the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on 6 September 2023. The Committee recommended that the Cabinet Member approve the recommendation.

6.2 Alongside national transport strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework the Kent Local Transport Plan provides the context for Maidstone's Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS). Given the current review of the Kent LTP5 it would also be timely to review the MITS. With changes in the impact and trends for climate, connectivity needs, travel preferences and patterns through demographic changes and technology advances there is a changed community context for the borough's transport strategy too.

6.3 It is proposed that as a starting point Maidstone Borough Council needs to ensure that the MITS meets sustainable development objectives. This means:

- Ensuring that people have genuine choice as to how they travel.
- Ensuring that transport systems support the borough's economic prosperity.
- Securing access to transport systems wherever people live and their mobility.
- Ensuring that transport is affordable.
- Ensuring safety throughout our transport systems.
- Reducing health impacts from air quality.
- Enabling reduced environmental and climate change impacts.
- Enabling improved resilience and greater efficiency for our transport systems.

6.4 It proposed that a comprehensive review is conducted commencing with a thorough future focussed debate on the challenges and outcomes that the community wants to see and that this then forms the foundation for a new strategy.

6.5 The objective would be to produce a strategy for the period to 2050 with intermediate short term plans to achieve the long-term outcomes enabling the council to set out its long term ambition and bridge the gap while technology becomes available. This approach mirrors the council's Strategic Plan which contains five-year areas of focus enabling the council to regularly review and respond to change and progress and to prioritise resources.

6.6 MBC's approach has been structured but not rigid with more frequent review where needed e.g., in order to respond to the impact of the Covid19 pandemic – and this would be the same with respect to the MITS.

6.7 The work would be evidence based including for example assessment of progress towards the council's carbon net zero aspirations and take into account the public's lived experience of our transport systems and aspirations for their future travel choices.

7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: MBC response to Kent County Council Emerging Local Transport Plan Consultation
- Appendix 2: List of Local Transport Plan Consultation challenges, policy outcomes and objectives and MBC comments.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Background document 1: EMERGING LOCALTRANSPORT PLAN: TURNING THE CURVE TOWARDS NET ZERO, Kent County Council (June 2023) - [Documents | Emerging Local Transport Plan | Let's talk Kent](#)