

From: Roger Wilkin, Director – Highways, Transportation & Waste

To: Thanet Joint Transportation Board

Date: 12th December 2017

Subject: **Draft Thanet Transport Strategy**

Classification: For Decision

Summary: The report sets out an overview of the draft Thanet Transport Strategy and its progress to date, including the future consultation and democratic process in relation to the emerging Thanet Local Plan.

1.0 Introduction

The proposed consultation draft of the Thanet Transport Strategy (TS) (**Appendix 1**), has been jointly developed with input from officers at Kent County Council (KCC) and Thanet District Council (TDC).

It is intended to replace 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 as outlined within the emerging Thanet Local Plan.

The proposed TS earmarks considerable investment in highway infrastructure, providing high level highway solutions to facilitate the proposed growth of 17,140 new dwellings and 5000 new jobs, between 2015–2031.

This paper is being presented to JTB in consultation form to meet more recent requirements for local plans to be submitted to DCLG by end of March 2018.

2.0 The Strategy

The existing Thanet Transport Plan was adopted in 2005. The majority of measures that were identified 12 years ago have been implemented successfully. The growth proposed within the emerging Thanet Local Plan has however instigated a review of the existing transport challenges, and a new strategy is now required to meet the future needs of the local highway network.

The TS has been developed over the last couple of years with feedback from both County and District Members, through ongoing informal briefing sessions. The early principles of the emerging draft were presented to JTB on the 19th March, 2015.

The headline aim of the TS is that Thanet will have a safe, accessible, affordable, sustainable, reliable and integrated transport network incorporating improved road, public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes.

There are numerous interventions identified within the TS, however the major focus is the creation of an Inner Circuit Route Improvement Strategy (ICRIS),

encompassing new & improved inner highway routes to complement the existing Primary Road Network. These improvements will enhance route choice and also provide the opportunity to deliver public transport access to new and existing residents within the district in a more commercially practical way. Positive engagement with a number of developers related to the potential delivery of on-site sections of the ICRIS has already taken place.

To inform land use option testing, a Strategic Highway Model has been developed by KCC to test the impact of the draft Local Plan allocations and any identified road interventions. Early outputs from this modelling exercise suggest that travel demand will inevitably increase as more houses are delivered, however with the provision of new highway routes will help to spread the subsequent traffic impact across a wider area thus managing impacts on key links within the district.

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 a number of other interventions which seek to improve walking and cycling facilities.

There are four key themes that underpin the Transport Strategy these are :

Encourage Sustainable Travel Habits

- Introduction of new cycle and pedestrian routes.
- Improvements to existing cycle and pedestrian routes.
- Extend and improve access to bus travel through increased frequency and network coverage.
- Implement improvements to the highway network to improve bus journey time reliability.
- Provision of a new Parkway Rail Station at Cliffsend.
- Ensure that new and existing bus infrastructure is delivered or renewed with easy access in mind.
- Ensure that developments provide appropriate walking and cycling facilities.
- Car Parking Strategy

Manage Journey Times

- Provision of new & improved inner highway routes to complement existing primary road network.
- Localised junction improvements to improve traffic flow and levels of service.
- Reduction in the need to travel

Improve Network Resilience

- Provision of new & improved inner highway routes to complement existing primary road network.
- Improve journey time reliability within the local road network by providing new link roads and junction improvements to avoid congestion.
- Improved directional Signage

Reduce the Requirement to Travel

- Promotion of mixed use development where appropriate.
- Robust Travel Planning Measures to be implemented for new developments.
- Encourage Car Sharing.
- Improved communication infrastructure (High Speed Broadband).

3.0 Finance

The majority of the measures detailed in the Draft TS, and in particular the significant elements of road infrastructure estimated to circa £70m, are linked to the larger development allocations and therefore have potential sources of developer funding.

Further viability appraisal work is currently being completed by TDC to assess the financial headway available within the emerging site allocations. This in turn will inform a subsequent Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will be submitted as evidence to the local plan examination.

It is anticipated that necessary highway infrastructure will be funded by Development with no financial commitment being placed on KCC or TDC. Further viability appraisal work by TDC will inform the specification and delivery of final infrastructure proposals, as will consideration of future consultation processes. It is possible that TDC will seek to impose a CIL to cover certain elements of infrastructure to ensure that the strategy is funded in a financially equitable way across the district.

It is expected that external funding will be sought to encourage rapid delivery of housing. TDC have recently submitted bids for external funding through the recently announced Housing Infrastructure Fund for highway infrastructure contained within emerging TS. Other sources of external funding will be subject to competitive bidding process as and when they are announced.

4.0 Consultation

At time of writing this report, this draft TS document is due to be considered by KCC's Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on the 30th November 2017.

TDC will be referring the draft TS to their Cabinet Committee on the 14th December. A comprehensive report in relation to pre submission draft of the Local Plan will be referred to TDC Full Council on the 18th January.

Subject to the outcome of the TDC Council meeting, a six week public consultation process will be undertaken for the draft Local Plan (referred to as Regulation 19). This is anticipated to commence following the Council meeting on 18th January 2018 and run until early March.

Once public consultation has been completed (March 2018), the feedback from this process will inform any necessary amendments to the draft TS.

It is anticipated that the Examination in Public (EiP) for the Thanet Local Plan will take place in Q3 / Q4 of 2018 (subject to Planning Inspectorate availability).

5.0 Conclusions

The Draft Transport Strategy for Thanet seeks to balance the needs of all road users and proposes a significant investment in highway Infrastructure to provide a more flexible and resilient local highway network.

It is anticipated that infrastructure will be funded by developer contributions and highway agreements; however it may also include a level of external funding (from sources such as Housing Infrastructure Fund and National Productivity Investment Fund). There will be no financial commitment placed on KCC or TDC.

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 final Draft TS will be subject to further governance processes and consideration through the Local Plan Examination in Public.

Recommendation

JTB are asked to consider and make recommendations in relation to the pre consultation draft of the Thanet Transport Strategy.

In addition JTB is asked to endorse the document for an initial public consultation exercise and subsequent consideration through the examination of the Thanet Local Plan process.

Background Documents

Thanet District Transport Strategy 2015-2031 - Consultation Draft 30/10/2017

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