

Comments on “Growth without Gridlock – an Integrated Transport Strategy for Kent”

The provision of an all way working junction of M 25/M 26/A 21 is a critical addition required to the Strategic Road Network, to maximise the use of the network and to provide relief for the A 25. This scheme should find a mention on page 11 of the Strategy.

The importance of the A 228 is noted on page 14 but as well as Colts Hill the improvements to the south of Kings Hill in the Kent Street area should be included for completion of this strategic route. It would also be consistent to include the Borough Green Bypass in this section of the Strategy.

In the section on "Maximising the Benefits of Rail" the importance of improving services on a wider range of lines needs to be emphasised. Not least the specific and critical need to provide access to city destinations from the Maidstone East line to support the most progressive growth area in Kent at present, to maintain good business links with Kings Hill and to reduce the ever increasing rail-heading in this part of Kent.

In the section on Airports there needs to be emphasis placed on the importance of rail access to Gatwick Airport via Tonbridge from all of Kent (and onward to Heathrow). I can see that the Strategy places great store on the role of the two Kent airports but it is undeniable that accessibility to Gatwick in particular is of importance to local residents and businesses and the current regime has been to effectively reduce that service level and efficiency.

In terms of the specific commentary on T&M, there should be an appreciation of the planned development taking place in the Medway Gap area and in central Tonbridge. These have been described in detail in an earlier note sent to comment on the brief for the Delivering a Sustainable Transport System project you are currently also considering. The development levels (residential and business) in the northern part of T&M are often overlooked. This is probably because they have been very carefully planned and husbanded over time in the best practice of forward planning, rather than in 'big-bang' high profile growth initiatives and I think that requires greater recognition. As does the importance of the Tonbridge/TW Hub which is referred somewhat in passing rather than being recognised as a regional strategic policy node where priority will be given to improving accessibility.

In the list of proposals on page 54 the planned improvements to West Malling station should be added as an example of bus/rail/road integration. The importance of improvements in the Tonbridge Hub to improve and maximise the use of the network should be included and this section should also pick up the M 20 3-5 widening and the full junction provision at M 25/M 26 at Sevenoaks.