

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

15 November 2016

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN FOR KENT – CONSULTATION

To seek endorsement of officer level comments returned to KCC in respect of the recent consultation on the fourth Local Transport Plan, which closed in October and to provide an update of other relevant transportation items.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Local Transport Plan for Kent (LTP4) consultation document is the culmination of collaborative working between KCC and each of the 12 Districts and Medway Unitary Authority. It sets out strategic ambitions for the county as well as the local schemes which are vital for supporting economic growth. The deadline for responding to the consultation was midnight on Sunday 30 October 2016, officer-level comments were provided as per **[ANNEX 1]** of this report.

1.1.2 The Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) provides the evidence base for LTP4. It has identified (as far as possible) the scale of growth expected in Kent to 2031 and therefore what infrastructure investment is required to support it and help grow the Kent economy.

1.2 Outcomes for Transport

1.2.1 The overall ambition for Kent is “to deliver safe and effective transport, ensuring that all Kent’s communities and businesses benefit, the environment is enhanced and economic growth is supported.”

1.2.2 There are subsequently five outcomes and policies to achieve this ambition. They are:

- 1) Outcome 1: Economic growth and minimised congestion. **Policy:** Deliver resilient transport infrastructure and schemes that reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability to enable economic growth and appropriate development, meeting demand from a growing population.

- 2) Outcome 2: Affordable and accessible door-to-door journeys. **Policy:** Promote affordable, accessible and connected transport to enable access for all to jobs, education, health and other services.
- 3) Outcome 3: Safer travel. **Policy:** Provide a safer road, footway and cycleway network to reduce the likelihood of casualties, and encourage other transport providers to improve safety on their networks.
- 4) Outcome 4: Enhanced environment. **Policy:** Deliver schemes to reduce the environmental footprint of transport, and enhance the historic and natural environment.
- 5) Outcome 5: Better health and wellbeing. **Policy:** Promote active travel choices for all members of the community to encourage good health and wellbeing, and implement measure to improve local air quality.

1.3 Strategic transport priorities

1.3.1 There are nine strategic priorities in addition to the priorities for each specific district. These are:

- Enabling Growth in the Thames Gateway
- New Lower Thames Crossing
- Port Expansion
- A Solution to Operation Stack
- Bifurcation of Port Traffic
- Provision for Overnight Lorry Parking
- Ashford International Stations Signalling (Ashford Spurs)
- Journey Time Improvements and Thanet Parkway Railway Station
- Rail and Bus Improvements.

1.3.2 The Council supports these strategic priorities and welcomes the benefits they will bring to Tonbridge & Malling and to the wider area. However, there are concerns regarding the new Lower Thames Crossing without the inclusion of the C Variant (improvements to the A229 and M2 junction3) or other alternatives to provide a suitable link between the M2 and M20. These concerns are shared by KCC and have been expressed to Highways England as part of the consultation on the preferred route for the LTC that took place earlier this year by both TMBC and KCC. The C Variant or other alternatives linking the M2 and M20 should be included as a key priority for the Local Transport Plan, as set out in question 6a of the response.

1.3.3 In addition to these strategic priorities, there are also a number of Kent-wide priorities including road safety, highways maintenance and asset management and home to school transport, active travel (walking and cycling) and aviation, that are supported in the officer level response.

1.4 District Priorities – Tonbridge & Malling

1.4.1 The district priorities are identified as the infrastructure requirements needed to support sustainable growth. These priorities have been highlighted in the Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) and will be updated as the evidence in the GIF is updated.

1.4.2 There are a number of specific schemes identified for Tonbridge & Malling Borough and these have been identified through collaborative working between KCC and the Borough Council.

1.4.3 In the pipeline already, the construction of an eastern overbridge at junction 4 of the M20, due to be completed by the end of this year and secured through funding from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership Local Growth Fund and developer contributions.

1.4.4 The Local Growth Fund has also funded the Tonbridge Town Centre regeneration works, including improvements to Tonbridge High Street and around the railway station.

1.4.5 The GIF has highlighted four schemes that can be brought forward during the life of LTP4.

- The potential for Urban Traffic Control (traffic signal coordination) in Tonbridge to help alleviate congestion and improve air quality.
- M20 junction 3 – 5 ‘smart’ (managed) motorway system.
- M25/M26 east facing slips to alleviate movement restrictions; and
- A20 corridor improvements between A228 and M20 junction 5.

1.4.6 It is accepted that there are limited financial resources to provide the infrastructure needed to support the growth in the Borough to 2031, and that for some of the measures identified, enabling developing will be required to support it.

1.4.7 Two further future schemes are identified;

- Tackling congestion in Tonbridge town centre; and
- A study into traffic flows on A229 Bluebell Hill.

1.4.8 An additional two District priorities for Tonbridge and Malling Borough should be included and are set out in the response to question 7a. These are in respect of

improvements to the A228 corridor supporting in part the submission by Snodland Town Council, but also reflects some of the early responses received in relation to the emerging Local Plan, which proposes additional development in the vicinity of the A228 north of Kings Hill.

- 1.4.9 The second additional priority is for reference to be made to the potential for improvements to the A26. In particular improvements to the connections between the A26 and A20 corridors via Hermitage Lane and also through Wateringbury and East Malling.

1.5 Responding to the consultation document

- 1.5.1 A consultation questionnaire for responding to LTP4 was provided and contained ten technical questions. The officer-level response was submitted by the deadline of 30 October, a copy of which is contained in annex A of this report.
- 1.5.2 The officer-level comments are largely supportive of the document and its contents, taking the opportunity to highlight those measures and road improvement schemes that are of particular importance to Tonbridge & Malling, such as improvements to Bluebell Hill and lobbying for the C Variant as part of the Lower Thames Crossing. The Council also supports the M25/M26 east facing slips to alleviate restrictions or other reasonable alternatives that may come forward to achieve the same goals.
- 1.5.3 There is scope to include other proposals in future iterations of the LTP and to update the GIF that is reviewed annually.
- 1.5.4 The inclusion of a scheme in LTP4 does not, unfortunately, guarantee it will be delivered. The funding is limited and competition, high. At the very least, the LTP4 provides some of the necessary detail to apply for bidding along with the data contained in the GIF. The Council will continue to explore other opportunities with KCC to secure funding for appropriate improvements and schemes.

1.6 Legal Implications

- 1.6.1 There are unlikely to be any legal implications as Kent County Council are ultimately responsible for the content of LTP4.

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.7.1 Working with KCC and providing input to LTP4 represents good practice and value for money

1.8 Risk Assessment

- 1.8.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 It is recommended Members **ENDORSE** the comments in the questionnaire in **[ANNEX 1]** that are supportive of LTP4 and the identified priorities for Tonbridge & Malling.

The Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

Nil

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