

## **Transport for the South East draft response to the consultation on Canterbury City Council's draft transport strategy**

### **Introduction**

Transport for the South East (TfSE) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the public consultation on Canterbury City Council's draft district transport strategy that has been produced to support their draft Local Plan.

This is an officer response. The TfSE Partnership Board next meets on 13 May 2024 when it will consider this response. A further iteration of the response may therefore follow.

TfSE is a sub-national transport body (STB) for the South East of England, bringing together leaders from across the local government, business and transport sectors to speak with one voice on our region's strategic transport needs. Since its inception in 2017, TfSE has quickly emerged as a powerful and effective partnership for our region. We have a 30-year transport strategy in place which carries real weight and influence and will shape government decisions about where, when and how to invest in our region to 2050. The Secretary of State has confirmed that they will have regard to our strategy in developing new policy. We work closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) to provide advice to the Secretary of State and our ambition is to become a statutory body with devolved powers over key strategic transport issues.

Our principal decision-making body, the Partnership Board, brings together representatives from our 16 constituent local transport authorities, district and borough authorities, protected landscapes, Highways England, Network Rail and Transport for London and businesses.

Our Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) provides a framework for investment in strategic transport infrastructure, services, and regulatory interventions in the coming three decades. The plan presents a compelling case for action for investors, including government departments – notably the Treasury and Department for Transport (DfT) – as well as private sector investors. It is written for and on behalf of the South East's residents, communities, businesses and political representatives.

TfSE welcome this opportunity to respond to the Canterbury City Council's draft district transport strategy that has been produced to support their draft Local Plan. We trust that our response will provide value to the work of Canterbury City Council in this area, but also form the basis for further engagement, especially as TfSE is undertaking a refresh of its own transport strategy throughout 2024/5. Specifically, we are keen to establish a 'golden thread' in policy terms so that Canterbury City Council is able to

achieve its own goals whilst playing a significant role in achieving a wider vision for the South East.

### **Vision and Objectives**

TfSE notes with interest the influence of the vision for your draft district transport strategy in developing the overall vision for transport in Canterbury. We welcome this, in that it provides an opportunity to ensure that the impacts of transport are seen from a wider place-based and user perspective, and not simply a transport system view.

TfSE is pleased to see that the overarching vision and themes in your district transport strategy exhibit a good general alignment at the local level with TfSE's own plan for the south east region. The two vision statements are shown alongside one another in the table below. .

Whilst the draft transport strategy doesn't contain any strategic objectives for the district of Canterbury, we have reviewed the objectives set out in your draft Local Plan. Again, it is apparent that these objectives broadly align with the Strategic Priorities in our own transport strategy, as shown in the table below.

<b>Canterbury Local Plan 2040 Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>TfSE Transport Strategy Strategic Priorities</b>
Create a transport network with a focus on district-wide public transport and low-carbon travel to improve air quality and people's health while ensuring excellent access to city and town centres on foot, cycle and by public transport.	A network that promotes active travel and active lifestyles to improve our health and wellbeing.
Reduce the causes of climate change and adapt to ensure all district developments enable the carbon emissions reduction and increased resilience as quickly as possible.	A reduction in carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, at the latest, and minimise the contribution of transport and travel to climate change.
Take advantage of and improve our links to and from London and the Continent, while creating a transport network which enables most residents, particularly those in the urban areas, to access their day-to-day needs locally through healthy, environmentally-friendly journeys.	Better connectivity between our major economic hubs, international gateways (ports, airports and rail terminals) and their markets.

Capitalise on our rich and distinctive heritage and culture, enhancing character, sense of place and quality of life, supporting sustainable tourism and the local economy for our residents, visitors and businesses.	A transport network that protects and enhances our natural, built and historic environments.
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Not all of TfSE's Strategic Priorities are covered explicitly by the strategic objectives set out in the Canterbury draft district local plan. Specifically, we would recommend changes, either through additional objectives or expanded text covering the following Strategic Priorities in TfSE's own strategy:

- A seamless, integrated transport network with passengers at its heart, making it simpler and easier to plan and pay for journeys and to use and interchange between different forms of transport.
- A more integrated approach to land use and transport planning that helps our partners across the South East meet future housing, employment and regeneration needs sustainably.

These changes would further enhance the alignment between our two strategy documents, and assist in making the case for investment in the transport network across the district of Canterbury.

### **Policy and Implementation**

Similar to the above, we haven't identified any fundamental issues with the policies and implementation process set out in your draft district transport strategy. We welcome the focus on the need to facilitate a significant shift in modes of transport, moving away from a reliance on private vehicles to sustainable transport options, in order to reduce to reduce impacts on air quality and carbon emissions associated with transport.

We welcome the attention has been given in the draft transport strategy to improving sustainable transport improvements across the district as a priority, and only building new roads when specifically required for new developments across the area. We endorse the priority placed on active travel, public transport interventions and mass transit enhancements over other modes of private transport. This aligns very closely with the improvements for the area that have been identified within TfSE's strategic investment plan.

We also welcome the inclusion of the Herne Relief Road improvements highlighted in the proposed infrastructure policies within your district transport strategy. This highway infrastructure scheme has also been identified in TfSE's strategic investment plan, and this proposal will help

improve the resilience the network by increasing capacity and improve connectivity between Thanet and the rest of the South East via the A299.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, TfSE endorses the vision and the approach to its implementation set out in the draft Canterbury district transport strategy. We look forward to hearing about its implementation and would be happy to discuss ways in which we could support its implementation.