Kent Local Transport Plan 5
Response from Transport for the South East

1. Introduction

1.1   This document is the draft Transport for the South East (TfSE) response to the consultation on Kent County Council's Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5). This is a draft officer response that will be presented to our Partnership Board on 28 October 2024 for their approval. A further iteration may therefore follow.

1.2   TfSE is a sub-national transport body (STB) for the South East of England. Our principal decision-making body, the Partnership Board, brings together representatives from our 16 constituent local transport authorities, district and borough authorities, protected landscapes, business representatives, Highways England, Network Rail and Transport for London.

1.3   We have a vision led Transport Strategy in place to influence government decisions about where, when and how to invest in our region to 2050. This strategy is currently in the process of being refreshed.

1.4   Our Strategic Investment Plan provides a framework for delivering our Transport Strategy setting out transport infrastructure and policy interventions needed in our region over the next three decades.

1.5   TfSE welcome this opportunity to respond to the Kent LTP5. We trust that our response will provide value to the work of Kent County 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 Kent – as well as other Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) – are able to achieve their own goals whilst playing a significant role in achieving a wider vision for the South East. We are welcome the inclusion and support for this approach set in the Kent LTP5.

2.   Vision and Objectives

2.1   The Kent LTP5 ambition covers many of the same themes as TfSE's 2050 vision for the South East set out in our Transport Strategy. We have highlighted some of the areas where there is close alignment in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Alignment between Kent LTP5 Ambition and TfSE Transport Strategy Vision

Kent LTP5 Ambition	TfSE Transport Strategy Vision
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.	By 2050, the South East of England will be a leading global region for net-zero carbon, sustainable economic growth where integrated transport, digital and energy networks have delivered a step-change in connectivity and environmental quality. A high-quality, reliable, safe and accessible transport network will offer seamless door-to-door journeys enabling our businesses to compete and trade more effectively in the global marketplace and giving our residents and visitors the highest quality of life.

2.2   The Kent LTP5 Ambition does not make reference to 'accessibility' or 'integration'. It is our view these two words should be included in the ambition to make sure our transport network works for all and to highlight the need for different transport modes to work together and complement each other as seamlessly as possible. Including these two words would strengthen the golden thread between Kent LTP5 with the TfSE 2050 Vision and the Department for Transport's five strategic priorities.

2.3   A comparison of the Policy Outcomes set out in the Kent LTP5 with TfSE's Strategic Priorities is set out in Table 2. This demonstrates that there is a good general alignment between these Policies and 12 of the 15 Strategic Priorities included in the TfSE Transport Strategy. The three TfSE Priorities which are not covered by the Kent LTP5 Policies relate to the need for a more integrated approach to land use and transport planning, the use of the principle of biodiversity net gain in all transport initiatives, and the need to minimise transports consumption of resources.

2.4   Policy Outcome 5 recognises the need to manage demand to reduce the amount of forecast future congestion and crowding on highways and public transport. However, this policy only refers to demand arising from new development. It will be necessary to manage demand more generally to tackle a number of the 'Challenges We Face' set out at the beginning of the document relating to congestion, declining public transport use, carbon emissions and public health. To address this the Text of Policy Outcome 5 would need to be amended to refer to the use of demand management measures, such as parking controls and traffic management measures, to tackle existing and future traffic levels on the network.

Table 2: Kent LTP5 Policy Outcomes (proposed) compared to the Strategic Priorities set out in TfSE's Transport Strategy

Kent LTP5 Policy Outcomes (proposed)	TfSE Transport Strategy Strategic Priorities
Policy Outcome 1: The condition of our managed transport network is brought up to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel and trade. • A) Achieve the funding necessary to deliver a sustained fall in the value of the backlog of maintenance work over the life of our Local Transport Plan.	• A safely planned, delivered and operated transport network with no fatalities or serious injuries among transport users, workforce or the wider public.
Policy Outcome 2: Deliver our Vision Zero road safety strategy through all the work we do. • A) Achieve a fall over time in the volume of people killed or very seriously (life-changing) injured occurring on KCC's managed road network, working towards the trajectory set by Vision Zero for 2050.	• A safely planned, delivered and operated transport network with no fatalities or serious injuries among transport users, workforce or the wider public.
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. • A) Increase resilience of the road network serving the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel crossing, by adding holding capacity for HGVs across the southeast region to support establishment of a long term alternative to Operation Brock. • B) Increase resilience of the road network servicing the Port of Dover through delivery of the bifurcation strategy including improvements to the M2 / A2 road corridor and its links to the M20 and a new Lower Thames Crossing for traffic towards the north.	• More reliable journeys for people and goods travelling between the South East's major economic hubs and to and from international gateways. • A transport network that is more resilient to incidents, extreme weather and the impacts of a changing climate.

Policy Outcome 4: International rail travel returns to Kent and there are improved public transport connections to international hubs. • A) International rail travel returns to Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International stations, supported by the infrastructure investment needed at Kent's stations to ensure they provide secure and straightforward journeys across the UK-EU border within the entry exit system. • B) A fall in the time it takes by public transport to reach international rail stations compared to conditions in 2023.	• Better connectivity between our major economic hubs, international gateways (ports, airports and rail terminals) and their markets. • 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.
Policy Outcome 5: Deliver a transport network that is quick to recover from disruptions and 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. • A) Strengthen delivery of our Network Management Duty to deliver the expeditious movement of traffic by using our new moving traffic enforcement powers and modernising the provision of on-street parking enforcement. • B) Reduce the amount of forecast future congestion and crowding on highways and public transport that is associated with demand from development by securing funding and delivery of our Local Transport Plan. • C) The prospects for the future of transport increase across the whole county, with new innovations in transport services having a clear pathway to trial or delivery in Kent.	• A transport network that is more resilient to incidents, extreme weather and the impacts of a changing climate. • A 'smart' transport network that uses digital technology to manage transport demand, encourage shared transport and make more efficient use of our roads and railways. • A reduction in the need to travel particularly by private car, to reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment.

Policy Outcome 6: Journeys to access and experience Kent's historic and natural environments are improved. • A) Proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing new, quicker, or more inclusive access to historic and natural environment destinations in the county, with proposals targeting access to such locations where appropriate.	• A transport network that protects and enhances our natural, built and historic environments. • An affordable, accessible transport network for all that promotes social inclusion and reduces barriers to employment, learning, social, leisure, physical and cultural activity.
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. • A) Reduce the volume of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions entering the atmosphere associated with surface transport activity on the KCC managed highway network by an amount greater than our forecast "business as usual" scenario. This means achieving a greater fall than those currently forecast of 9% by 2027, 19% by 2032 and 29% by 2037. • B) No area in Kent is left behind by the revolution in electric motoring, with charging infrastructure deployed close to residential areas, reducing barriers to adoption. • C) Proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing lower emissions from transport in Air Quality Management Areas in the county.	• A reduction in carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 at the latest, to minimise the contribution of transport and travel to climate change. • Improved air quality supported by initiatives to reduced congestion and encourage further shifts to public transport.

Policy Outcome 8: A growing public transport system supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased ridership, helping operators to invest in and provide better services. • A) We will aim to obtain further funding to deliver the outcomes of our Bus Service Improvement Plan (or its successor) beyond its current horizon of 2024/25. We will ensure that our Local Transport Plan proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution towards achieving our Bus Service Improvement Plan. • B) We will identify and support industry delivery of priority railway stations for accessibility improvements and route improvements to reduce journey times and improve reliability.	• 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
Policy Outcome 9: Health, air quality, public transport use, congestion and the prosperity of Kent's high streets and communities will be improved by supporting increasing numbers of people to use a growing network of dedicated walking and cycling routes. • A) We will aim to deliver walking and cycling improvements at prioritised locations in Kent to deliver increased levels of activity towards the Active Travel England target (of 50% trips walked, wheeled, or cycled in towns and cities by 2030) and support Kent's diverse economy, presented in a Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.	• A network that promotes active travel and active lifestyles to improve our health and wellbeing.
Policy Outcome 10: The quality of life in Kent is protected from the risk of worsening noise disturbance from aviation. • A) Where there is evidence of impacts on our communities, we will make representations on airport expansion proposals and argue for measures to mitigate their effects.	• N/A

3.   Implementation

3.1   We welcome the recognition of the supporting role that TfSE has in realising the proposals within LTP5, which are listed below:

- Integrated public transport timetables, fares, and ticketing
- Mobility-as-a-service initiatives
- Freight management
- Electric Vehicle infrastructure

4.   Other Comments

4.1   We welcome the recognition of TfSE's role in supporting the success of LTP5, as well as highlighting where cross boundary collaboration with neighbouring authorities is required. We will continue to support Kent, and other local transport authorities, in facilitating coordination and collaboration to most effectively deliver improvements to our transport network.

4.2   We note that in the 'Challenges We Face' section at the beginning of the document the document the challenges identified do not refer to the barriers some residents face in accessing transport to live, work, and socialise, or areas of deprivation. The 2021 Census reveals that in some areas of Kent up to 26% of households are without a car and that county-wide an average of 17% of households do not have a car[1]. This highlights the importance of access to alternative transport options. Similarly, in some parts of Kent up to 36% of households are deprived in one or more way[2]. We suggest that another challenge needs to be added recognising this issue, along with measures in the plan to address the accessibility and inclusion needs of disadvantaged residents in Kent.

4.3   Freight movements are a key challenge within Kent given the presence of international gateways in the county. Whilst there is good coverage of the challenges faced by larger and longer distance freight movement within the plan, there is opportunity to include reference to interventions to deal with local freight movements. Decarbonising local deliveries in Kent through logistics consolidation and first and last mile deliveries will not only reduce emissions, but also reduce road traffic levels.

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[1] Accessed on 30 September 2024 https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/choropleth/housing/number-of-cars-or-vans/number-of-cars-3a/no-cars-or-vans-in-household
[2] Accessed on 30 September 2024 https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/choropleth/population/household-deprivation/hh-deprivation/household-is-deprived-in-one-dimension