

14 June 2012		ITEM 5
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
THURROCK TRANSPORT STRATEGY REFRESH		
Report of: Cllr Andy Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regeneration		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Accountable Head of Service: Andy Millard, Head of Planning and Transportation		
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive		
This report is Public		
Purpose of Report: To update Overview and Scrutiny Members on the updates and changes applied to the Thurrock Transport Strategy refresh and to seek views prior to reporting the refresh to Cabinet.		

Comment [s]: PLEASE CLICK THIS BOX ONCE and enter the date of the meeting (in font 16, not capitals)

Comment [s]: Please leave this for completion by Democratic Services

Comment [s]: PLEASE CLICK THIS BOX ONCE and enter the name of the Committee you are reporting to (in font 16, not capitals)

Comment [sj]: PLEASE CLICK THIS BOX ONCE and enter the title of your report (in font 16)

Comment [a j]: Please enter the name and job title of the person who will be presenting the report

Comment [s]: Please enter details of any Wards and Communities affected by the

Comment [s]: Yes/No/Not Applicable – a 'Key Decision' is generally one affecting more

Comment [sj]: Please state the Head of Service's name and job title

Comment [sj]: Please state Director's name and job title

Comment [sj]: State whether your report is Public or Exempt. If Exempt (i.e. not to be given to

Comment [sj]: Briefly set out the purpose of your report

Comment [sj]: Please provide a summary of the key points in your report

Comment [s]: The recommendations should be set out in bold in the form of the

Comment [s]: You should briefly explain why the report is on the agenda - See para. 5.3 and 5.4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the Thurrock Transport Strategy: 2008 - 2021 was developed there have been a significant number of changes in the national, regional and local context surrounding the delivery of transport improvements in Thurrock. Consequently, a light touch refresh of the Strategy has been progressed.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Members consider and comment upon the refresh of the Thurrock Transport Strategy prior to reporting to Cabinet.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

2.1 Based on a robust evidence base and feedback from residents and key stakeholders, the Transport Strategy sets out the aims, objectives and a series of policies for delivering transport improvements in Thurrock.

2.2 Thurrock is undergoing significant change. It is part of the Thames Gateway national growth area, the UK's top priority for social and economic regeneration, and between 2001 and 2026 there is planned to be an additional 18,500 new homes and 26,000 new jobs in the Borough. Challenges facing Thurrock include:

- There are very low levels of skills which are and could continue to be a barrier to greater aspirations and generating good job opportunities
- There are low numbers of people in professional or knowledge based jobs
- High levels of obesity in key communities will impact adversely on long-term health
- Multiple deprivation is high compared to the region, especially in some urban areas, which may harm social well-being and create community tensions
- High numbers of HGVs and high traffic flows on strategic roads are adversely impacting on local air quality, CO₂ emissions, and congestion. Growth could well make this worse. Worsening air quality will increase respiratory problems, whilst increasing congestion which in turn could harm job creation prosperity.
- There is generally good accessibility by public transport and walking to many services, but poor access to further education and hospitals could exacerbate low skills and health issues. Many of the planned new jobs will be at London Gateway, which is away from the main urban areas and so less accessible for employment access by non-car means, which may limit opportunities for many social groups and fail to deliver equality of opportunity
- There are very low levels of walking and cycling which could fuel increasing obesity and so it will be necessary to learn from the success of recent School Travel Plans in increasing walking and cycling
- It will be important to maintain the increasing use of public transport to limit traffic growth, especially given forecast increases in congestion and CO₂ emissions
- Reducing the number of accidents where people are killed or seriously injured has implications on incident based congestion and the chances of encouraging people to walk or cycle more

2.3 For the growth to be delivered, and delivered sustainably, a solid and sound Thurrock Transport Strategy is needed. The Thurrock Transport Strategy has been reviewed in this context.

3. **ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:**

3.1 The Transport Strategy 2008 – 2021 sets out the Council's transport policies and priorities. However, there arises a need for this to be refreshed in response to a number of important changes to the context in which the Thurrock Transport Strategy was developed. These changes include:

- The proposed demise of the East of England Plan and Regional Planning bodies;
- The economic downturn since 2008;
- A change to the timescale of the Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (previously to 2021, now to 2026) and its progress through to its adoption in December 2011;

Comment [s]: Other headings may be appropriate. The report should outline the reasoning that leads to its recommendations and **must** include:

1. a brief summary of options considered;
2. consultation outcomes
3. a risk assessment.
4. Whether the responsible cabinet members have been consulted/contributed to the report (NB professional and political advice must be clearly distinguished)

- See para.5.5 of the report writing guidelines.

- The Transport White Paper, published in January 2011;
- A proposed major transport infrastructure improvement that is likely to significantly affect the Thurrock area, ie. the new Lower Thames Crossing;
- The Highways Agency proposals to implement a highway improvement scheme at Junction 31;
- Potential for ‘free flow’ tolls at the Dartford River Crossing;
- Significant additional funding from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to deliver sustainable transport improvements;
- The creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), and their role in major transport improvements; and
- The significant progress made on developing local operational policies for traffic management and maintenance.

3.2 Of particular importance is the growth agenda and the need to make sure that transport helps to deliver sustainable growth and regeneration in the Borough. The growth Thurrock needs to accommodate is significant. Between 2001 and 2026 an additional 18,500 new homes need to be built and 26,000 new jobs created. Growth and regeneration in Thurrock will be driven forward by the Council’s Local Development Framework, and Thurrock Council’s transport policies and priorities need to keep pace with this.

3.3 The wider planning context is now at a stage where a much greater degree of certainty is available compared to that in recent years. The Local Development Framework’s Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development has been through its Examination in Public and was formally adopted by Thurrock Council in December 2011, providing a clear direction for the spatial distribution of jobs and housing.

3.4 Now that this greater certainty is available, with a longer time horizon of 2026, it is important to refresh the Transport Strategy to align and integrate it with the Local Development Framework.

3.5 In summary this required the following broad changes to the Strategy:

- Timescale of TTS changed from 2008 – 2021, to 2012 – 2026 to align with the LDF
- Revisions to Chapter 1: Introduction, particularly Section 1.2 Context, to account for the changes to the national, regional and local policy context;
- Revisions to the Policy Context within each “thematic” chapter (i.e. Accessibility, Congestion, Air Quality and Climate Change, Road Safety and Regeneration);
- Revisions to policy supporting text and where absolutely necessary policies themselves within the “thematic” strategies, in light of any relevant changes to the wider context;
- Integration of local maintenance policy and procedure, where appropriate, within each of the thematic chapters and strategies; and
- Removal of detailed implementation and monitoring information as this has been replaced by the separate production of the LTP3 Implementation Plan.

These key changes are identified in greater detail in Appendix B.

4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

4.1 The Transport Strategy refresh has been produced with input from members, key stakeholders, statutory consultees and members of the public.

4.2 A draft version of the strategy was placed on-line in February 2012 for comment and input and the final version of the Thurrock Transport Strategy reflects that input.

4.3 The changes applied to the refreshed strategy are set out in Appendix B.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

5.1 The refresh of the Thurrock Transport Strategy addresses the Council's priorities within the community, with emphasis on the priorities to encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity and to ensure a safe, clean and green environment

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652772**
mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk

This report and attached strategy set out the Thurrock Transport Strategy for 2008 to 2026. The strategy itself does not discuss the funding of its activities, however, the existing level of funding, as well as agreed LTP funding from central government, is available to support meeting the objectives of the strategy. The details of how this is to be applied will need to be formulated as part of ongoing annual delivery programmes.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Remi Aremu (Planning Solicitor)**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652 994**
raremu@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no direct legal implications arising from the Report at this stage. The Council's Transport Strategy is in need of revision and updating to reflect legislative and policy changes since it was originally adopted. The changes also contribute further to the visions and priorities contained within the Thurrock Community Strategy.

Comment [j]: This should include any consultation with Ward Members and Shadow Portfolio Holders, as well as any public or statutory consultation

Comment [a]: Please refer to Section 5.7 of the Report Writing Guidelines

Comment [sj]: This section should always be completed – if they are dealt with fully in another part of the report, they also need a brief cross reference here. The names and job titles of the officers providing the implications should be provided in full – see Guideline 6.1 and please note Democratic Services Deadlines and ensure that officers providing implications are given 5 clear working days to work on the report. Authors can write implications but they must be signed off by the appropriate officers

Comment [sj]: See Guideline 6.2

Comment [sj]: See Guideline 6.3

Section 108 of the Transport Act 2000 provides that a local authority must develop policies in a strategy for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities. Because the policies contained within the Transport Strategy Refresh would supersede the policies in the Local Transport Plan 2006 they have to be adopted by full Council under the Constitution. The refreshed Strategy will need to be the subject of prior consultation before is if finally adopted as a strategic policy for the determinations of future transport measures.

6.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
 Telephone and email: **01375652472**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

The Council is under a statutory obligation to ensure that local policy decisions are subject to an Equality impact Assessment to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to statutory obligations under appropriate legislation, which includes the Race Relations Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act.

An EIA has been conducted with regards to the Thurrock Transport Strategy 2008-2026.

6.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

7. **CONCLUSION**

7.1 Approval of this report will enable the refreshed Thurrock Transport Strategy to be implemented, taking account of the changes in national and local policy and planning context.

7.2 A robust and refreshed strategy will provide longer-term direction for maintenance of the highway network and improvements to transport infrastructure and service provision within the Borough.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

- Thurrock Transport Strategy 2008 - 21

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Appendix A – Thurrock Transport Strategy 2012 – 2026
- Appendix B – TTS document changes

Comment [sj]: See Guideline 6.4

Comment [sj]: This should inform the recommendations in the report

Comment [sj]: See Guideline 8. If any Papers are to be placed in the Members room that relate to this report, you should also list them here

Comment [sj]: List the Appendices referred to in the Report

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Comment [sj]: Insert the full contact details of the author of the report