

8 March 2021
Local Development Plan Task Force
Thurrock Transport Strategy Refresh update
This report is Public

1. Summary

- 1.1 Thurrock has one of the most significant growth-led regeneration agendas in the country and it is vital to ensure that future growth is supported by the right transport infrastructure, providing sustainable travel options for our communities and businesses whilst reducing congestion and improving air quality as the Council brings forward the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.2 This paper provides Task Force Members with an update on the steps taken to develop the Interim Transport Strategy that will lead on to the development of a refreshed Thurrock Transport Strategy (TTS).
- 1.3 The paper details work that is currently underway and future work packages and technical studies needed to be progress and deliver the TTS and to support the development of the new Local Plan.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 There are a number of steps in the process of preparing the updated Transport Strategy, including technical baseline assessments, strategic transport visioning and engagement with statutory consultees, partner agencies, businesses and community groups.
- 2.2 There will be a suite of supporting strategies and plans that accompany the Transport Strategy, including but not limited to work streams including Active Travel, Parking (which is subject of a separate report on this agenda), Freight, Air Quality and Health.
- 2.3 The TTS work and supporting strategies require additional resource to complete. Latcham Consultants and Mott MacDonald have been procured to provide the required level of support and expertise to ensure that these areas of work can be progressed to support the Local Plan timescale.

A summary of the identified studies is provided in Appendix A.

3. Work to date

Scoping the interim strategy- Strategic Aims

3.1 The work in scoping the Interim Transport Strategy has outlined twelve strategic aims which are as follows:

- Safer Roads;
- Delivering accessibility- walking and cycling and access for all;
- Tackling congestion by changing the transport mix;
- Improving air quality and helping to address climate change;
- Connecting and integrating housing growth and regeneration areas;
- Facilitating employment regeneration including business and employment, freight and logistics;
- Securing local benefits and opportunities offered by the Lower Thames Crossing;
- Town and Village centres and large-scale retail districts;
- A fully integrated sub-regional Mass Rapid Transit System with high quality interchange points;
- An efficient, integrated and high-quality bus network;
- Breaking down the barrier of the river;
- Sub-regional rail connectivity

High-level vision

3.2 Early work to date has focused on defining the scope and content of the Interim Transport Strategy, particularly the production of a high-level strategic transport vision for future transport in Thurrock. This work, alongside other baseline studies will be critical in the development of the Interim Transport Strategy. Initial thoughts have identified the high level elements of the transport vision to include the following:

- A vision for transport in Thurrock up to 2050, identifying what success looks like for different types of travel;
- Key strategic principles and policies;
- Explain how the various parts of the transport plan (vision; strategy; action/ implementation plan) will make up a whole strategy for growth and development;
- Wider policy linkages and likely drivers of future travel needs;
- Indicative delivery timelines;
- Alignment with the Council's wider corporate objectives and the views of local communities;
- Refer to (but not necessarily try to resolve) emerging spatial options to planned transport infrastructure;
- Support wider sustainable development objectives;

- Align with the published and emerging transport and local plans of neighbouring authorities, county and regional/sub regional transport planning bodies.

Baseline studies

- 3.3 A baseline study to identify the challenges and opportunities that exist for transport and movement is being undertaken and will provide key evidence for the Local Plan. This work has included a series of stakeholder workshops which were undertaken in November 2020 to engage with key operators, transport providers, neighbouring authorities, Transport East (sub-national Transport Body) and officers involved in various elements that feed into the Local Plan and TTS.
- 3.4 These sessions enabled the Council to gain a greater understanding of the issues and 'asks' presented by various network operators and users and to understand how this work will need to take account of the work produced by other bodies.
- 3.5 It was also a valuable process in terms of gaining valuable data from the stakeholder groups to gain a greater understanding of the existing network, barriers presented to those who use it and what they see as the key issues going forward as increased growth is planned and delivered.
- 3.6 The baseline study and associated engagement work, including focussed Design Charettes, has played a key role in identifying how the existing network operates and where existing and future issues / pinch points may occur.
- 3.7 A list of all relevant transport baseline studies, planned and committed infrastructure projects and strategies underway or proposed to be undertaken was submitted to O&S in September 2020. A more detailed appraisal will be brought to Members later this year alongside updates on progress of the Local Plan.

Infrastructure map and 'sieved' project list

- 3.8 An initial sieving exercise has identified known proposed and potential major, local and site-specific transport infrastructure that maybe required to deliver the growth and development within the Local Plan. Officers are sharing the results of this initial mapping exercise (Appendix B – Core Projects and Sieved Projects). This work will evolve over the next 12 months.
- 3.9 A 'long list' of current, proposed and possible future transport infrastructure projects and programmes and packages is being devised. The next stage of this work involves/sieving' these projects in order to identify which projects

should form the core of the emerging strategy. The result of this exercise will be discussed in more detail as this work is developed.

Development capacity and frameworks

- 3.10 A Thurrock-wide development capacity study is to be undertaken which examines the likely scale of growth in a number of locations across the Borough and the infrastructure necessary to support this growth. The work has a close relationship with the emerging Transport Strategy and Transport Officers will be working with planning colleagues to ensure strategies fit together.
- 3.11 In addition to the development capacity study the Council has commissioned a series of development frameworks for key growth areas and a town centre framework for the Lakeside Basin. These detailed planning and master planning studies will be used in the preparation of the Interim Transport Strategy.

Transport Modelling

- 3.12 The provision of accurate traffic modelling will play an important role in understanding the impact that growth will have on the transport network over the coming years. The ability to model and understand these impacts will help to inform how and where growth can be accommodated in Thurrock. These are two distinct areas of work that need to be taken forward. Officers have prepared a consultant brief for the Transport Modelling work and this is to be used to ‘test the market’ within the coming weeks to ensure that our ‘ask’ is relevant and robust and to understand the costs associated with developing and maintaining the transport model.

TTS Programme and next steps

Draft Transport Vision	June 2021
Consultation	July - September 2021
Transport Vision Approved and adopted	September 2021
Draft Transport Strategy	October 2021
Consultation	November/ December 2021
Transport Strategy Approved and adopted	January 2022
Draft Action/ Implementation Plan	February 2022
Stakeholder engagement	March - May 2022
Draft Action/ Implementation Plan Approved and adopted	June 2022

Appendices to the report

- Appendix A – Updated Transport work stream programme
- Appendix B – Infrastructure Plans – Core Projects and Sieved Projects

Appendix A – Updated Transport work stream programme

WORKSTREAM	Anticipated TIMESCALES
Transport Evidence Base - Baseline Positioning and Visioning for Movement and Transport Strategy	Resume Q2 2020 Complete Q4 2020 Complete Q1 2021
Thurrock Vision for Movement – A strategic transport perspective	Start Q2 2020 Interim Q3 2020 Complete Q1 2021 Start Q1 2021 Complete Q2 2021
Call for Sites Transport Connectivity Site Assessments	Start Q3 2020 Complete Report Q3 2021 Update Report Q2 2022 Start Q1 2021
Thurrock Transport Strategy	Start Q4 2020 Complete Interim Strategy Q4 2022 Complete Final Strategy Q3 2023
Development of Thurrock Strategic Transport Model	Procure Model Development Q3 2020 Q2 2021
Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP	Complete Q3 2020 Update Q4 2021
Thurrock Freight Strategy	Start Q3 2020 Draft Q2 2021 Final Q4 2021 Start Q1 2021
Car Parking Strategy (enforcement; policy and strategy)	Complete Q3 2020 Refresh Q4 2021
Growth Area Transport Access Strategies	Start Q3 2020 produce detailed project specification for roll out on a consistent basis across the Borough. Start Q1 2021

Development of Local Area Transport Models	Start Q3 2020 produce detailed project specification for roll out on a consistent basis across the Borough. Q1 2021
Grays Town Centre Transport and Access Strategy	Start Q4 2020 – Q3 2021 Q1 2021]
Lakeside Transport Strategy	Start Refresh Q1 2021 Complete Q3 2021
Strategic Transport Scheme Business Case Development	To be agreed and commissioned on a rolling/staged basis commencing Q1 2021
Policy Development & Site Allocations	Start Q4 2021 Complete Q2 2022