

Thurrock Interim Local Transport Strategy

Connecting Thurrock – Vision 2050

Vision Statement

Outline Draft Vision

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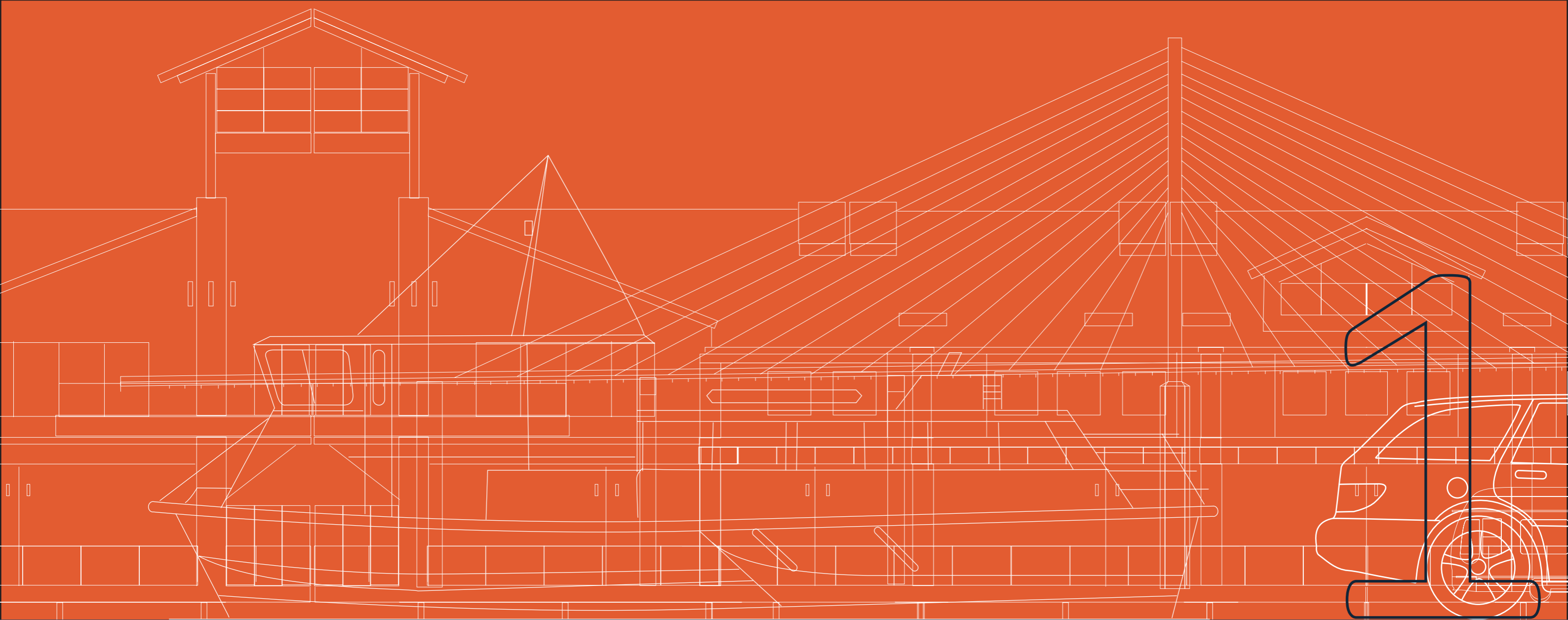
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Thurrock Interim Local Transport Strategy

Connecting Thurrock – Vision 2050

Introduction

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



Figure 1 Nine focus areas

1.1 Executive Summary

The challenge

1.1.1 Over the next fifteen years, Thurrock will change on a scale not seen for several generations. There are big plans for new homes and business areas alongside strategies to regenerate existing communities and transform town centres. This is a chance to rethink the approach to transport and reshape how people travel in and through the borough. The aim is to ensure transport investment and planned growth benefit all Thurrock's communities.

A new Transport Strategy

1.1.2 Thurrock Council is currently developing a long-term Transport Strategy. The Strategy will outline how, over the next 25-years, the use and management of the Boroughs transport networks - local and national roads, railways, stations, interchanges, footpaths, and cycleways will change and how connections to and through the borough should be improved.

1.1.3 The Thurrock Transport Strategy 2021/22 to 2036/37 will establish a new strategic approach, policies and guidelines and detail how we will make it happen. The Strategy will play an influential role in delivering the Council's overall vision and the priorities set out in the new Local Plan. The Transport Strategy is in three main parts: A Vision, a Strategy, and an Action/Implementation Plan.

Building upon Thurrock's corporate vision

1.1.4 The Vision and the overall Transport Strategy help to fulfil Thurrock's corporate vision and the three themes:

People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live, and stay.

Place – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future.

Prosperity – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations.

Transport Vision

1.1.5 We have called our transport vision 'Connecting Thurrock' to highlight that Thurrock's strategic location does not currently translate into well-connected places at the local/district level. Local connections mean everything. Poor connectivity is a barrier to accessing employment for existing communities that rely on public transport. It means economically disadvantaged groups cannot access a full range of local services.

1.1.6 This Vision document explains how we will help change how people choose to travel to enhance both transport connectivity and quality of life.

1.1.7 To create a transport system for Thurrock that:

- Is fully inclusive, meeting the social needs of residents;
- Is integrated to provide seamless multi-modal journeys;
- Is accessible for everyone, safe and attractive to use;
- Delivers sustainable community regeneration and growth; and
- Reflects the exceptional circumstances of Thurrock as an international centre for logistics and commercial development.

1.1.8 We will work with our partners to ensure Thurrock has a transport network that ranks alongside the most sustainable and 'liveable' places in the Country. This is an integrated Vision that requires a joined-up approach, drawing together the ten overall goals, a three-fold modal focus and our nine strategic themes.

1.1.9 The Vision will guide the second and third parts of the Strategy - the Transport Strategy and Action/Implementation Plan. These will set out how we will coordinate transport investment with our growth and regeneration plans, priority capital programmes and projects, and detail operating and capital budgets.

Timescale

1.1.10 The first part of the strategy will be a Vision Statement to be published in draft form in the summer of 2021.

1.1.11 The vision comprises our broad aspirations and will provide the basis for developing the Vision's full draft to be published for consultation later this year.

1.1.12 The development of the vision is informed by analysis of transport trends, policy and international best practice including the transport baseline study (by Stantec). The baseline study included early engagement with organisations with an interest in transport in and through Thurrock. Some of the key findings from this engagement process is summarised on the following pages.

Seeking your views

1.1.13 We would like to hear your views on the Connecting Thurrock – Vision 2050 statement. Is this the future for transport in Thurrock that you would like to see?

1.2 Transport Strategy

Current strategy

1.2.1 Thurrock's current Transport Strategy sets out the Councils' transport policies and priorities from 2013 to 2026. However, the Strategy was developed in a very different context from the position today. We need to refresh the Strategy in response to significant new challenges and opportunities, including:

- Revised government housing delivery targets;
- Government transport policy reforms and changing priorities;
- Government planning reforms;
- Changes to sources of government funding;
- The development of a new Local Plan for Thurrock to be adopted in 2023/24;
- The Highways Agency evolving plans and timescale for the implementation of the Lower Thames Crossing;
- A proposed new sub-regional transport body Transport East;
- The continuing effects effect of economic downturns in 2008 and 2020.

1.1.1 These challenges and opportunities have been put into sharp relief by the COVID 19 pandemic.

Updating the transport strategy

1.2.2 Thurrock Council is currently developing a long-term Transport Strategy. The Strategy will outline how, over the next 15-20 years, the use and management of the Boroughs transport networks - local and national roads, railways, stations, interchanges, footpaths, and cycleways will change and how connections to and through the borough should be improved.

1.2.3 The first part of the strategy will be a draft Vision Statement published in draft form in the summer of 2021.

1.2.4 The vision paper provides the background and context, sketches out a first rough version of the visions and introduces each of these in a series of background supporting chapters.

1.2.5 This Vision statement, along with the appendix papers, will provide the basis for developing the complete draft of an Interim Transport Strategy to be published for consultation later this year (Nov 2021).



Figure 2 Transport Strategy format

Structure of the new transport strategy

1.2.6 The structure of the new Thurrock Transport Strategy is a three-part strategy:

- Transport vision
- Transport Strategy
- Action/ implementation plan

Timescales

1.2.7 The following timescales set out the likely process and dates, which are in part related to the delivery of closely aligned spatial planning and economic growth studies:

Transport Vision

- Draft Transport Vision - June 2021
- Consultation - July - September 2021
- Approved and adopted – October 2021

Transport Strategy

- Draft Interim Transport Strategy - November 2021
- Consultation - November 2021 to February 2022
- Transport Strategy Approved and Adopted - June 2022

Action/Implementation Plan

- Draft Action/ Implementation Plan - March 2022
- Stakeholder engagement (engagement throughout the process)
- Draft Action/ Implementation Plan Approved and adopted - June 2022

VISION STATEMENT (FIRST DRAFT)

1.3 Thurrock Council Vision and Priorities

1.3.1 The Connecting Thurrock Vision and the Transport Strategy are based upon and will help fulfil Thurrock's corporate vision and priorities.

Vision

1.3.2 The vision and priorities for Thurrock were adopted by the Council on 31 January 2018.

1.3.3 An ambitious and collaborative community that is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

Priorities

1.3.4 Three priorities define the vision:

- **People** – a Borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live, and stay.
- **Place** – a heritage-rich Borough that is ambitious for its future.
- **Prosperity** – a Borough that enables everyone to achieve their aspirations.

People – a Borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.

1.3.5 This means:

- high quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time;
- build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing and;
- communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

Place – a heritage-rich Borough that is ambitious for its future.

1.3.6 This means:

- roads, houses, and public spaces that connect people and places
- clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
- fewer public buildings with better services

Prosperity – a Borough that enables everyone to achieve their aspirations.

1.3.7 This means:

- attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
- vocational and academic education, skills, and job opportunities for all
- commercial, entrepreneurial, and connected public services

1.3.8 The strategy includes:

- A programme of smarter choices to deliver a modal shift, especially in new housing and employment growth areas.
- Prioritising public transport, walking, and cycling in all new housing and employment growth areas.
- Increasing bus capacity and establishing new routes to main transport interchanges.
- Reallocating road space to sustainable modes of transport including buses, cycles and MRT.
- Reducing the stock of car parking spaces overall and switching extended stay towards short stays to promote sustainable transport at peak times, such as working and school.
- Encouraging a freight modal shift from road to rail and river.



Figure 3 Thurrock vision and priorities

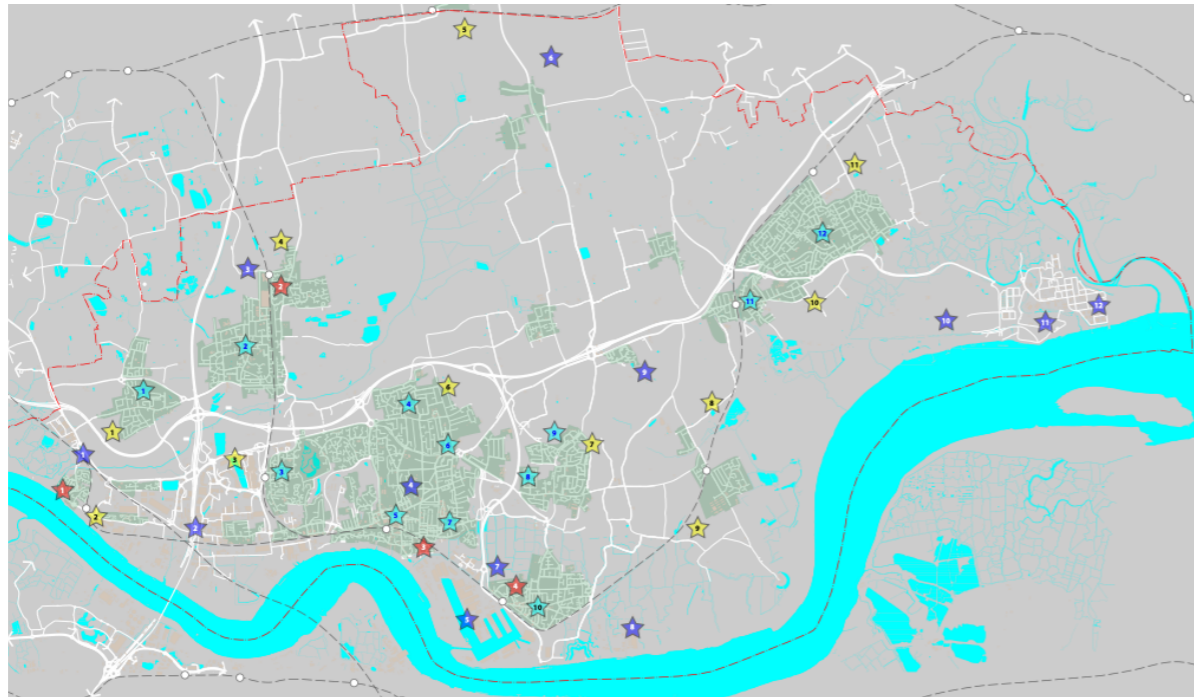


Figure 4 Potential locations for regeneration and growth across Thurrock

TO BE UPDATED

Figure 5 Growth and regeneration showing possible housing growth and key community facilities

1.4 Local Plan

- 1.4.1 The Transport Vision's starting point is the current Development Plan and the Issues and Options Stage 2 Report prepared as the first stage of the revised plan and the adopted Local Plan.
- 1.4.2 The Vision builds upon recent Design Charrettes coordinated by the Prince's Foundation and preliminary findings from a series of planning and master planning studies commissioned to help shape and inform the Local Plan's development. These studies identify the potential for growth in urban areas and the Green Belt (policy off position).
- 1.4.3 The Thurrock Transport Strategy will need to align with the emerging spatial strategy and new development locations to be defined by the new Local Plan including:
 - Supporting local, district and town centres.
 - Improving access to key services.
 - Improving job opportunities.
 - Maximising sustainable travel in new developments.
- 1.4.4 The transport strategy needs to be flexible to influence and support proposals as they are brought forward.

Local Plan studies

- 1.4.5 The following Local Plan studies are closely related to this Connecting Thurrock Vision study:
 - Princes Foundation Design Charettes – December-ongoing 2021
 - Draft Housing Site Assessment Report - November 2021
 - Climate Change and Energy Strategies - November 2021
 - Housing Sites Assessment Report - November 2021
 - Sustainability Appraisal - September 2021
 - Place Making Strategy - September 2021
 - Spatial Vision and Strategy - to be commissioned
 - Town Centre Study - to be commissioned
 - Urban Typology and Character Study - to be commissioned
- 1.4.6 This vision study will be followed by the Thurrock Interim Transport Strategy, due in November 2021.

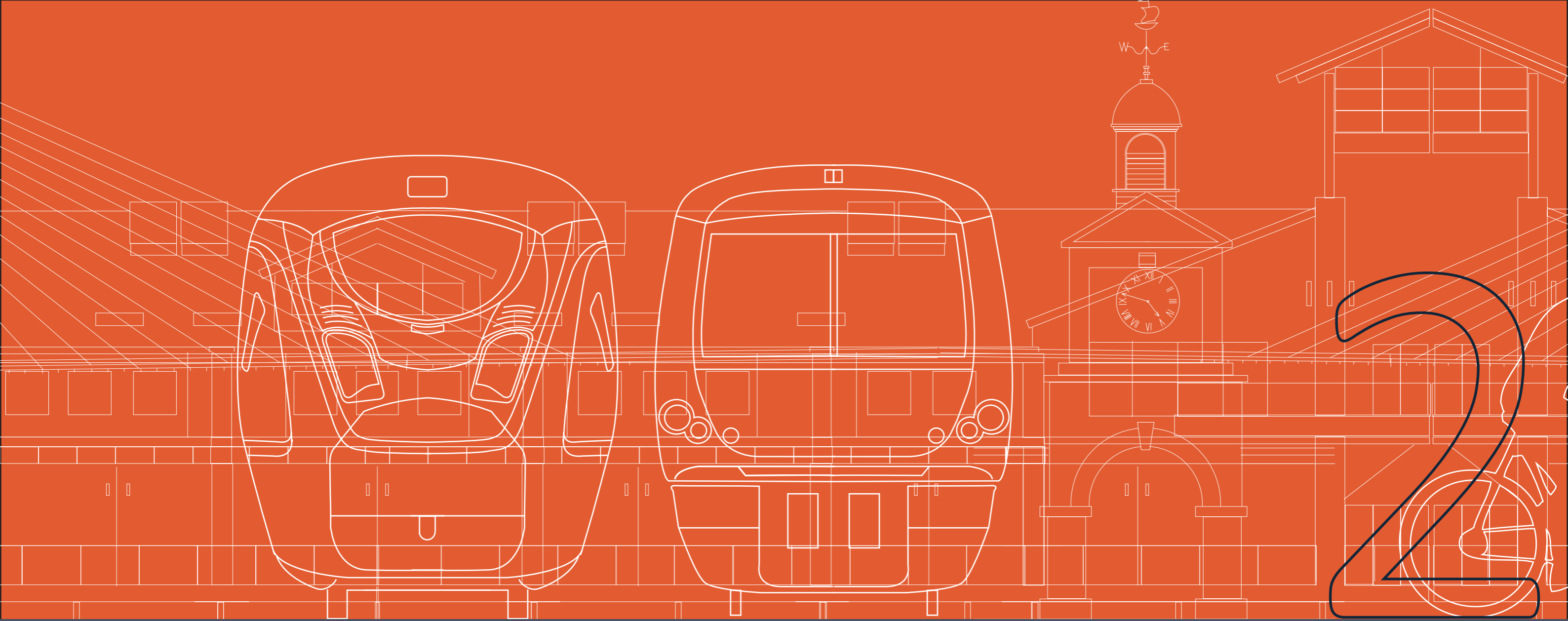
Emerging regeneration and growth opportunities across Thurrock

- 1.4.7 The Vision is informed by and will help shape the emerging plans for regeneration and growth across the borough. Both the Vision and the transport strategy can help the Local Plan:
 - Identify towns and villages that should grow, which sites should be developed and at what density.
 - Define the quantity, type and location of new employment uses, particularly port and freight/logistics and the supporting national infrastructure needed to deliver sustainable economic growth.
 - Support estate and community regeneration to deliver better access to services, jobs and homes with planned growth founded on bringing benefits to existing places, local people, and communities.
 - Provide certainty to port and logistics development plans, especially concerning free ports and emerging border facilities and infrastructure.
 - Support the framing of plans and proposals for town and neighbourhood centre transport and public realm improvements to be delivered as part of growth and regeneration strategies.

VISION STATEMENT (FIRST DRAFT)

- Outline the strategic and local infrastructure improvements required to support growth and the regeneration of existing communities.
- Seek to limit new infrastructure's incursion into the Green Belt, including critical gaps between urban areas and settlements.
- Prepare for the impacts of climate change which lies at the heart of the transport strategy, and the challenges related to delivering sustainable travel and movement in Thurrock.
- Improve access to local services, facilities, and employment opportunities,
- Help relieve congestion which hinders the movement of goods and people, by focusing on mode shift and getting a better multi-modal approach for the transport network.
- Examine ways to improve air quality and reduce emissions significantly
- Seek to protect and enhance the critical role played by the River Thames as an economic asset
- Protect and enhance the character and services of existing communities by ensuring centres are accessible by public transport to encourage local trips and not traffic dominated.
- Maximise the local economic, housing and accessibility benefits and mitigate the impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing.

1.4.8 The Local Plan technical studies underway have delivered some early outputs on the emerging regeneration and growth opportunities across Thurrock. Some of these emerging ideas and plans for growth and regeneration have been used to produce this report.



Thurrock Interim Local Transport Strategy

Connecting Thurrock – Vision 2050

Vision

2 TRANSPORT VISION

2.1 Scope and purposes

2.1.1 The Vision comprises the first of a three-part refresh of Thurrock Councils' Transport Strategy. The long-term Vision extends to 2050, whilst the Strategy and Action/Implementation Plan focus on the period from 2022 to 2037.

2.1.2 The refreshed Transport Strategy will sit alongside the new Thurrock Local Plan to determine how ambitious growth will be delivered sustainably.

2.2 Context

2.2.1 Thurrock lies on the north side of the River Thames, only 20 miles east of central London. It is home to one of the largest shopping complexes in Europe at Lakeside and several ports of national significance - importing and exporting goods and services for the whole UK.

2.2.2 Large tracts of the south of the Borough are developed, stretching along the 18-mile frontage to the River Thames. In sharp contrast, around 60% of the Borough is classed as Greenbelt with historic villages surrounded by valuable agricultural and grazing land.

2.3 Accommodating sustainable growth

2.3.1 Thurrock aims to create better places by integrating planning and transport strategies and taking a more sustainable approach. Integrating sustainable transport into planned new developments is key to achieving that outcome. The Transport Strategy and the Local Plan are being developed side by side to enable sustainable growth in housing and jobs.

2.3.2 Thurrock needs to accommodate significant growth and is working towards a future where every resident has a job with 24,500 new jobs planned for the next 20 years. For housing, this equates to a total housing requirement of up to 32,000 new homes in the period to 2038 (standard method and associated guidance set out in the PPG - 1,169 - 1,381 additional dwellings per annum).

2.3.3 The Government is currently consulting on changes to the standard method, which may increase the minimum number of homes that Thurrock will need to accommodate if taken forward in the present form.

2.3.4 There is a more significant growth vision for a million homes in the Lower Thames, linked with London, Kent, and Essex. Thurrock lies at the heart of the Lower Thames - Europe's most extensive regeneration programme.

2.3.5 The association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) are working together to bring forward a joint spatial plan (JSP) for South Essex, which must plan for 97,000 homes over the period to 2038 and has a longer-term vision that extends over the period to 2050 (152,000 homes). Thurrock is considered well placed to take more than its 25% share of new homes in South Essex.

2.3.6 There are significant plans and proposals in the pipeline for the global Ports in Thurrock, including Thames Freeport. The London Gateway deep-sea container port development and further development at Lakeside and Tilbury docks are all highly significant and substantial developments like Tilbury 2 and the London Resort (on the south side of the Thames).

2.4 The Challenge

2.4.1 Thurrock has a diverse range of places and land uses and associated social, economic, transport and environmental challenges. As well as current challenges, Thurrock is undergoing significant changes that include:

- Population increases by around 10% every decade¹, with predictions estimating an even bigger increase during the most recent ten years from 143,000 in 2011 to about 178,000 at the time of the next census in 2021. Future population estimates from the Office for National Statistics predict that Thurrock's population will have risen to over 209,000 by 2038.²
- Very low levels of skills could continue to be a barrier to greater aspirations and generate good job opportunities. Though it has reasonable employment rates, there are insufficient 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 wellbeing and create community tensions.
- High numbers of HGVs and high traffic flows on strategic roads negatively impact local air quality, CO2 emissions, and congestion. Growth could well make this worse. The worsening air quality will increase respiratory problems whilst increasing congestion could harm job creation and economic performance., particularly concerning international gateways, such as London Gateway.

¹ Since NOMIS official population data sets first available (1981)

² ONS (2019) Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland [online]

- There is generally good accessibility by public transport (although gaps exist) and walking to many services. Still, poor access to further education and hospitals could exacerbate low skills and health issues, the latter being a particular concern with the ageing population. However, many of the new jobs could be away from the main urban areas and less accessible for employment access by non-car means, limiting opportunities for many social groups and failing to deliver equality of opportunity.
- Very low levels of walking and cycling could fuel increasing obesity, so it will be necessary to learn from other places' success in increasing walking and cycling.
- It will be essential to build back better after COVID 19 and increase the use of public transport and walking and cycling to limit traffic growth, especially given forecast increases in congestion and CO2 emissions.
- A pressing need to look further forward in time and address impacts from ageing transportation infrastructure, climate change and system resilience.
- Providing much better transport systems that are more capable of supporting the needs of a growing and changing population.
- Finding better solutions to share highway space as more people and goods travel to, from, and within Thurrock – business as usual is unsustainable and highly likely to worsen traffic congestion, negatively impact street safety, transport service reliability, and the free movement of goods.

2.4.2 The regeneration and growth agenda means that the future transport network will need to be more multi-functional and more multi-modal. The scale of growth anticipated cannot be delivered without significant investment to solve current and future transport infrastructure deficiencies. These transport improvements must also offer benefits and meet the needs of existing Thurrock residents.

2.5 Scope of the vision

2.5.1 The Vision will:

- Describe a high-level vision for future transport in Thurrock.
- Set out a vision for transport in Thurrock up to 2050, identifying what success looks like for different travel types.
- Outline key strategic principles and policies.
- Explain how the various parts of the transport plan (vision; strategy; action/implementation plan) will develop into a whole strategy for sustainable growth and development.
- Highlights broader policy linkages and likely drivers of future travel needs.

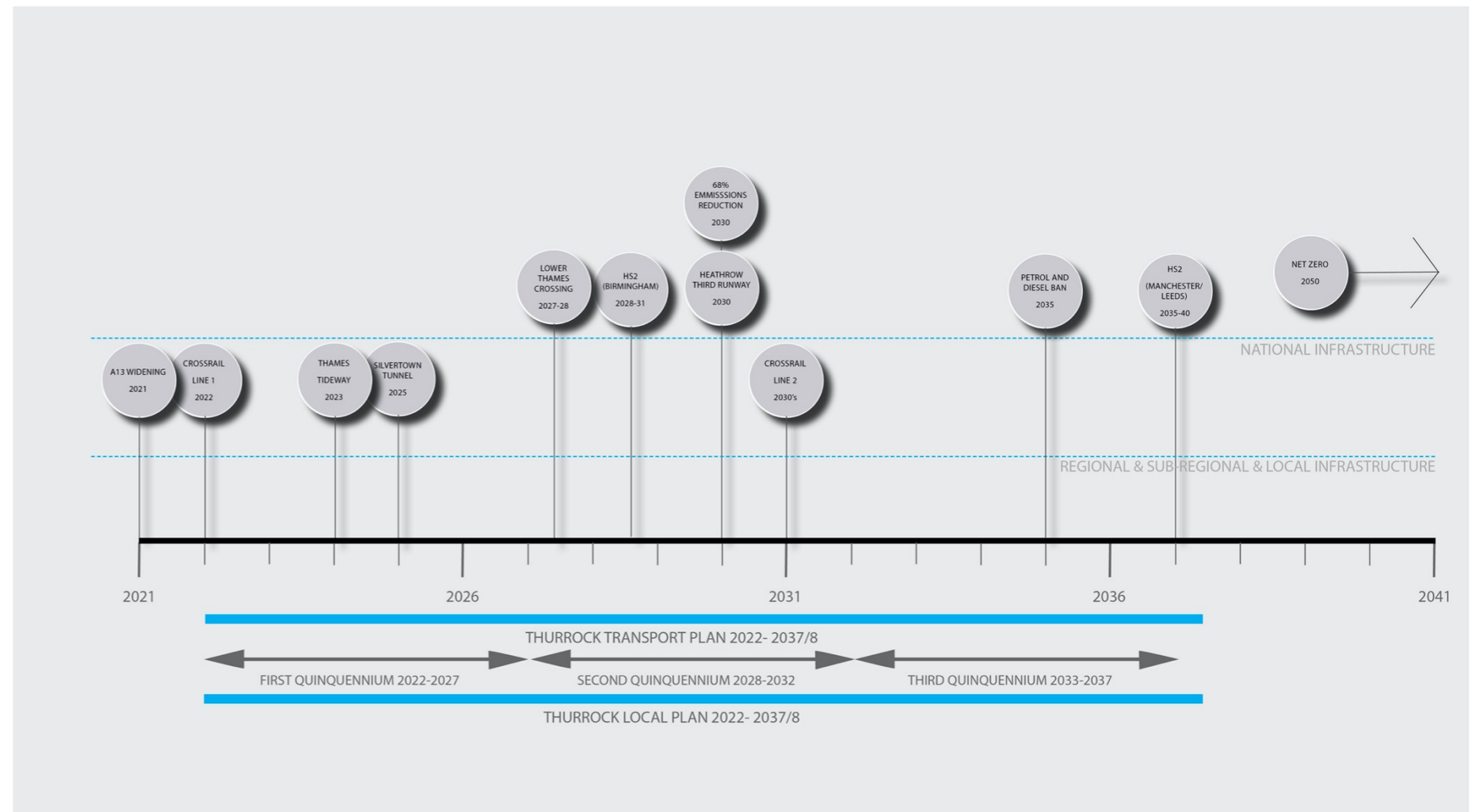


Figure 6 Time horizon

- Include indicative delivery timelines.
- Align with the Council’s broader corporate objectives and the views of local communities.
- Refer to (but not try to resolve) emerging spatial options to planned transport infrastructure.
- Support broader sustainable development objectives.
- Align with the published and emerging transport and local plans of neighbouring authorities, county, and regional/sub-regional transport planning bodies.

2.6 Time horizon

2.6.1 Recent national and international changes and challenges (including Brexit and COVID 19) point to further, significant, and sometimes rapid and unpredictable change in the coming years: This creates a pressing need to prepare and deliver transport strategies at pace and to continue to reflect new and emerging challenges and opportunities.

2.6.2 The Connecting Thurrock Vision 2050 is a 30-year vision that sets the approach and direction for the Thurrock Transport Strategy 2021/22-2036/37. The Transport Strategy - Plan outlines projects, programmes, and plans over five years or quinquennium:

- First Quinquennium 2022-2027
- Second Quinquennium 2028-2032
- Third Quinquennium 2033-2037

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Regional and national transport event horizon (pre-COVID)

- 2021 - A13 Widening
- 2022 Crossrail Line 1 Opening
- 2023 - Thames Tideway
- 2025 - Silvertown Tunnel
- 2029 - Lower Thames Crossing
- 2028-31 - Hs2 (Birmingham)
- 2030 - 68% Emissions Reduction
- 2030 - Heathrow Third Runway
- 2030's Crossrail Line 2
- 2035 - Petrol and Diesel Ban
- 2035-40 Hs2 (Manchester/Leeds)
- 2050 - Net Zero

2.6.3 The time horizon in the diagram shows the Thurrock Transport Strategy's delivery in the context of planned/committed regional, sub-regional and national infrastructure.

2.7 Scale

2.7.1 The vision ranges across a wide range of scales from neighbourhood to global connectivity. This reflects the strategic nature of Thurrock's international gateways and plans for multi-centred growth and the need to manage change in small villages better. The vision focuses first on the people, communities, urban centres, and business in the Borough today and those who come in the future.

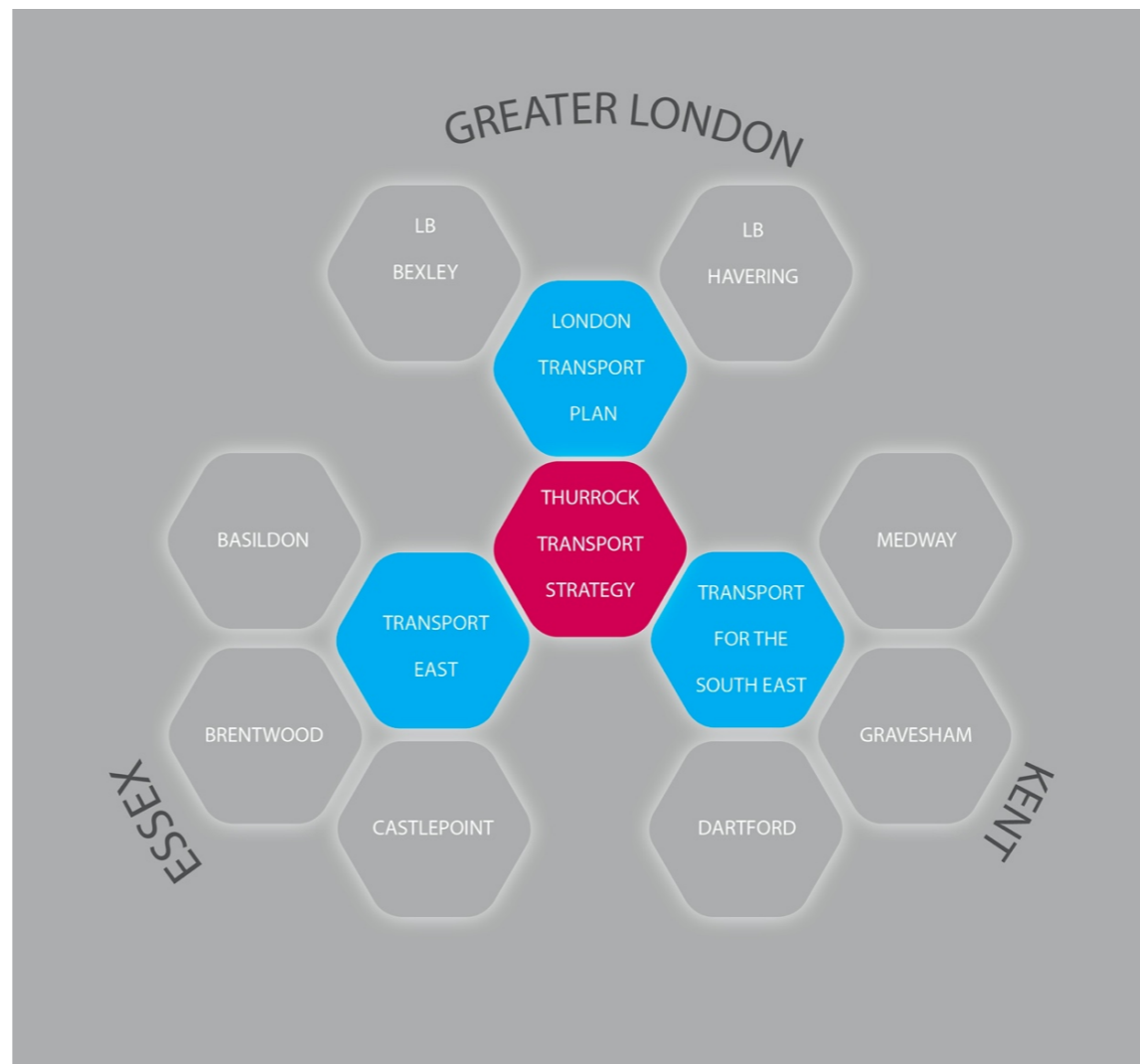


Figure 7 A cooperative approach across adjacent counties

2.7.2 The transport strategy and associated action/implementation programme of projects can be viewed across this range of scales in terms of size and the benefits delivered.

2.8 Partnership working and the duty to cooperate

2.8.1 The vision has been framed on the assumption that all parts of the Transport Strategy (Vision, Strategy, and Action Plan) will be brought forward in close cooperation with adjoining boroughs and counties and sub-regional agencies. The approach will be to work in partnership with both the development and delivery of plans.

Mayor for London - 'London Transport Strategy'

- LB Bexley
- LB Havering

Essex County Council and 'Transport East'

- Basildon
- Brentwood
- Castlepoint

Kent County Council and 'Transport for the South East'

- Dartford
- Gravesham
- Medway

2.8.2 Examining neighbouring authority Local Plans and transport strategies shows the scale of growth across boundaries, the distribution of development and the likely required infrastructure improvements.

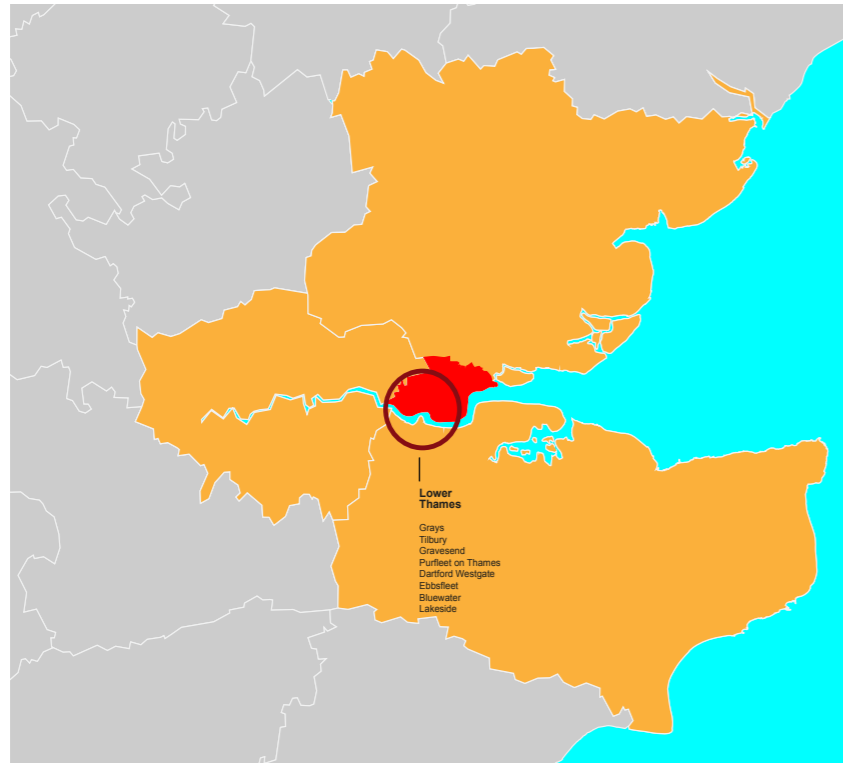


Figure 8 A core area of towns with better connectivity between each other

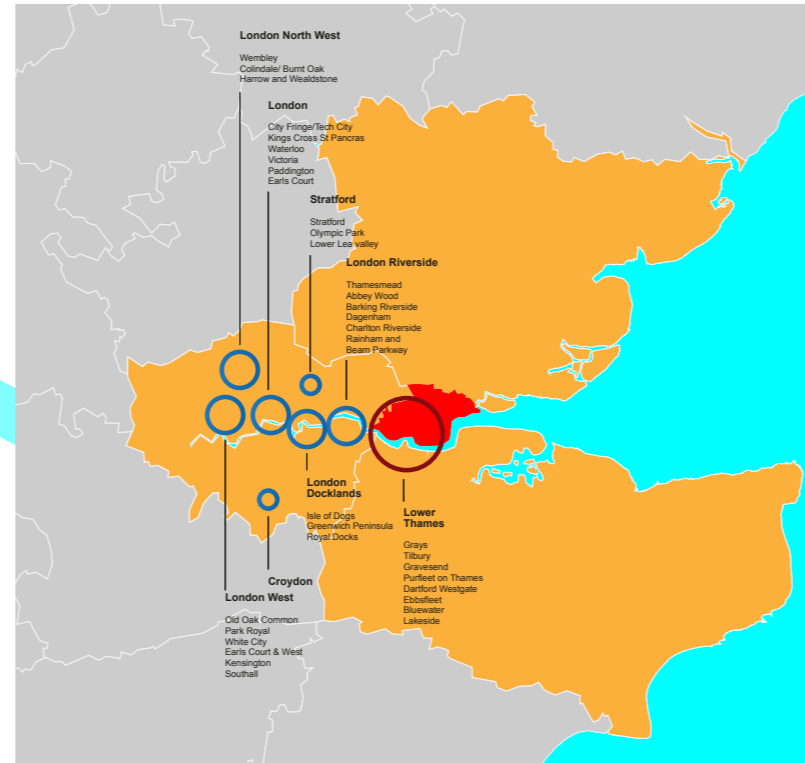


Figure 9 Coordinated strategy with London's Opportunity Areas

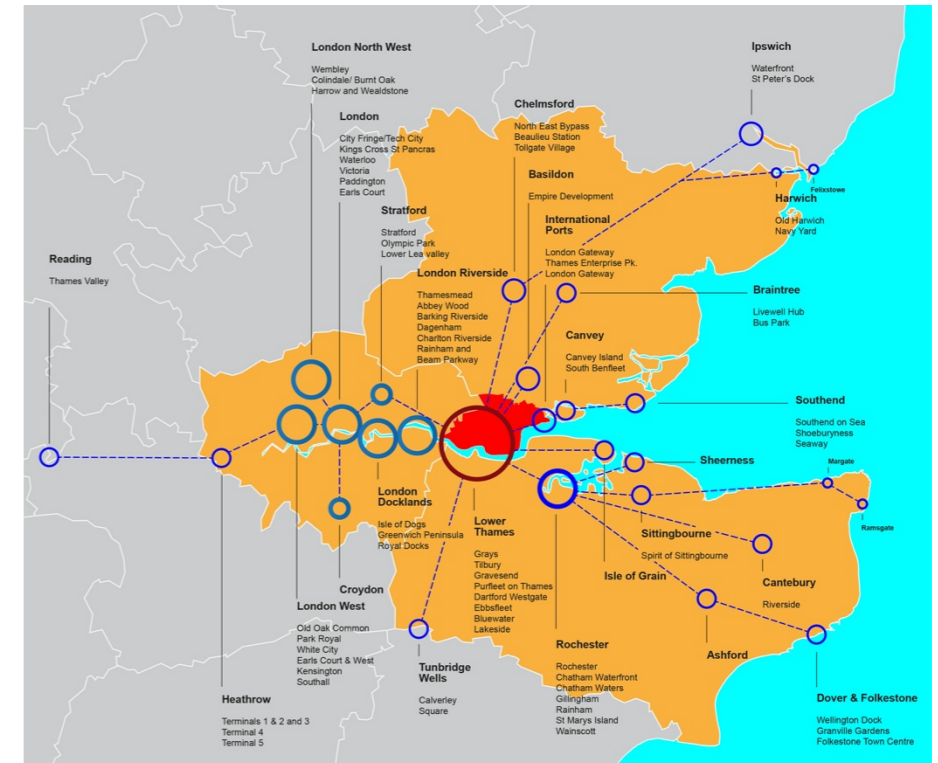


Figure 10 An integrated and connected strategy across the Lower Thames

2.9 An integrated transport strategy coordinated across the Lower Thames

- 2.9.1 The Thurrock Transport Strategy will require cross-boundary infrastructure planning and delivery that involves identifying, funding, and phasing strategic and local infrastructure provision to support growth across the area.
- 2.9.2 The Connecting Thurrock Vision is an integrated strategy coordinated across the Lower Thames.
- 2.9.3 The Vision is for a joined-up approach to transport and development planning that consist of a core area of towns in and around Thurrock.
- 2.9.4 The Vision is to make better connections with these towns and seek an area-wide approach to transport investment and funding for significant regeneration and growth projects.
- 2.9.5 The towns defined in the Vision are Grays, Tilbury, Gravesend, Purfleet on Thames, Dartford, Ebbsfleet, Bluewater and Lakeside.
- 2.9.6 An integrated, area-wide strategy requires cross-boundary working to develop transport network connections between strategic centres. Cooperation is needed to define the scale, distribution and phasing of land development and the major transport schemes required to deliver strategic growth in the Lower Thames. This Vision should be further developed in partnership with neighbouring boroughs and transport bodies.

2.10 Lower Thames City Sub-region

- 2.10.1 The Lower Thames city sub-region puts Thurrock, our close neighbours and associated towns front and centre of regeneration and growth to 2050. It is a vision geared towards working together on joint plans for urban growth and the development of highly connected town and local centres.
- 2.10.2 Acting as a core sub-region gives a significant opportunity to coordinate future transport projects with inner and outer east London's Opportunity Areas: Isle of Dogs; Greenwich Peninsula; Royal Docks; Thamesmead; Abbey Wood; Barking Riverside; Dagenham; Charlton Riverside; Rainham and Beam Parkway; Stratford/ Olympic Park and the Lower Lea Valley.
- 2.10.3 This core region can also build strong connections with regeneration and growth plans in centres across Essex and Kent and through Central London to the Thames Valley in the west. Better connectivity can also be planned for access to Heathrow and Gatwick Airports and major Ports for both people, goods, and trade.

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2.11 Vision

2.11.1 The vision is set out in four parts:

Vision statements - A concise statement of Thurrock’s hopes and expectations.

Goals - Ten interconnected goals - that overlap with each other. The goals should be seen as benchmarks against which projects and programmes of transport infrastructure can be judged. The goals apply to remodelling existing roads, bridges and other assets and providing new infrastructure to support growth and regeneration. The goals will guide the development of the following stages of the Transport Strategy/Implementation Plan.

Strategic focus areas- Nine strategic focus areas – these are foundations for developing the Transport Strategy. Each strategic focus has a background story and is a visioning exercise in its own right.

Vision 2050 Diagram – An abstract diagram illustrating potential transport connections, interchanges, development, and regeneration by 2050.

2.12 Vision Statement

2.12.1 The vision is to create a transport system for Thurrock that improves the quality of life for all people. Over the next 30 years, we want to transform our transport connections to help deliver zero-carbon economic growth. The Connecting Thurrock Vision is to create a transport system that:

- Is fully inclusive, meeting the social needs of residents;
- Is integrated to provide seamless multi-modal journeys;
- Is accessible for everyone, safe and attractive to use;
- Delivers sustainable community regeneration and growth; and
- Reflects the exceptional circumstances of Thurrock as an international centre for logistics and commercial development.

2.12.2 The long-term goal is excellent connectivity, innovation, sustainable economic growth and access to opportunity for all.

2.12.3 The Vision is built on a set of ten goals, nine focus areas and an abstract spatial transport diagram to illustrative systems - parts and the whole.

2.13 Goals

2.13.1 The Vision is based on ten goals.

Goal 1: An accessible and inclusive network - a transport network that is accessible for all.

Goal 2: Reducing emission and improving air quality- reducing all transport emissions, including CO2, nitrous oxide, noise, and particulates.

Goal 3: Climate change resilience and responsibility – a transport network more adaptable to climate change effects whilst promoting development travel patterns to minimise and mitigate climate change impacts.

Goal 4: Health and wellbeing - promoting good physical and mental health and community wellbeing.

Goal 5: Active travel choices- encouraging more people to walk and cycle.

Goal 6: Modal shift to public transport- a significant shift from private car use to public transportation for most journeys.

Goal 7: Safer roads - a feeling of safety and security for all transport network users with no deaths and fewer accidents.

Goal 8: Facilitating development, growth, and regeneration - transport infrastructure investment to facilitate growth and renewal.

Goal 9: Sustainable Development - coordinating land use and transport planning to avoid, minimise and mitigate negative economic, social, environmental and climate impacts.

Goal 10: Managing and maintaining- A well-managed and well-maintained network that is reliable, giving people confidence in journey times.

2.14 Strategic Focus

The Vision comprises nine strategic focus areas.

Growth and regeneration - Connecting and integrating growth and regeneration opportunity areas.

Modes - Multi-modal and modal shift.

Rail - Sub-regional rail connectivity for rail passengers and freight.

Mass Rapid Transit - A fully integrated sub-regional Mass Rapid Transit System.

River -River Thames connectivity and breaking down the barrier of the River.

Walking and cycling - walking and cycling and access for mobility impaired.

Buses - An efficient, integrated, and high-quality bus network.

Roads - Planning for Multi-modal Roads.

Lower Thames Crossing - Securing local benefits and opportunities offered by the Lower Thames Crossing.

2.14.1 Each strategic focus is summarised in Section 2.16 below and described in more detail in Chapters 3-11.

2.15 Goals

2.15.1 Ten broad goals define Thurrock's vision for transport that will guide its realisation.

Goal 1: An accessible and inclusive network - a transport network that is accessible for all.

2.15.2 Thurrock's vision is of an inclusive, accessible, and affordable transport network available for all people.

2.15.3 An accessible and inclusive network will offer better access to employment and educational opportunities, and other vital services, particularly to those in disadvantaged groups or areas.

2.15.4 The thrust of the accessibility strategy will be to improve accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to vital services and facilities, especially further education, employment, and hospitals.

2.15.5 The priority will be to deliver these accessibility improvements where deprivation is most apparent and significant growth can be delivered sustainably.

Goal 2: Reducing emission and improving air quality- reducing all transport emission, including CO2, nitrous oxide, noise, and particulates.

2.15.6 Improving air quality and reducing emissions will be achieved by minimising traffic growth, promoting low-carbon/carbon-free vehicles, and encouraging a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling.

2.15.7 Future improvements will reduce emissions from transport with measures that reduce greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions prioritised.

2.15.8 Air Quality Action Plans will be developed and implemented for all Air Quality Management Areas to ensure that road safety and congestion schemes, particularly in Air Quality Management Areas, do not increase vehicle emissions.

2.15.9 Efforts will focus upon mitigating the adverse impacts of freight operations by reducing emissions from Heavy Goods Vehicles in Thurrock and encouraging rail and water freight where feasible.

2.15.10 A targeted programme to improve air quality, reduce emissions from transport overall and address climate change focused on reducing the need to travel; encouraging a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transportation, such as public transport, walking and cycling; lowering emissions from residual sources, and reducing vulnerability to climate change.

Goal 3: Climate change resilience and responsibility

2.15.11 To contribute towards the mitigation of climate change and reduce the vulnerability of the transport network to climate change impacts, whilst also protecting human health from the adverse effects of air pollution.

2.15.12 A resilient transport network that will be better able to withstand unexpected events, exceptional demand, severe weather conditions and adaptive to climate change effects.

2.15.13 Environmentally sustainable development and travel patterns that will help reduce climate change impacts. Thurrock should help to lead the transport decarbonisation agenda through technology, low emissions, better quality streets and connections to green and blue networks.

2.15.14 When undertaking transport improvements, including maintenance schemes, the Council will integrate climate change adaptation measures into the design to ensure that the transport network's vulnerability is minimised.

Goal 4: Health and wellbeing

2.15.15 Transport can deliver positive health, inclusion and environmental outcomes if adequately integrated with broader plans and policies - the health and wellbeing strategy is key in this area.

2.15.16 Thurrock's future transport network will be designed to promote good physical and mental health and community wellbeing. The key method will be to encourage walking and cycling for all local journeys.

2.15.17 Encouraging active travel choices will increase walking and cycling levels, minimise noise and air pollution, open up access to open spaces and the 'Greengrid' and 'Bluegrid'.

2.15.18 Improving ease of access to health and welfare services - including mental health services.

Goal 5: Active travel choices- encouraging more people to walk and cycle

2.15.19 Encouraging walking and cycling for all local journeys will deliver health benefits.

2.15.20 This goal is related to the 'Walking and Cycling strategic focus area and is considered in more detail in Chapter 8, Walking and Cycling'.

Goal 6: Modal shift to public transport- a significant shift from private car use to public transport.

2.15.21 Thurrock's future transport system's success and the key to reducing congestion is reducing dependency on cars in favour of increased walking, cycling, and public transport use. A shift away from car use combined with encouraging more people to use public transport for most or all their journey will help address health problems, reduce inactivity, cleaning up the air and reducing the blight of road danger.

2.15.22 It will limit the Borough's contribution to climate change and help develop attractive local high streets where people are prioritised over cars.

2.15.23 The demand for travel in Thurrock will be managed by encouraging sustainable development patterns, public transport use, walking and cycling.

2.15.24 Integrated public transport networks, widening travel choices, offering seamless transfer between modes and services with integrated fares, ticketing, and information.

2.15.25 The strategy will be to deliver a targeted programme of measures to reduce the need to travel. The purpose is to encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling, particularly in the urban areas, and improve the efficiency of the transport network, significantly increasing the capacity of routes providing access to key strategic economic hubs. Improving accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling, and improving the safety of these modes (see road safety) provides a solid basis for delivering measures that will encourage modal shift.

2.15.26 Increasing public transport patronage depends on improved bus satisfaction and new travel choices, such as MRT and new rail services and stations.

2.15.27 This goal is related to the growth and 'Multi-modal and Modal Shift' strategic focus area and is considered in more detail in Chapter 3 'Modes'.

Goal 7: Safer roads - no deaths, fewer accidents, a feeling of safety and security for all transport network users.

2.15.28 Reducing road accidents and eliminating deaths are vital in creating a sense of safety and security for all road users.

2.15.29 The Safer Roads strategy will aim to reduce casualties, especially the more severe casualties. Road safety measures cover four main areas child pedestrians, cycle safety, driver improvement and safe journeys to school.

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- 2.15.30 Measures within School Travel Plans that will improve road safety and/or school children's health will be prioritised.
- 2.15.31 The Council will improve pedestrians and cyclists' road safety and aim to mitigate safety concerns that currently act as barriers to using these modes. This will support accessibility by, and modal shift to, walking and cycling. Priority will be given to improving the overall safety of roads in disadvantaged communities and areas around schools, colleges and major employment sites. Road safety measures will be fully integrated into other transport improvements, and widespread 20mph zones will be implemented in those residential areas where the local community supports the measure.
- 2.15.32 A high priority will be given to implementing accident remedial schemes at locations and along specific stretches of road where there are clusters of accidents resulting in deaths or serious injuries. The number of killed or seriously injured casualties recorded in recent years, and likely to be prevented in future years, will be used to help further prioritise these road safety interventions. Education, training, and publicity measures will improve road safety, focusing on improving the road safety of vulnerable road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists, reducing dangerous traffic speeds, and reducing drink driving. The Council will also provide expertise to the police to help with enforcement on critical issues, such as drink driving.

Goal 8: Facilitating development, growth, and regeneration - Transport infrastructure investment to facilitate growth and regeneration

- 2.15.33 Transport infrastructure investment is essential to deliver better opportunities for Thurrock's residents and employees from regeneration and new homes and business opportunities for all.
- 2.15.34 The transport strategy will be developed to help support physical, social and economic regeneration. The focus will be on the regeneration strategies emerging for Purfleet, Grays and Tilbury and Estate regeneration and Housing plans that will come forward over the short, medium and longer term. The emphasis of the approach to social regeneration will be on access to services and opportunities and access to employment, education, and health care. Access to further education is especially critical given the low levels of skills and qualifications and the need to provide the knowledge sector skills. The priority will be to target those residents and communities facing disadvantage.
- 2.15.35 This goal is related to the growth and 'Regeneration and Growth' strategic focus area considered in more detail in Chapter 3 'Regeneration and Growth'.



Figure 11 Vision goals

Goal 9: Sustainable Development - coordinating land use and transport planning to avoid, minimise and mitigate negative social, environmental and climate change impacts.

- 2.15.36 Thurrock's future vision is for a coordinated and integrated approach to land use and transport planning to avoid, minimise and mitigate negative social, environmental and climate impacts.
- 2.15.37 Reducing congestion and delay is key to promoting sustainable economic regeneration and growth. Encouragement will therefore be given to transport solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce congestion.
- 2.15.38 Improving connectivity and accessibility for isolated communities is key to promoting the social regeneration of Thurrock's communities. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes by giving people a real choice about travelling.

2.15.39 Transport has a vital role to play in facilitating sustainable development, particularly for new homes and jobs. Investment should be guided towards locations that can support the development of a sustainable transport network.

Goal 10: Managing and maintaining - a better managed and well-maintained network

- 2.15.40 A better-maintained network will be a safer system with fewer accidents, less disruption and fewer delays and less need for unplanned works.
- 2.15.41 A coordinated and costed asset management and maintenance programme will result in a systematic approach to repairs and maintenance that anticipates problems arising from degradation.
- 2.15.42 A more reliable transport network will give people confidence in journey times and quality of roads and public transport systems.

2.16 Strategic Focus

2.16.1 The Vision comprises a series of strategic focuses as a basis to develop the transport strategy and implementation/action plan. Each strategic focus has a background story and is a visioning exercise in its own right.

2.16.2 The Strategic focuses are described below and in greater detail in the following chapters (3-11).

Vision 1: Connecting and integrating growth and regeneration opportunity areas

2.16.3 The vision for connecting and integrating growth and regeneration opportunity areas includes housing, business and employment, freight and logistics and small and larger urban centres.

2.16.4 Good quality connectivity and accessibility are essential in creating sustainable, well-functioning and liveable communities. The challenge of integrating land use transport plans is to ensure high-quality public transport networks serve housing development and regeneration lands. Underlying planned estate and community regeneration is the need to deliver better access to services, jobs, and homes.

2.16.5 Both strategic and local infrastructure improvements are required to support the growth and regeneration of town centres, village cores, district and local centres, shopping parades, and large-scale retail centres such as Lakeside. The foundations for the revitalisation of Thurrock's urban centres will be creating better-connected places that are walkable and cycle-friendly, and easy to access by public transport.

2.16.6 High-quality transport connectivity underlies Thurrock's current and future reputation as a dynamic and competitive borough, attractive to foreign direct investment and responsive to business needs. Future transport infrastructure investment needs to meet community and business expectations to support and encourage growth and development.

2.16.7 There will still be a need for local vehicle access with efficient servicing and parking - key to Thurrock's urban centres' economic competitiveness. The challenge will be to protect and enhance the environmental character and range of services available to local communities and making places that are not traffic dominated.

Vision 2: Multi-modal and mode shift

2.16.8 Thurrock's transport vision is not a mode-by-mode strategy. The Vision focuses instead on developing an integrated, sustainable, and well-coordinated transport system that supports a wide range of different travel needs and encourages people to make better travel choices.



Figure 12 Nine strategic focus areas

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2.16.9 We call this a future for an integrated multi-modal transport network. The integrated, multi-modal network will be achieved by focusing upon principles, strategy objectives and themes that apply to - and cut across - individual travel modes. The goal is a more multi-modal network with increased capacity and quality for walking, cycling, and using public transport and a modal shift to help support growing places.

2.16.10 The vision is for a sustainable and well-connected transport system that supports a wide range of travel needs, reducing car dependency in favour of walking, cycling, and using public transport. This vision is built around two wrapped together concepts- 'Multi-modal' and 'Modal Shift'.

- 'Multi-modal' – widening the choice of ways to move around Thurrock.
- 'Modal shift' – encouraging people to choose sustainable travel modes.

2.16.11 A vision for movement in Thurrock requires building up more multi-modal systems, with better connectivity between these systems and places - both inside and outside the Borough. This multi-modal approach applies to i) the walking and cycling network, ii) the road network, and iii) the public transport network.

2.16.12 Modal shift means more people using all of these networks, and it means a necessary increase in capacity and quality across all three networks. For the road network, this means adding more multi-modal functions to support a shift to walking, cycling, and using public transport.

Vision 3: Sub-regional rail connectivity for passengers and freight

2.16.13 The overall rail vision encompasses wider area capacity and connectivity, Thurrock rail capacity and connectivity, and the rail stations in Thurrock. The vision sees Thurrock benefit from better rail transport connections – residents, businesses, workers, students, school children, and visitors will benefit from improved local, national, and international connections.

2.16.14 Rail connections need to be made much stronger if Thurrock is to support a significant increase in planned economic growth and realise the Borough's full potential as an important economic hub. The vision is one of new, direct connections to places in Essex, Kent, the West End, north, south, and west London. The proposed strategic approach to realising the vision and goals is five-fold:

- Multi-modal- mixed modality – combining multiple rail-based modes operated as a single integrated transport system.
- Increase capacity - essential to support the delivery of new homes and jobs and to improve public transport accessibility to and through Thurrock.

- Better connectivity - strengthening connections to London, Essex and Kent neighbours and the growing places of Thurrock- new communities, employment areas and mixed-urban centres.
- Promote station interchange – new/enhanced stations and interchanges to act as a catalyst to regenerate existing places, and enable residential intensification, new uses, and other new development.
- Tackle freight bottlenecks – releasing rail capacity bottlenecks in north London, to consider wider connectivity including cross-Thames and options for level crossings to help provide more train paths.

2.16.15 The new sub-regional rail network and stations need to be fully integrated into a borough-wide public transport network to provide seamless multi-modal journeys.

Vision 4: A fully integrated sub-regional Mass Rapid Transit System

2.16.16 The vision is for a new, direct, high capacity and fast transport system to connect across the Borough and serve outer East London, North Kent, South Essex, and east to Canvey Island. The system sits somewhere between a conventional bus network and a railway. We have termed this MRT or 'Metro'. The overall vision is five-fold:

- Extending rapid transit across the River Thames, Mardyke and Holehaven Creek.
- A multi-modal approach – a mixed MRT network that integrates urban/light rail, tram, high-speed buses.
- A staged approach – with a high-speed bus network developed first.
- Connecting through and around areas where buses are affected by congestion.
- Connected to and through areas and communities detached from the existing rail network (both away from main lines, between main stops, missing rail connections, using freight lines etc.)
- Interchange points with high-quality facilities and place-making related functions

2.16.17 The vision will bring benefits to Thurrock and our neighbours – so that residents, businesses, workers, learners, and visitors will significantly gain improved local, national and international connections.

2.16.18 The MRT concept to be developed is for a hybrid system either as an off-road rail-based MRT (such as Docklands Light Railway) or road running trams (such as Croydon Tram) and/or possibly off-line high-speed bus corridors (such Metrobus). The system will need to link to points outside the Borough. This will involve crossing rivers, straits, and marches to the east, south and west. Several possible main crossing points should be considered to see if they are feasible, viable in financial and economic terms and implementable.

Vision 5: River Thames Connectivity and Breaking down the barrier of the River

2.16.19 The vision for Thurrock's is a strengthening of the River as a transport artery with enhanced connections to the broader transport network. This will allow new, direct links to places in central London, East London, Essex, and Kent and support new communities, employment areas, and mixed-urban centres. The vision is based on a need for much stronger cross-river connections across all transport modes. Current planning is focused on increasing road capacity through new crossings. However, Thurrock's future growth potential will not be fully realised without new and better public transport connections (bus, MRT and rail) and walking-cycling connections. The overall river vision is five-fold:

- North-south cross-river connectivity- increasingly connected.
- Thames tributary connectivity (Mardyke River and Holehaven/Vange Creek).
- Multi-modal crossings (including public transport links and reallocating existing/planned space).
- West-east river connectivity and increased capacity.
- Connecting directly to the riverside strip.

2.16.20 The vision for breaking down the barrier of the River involves delivering the opportunity for the development of a fast riverboat network. Associated with these new services will be new infrastructures to include new and improved piers along both sides of the River that connect with road/rail interchanges and related to significant regeneration and growth projects. It also involves new/improved river crossings to act as a catalyst to regenerate riverside neighbourhoods and enable urban centre residential intensification, employment and other new development. The new cross-river connections need to be fully integrated with local transport networks along the Thurrock riverside, including new stations and interchanges to immediately serve the housing and employment growth areas along the northern riverbank.

Vision 6: Walking and cycling

- 2.16.21 The vision for Thurrock is a place where walking and riding a bicycle is always safe and convenient for everyone and where active travel is the top choice for recreation and everyday trips to shops, school, college or work.
- 2.16.22 The vision is for bold ideas for new connections and enhancement of existing routes - deliverable projects that will get more people to choose walking or cycling and to be able to do so safely, confidently, and knowledgeably with great wayfinding systems. At a strategic level, our approach is guided by several key layers:
- Accessibility for all - to improve accessibility for walking and cycling and the mobility-impaired, especially to access education, employment, healthcare, and open spaces
 - Modal shift – an integrated, sustainable, and well-coordinated transport system that supports a wide range of different travel needs, reducing dependency on cars and favouring increased walking, cycling and public transport use.
 - ‘Greengrid’ – enhanced existing and new connections as part of the green space network weaving through Thurrock as a network of interlinked, multi-purpose open and green spaces.
 - ‘Bluegrid’ - enhanced and new connections as part of the Bluegrid of rivers, streams and other water bodies define that define the edges and weave through Thurrock.
 - Creating gaps around the edges of urban areas - a comprehensive network of on and off-road walking and cycling routes to connect into and through the heart of each community or business district.
 - Reducing severance – breaking down the barriers caused by rivers, roads and railways for new/enhanced bridges, underpasses, and paths alongside the major physical edges/boundaries between places.
 - Fixing missing links - great potential to create new and improved connections between new and existing communities and main interchange hubs and major movement corridors
 - Multi-modal roads - sharing the space in the road and looking at how existing and new streets can be made more friendly and safer for walkers and cyclists
 - More and better walking and cycling facilities - an array of new facilities that can serve walkers and cyclists from wayfinding systems, bike share schemes, secure cycle storage, water fountains and benches to rest along the way.
- 2.16.23 The approach is to promote walking bicycling to improve our communities' health, vitality, and happiness. The projects that will deliver the vision involve physical infrastructure changes and public health measures, including behavioural change initiatives.

- 2.16.24 The vision's priority is to deliver accessibility improvements where deprivation is most apparent to help tackle social exclusion and promote equality of opportunity.

Vision 7: An efficient, integrated, and high-quality bus network

- 2.16.25 The vision for Thurrock is for high-quality bus services that offer faster, more reliable, accessible, comfortable, and convenient travel integrated with and complementing rail, walking and cycling networks.
- 2.16.26 Most public transport journeys in Thurrock are by bus. The future development of the rail and MRT networks and the promotion of cycling and walking are unlikely to change the importance of the bus network in keeping Thurrock moving, helping people to get to work, the local shops, or the library. The overall vision is four-fold:
- A transformation in the overall quality of services and infrastructure
 - Interchange and integration – bus to bus; bus to rail; bus to riverboat and bus to MRT
 - New routes and connections – to match growth from development and regeneration
 - Improving existing routes and journeys – increase frequencies, reliability, and travel time
- 2.16.27 An enhanced bus network including increased priority, new links, and capacity to serve growing places. The return to growth in bus journeys will place significant capacity pressure on local passenger bus services underlining the pressing need to market bus travel that is affordable, clean and with flexible ticketing.
- 2.16.28 Bus travel priorities also include facilitating public transport movement between Thurrock and the other regional transport nodes by tackling congestion along the key bus routes, improving interchange between modes and a new bus-based rapid transit links.

Vision 8: Multi-modal Roads

- 2.16.29 Quality roads are fundamental to Thurrock's future success. They will continue to make it possible for people to travel for work and leisure and for businesses to move goods and materials. The road network will remain the backbone of our transport system, carrying passenger journeys and freight, keeping the population connected and the economy flowing.

- 2.16.30 Thurrock's vision is to transform our road network, the experience of driving on them and the environmental place quality of the neighbourhoods and landscape through which roads pass. Their transformation should facilitate economic regeneration and growth, sustainably serving new housing and addressing the strategic imperatives of climate change. Our vision is for smooth, safe, and reliable motoring, more sustainable roads, and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies.
- 2.16.31 ‘Multi-Modal Roads’ provides an overarching framework for all streets and roads in Thurrock. It is about making our streets easier to get around - and healthier and pleasant to be in or near, while achieving our ambition for most journeys in Thurrock to be made by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 2.16.32 Multi-modal roads refer to different types of road and the different ways roads are used. There is no single solution to improving Thurrock's roads because they have different roles. Many of them also change in character throughout the day, across the week and along their length – at school drop off and pick up times, for example, or at times of the day when goods are being delivered to businesses.
- 2.16.33 Better connectivity is vital, with the emphasis on modal connectivity and interchange. Multi-modal roads provide the capacity to enable new housing and business developments, encourage trade, and attract inward investment into Thurrock.
- 2.16.34 The proposition is to design streets to be equitable and inclusive, serving diverse users' needs and functions with particular attention to people with physical and mental disabilities, older people, and children. Regardless of income, gender, culture, or language, whether one is moving or stationary, roads must always put people first.
- 2.16.35 The strategy for multi-modal roads will define road qualities for street types and become part of an efficient, well-managed and well-maintained network with low levels of disruption from new road building, maintenance, and repair.
- 2.16.36 The principle is for multi-modal roads to be ‘better neighbours’ to the places through which they pass, e.g., places for people, healthy streets, landscape enhancement, a net gain in biodiversity. An effective strategic road network can also be a ‘Locally sensitive network’.
- 2.16.37 The goal is also for sustainability, green infrastructure, resilience – roads that connect green infrastructure and include sustainable drainage measures. Thurrock's future multi-modal streets will be more resilient and climate-responsive whilst embracing technological developments. This means new mobility - automated driving, connected transport systems and networks, electric vehicles, and infrastructure for shared use.

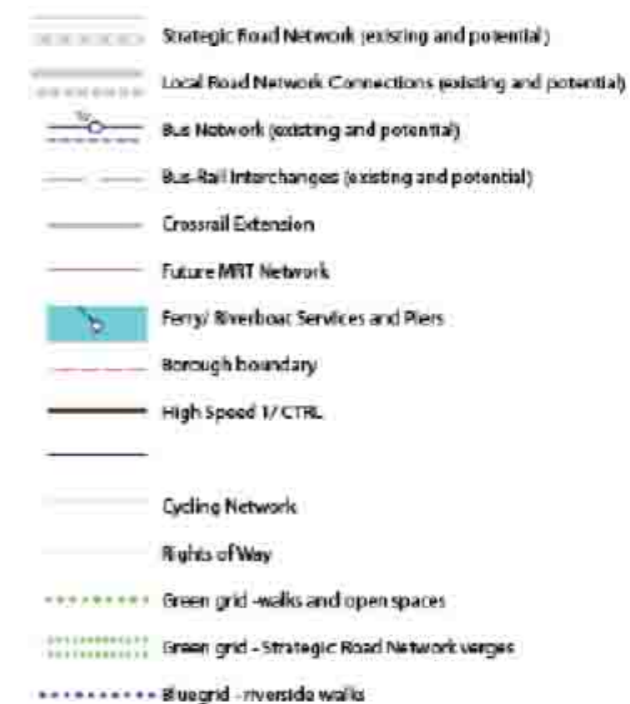
VISION STATEMENT (FIRST DRAFT)

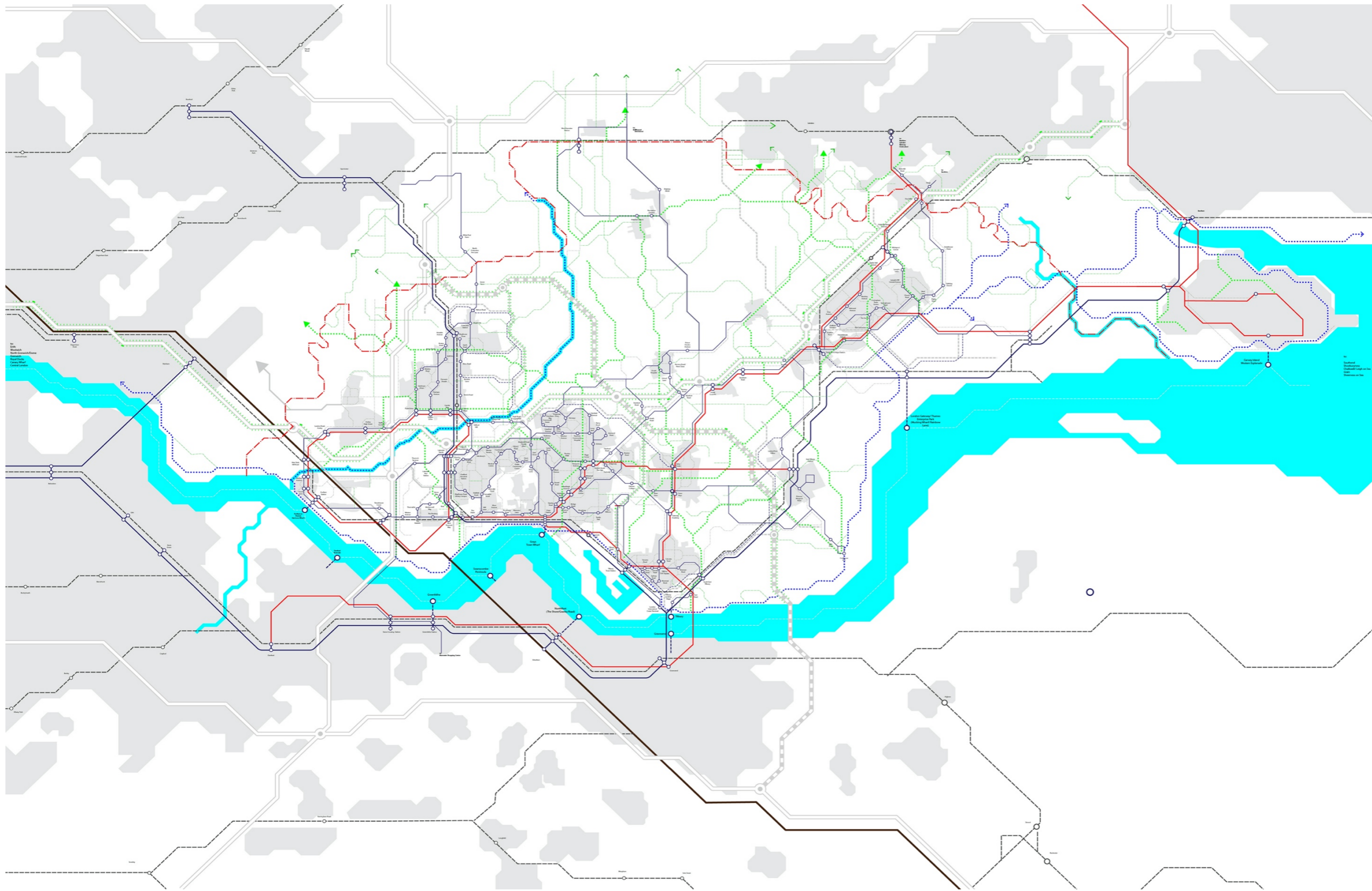
Vision 9: Securing local benefits and opportunities offered by the Lower Thames Crossing

- 2.16.38 The Council strongly opposes the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) and has raised numerous concerns with Highways England on the construction and longer-term impacts of the new crossing.
- 2.16.39 The main reasons that Thurrock Council oppose the Lower Thames Crossing are that the local benefits are too few and the impacts too great and insufficiently mitigated.
- 2.16.40 Nevertheless, the Council is committed to working with Highways England to ensure a complete mitigation package comes forward in parallel with the LTC scheme and designed to limit harm to the Borough's interests.
- 2.16.41 The Council has identified areas where the LTC Scheme will cause harm within the Thurrock which includes restricted access onto the LTC from local roads so that LTC benefits long-distance travellers and not Thurrock residents; traffic impacts on local roads and at A13 junctions; homes lost and blighted and development land lost leading to long-term disruption of Thurrock's economic growth and development ambitions; severance across the Borough with public rights of way severed and diverted; negative impacts to health and wellbeing as a result of air and noise pollution; major construction impacts on local communities; and increasing greenhouse gas and carbon emissions.
- 2.16.42 The alignment and design of LTC is the responsibility of Highways England. The decision whether to construct the new tunnel and road lies with the Government. The current position is that the scheme (the Development Consent Order) was withdrawn on 20th November 2020. Should the scheme proceed, Thurrock Council's goals are to:
 - Limit or avoid constraints upon future growth, including severance and blight.
 - Increasing local access onto the LTC
 - Revise and amend the scheme to increase the local benefits.
 - Secure a complete programme of mitigation.
- 2.16.43 A range of options for offsetting the LTC scheme's identified adverse impacts are identified in an Economic Costs Study for Thurrock Council by Hatch - Lower Thames Crossing -Mitigating the Negative Impacts and Maximising the Benefits to Create a Positive legacy for Thurrock.
- 2.16.44 The Hatch report was produced in February 2021, summarising the findings of the Lower Thames Crossing mitigation benefits study (November 2020). The report identifies 57 individual schemes and interventions that could help reduce the negative impacts of the LTC construction, enhance the scheme's operation, support residents and businesses through the transition, and provide a series of lasting legacy provision across Thurrock.

2.17 Vision Diagram

2.17.1 The vision diagram illustrates an idealised transport network for Thurrock in the year 2050.





Vision 2050 Diagram (To be updated)

The vision diagram illustrates an idealised transport network for Thurrock in the year 2050.



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