

15 September 2021		ITEM: 7
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee		
Transport Strategy and Vision Update		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Mat Kiely, Transportation Services Strategic Lead		
Accountable Assistant Director: Leigh Nicholson, Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection		
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers, Director Public Realm		
This report is: Public		

Executive Summary

Following the TTS report presented to PTR O&S in January 2020, this report seeks to update committee members on the progress made in developing the 'Connecting Thurrock Vision' document and the emerging Thurrock Transport Strategy.

This report provides an update on the steps taken to progress internal engagement and develop the long term Connecting Thurrock Vision which informs the emerging TTS. Focusing on the Vision document has enabled a robust approach to be taken on the developing strategy, ensuring that key goals and themes are identified in order to inform the TTS as it evolves.

This report also identifies the next steps and broad timescales for completing a draft of the TTS that can be consulted upon (from November) and approved by the Council.

1.0 Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the progress made in preparing an updated Thurrock Transport Strategy and long term Connecting Thurrock Vision and endorse the approach set out within this report.**

2.0 Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Over the next fifteen years, Thurrock will change on a scale not seen for several generations.
- 2.2 The Council has therefore taken the decision to develop a long term Vision and Strategy that will set out the approach to ensure our transport network evolves in line with the Council's Local Plan growth aspirations and facilitates investment and planned growth that will benefit Thurrock's existing and future communities.
- 2.3 The approach to developing the TTS was set out within the previous O&S report and identified how the Transport Development Team will produce a new TTS that is focused on delivering network improvements that will support growth and the need for a changing / adaptive transport network.
- 2.4 Our approach to developing the TTS has focused on production of the 'Connecting Thurrock Vision' document, which sets out the Council's long term vision for transport in Thurrock and to create a transport system that supports quality of life and health and wellbeing for all people and transforms our transport options and connections to help deliver zero-carbon economic growth.
- 2.5 The long-term goal is excellent connectivity, innovation, sustainable economic growth and access to opportunity for all.
- 2.6 This is a chance to rethink the approach to transport and reshape how people travel in and through the borough while facilitating transport investment and planned growth.
- 2.7 The Transport Strategy 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.
- 2.8 The TTS has progressed with input from colleagues and council departments. Various workshop sessions have been held to ensure cross-department input and opinions are used to help shape the Vision and Strategy.

3.0 Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

A new Transport Strategy

- 3.1 The Thurrock Transport Strategy 2021/22 to 2036/37 will establish a new strategic approach, policies and guidelines and detail how we will plan for and deliver improvements across the network. 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.

- 3.2 The Vision has been developed to identify a long term aspirational yet achievable view of what should be considered and what can be delivered to enhance the transport network. The Connecting Thurrock Vision has been developed with input and from colleagues and lead members to ensure a holistic approach.
- 3.3 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. The Connecting Thurrock Vision 2050 extract document is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The Vision has evolved by identifying ten goals and strategic themes. These are set out below:-
- Goal 1: An accessible and inclusive network - a transport network that is accessible for all.
 - Goal 2: Reducing emissions 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.
- 3.5 The above goals translate into the following range of accompanying themes which will provide strategic direction and focus for the TTS and how the Council improves and manages network improvements for the future.



- **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, 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.

3.6 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.

Growth

3.7 The Transport Vision and Strategy will play a vital role in identifying the transport measures and key infrastructure projects that need to be delivered to support the Council's growth aspirations for new sites for

residential development and employment opportunities. A sound transport system is critical to the success of new housing and jobs and avoids putting additional strain on local transport networks.

- 3.8 Providing high-quality public transport connections and safe and attractive walking and cycling routes will enable people to choose active and healthy ways to travel while supporting higher-density development. Active Travel options and a Mass Rapid Transit solution are just two examples of vital components which will ensure that the transport network remains free-flowing and offers real sustainable alternatives as the council delivers its growth targets.
- 3.9 Key pieces of infrastructure will also be needed. The Vision and Transport Strategy will help to identify and prioritise what is needed in terms of infrastructure and major projects. Some will be delivered by the Council, some will be delivered by Highways England or developers. The Transport Vision work has already started to identify what the key pieces of infrastructure are. More work is needed to understand how all of this will be delivered.

Additional progress

- 3.10 There is also evidence of reasonable progress being made within other work areas that support the emerging Vision and Strategy. Previously we reported on a number of key work areas and documents that would need to be progressed in order to inform the TTS work. A summary update is provided below.
- **Transport Baseline Study** – a baseline study has been prepared to document the existing transport and travel situation in Thurrock. The study will inform the transport planning evidence for the emerging Local Plan. This study focused on accessibility, congestion, safety, pollution & health and affordability.
 - **Strategic Model** – a brief has been developed to support appropriate procurement of a strategic transport model.
 - **Transport Area / Site Assessments** – brief developed to support the procurement of suitable resource and progress a ‘pilot’ example of what is needed for each of the LP areas.
 - **Mass Rapid Transit study** – brief to be developed to enable an MRT study to be progressed.
 - **AQ Assessment and Model** – procurement exercise undertaken to gain AQ model support. Appropriate support identified to develop AQ & Health Strategy.
 - **Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP)** – enhanced partnership option identified and submitted to DfT. The Council is to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan by the end of October 2021. The BSIP will identify prioritisation of enhancements to bus service provision within the borough.

- **Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan** – resource identified to produce an LCWIP for the borough. This will identify where cycling and walking infrastructure is needed and will support future funding bids.
- **Flood Risk Management Plan** – the authority has a duty to produce a Flood Risk Management Plan. Thurrock's FRMP identifies the key areas and measures that need to be addressed.
- **Flood and Coast Resilience** – the Council has worked collaboratively with Southend to submit a funding bid for flood resilience. £6m is to be shared across the authorities to address resilience issues.
- **Parking Strategy & Standards** – Parking documents are to be presented to O&S for comment and approval in September.

Next steps and timescale

3.11 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 - July 2021
- Consultation – November 21 – February 22
- Approved and adopted – June 2022

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

4.0 Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 It is important that Members are updated on the progress that has been made in developing the Transport Vision and Transport Strategy, which supports and underpins the Council's growth ambitions.

4.2 The information and updates provide a useful high level summary of the work undertaken to date, how it integrates with the emerging Local Plan and the level of work required to draft a TTS document that can be shared for engagement and feedback. Input from this Committee will help to ensure there is ongoing momentum and support for the Vision and Transport Strategy.

5.0 Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 The next step will be to develop a draft Transport Strategy which will be submitted to the Council's consultation portal in due course. Consultation will run for a minimum of 6 weeks, allowing local residents, business and other interested parties to comment. The consultation document will also be promoted to local residents, interest groups and key stakeholders through established meetings, forums and interest groups.

6.0 Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The TTS will have an impact upon all communities within Thurrock. Developing a long term TTS which aligns with the Council's emerging Local Plan is vital to making Thurrock a place where people of all ages can work, play, live and stay in a clean environment that everyone has reason to take pride in.

7.0 Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

An operational and staffing budget is required to deliver the revised TTS. Funding for this has been identified and applied through the Local Plan funding allocation. If any further funding is needed then either further Local Plan funding or the Transport Development team budget will be used.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Since this report is essentially an update to Members on progress to date and likely next steps, rather than one recommending any decision, there are no direct legal implications as such. By way of background to the key statutory provisions, the Council, as local transport authority, is required, under the Transport Act 2000, to develop policies, for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within its area and carry out its functions so as to implement those policies. These policies and proposals for their implementation must be set out in a Local Transport Plan, in one or more documents, to be prepared by the authority. The authority is required to keep this Plan under review and they may alter or replace it if they consider it appropriate to do so. There are detailed consultation requirements when preparing and reviewing a Plan. The Plan or any alterations to it must take into account relevant Government policy and

have regard to Government guidance on climate change mitigation or adaption and on protection of or improvement to the environment. In due course, as soon as practicable after a new Plan has been prepared or the Plan has been altered, the authority will, amongst other things, need to publish it and send a copy of it to the Secretary of State for Transport.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**
Strategic Lead, Community Development,
Community Development Team

An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the refreshed TTS.

7.4 **Other** implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Local Plan transport background studies

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Connecting Thurrock Vision 2050 extract

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