

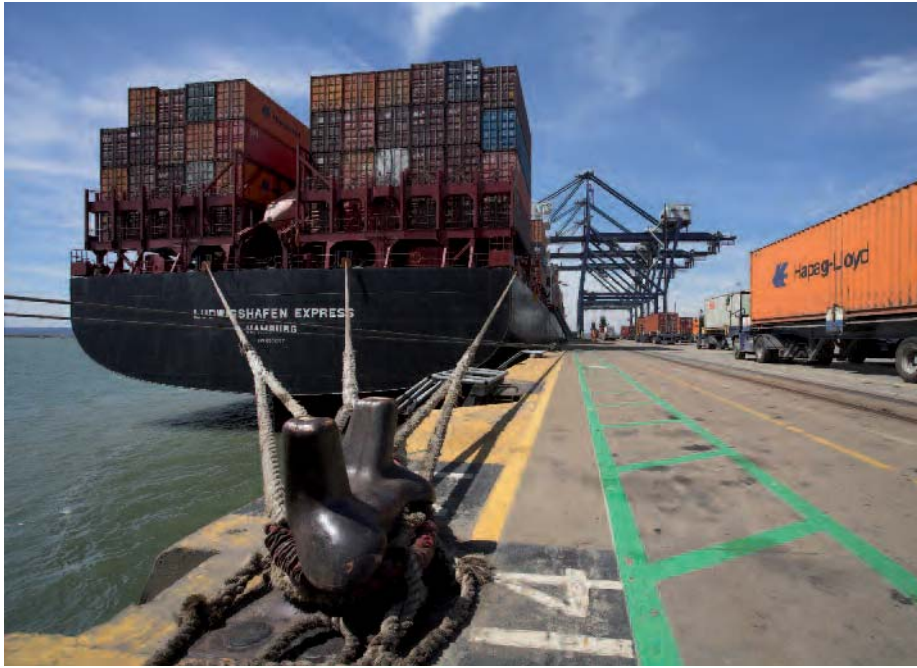
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Kent -
- Unlocking Kent's Potential

# Growth without gridlock

A transport delivery plan for Kent

December 2010





Oliver Mannion



# Growth without gridlock

A transport delivery plan for Kent

## Contents

Foreword: our offer to Government	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Delivering Growth and Prosperity	5
3. Unlocking Kent's Potential	6
4. Transport's Wider Contribution	8
5. Our 20 Year Funding Plan	10
6. The Thames Gateway: gearing up for growth	15
7. The Channel Corridor: relieving the pressure	26
8. West Kent: cutting congestion along the A21 corridor	36
9. East Kent: radical solutions needed	41
10. An Integrated Public Transport Network: supporting Kent's workforce	47
11. Local Development Frameworks: securing infrastructure	55
12. Priorities for Growth without gridlock: the big, key, transport drivers for change	60

# Foreword

## Our offer to Government

Kent has South East England's greatest potential to deliver economic growth worth billions of pounds to the UK economy and to stimulate private-sector-led recovery.

The schemes identified in this programme for regeneration form a collective package which, if delivered in its totality, will deliver benefits on a scale far greater than the sum of its parts.

Kent County Council (KCC) fully supports the Coalition Government's view that the definition of local investment priorities should be in the hands of local government, working side-by-side with business and communities and we stand ready to take our delivery plan forward as an early pilot of this approach.

This document pulls together the big strategic transport solutions but does not try to include everything. It highlights those schemes that we feel can be delivered by creative and innovative means. We want to work with Central Government and therefore ask of them:

- Give KCC and its partners the power and funding to take forward strategic transport projects which were previously the responsibility of Central Government; to identify and realise efficiencies; and to deliver swift and meaningful growth.
- We need cheaper and faster ways to deliver strategic infrastructure. We propose the transfer of Highways Agency budgets and powers to local transport authorities in order to remove the existing duplication of maintenance functions and to enable local government

and business to take more strategic decisions about sub-regional priorities so we can substantially reduce costs. This would enable KCC to progress long-awaited schemes such as the dualling of the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury, which is crucial to relieving congestion and improving access to the new Pembury Hospital.

- We also need Government to play its part. Given the national strategic importance of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, we have commissioned studies on the feasibility and benefits of this vital piece of infrastructure and ask the Government to act swiftly upon its commitment to conduct a detailed feasibility study of the principal crossing options. We also ask the Government to hold firm on its pledge, in the National Infrastructure Plan, to bring forward a scheme of foreign lorry road user charging. The revenue raised from the charge must be used to fund a long-term solution to Operation Stack as well as the other vital schemes identified in this transport delivery plan for Kent.

KCC has exciting and realistic plans for the future. We have already produced 21st Century Kent – Unlocking Kent's Potential, our framework for economic development over the next 20 years and with our excellent track record of working with Government and business to bring forward strategic infrastructure schemes, we have in place a clear strategic base on which to proceed and are now ready to deliver.

**The Country is at a crossroads and we need to get on and deliver these improvements.**



**Paul Carter**  
**Leader of Kent County Council**  
December 2010





# 1. Introduction

The ability to travel freely around our County is essential to our everyday lives. A good transport network is vital for Kent's residents and businesses to have access to opportunities, goods and services, to attract new companies into the County, to stimulate economic growth and regeneration and to help us cope with the demand for increased housing.

We expect to be able to travel easily, safely and quickly. We need to be realistic - the private car will continue to remain the most popular and dominant form of transport for our residents and these expectations and demands increase pressure on our transport network, on our environment and on us as individuals.



This reliance is also the reason why our road network is congested and in response our vision is to create a high quality integrated transport network which will create opportunities for real transport choice as

well as enabling economic growth and regeneration. Enhanced road, rail and bus networks will reinforce and support each other, providing Kent's residents and businesses with comprehensive and reliable transport choices.

As well as maximising opportunities for travel using the existing transport network, we will seek to introduce much needed new infrastructure to stimulate economic growth, through alternative sources of funding.



Kent's growth agenda is huge. We will ensure that new communities are designed in a way that embraces travel choice and where the transport network enables residents and businesses to prosper. Set against this, we will continue to develop our County in a sustainable way, which minimises the effect of pollution and climate change on the environment.

# Kent is the UK's front door



## 2. Delivering Growth and Prosperity

The Greater South East is the only area of the UK that can compete with the major regional economies of Europe, Asia and the Americas. It is one of the world's biggest markets for UK business and the revenue generated by its high value economy supports investment in other areas. Yet its future success is critically dependent on the resilience of Kent's transport network, including its strategic links to Essex and East Sussex.

Kent has the UK's only High Speed rail line, offering frequent services to a range of northern European destinations via the Channel Tunnel. It is home to the country's busiest and most successful ferry port at Dover, which has ambitious plans for expansion to meet growing demand for cross-Channel freight. And it has an emerging international airport at Manston with the capacity to cater for the increasing freight and passenger movements expected at South East airports over the next 30 years.

Kent has the South East's greatest potential for successful economic growth. The County boasts Britain's largest quantity of high quality affordable development land, all of which benefits from excellent connectivity and access to Kent's stunning countryside and coast. In the Thames Gateway, the delivery of 53,000 new homes and 58,000 jobs form part of Europe's largest regeneration programme, while the Growth Area of Ashford and the Growth Points of Dover and Maidstone offer excellent prospects for private sector jobs growth.

If Kent is to accommodate this growth, its transport network must have sufficient capacity and resilience to provide for efficient and reliable journeys. However, the County's highway network is already overloaded

at critical points and is particularly vulnerable to incidents at the Dartford Crossing and the Channel ports.

Kent also has pockets of social disadvantage which require urgent attention, concentrated within those seaside towns in East Kent which have yet to feel the benefit of the High Speed rail services and employment opportunities. Transport has a key role to play in enabling a transformation of the fortunes of such communities.

KCC, together with local businesses and stakeholders, has therefore developed a plan of action for funding and delivering improvements to the County's strategic infrastructure. The schemes contained within this plan are entirely consistent with the strategic direction outlined in the Coalition Government's 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review and National Infrastructure Plan. They will deliver productivity benefits worth billions of pounds a year and will be paid for through innovative funding mechanisms such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), banning foreign lorry "belly tanks" and a port landing charge, thereby minimising the costs to the public purse.

In taking forward these proposals, we want to get the most out of the Coalition Government's localist approach to economic growth and to demonstrate that putting business and local government in charge – through the Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex Local Enterprise Partnership – can deliver swift and practical results.

### 3. Unlocking Kent's Potential

The need for a Transport Delivery Plan for Kent was identified in Kent County Council's framework for regeneration entitled "*Unlocking Kent's Potential: opportunities and challenges*".

This framework identifies the key opportunities and the challenges that must be addressed to deliver long lasting regeneration and economic growth in the County and, through the *21st Century Kent—Unlocking Kent's Potential* delivery plans, establishes a series of priority areas for action by the County Council and its partners for the next 20-30 years.

*Unlocking Kent's Potential* redefines regeneration to include not only economic growth but also transformation in education and skills, the culture renaissance in the County, an efficient transport system, developing a strong civic spirit, tackling climate change and improving housing conditions. It sets a clear direction for achieving economic growth and diversifying Kent employment; particularly across the professional sector.

*Unlocking Kent's Potential* represents the County Council's first step towards defining what Kent will look like in the future and provides a baseline for a broad policy approach that will inform the development of a series of further strategies and implementation plans.

These strategies will become the collective evidence base to inform future strategic investment plans. A Transport Delivery Plan for road, rail, air and sea, which addresses the key transport solutions that need to be implemented over the next 20-30 years, is one of these key strategies which will enable us to 'Unlock Kent's Potential' and support the County Council's Environment Strategy target of reducing

greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020, 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050.

A key delivery strand of *21st Century Kent—Unlocking Kent's Potential*, "Growth Without Gridlock" outlines how economic growth and regeneration can be delivered in a sustainable way and what infrastructure is needed to deliver an integrated transport network which is fit for purpose in the 21st Century.



Credit: Land Securities



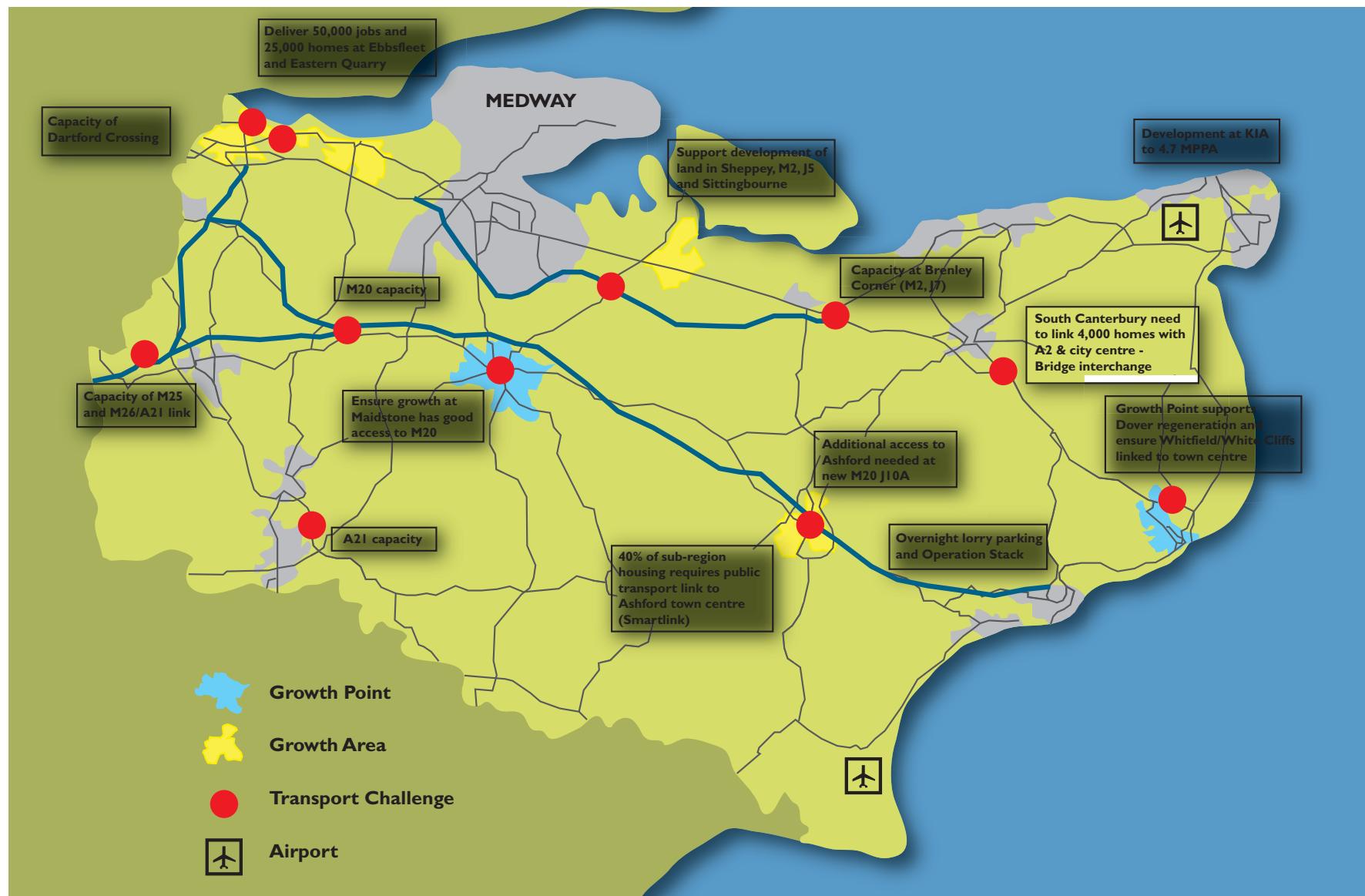


Figure 3.1 Kent's Transport Challenges

## 4. Transport's Wider Contribution

Transport is vital not as an end in itself but as an enabler of economic growth and regeneration and many essential social activities. The way in which we plan and operate our transport networks also has a significant impact on the quality of our environment.

“Growth Without Gridlock” identifies the necessary transport infrastructure needed to accommodate the level of economic growth and regeneration planned for Kent, the measures required to manage the existing network and offers travel choice and better access to jobs.

### Managed Economic Growth

Sustainable economic growth and regeneration is reliant on comprehensive and resilient transport networks. These networks are essential to increasing business efficiency by generating time savings and improved reliability for business travellers, freight and logistics operations. They support clusters of economic activity, expand labour market catchments, and facilitate business-to-business interactions.

Kent's economy is not as prosperous as other parts of the South East, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per head of population well below the regional average, and a relatively high unemployment rate. These problems are particularly acute in areas of East Kent and around the coastal fringe, which until recently have suffered from relatively poor road and rail links.

In order to achieve the scale of economic growth necessary to support sustainable development in the County's Growth Areas and the regeneration of our coastal towns, it is vital that business and retail sites are well connected to reliable and integrated multi-modal transport networks.

### Supporting Independence

The last decade has seen changes in the age profile of Kent's population. The most significant population increase has been among the 45-59 age group and as a consequence, Kent will have a population that is much older in 10 to 15 years than it is today. Forecasts predict that the older age groups will be found in Thanet, Shepway, Canterbury and Dover with predominately younger populations in Ashford and Dartford.

These differences in population across Kent need to be taken into account when we consider improvements to the transport network, especially relating to access to key services, vulnerability, personal safety and affordability. “Growth Without Gridlock” supports the policy framework for Living Later Life to the Full by looking to improve accessibility to key services by public transport including health centres, GP surgeries and hospitals.

### Rural Issues

Kent is a rural county. Some 85% of Kent's land area is classified as rural and almost 30% of the County's residents live in rural areas. While several of Kent's districts regularly top national surveys measuring quality of life and the wealth of residents, almost half of the South East's worst areas of rural disadvantage are to be found in Kent. These are concentrated in the districts of Ashford, Shepway and Swale. Kent also has a significant number of rural residents with few skills and qualifications.

Most rural residents live in large villages and there is the potential for an improved transport network, including pedestrian and cycling routes

to connect these communities with each other and major urban centres. Other important issues are the impact of traffic on rural roads, especially lorries using inappropriate narrow lanes and speeding on remote country roads.

## **Health and Road Safety**

Transport has both positive and negative impacts on people's health. Improving accessibility to hospitals, health centres and GP surgeries makes it easier for people to seek immediate treatment rather than delay care due to lack of transport. Moderate activity plays a part in improving health and walking and cycling are good forms of exercise that can easily be incorporated into our busy lives. Health and road safety are interlinked, and reducing casualties caused by vehicular traffic is a constant priority for central and local government. Recent years have seen a gradual decline in road casualties through changes to the highway and vehicle design, awareness raising, education and enforcement.

There are 36 areas in Kent where air pollution, caused by road traffic, exceeds the Government's objectives and these can lead to respiratory disease and illness. Although previously located mainly on the motorway and trunk road network, the number of locations on local roads in urban areas is steadily increasing.

## **Climate Change**

In the South East, it is suggested that by 2080, summers will be hotter by 2-6°C and summer rainfall will decrease by 20-60%; winters will be warmer by 1.5-3.5°C and winter rainfall will increase by 10-30%. Kent is particularly vulnerable, due to its location and stretches of low lying coastline.

Road transport is responsible for around 30% of Kent's greenhouse gas emissions. The way forward is to provide low-carbon transport options allied with better planning to reduce the need to travel which will support economic growth and housing growth and tackle climate change, supporting the Kent Environment Strategy target as our contribution to the UK Climate Change Act (2008) greenhouse gas reduction targets.

## 5. Our 20 Year Funding Plan

In the wake of the Coalition Government's 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review it is clear that public sector funding for transport infrastructure will be very limited for the foreseeable future, meaning that local authorities cannot continue to rely on existing funding streams. Nevertheless, we are committed to securing the timely delivery of planned housing and employment growth which will kick-start the economic recovery in Kent and the wider South East. The County Council has therefore taken bold and innovative steps to identify alternative sources of funding which, taken in their totality, could generate some **£616 million per year over the next 20 years** without any recourse to the public purse. We are working closely with Government to unlock this funding and have already achieved positive progress, including commitments by the Department for Transport to introduce a scheme of foreign lorry road user charging by 2014 and to hypothecate future Dartford Crossing toll revenue towards the cost of a new Lower Thames Crossing.

### Dartford Crossing and Lower Thames Crossing

The total capital cost of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing has been estimated by Gifford as being in the region of £1 billion, with the necessary link roads into the motorway network north and south of the Thames costing up to a further £2 billion. Over a 20 year period, toll revenues from the new crossing, plus those from the existing Dartford Crossing, could support around half of these costs, and foreign lorry road user charging and a resident planning tariff in Thames Gateway Kent could provide the remaining funding. Given that the capital cost of the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge has been paid for, there is a strong case for using the net operating surplus to support infrastructure investment that encourages economic development in

the area that feels the impact of the toll most acutely. This has been facilitated by the Coalition Government's announcement, as part of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, that it has decided not to sell the Dartford Crossing at this time and that the crossing charges for cars will be raised to £2.00 in 2011 and £2.50 in 2012. This will fund the provision of free-flow tolling using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras from late-2011, and will contribute to the capital cost of the new crossing in the longer-term.

### Banning of 'belly tanks'

We and the Freight Transport Association (FTA) are deeply concerned by the practice followed by many foreign hauliers of carrying large additional 'belly tanks' of up to 1,000 litres of diesel. These give drivers the capacity to travel from Luxembourg to Aberdeen and return without the need to fill up their fuel tanks, and thus further enhance their ability to avoid paying UK fuel duty. It has been calculated that the **UK Treasury loses approximately £475 million a year** in potential tax revenue as a result. This practice also presents a significant health and safety hazard on cross-Channel rail and ferry journeys and we will work with the FTA and Government to outlaw it as quickly as possible. If this is achieved, up to **£9.5 billion of additional revenue could be captured** over the 20-year period of this Delivery Plan, which could have a transformational impact on transport infrastructure investment in Kent, including the delivery of the Operation Stack lorry park between Junctions 10 and 11 of the M20 and the upgrading of the A2 corridor in East Kent.



## Tax Increment Financing (Thames Gateway Kent)

We strongly welcome the Coalition Government's recent announcement that local authorities will be given the power to introduce Tax Increment Financing (TIF) schemes. TIF is a funding method used for infrastructure investment in a number of countries, including the United States. It uses forecast future gains in taxation to finance infrastructure improvements. These improvements serve to increase the value and desirability of surrounding land and hence promote further inward investment. This in turn generates greater tax revenues, enabling local authorities to recoup their initial investment. TIF has significant potential to provide a sustainable funding model to support Kent's growth aspirations. A tentative assumption would be that 35% of the Gross Value Added (GVA) impacts of a new Lower Thames Crossing would be captured in taxation and could thus contribute up to **£117 million a year** for local infrastructure investment.

## Resident Planning Tariff (Thames Gateway Kent)

The resident planning tariff, or 'roof tax', is based on existing practices of levying standard charges on new developments, such as the Milton Keynes Tariff. Under resident planning tariff arrangements, new housing developments given planning permission would pay a set contribution to the cost of new infrastructure. The amount each development would pay per dwelling would vary across Kent; however a reasonable assumption would be that new dwellings in the Thames Gateway Kent Growth Area should contribute approximately £10,000 each in tariff payments, representing a **contribution of £10 million per year over the 20-year** period of this Delivery Plan.

## Foreign Lorry Road User Charging

KCC is delighted at the Coalition Government's commitment, in its National Infrastructure Plan, to introduce a scheme of foreign lorry road user charging. The Government has listened to the evidence we have presented and will implement a vignette imposing a standard charge on all lorries entering the UK. This would provide an important new revenue stream of up to **£40 million a year** (£640 million over the 20-year period of this Delivery Plan), as well as levelling the playing field for UK hauliers vis-à-vis their foreign counterparts, many of whom enter the UK with full fuel tanks and hence make no contribution to the costs they incur in this country through road damage, congestion and emissions.

*'... We will work towards the introduction of a new system of HGV road user charging to ensure a fairer arrangement for UK hauliers....*

**The Coalition: our programme for government - July 2010**

## Port Landing Charge (cars and coaches)

The practice of levying a small development charge on international passengers is already well established at a number of UK airports. The charge is used to fund improvements to the airport environment, including parking areas and access roads. We believe that this practice should also be adopted by the UK's major seaports (including Dover and Ramsgate) and the Channel Tunnel, in order that international car and coach passengers make a reasonable contribution to the economic and environmental burdens they place on Kent's residents, businesses and infrastructure. The charge would not be levied on HGVs, given that hauliers would be asked to make a separate contribution through the proposed foreign lorry road user charge (see above). A charge of just £5 for each car and coach entering the UK would generate some **£12.5 million per year** for investment in local transport improvement schemes.

## Releasing additional funding

### Ashford-Ramsgate line speed improvements

KCC has recently supported a Network Rail study to identify potential line speed enhancements between Ashford and Ramsgate via Canterbury West. The study found that journey times between the two towns could be reduced by up to 10 minutes and that the strength of the business case for the necessary improvement works justifies some £5 million investment for every minute saved, representing a **potential total of £50 million**. Network Rail has therefore committed to prepare a full business case for the scheme, which is currently scheduled for implementation in 2014.

### Thanet Parkway Station

Initial feasibility analysis by KCC suggests that there is also a strong business case for a Thanet Parkway station close to Kent International Airport (KIA). The County Council, together with Thanet District Council and Network Rail, is currently preparing a bid to the Government's Regional Growth Fund to bring forward the implementation of the new station, which has an estimated cost of **£10 million**. Last year's Total Place pilot in Thanet identified millions of pounds worth of potential savings to the district's **£180 million welfare bill**, which could be achieved by delivering public services more efficiently. If we are to realise these savings and to lock in the benefits of reduced dependency for the long-term, it makes sense that some of this money should be used to fund new transport infrastructure and services which will improve accessibility to jobs and services.

## Integrated Bus Network

By taking forward the successful model of partnership working with Kent's commercial bus operators which has delivered patronage growth of some 65% over the past 10 years, KCC would be in a position to make an unprecedented level of **investment in bus route infrastructure to the level of £80m**. We have already received agreement in principle that the County's major commercial bus operators would be prepared to match-fund such an investment, which would secure significant service improvements, new low-emission vehicles and improved marketing and information.

In addition we will also pursue European funding opportunities such as the European Regional Development Fund.

The tables opposite provide a detailed annual breakdown of our 20 year funding plan. Please note that the figures provided are based on the capital costs emerging from our scheme feasibility studies and the latest available statistics for international road traffic, Dartford toll income and housing delivery. They are therefore indicative only and will require more detailed analysis by KCC and Central Government as each funding model is developed and implemented.

## Estimated Capital Costs of Priorities for Growth

Third Thames Crossing	£1000 million
Enhancements to M20/M2	£500 million
Bifurcation	
Operation Stack	
Network Rail Upgrade to Thanet (including Manston Parkway station)	£40 million
Integrated/Enhanced Public Transport (bus network etc)	£80 million
A21 Dualling	£50 million
Other District-based road improvements	£100 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1.77 BILLION</b>
<b>Spread over 25 years annual revenue cost (incl. interest and repayment)</b>	<b>£154 million p.a.</b>

## Our Offer to Government

	<b>Per annum</b>
Increased Tolls at Existing Dartford Crossing	£20m additional revenue
Third Thames Crossing Toll (assuming transport growth)	£30 million
Increased DERV Duty banning belly tanks to EU HGVs	£475 million
TIF tariff (approx 20% on roads & public transport)	£23.4 million
Resident Planning Tariff – 20% on roads	£10 million
Vignette for foreign lorries	£40 million
Port Landing Charge	£12.5 million
EU Trans European Network Funding	£5 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>£615.9 million p.a.</b>

Note - These estimated figures do not include any GVA increase or welfare reduction to DWP

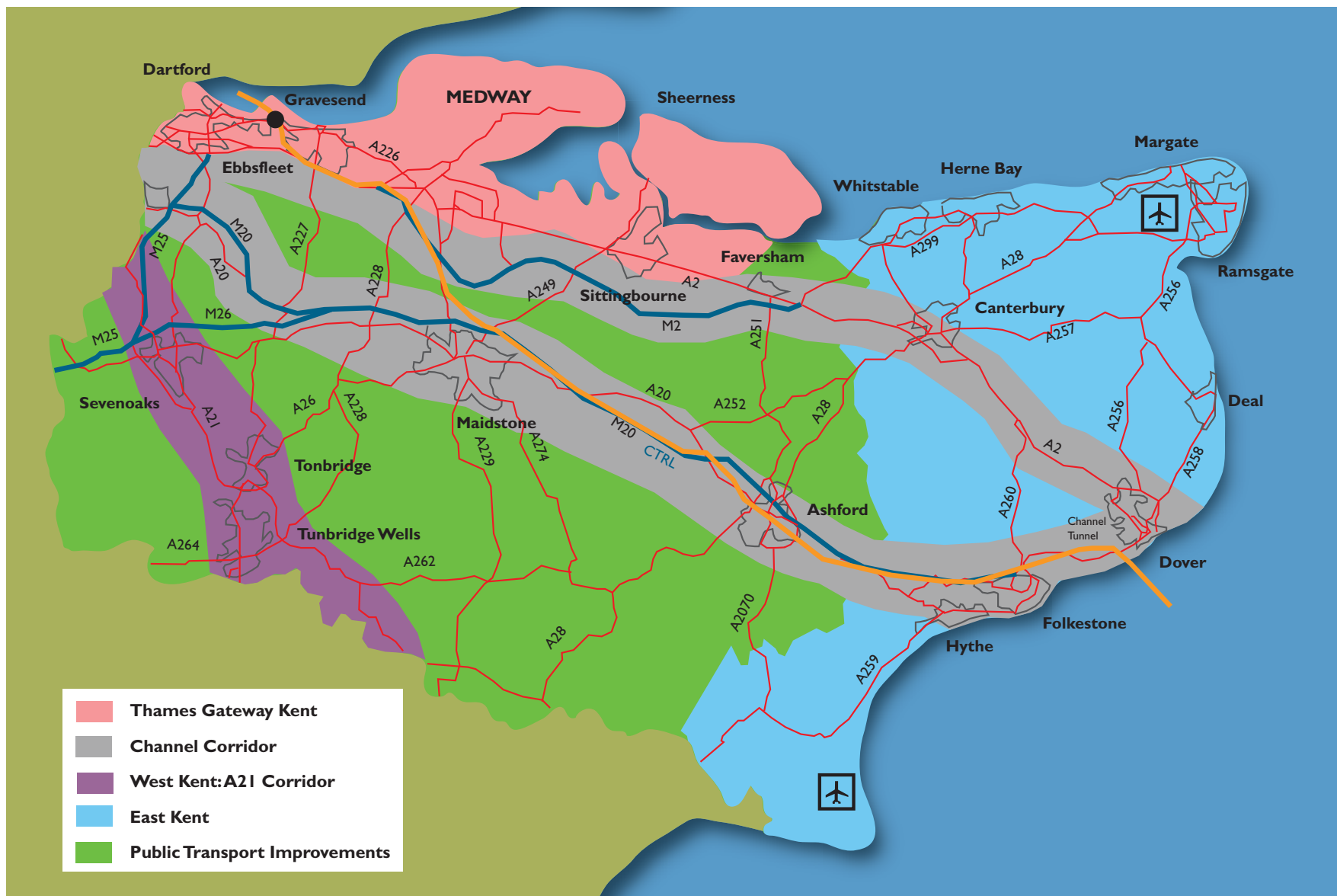


Figure 5.1 Our Plan of Action



## 6. The Thames Gateway: gearing up for growth

<b>Issue:</b>	congestion at Dartford Crossing and its approaches costs UK economy some £40m a year
<b>Action:</b>	provision of a Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend
<b>Outcome:</b>	6,000 jobs, contribute £12.7bn to local GVA (£334m a year), journey time reliability and increased network resilience
<b>Cost:</b>	£1bn (excluding access roads) funded from existing and future tolls and foreign lorry charging

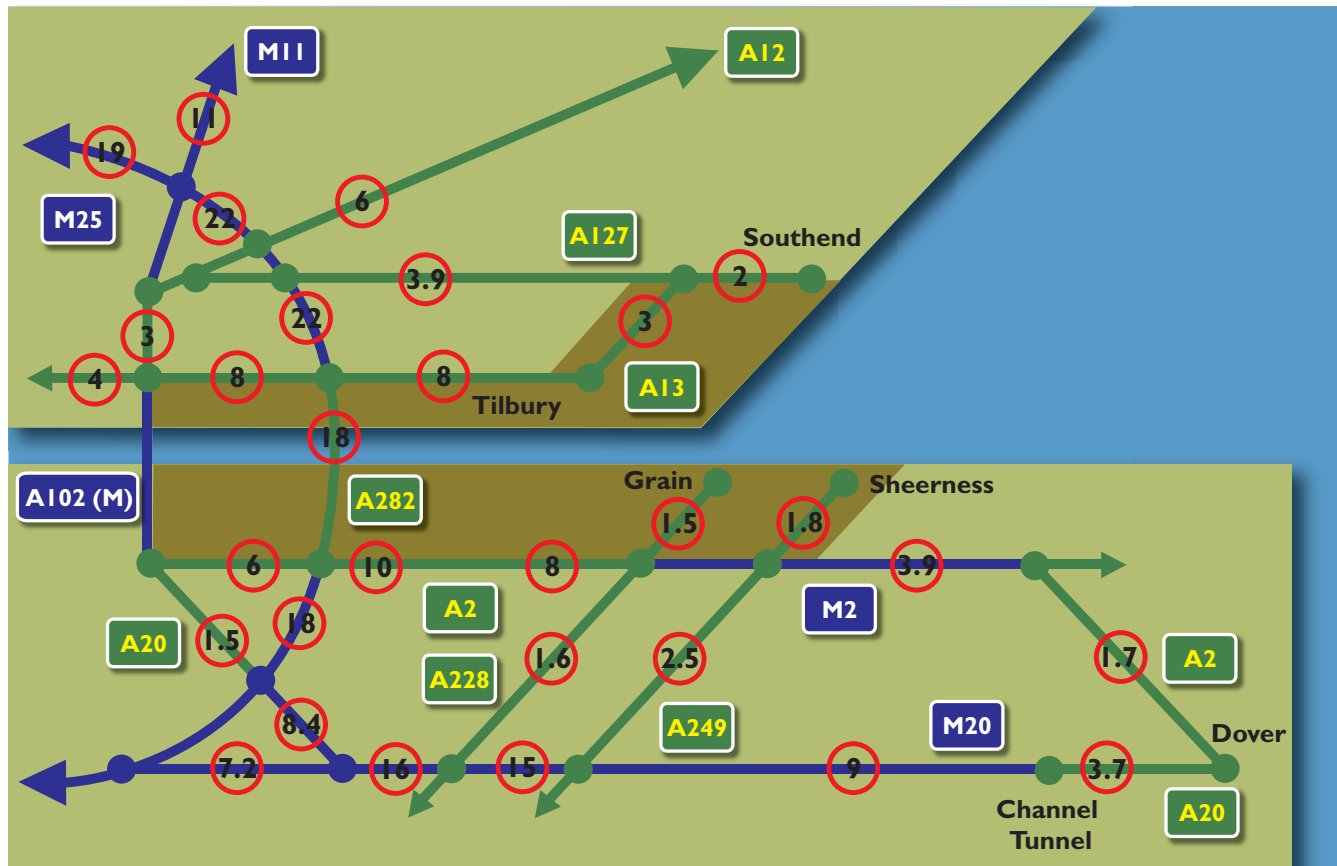
### Thames Gateway Kent

Thames Gateway Kent covers the majority of the districts of Dartford, Gravesham and Swale including the main urban areas of Dartford, Gravesend, Northfleet, Sittingbourne and Sheerness. It joins up with Medway, South Essex and parts of East London to form the Thames Gateway Growth Area. There is a target to develop 52,340 new homes and 58,000 jobs for Thames Gateway Kent and Medway over the period 2006-2026.

The economy of Thames Gateway Kent has undergone a structural shift over the past 20 years, reflecting the decline of the traditional local industries of manufacturing, engineering, quarrying and power generation. Although this has been partially offset by growth in employment in construction and finance, there remain significant pockets of unemployment and disadvantage in each of the Growth Area's constituent districts. Thames Gateway Kent nonetheless exhibits great potential for growth and regeneration given its proximity to London and the wide availability of brownfield development sites.

This new housing and employment will be focussed around Ebbsfleet International Station, with mixed-use communities planned for the Ebbsfleet Valley and Eastern Quarry development sites. New housing and employment in Swale will be focused around Sittingbourne and Sheppey. Swale Borough Council is proposing the development of 8,700 new homes over the next 15 years. The Port of Sheerness has plans for major expansion which also incorporate new housing. The Port is the largest employer in Sheerness and the scheme offers significant benefits for the town.

The area enjoys generally good road and rail links, being located on the M2/A2 corridor and having benefitted from the commencement of Southeastern High Speed services to London in December 2009. Unfortunately, connectivity across the Thames is very poor with major congestion at the Dartford Crossing limiting the growth of the whole Thames Gateway area. North-South links are also poor, which results in congestion on the main inter-urban routes to Maidstone and Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells. Within the area, this new growth will put pressure on local roads and therefore sustained investment in new infrastructure is necessary.



**Figure 6.2** HGV Flows per day 2008-09 (thousands) - shows the volume (in thousands) of two-way HGV movements per day on the strategic road network in Kent and Essex. It illustrates the heavy reliance of road freight from Dover and the Channel Tunnel travelling north, and from the major distribution centres in the Midlands travelling south, on the Dartford Crossing, which is part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

### Lower Thames Crossing

The Dartford Crossing is one of the UK's most important strategic connections. It offers the shortest freight route between the Kent ports and the major distribution centres in the Midlands and the north of England and carries some **18,000 HGVs a day** (see Figure 6.2). Yet the capacity of the existing bridge and tunnels is considerably overloaded for large periods of the day and, like all estuarial crossings, it has limited resilience to incidents.

The Crossing experiences an average of 15 major incidents a year which require the closure of some or all of the carriageways, along with five additional closures of the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge due to high winds. The wider impacts on the highway networks of Kent and Essex are severe and extensive, affecting the reliability of journey times for all road users and **costing the UK economy some £40 million a year**. Disruption at these times is increased since the alternative routes are significantly longer than the direct crossing.

It is clear that the current situation will only get worse. Not only will freight volumes continue to rise but over 200,000 planned new homes in the Thames Gateway will generate their own demand. A solution is needed that will free up this vital national connection and support job creation in Kent and Essex.

Having established a clear and pressing need for a new crossing, Kent and Essex County Councils jointly commissioned an independent study to evaluate the principal options for the form and location of a new crossing in 2008. This study was carried out by a team of consultants comprising Gifford, MVA and Capita and looked at nine possible locations. KCC followed this in 2010 by commissioning a further study by KPMG aimed at developing a business case for the crossing. Whilst all crossing options demonstrated positive economic benefits, the KPMG study identified that a new crossing between Chadwell in Essex and east of Gravesend, linking the M25 with the A2/M2 would have major economic benefits for the local area (see Figure 6.3 on page 18).



KCC has therefore adopted this as its preferred location and will now work with all partners and Government to further develop the case for a third crossing of the Thames.

*“The Department for Transport intends to begin the necessary consultation on proposals for the new charging regime at the Dartford Crossing around the end of 2010.”*

*“Increasing the charges as proposed allows future investment in improvements at the Crossing, including the implementation of free-flow charging technology, and funding of proposals for a new, additional lower Thames crossing in the longer term.”*

**Michael Penning**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Roads and Motoring)**

### Benefits of a new Crossing to the east of Gravesend

- A new crossing to the east of Gravesend would **remove the two most important constraints on growth in the Thames Gateway**, providing significant additional capacity on the strategic road network between the Kent ports and the Midlands.
- The Chadwell to Gravesend option would unlock substantial regeneration opportunities. **KPMG estimates that the crossing would create around 6,000 jobs in North Kent and South Essex and contribute £12.7 billion to local GVA (£334 million a year).**
- The Chadwell to Gravesend option would provide the potential to better serve the new London Gateway port, which is being developed by Dubai Ports World near Stanford-le-Hope in Thurrock.

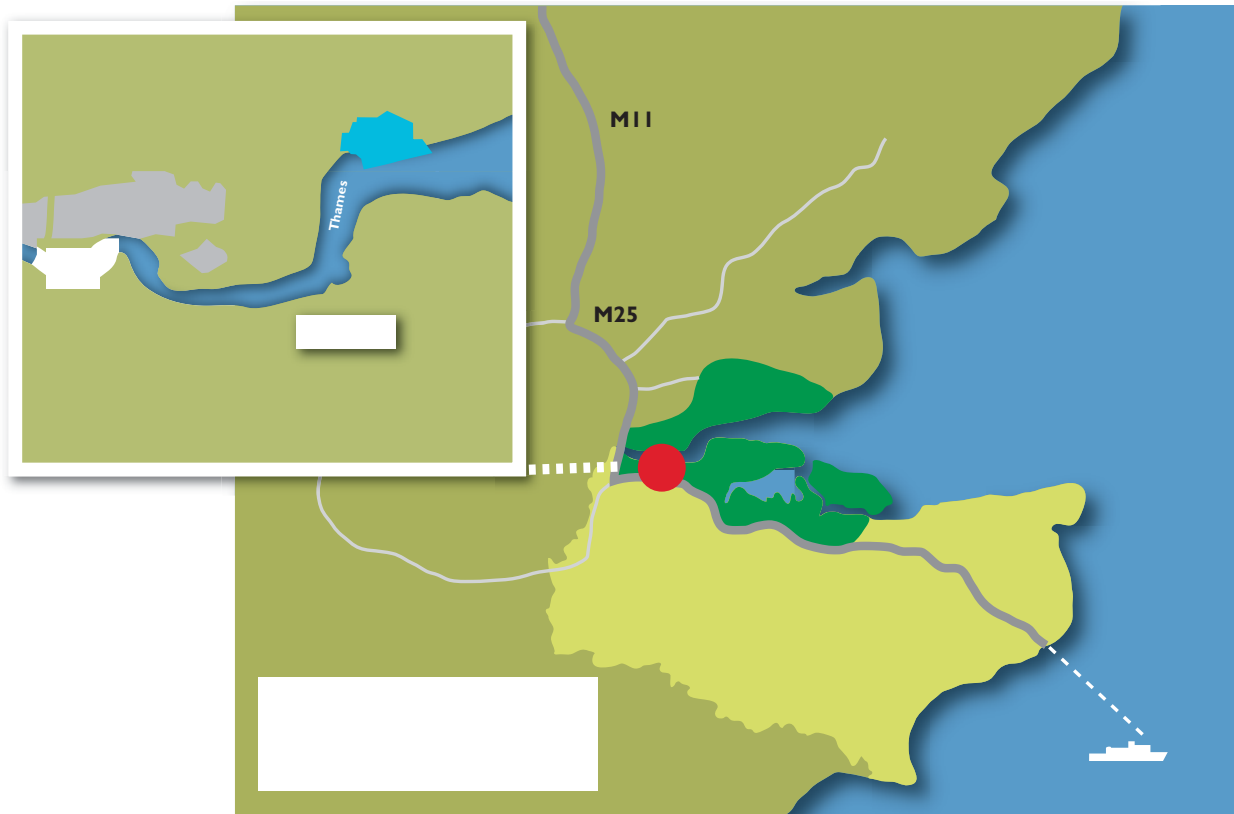
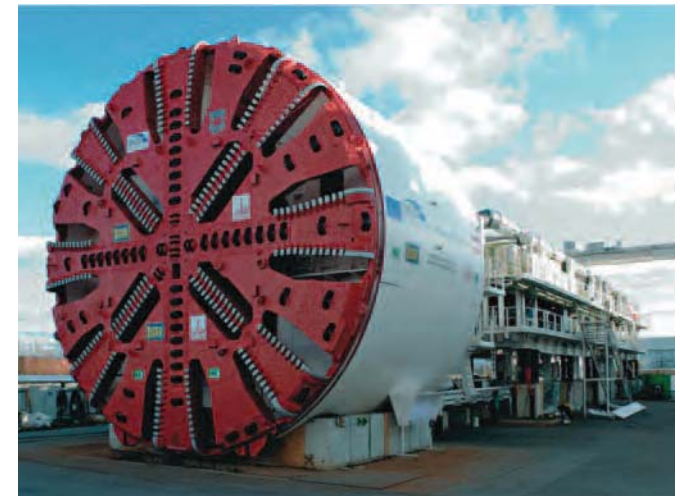


Figure 6.3: Strategic Location of Proposed Lower Thames Crossing



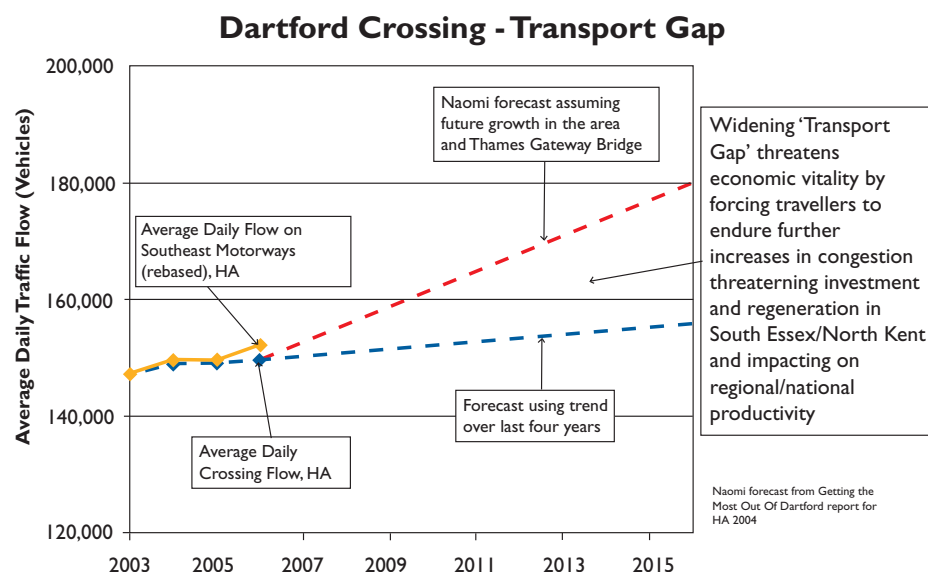
Construction of the container port and logistics park began earlier this year and is expected to generate some 12,000 private sector jobs.

- The new crossing offers a valuable opportunity to **implement a system of bifurcation for traffic heading to and from the Channel ports**. Under this system, vehicles travelling to the Continent by way of Dover's Eastern Docks would be encouraged to route via the Lower Thames Crossing and the M2/A2, while those travelling through the Western Docks or the Channel Tunnel would be routed via the Dartford Crossing and the M20/A20. This would

greatly increase the efficiency of Kent's motorway and trunk road network, thereby facilitating the growth of Ashford, Dover and Maidstone by freeing up road capacity in the Channel Corridor.

- The crossing would also **facilitate north-south journeys** to education and employment opportunities in North Kent and South Essex. This is evidenced by the fact that traffic levels on the Dartford Crossing have grown at a lower rate than other motorways in southern England in recent years (Figure 6.4).





**Figure 6.4** Dartford Crossing Transport Gap - indicates that whilst average traffic levels per day have increased at the Dartford Crossing in recent years, this has occurred at a lower rate than other motorways in South East England. This suggests that north south journeys to employment, education and leisure opportunities are being suppressed by the available capacity. This 'transport gap' is projected to widen further in future years, which would have a significant impact on the economic vitality of the Thames Gateway should no additional crossing capacity be provided.

- By physically separating the new crossing from the existing one, there would be substantially more resilience in the transport network, making it much **less vulnerable to single incidents**.
- A new crossing would help to secure the development of an **integrated bus network for the Thames Gateway, including the Fastrack and South Essex Bus Rapid Transit schemes**. Future work on the development of the route in Thurrock and Essex to be discussed with partners.

### M20/M25 Widening

The Highways Agency plans to trial the use of hard shoulder running in peak periods to increase capacity on the M25 Junctions 5-7 by 2015 and the M20 Junctions 3-5 by 2019. We will work with them to co-ordinate the work of our Traffic Management Centres to cut journey times and continue to lobby for these improvements to be implemented without delay.

### Thameslink

The expansion of Thameslink rail services from 2018 will significantly improve access to and from the City. The County Council will lobby for Kent to benefit from these new services and in particular for Maidstone to be linked directly into the Thameslink network.

### Crossrail

Crossrail is an exciting new railway line running east to west across London from Maidenhead via Heathrow, Paddington and Liverpool Street stations to Shenfield in Essex and Abbey Wood. Due to be complete by 2018, it will bring an additional 1.5 million people within 45 minutes commuting distance of London's key business districts. The County Council welcomed the Coalition Government's commitment, in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, that the project will be

delivered in full. We will now continue to work with Transport for London to make the case for the extension of Crossrail to Gravesend via Dartford and Ebbsfleet International.



## Congestion Management

The County Council's recent investment in Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) system enables us to maximise the efficiency of the local highway network as traffic levels increase in line with development. Our Traffic Management Centre has successfully reduced average journey times into Maidstone town centre during peak periods and we are expanding the system to cover Dartford and Gravesend town centres. As well as reducing congestion, the UTMC will also support measures implemented by Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils to reduce traffic pollution in designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

## Strategic Transport Investment Package Schemes

Traffic modelling to support the Kent Thameside Transport Strategy has identified a number of future congestion hotspots which will result from the major development planned for the area over the next 20 years. This has led to the development of 11 Strategic Transport Investment Package Schemes (STIPS) which will be primarily funded by the Department for Transport, the Homes and Communities Agency, and developers. If all of these schemes can be delivered, they will help to reduce congestion at over-capacity junctions by 21% in the evening peak and reduce journey times by 3% or more by 2025. The 11 STIPS schemes are:-

- **A2 Bean junction improvements** - to improve access between the A2, Eastern Quarry and Bluewater;
- **A2 Demand management** - introduction of variable speed limits, access management, Variable Message Signs (VMS) and vehicle priority lanes;
- **A2 Ebbsfleet junction improvements** - to improve access between the A2, Ebbsfleet International station, and Eastern Quarry;
- **A256 Thames Way dualling** - to improve access to Ebbsfleet International station;
- **Fastrack busway: Northfleet to Garrick Street, Gravesend** - provision of dedicated Fastrack route to Gravesend town centre from new development area;
- **Dartford Town Centre improvements** - to revise traffic circulation on the ring road and improve bus access in support of development proposals;

- **Rathmore Road link, Gravesend** - provision of new section of one-way system to support new public transport interchange north of Gravesend rail station;
- **A226 London Road/B255 St Clements Way underpass** - provision of underpass to improve junction capacity;
- **Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC)** - introduction of traffic signal control system, traffic flow monitoring using CCTV, additional signalised junctions, VMS and Real-Time Information (RTI);
- **A206 Bob Dunn Way junction improvement** - conversion of Marsh Street roundabout to a signalised junction;
- **B262 Hall Road junction improvement** - junction capacity improvement and traffic calming on Springhead Road.

### Sheerness

Sheerness is the largest UK port for fresh produce and has the opportunity to intensify its activity within its existing boundaries with the option to expand onto nearby industrial areas. The Second Swale Crossing has significantly improved road access to the port, but improved rail access and facilities are needed to increase the amount of rail freight to and from the port. A massive regeneration project to transform Sheerness Port was announced in September 2009, with a marina for up to 500 large yachts, three new deep water berths, new housing and an extension of commercial shipping facilities.

### Thamesport

Thamesport is the largest deep-water container port in Medway, carrying a relatively high volume of containers to and from the port by rail (some 20%). Further development of the port would benefit from improved access by the A228 and for more capacity on the branch.

## Dartford

Dartford is located at the heart of the Thames Gateway, bordering Greater London and Essex. The A2 and M25 pass through the borough and provide high capacity routes to London, the Channel Ports and the wider South East. There are five railway lines to London and the Kent coast, as well as daily commuter coaches providing fast, direct services to Canary Wharf and the City.

An additional 17,000 homes are planned in Dartford over the period 2006 to 2026, which will increase the borough's population by over 40%. New communities will be created in the Ebbsfleet to Stone corridor, on the Thames waterfront and in Dartford town centre. The largest of these will be at Eastern Quarry, where more than 6,000 homes will be built.

If this growth is to be delivered without creating transport gridlock, a high quality public transport network linking the new development sites with local town centres, employment areas, transport interchanges and key services is essential. Dartford's growth strategy is therefore predicated on the further development of the Fastrack Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network, including a direct route through the Eastern Quarry development to Ebbsfleet International Station.

The key transport challenges for Kent Thameside are:

- Relieving the capacity and air quality issues at the Dartford Crossing
- Transferring existing and new car trips onto public transport, walking and cycling, especially for short journeys
- Tackling congestion hotspots including the M25/A282 Dartford Crossing, the A2 corridor including the Bean Interchange; and Dartford town centre

- Integrating rail services and improving connectivity between stations to maximise the benefits of Southeastern High Speed services
- Providing sufficient transport infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the planned development including walking and cycling routes
- Mitigating the significant levels of traffic generated by Bluewater

### Proposals

Lower Thames Crossing to relieve congestion at the Dartford Crossing, potentially incorporating Fastrack facilities to extend this Bus Rapid Transit system into the South Essex Rapid Transit system.

Bus and rail interchange at Dartford station.

Fastrack links to Northern Gateway development and through Eastern Quarry.



## Gravesham

Gravesham is centrally located within Thames Gateway Kent and benefits from direct access to the A2 trunk road and the High Speed 1 rail line, which provide fast routes to London, the Channel Ports and the rest of the UK. The commencement of Southeastern High Speed rail services in 2009 brought a dramatic improvement in journey times to the capital from Gravesend (23 minutes) and Ebbsfleet International (17 minutes). The borough's key transport link to the north is via the A282 Dartford Crossing, although a small passenger ferry operates between Gravesend and Tilbury in Essex.

The delivery of approximately 9,000 new homes is expected in Gravesham up to 2026. Key development sites include Gravesend town centre and Canal Basin and Northfleet Embankment. Ebbsfleet International Station is located in the west of the borough and will form the focus of a major mixed-use development. This will include a business district which will create up to 20,000 new jobs.

Like Dartford, Gravesham's existing road network is already operating at close to maximum capacity during peak periods. Continuing modal shift to rail and bus services is therefore crucial if future levels of housing and economic growth are to be accommodated.

The key transport challenges for Gravesham are:

- Transferring existing and new car trips onto public transport, walking and cycling, especially for short journeys
- Tackling congestion hotspots including the A2 corridor including the Bean Interchange; B262 Hall Road/Springhead Road; and Gravesend town centre
- Integrating rail services and improving connectivity between stations

- to maximise the benefits of Southeastern High Speed services
- Providing sufficient transport infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the planned development including walking and cycling routes

### Proposals

Lower Thames Crossing to relieve congestion at the Dartford Crossing, potentially incorporating Fastrack facilities to extend this Bus Rapid Transit system into the South Essex Rapid Transit system.

Transport Quarter centred on Gravesend rail station.

Green Grid links to Shorne Wood Country Park.

Redevelopment of the Canal Basin area, including improvements to Ordnance Road junction.



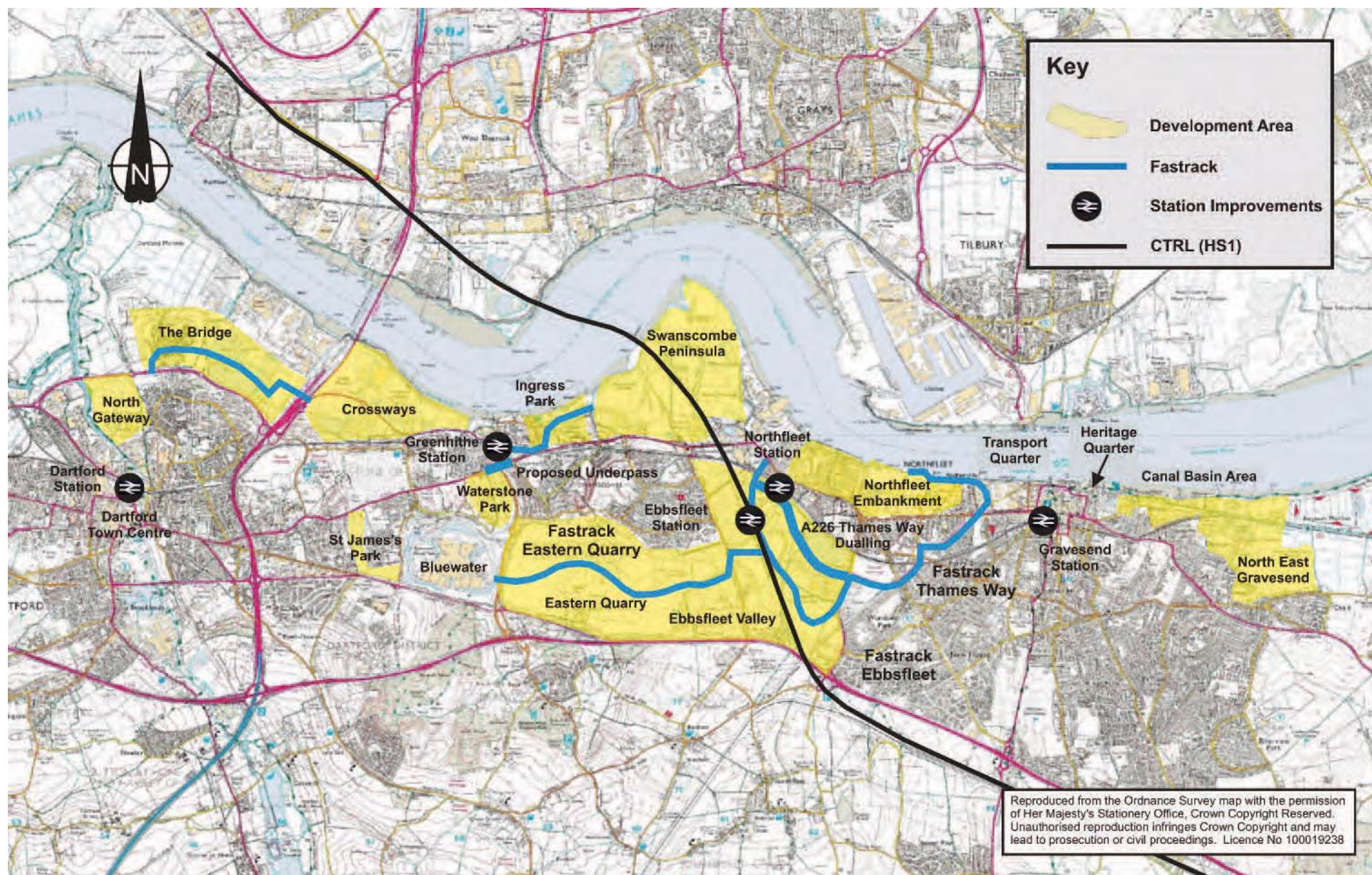


Figure 6.5 Kent Thameside transport and regeneration schemes



## Swale

The Borough of Swale is located in North Kent, covering Sittingbourne as the main population centre and the towns of Faversham and Sheerness. Both Sheerness and Sittingbourne have suffered from high unemployment in recent years and therefore the priority for the area is economic regeneration and employment growth. The western part of Swale (including the Isle of Sheppey) forms part of the Thames Gateway Growth Area and 9,500 new dwellings are planned by 2026.

The Borough is well served by the road and rail networks. The M2 provides fast journey times into London and the wider South East and the recently completed Sheppey Crossing has reduced disruption on the A249 to and from the Isle of Sheppey. The A2 runs parallel to the M2 and connects Sittingbourne with the Medway towns and Faversham. Following the same alignment is the North Kent railway line linking Faversham, Sittingbourne and the Medway towns with London. The new Southeastern High Speed services have cut journey times between Sittingbourne and London from 69 minutes to 53 minutes. Sheerness is located on a branch line from Sittingbourne. The A251 provides the only direct road link between Faversham and Ashford, including access to emergency hospital services for the eastern part of Swale.

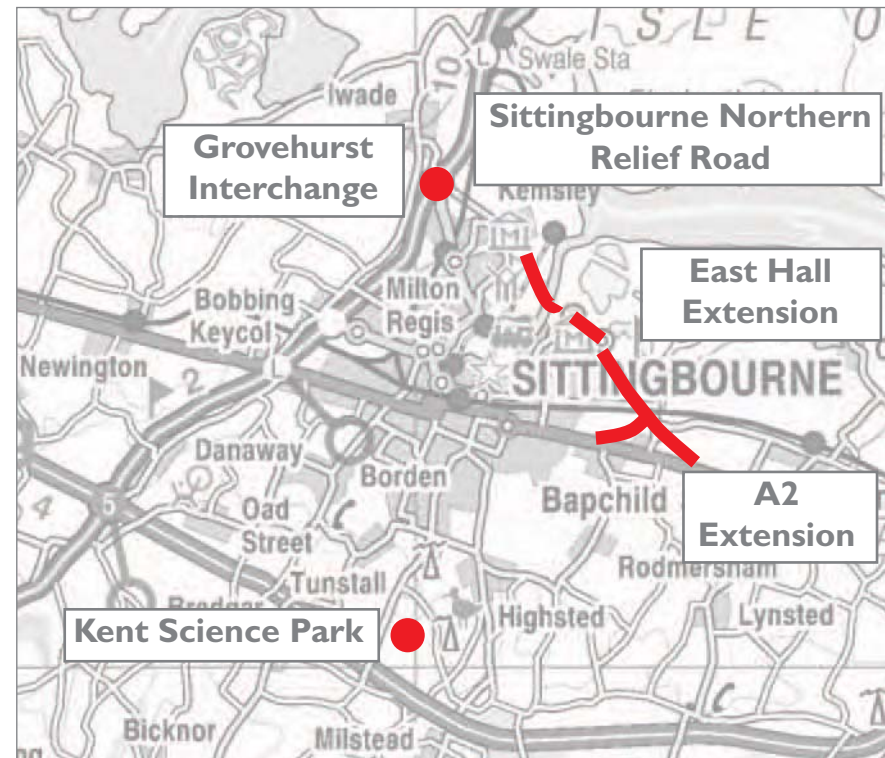
The key transport challenges for Swale are:

- Securing the necessary infrastructure to open up key development areas for housing and employment
- Delivering capacity improvements on the strategic road network
- Regeneration of Sittingbourne town centre

## Proposals

Major road infrastructure including Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road and extension to the A2, A2/M2 Junction 5 capacity improvement, A249 Grovehurst Interchange and Rushenden Relief Road.

Expansion of Kent Science Park with possible new link to the M2 (south) and A2 (north).



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved 100019238 2010

## 7. The Channel Corridor: relieving the pressure

<b>Issue:</b>	cross channel disruption when Operation Stack is implemented costs the UK haulage industry £1m per day
<b>Action:</b>	provision of a lorry park between junctions 10 and 11 of the M20
<b>Outcome:</b>	reduce delays to local traffic and problems linked to unsuitable HGV parking
<b>Cost:</b>	£25-60m funded from foreign lorry charging scheme

<b>Issue:</b>	predicted doubling of freight traffic through the port of Dover
<b>Action:</b>	bifurcation of port traffic (Eastern Docks via M2/A2, Western Docks via M20)
<b>Outcome:</b>	reduced congestion and pollution through Dover, regeneration of town centre
<b>Cost:</b>	£440m-475m

There are few people in Kent who are unaffected by the County's role as an international corridor. We are fortunate to have convenient access to the Continent, whether for business or pleasure but we also have to suffer the traffic that uses this corridor. Road freight is significant and one in four vehicles on the M20 between Maidstone and Ashford is a lorry. When Operation Stack is in force, it makes us all realise how fragile our transport network is. Dover is the largest passenger ferry port in Northern Europe and handles more than half of all the UK's international ferry passengers. The town benefits from the

employment opportunities that the port brings but also suffers from the congestion, severance and air quality problems associated with queuing traffic from the Eastern Docks.

There was a significant and continued increase in road freight through the Port of Dover and Channel Tunnel between the Tunnel's opening in 1994 and the recession in 2008. When the country's economy picks up again, continued growth, in line with GDP, is forecast to resume at Dover and the Channel Tunnel. We therefore fully recognise the importance of the Channel Corridor to "UK plc".

### Dover Western Docks Expansion

Dover Harbour Board has developed a 30-year plan for the port so it can accommodate the forecast increase in cross-channel traffic. A new ferry terminal (T2) in the Western Docks could provide up to four new ferry berths with the possibility of re-introducing rail freight connections. Further improvements include a new marina in the outer harbour and related waterfront development, including expansion of the busy cruise terminal. Since the new terminal at the Western Docks will take some time to be implemented, interim measures to deal with traffic continuing to use the Eastern Docks include revising the A20 dock exit and upgrading Berth 5 to accommodate larger vessels. The proposed expansion of Dover's Western Docks will lead to the creation of 6,000 jobs, with related productivity and GVA benefits.

### M2/A2 Improvements at Dover

Freight and passenger traffic through the Port of Dover is forecast to grow substantially over the next 30 years, placing further pressure on the M20/A20 and M2/A2 corridors. The new Lower Thames Crossing is



Figure 7.1 The Channel Corridor



part of a wider package of schemes proposed by KCC and its partners which must be delivered collectively if we are to reap the maximum growth and productivity benefits.

One of the most important of these schemes is the bifurcation of traffic travelling to and from Dover. This would be made possible by the provision of a Lower Thames Crossing between Chadwell and Gravesend and would allow traffic heading for Dover's Eastern Docks to be directed via the M2/A2, thereby relieving pressure on the M20. This would require improvements to the M2/A2 route including dualling a short length of the A2 north of the town between Lydden and the Whitfield roundabout. This is essential to maximise the development potential of the Port of Dover and presents an opportunity to deal effectively with strategic long distance lorry routing to the M11 and the Midlands. Bifurcation will also facilitate the growth of Whitfield, Ashford and Maidstone by freeing up capacity on the M20.



**Figure 7.2 Proposed Lorry Park Location at Aldington**

### **Lorry Park (Operation Stack)**

One of the greatest disbenefits of Kent's gateway role is the imposition of Operation Stack on the M20. This causes immense disruption across a wide area and sends much needed inward investment elsewhere. Delays caused by Operation Stack cost the UK haulage industry £1 million a day and significantly reduce the attractiveness of East Kent as a place to do business. The management of Operation Stack already costs Kent Police and the Highways Agency some £3 million a year and with rising freight and passenger volumes, it is likely that its imposition will become more frequent over the next few years, causing a local inconvenience to become a national problem.

In response, the County Council has developed plans for a possible lorry park near Aldington between Junctions 10 and 11 on the south side of the M20. It would be a real opportunity to provide 500 secure overnight parking spaces for HGVs and an overflow area for up to 2,500 additional HGVs during Operation Stack. The proposed lorry park will significantly reduce the disruption and delay caused by Operation Stack and encourage businesses to look again at East Kent as a place to locate and grow. It will also reduce the level of illegal and unsuitable HGV parking in the County. The County Council is currently investigating how this proposal could be funded, including working with Government to introduce a system of foreign lorry charging.

In addition to the lorry park, there are key locations within Dover where network resilience could be enhanced through proactive network management—particularly the M2/A2 and M20/A20 in relation to Incident Management and provision of appropriate Variable Message Signing (VMS) along this corridor, the M25 and beyond and these will be investigated.

## Foreign Lorry Charging

The County Council has set out proposals to introduce a charge for foreign lorries using Kent's roads to contribute to the cost of the Lower Thames Crossing, the Operation Stack lorry park and other infrastructure improvements which will mitigate the impact of cross-Channel traffic. A charge would also help to level the playing field for UK hauliers vis-à-vis their foreign counterparts, many of which enter Britain with full fuel tanks, having taken advantage of the lower rates of fuel duty on the Continent. They therefore make no contribution to the costs they incur in this country through damage to roads, the release of emissions and the exacerbation of congestion problems. KCC is delighted at the Coalition Government's commitment, in its National Infrastructure Plan, to introduce a scheme of lorry charging and we will work with the Department for Transport to implement it as swiftly as possible.

## Overnight Lorry Parks

In addition to Operation Stack, overnight lorries parking in residential and commercial areas have a detrimental impact on Kent and its communities. KCC will lobby for the provision of overnight lorry parking and associated facilities at suitable sites adjacent to Kent's motorway and trunk road network, including the possibility of using Park and Ride sites for overnight lorry parking. We will also work with other agencies to reduce the occurrence of inappropriate lorry parking on Kent's roads.

## Quick Moveable Barrier (QMB) Extension

The Quick Moveable Barrier (QMB) can only cope with Phase One of Operation Stack, holding some 400 lorries which, at peak times, can be filled within two hours. The Highways Agency is currently reviewing the performance of the QMB and will recommend whether the scheme should be expanded. We continue to press for the time taken to effect the QMB to be significantly reduced.

## Eurotunnel

The Channel Tunnel offers a direct alternative to Dover for international car and lorry movements, taking some 40% and 33% of the market respectively in 2008. Competition with the ferries has kept the costs of crossing the Channel relatively low and, together with the short and frequent crossing, has meant that Kent attracts a high level of international traffic. The Tunnel has good, direct access to and from the M20 but the benefits of this are negated when there is major disruption in the Channel and Operation Stack is required. Theoretically, Eurotunnel could operate more shuttles which could relieve some of the pressure on Dover.

## International Rail Services

The European Union's liberalisation of international rail travel in 2010 enables train operating companies to run services in competition with Eurostar between London and the Continent. The German operator, Deutsche Bahn, is the first to receive permission to do so and intends to commence services to Amsterdam and Frankfurt via Brussels in December 2013. KCC's priority is to ensure that Ebbsfleet and Ashford continue to benefit from frequent services to a range of northern European destinations and we will lobby Eurostar and Deutsche Bahn to include a Kent station stop on as many of their services as possible.

## Road/Rail Terminals

We are generally supportive of strategic road/rail terminals if they are placed in the right location and will genuinely transfer freight from road to rail. As a result, the County Council supported the proposed redevelopment of a 64 hectare site at Howbury Park in Erith as it is well located close to London and the M25. However, the County Council strongly opposed the proposals for the Kent International Gateway (KIG), located to the east of Maidstone as, amongst other things, it was over 20 miles from the M25 and would not have relieved the most congested western part of the M20 of lorry traffic.



**Figure 7.3 Local Connections to the Transmanche Metro**

## Transmanche Metro

There is a real opportunity to enhance international rail services by utilising the intermediate stations on both sides of the Channel with a semi-fast rail service connecting into European-wide services.

There would be a regular interval service (working up to hourly) linking St Pancras, Stratford, Ebbsfleet, Ashford, Calais-Frethun and Lille. Passengers could connect at Lille for Brussels and into Holland and Germany, from Calais to the French coastal towns and at St Pancras/Kings Cross for the north and east of England.

## Rail Freight

Despite the provision of rail freight services through the Channel Tunnel, the modal share in Kent is disappointingly low. Estimates are that 6 million tonnes of rail freight could use the Channel Tunnel, but the

maximum level reached was barely over three million tonnes in 1998. Due to problems with illegal immigrants boarding trains and the poor level of service quality in France, the flow has declined to 1.24 million tonnes in 2008 but there is the potential to re-connect the Western Docks at Dover to the rail network. We will continue to press central and international government to put more freight through the Channel Tunnel. We will work with the freight industry to identify potential legislative and physical barriers for transferring freight from road to rail and assist, where possible, in identifying solutions to overcome such barriers.

## Major Infrastructure in Ashford and Dover

As part of the growth of Ashford, a number of transport improvements have been identified. Some have already been awarded Government funding through mechanisms such as the Regional Infrastructure Fund, with local contributions from the County Council and developers. However others will require more innovative funding models given the reduced public funding now available. These schemes include:-

**Smartlink** - a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme which will provide fast, frequent, high quality bus services for Ashford's residents and commuters. The service will benefit from dedicated bus priority measures and will link the town centre to the new development and park and ride sites, as well as existing communities.

**The Warren Park and Ride** - one of three proposed Park and Ride sites designed to complement the Smartlink BRT scheme. The Warren will be located adjacent to Junction 9 of the M20 and be accompanied by the provision of bus priority measures to offer a rapid and direct route into the town centre;

**Victoria Way** - a new route to the south of the town centre which will link Beaver Road and the A28 Chart Road. Work is currently underway on this scheme, which is due for completion in Spring 2011;

**M20 Junction 9 and Drovers Roundabout** - which will improve access to the town; particularly the Eureka Park business area and residential developments such as Repton Park. The scheme will include the introduction of traffic signals, the widening of approach roads and the construction of a new footbridge over the M20. Work is currently in progress and will be completed in Spring 2011;

**M20 Junction 10A** - providing the necessary highway capacity to serve and support the new development sites to the south and east of Ashford;

**Learning Link** - a north-south cycling/walking route linking a series of educational establishments;

**A28 Kennington/Bybrook Corridor** - cycling, pedestrian and bus improvements;

**Roman Way Corridor** - new link road;

**Ashford International Station Improvements** - comprising a new station forecourt and public space to complement the recently completed works to the ticket hall. The scheme will include a revitalised bus and taxi interchange, extensive cycle parking, the provision of additional seating and landscaping;

**Dover Bus Rapid Transit** - The Dover Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme is a proposed service connecting Whitfield to Dover Town Centre and is part of the masterplan for 5,750 new homes at Whitfield.

It is planned to run on a dedicated route through the various development sites in Whitfield and the Connaught Barracks, linking to the town centre, Dover Priory railway station and the St James regeneration area, with a possible extension to a Park and Ride site at Farthingloe. KCC and Dover District Council are currently preparing a detailed business case for the scheme and identifying suitable funding options;

**South East Maidstone Strategic Link (SEMSL)** - Maidstone Borough Council has identified, through its Local Development Framework, the potential for new development to the south east of the town. This could require a more direct route from the A274, serving the commercial area around Parkwood and new development at the A20/M20 Junction 8 which would also act as a bypass to Leeds and Langley. The SEMSL does not appear to be affordable by conventional funding, and would require new sources of funding currently emerging from Government, such as the New Homes Bonus.



# Ashford

The strategic position of Ashford on the Channel corridor has meant that the town has always been a major transport hub. The M20 runs through the town and access is provided via junctions 9 and 10. Ashford also became a railway town, being the junction of five lines to Hastings, Folkestone, Canterbury, Maidstone and Tonbridge and is also served by High Speed One with an international railway station. Ashford has benefited from reduced journey times when Southeastern High Speed services commenced in December 2009, with the quickest journey time to London cut to 37 minutes from 84 minutes.

Because of its strategic location, good transport links and a generally flat topography, Ashford is one of the South East region's four designated Growth Areas, with the capacity to provide an additional 31,000 homes and 28,000 jobs over the period 2001 to 2031. This equals a doubling in the number of households within the town centre area by 2031. It is planned for Ashford to develop as an office, research and business node providing market growth for East Kent and an opportunity for large investments that require an expanding workforce.

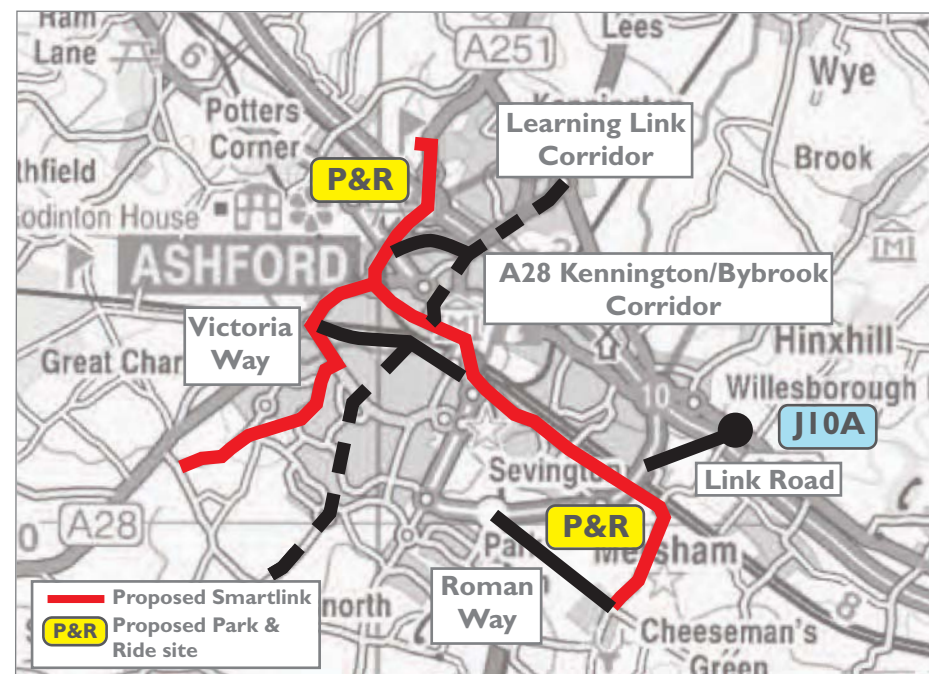
The key transport challenges for Ashford are:

- Securing road access from development sites to the M20
- Developing a high quality public transport network to connect the growth areas with the town centre, the international station and other key locations
- Providing a choice of transport modes for residents
- Creating a high quality public realm in the town centre

## Proposals

Smartlink Bus Rapid Transit system connecting the growth areas and out-of-town Park and Ride sites with the town centre, international station and complementary expanded bus network and cycling facilities.

Green spaces and the existing road network incorporating walking and cycling routes as well as promotion of Ashford as a “cycling town”.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved 100019238 2010



## Dover

Dover is best known as the UK's gateway to the Continent, being the country's busiest ferry port. This can often lead to traffic congestion along the A20 Townwall Street, causing pollution and severance between the town and seafront. This is exacerbated when disruption causes cross-Channel services to be suspended and Operation Stack is put into operation. The most direct rail service to London is via the Folkestone line which connects with services from Ashford. There are also lines that connect to the north Kent line via Canterbury and a coastal line to Deal, Sandwich and Thanet. Southeastern High Speed services were introduced in December 2009, reducing the journey time from 116 minutes to 67 minutes. This is starting to help create the foundations for a transformation in the economic geography of Dover. It is anticipated that further improvements in journey time together with additional parking and at Dover Priory station will be realised to support the recent public realm works.

The key transport challenges for Dover are:

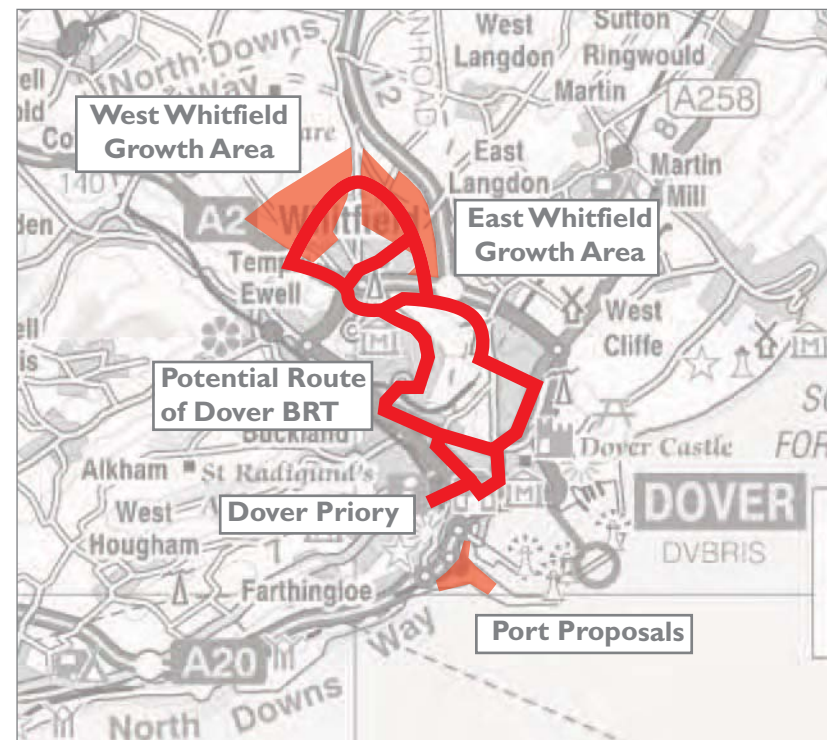
- Increasing cross-Channel freight traffic using the port causing congestion and pollution on the A20 and severance
- Delivering 10-14,000 new homes as part of the town's Growth Point status, which will require improvements to the A2
- Providing better accessibility to the town centre and railway station to maximise the benefits of Southeastern High Speed services
- Regenerating the old colliery sites around Aylesham and Snowdown and supporting growth in the Sandwich corridor
- Reduce HSI journey times from Dover Priory to London to under an hour

## Proposals

Expansion of Western Docks, seafront development and related access improvements to the A20 with bifurcation of port traffic via M20/A20 (Western Docks) and M2/A2 (Eastern Docks).

Dualling of the A2 from Lydden to Dover.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system between Whitfield, Dover town centre and the railway station complementing an enhanced bus network.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved 100019238 2010

# Maidstone

Maidstone is the County Town of Kent and a designated Growth Point. The town centre currently experiences severe congestion, particularly where three 'A' roads meet at the bridge gyratory system. The launch of the County Council's Traffic Management Centre has improved the operation of Maidstone's highway network, reducing average journey times by over 10% since 2006 through the active management of traffic signals, the use of car park guidance systems, and the provision of live traffic information to road users.

There is a large volume of inbound traffic heading for the town's offices, shops and schools every day. These movements are served by an extensive bus network, including three Park & Ride sites run by the Borough Council. Outbound commuting takes place on the regular rail service to London via Maidstone East.

The key transport challenges for Maidstone are:

- Tackling congestion hotspots and areas of poor air quality, particularly in the town centre and on the 'A' roads into Maidstone.
- Providing multi-modal access to a proposed urban extension of 5-6,000 homes to the south and east of the town.
- Maintaining accessibility to the town centre by public transport.
- Maintaining and enhancing rail services, particularly to the City of London.

## Proposals

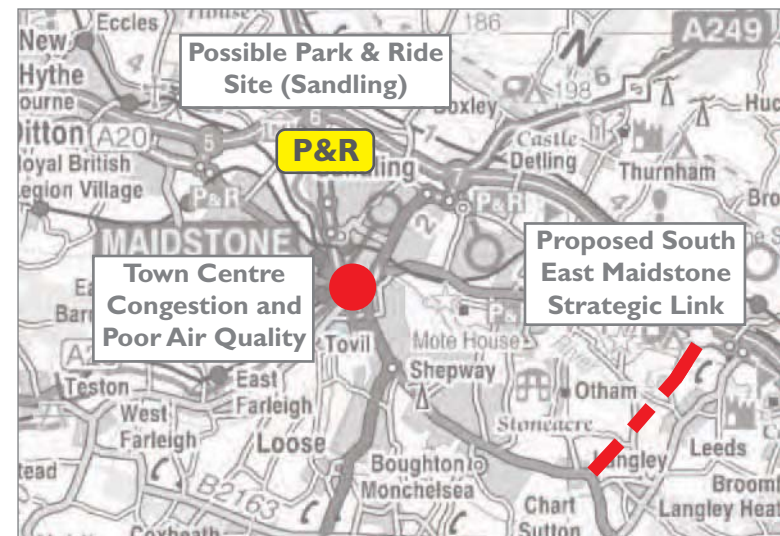
Developer-led highway improvements to M20 junctions 7 and 8.

Extension of bus lanes to serve the proposed urban extensions.

Additional Park & Ride sites to assist in reducing congestion in the town centre.

Improved walking and cycling networks, supported by Travel Plan requirements for new major developments.

Parkway station near Hollingbourne to complement Thameslink services to the City of London from 2018 and to reduce congestion on the M20 around Maidstone.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved 100019238 2010

## Shepway

Shepway is located within the Channel corridor, hence the main transport issues relate to the impact of international traffic. Folkestone is the main urban, retail and commercial centre in Shepway with Hythe and Sandgate located along the coast, Hawkinge, which lies on the North Downs, and various towns and villages dotted around the Romney Marsh. Like many of the coastal towns in Kent, Folkestone has suffered from several decades of economic decline, due mainly to the loss of seaside trade. It has also experienced the withdrawal of cross-Channel ferry services as a result of competition from the Channel Tunnel and the Port of Dover. Furthermore, the town centre is facing increased competition from neighbouring shopping centres, with leakage of trade to Canterbury and Ashford.

Folkestone has good road access to London and the wider South East via the M20, the A20 and the A259, and regular rail services to London and Dover. The town has benefited from the introduction of Southeastern High Speed services in December 2009, with journey times having been cut from 101 minutes to 57 minutes. The Channel Tunnel facility is located to the north of Folkestone at Cheriton.

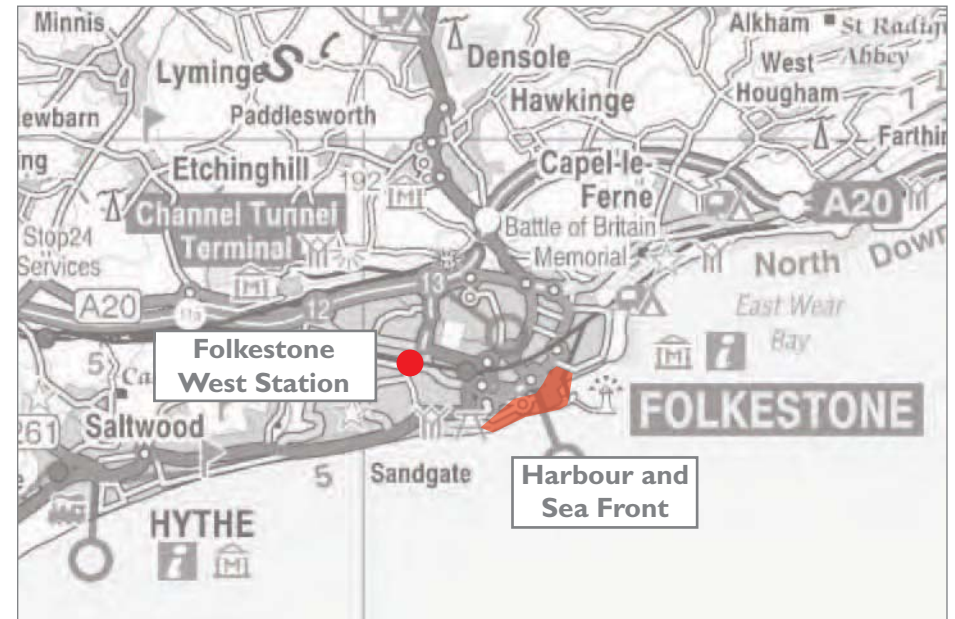
The key transport challenges for Folkestone are:

- The impact of Operation Stack on the local road network
- Maximising the benefits of Southeastern High Speed services and managing the impact on local journey patterns
- Supporting the regeneration proposals for the seafront as part of the Folkestone Harbour and Seafront Masterplan, with better access to the seafront from the town centre
- Providing public transport access to and from proposed development sites in West Hythe, Lympne and Shorncliffe.

## Proposals

Parkway station at Westenhangar and improvements to Folkestone West station.

Improved public transport to development sites, existing inter-urban routes and expansion of the urban bus network.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved 100019238 2010

## 8. West Kent: cutting congestion along the A21 corridor

<b>Issue:</b>	congestion and delay on A21 near Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge, poor accessibility to Hastings
<b>Action:</b>	dualling of A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury
<b>Outcome:</b>	improved journey times and reduced congestion for businesses, improved safety for road users
<b>Cost:</b>	est. £45m funded from National Roads Programme

The West Kent area comprises the districts of Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling and Sevenoaks and features a number of medium sized towns including Swanley, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, interspersed with smaller settlements and tracts of open countryside. It is a very attractive area in which to live and work and is generally more prosperous than other parts of Kent thanks to its close proximity to London. However, economic growth in West Kent has increasingly lagged behind many other areas in the South East in recent years and the area's GVA per capita is only 74% of the South East average.

One of the key reasons for West Kent's declining economic position relative to other parts of Kent and the wider South East is its poor transport connectivity; particularly peak time congestion on inter-urban routes such as the A21, A26 and A228. The area's traditional rail connectivity advantage to London has also been diminished by the commencement of High Speed rail services from North and East Kent to London. These have made commuter journey times from Ashford, Folkestone and Canterbury comparable with those to Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, and significantly better than those to Maidstone. This situation requires urgent action if West Kent is to regain its previous economic strength.

Devolving Highways Agency budgets and powers to local transport authorities would provide a cheaper and faster way of delivering strategic road infrastructure. The Kent economy has suffered repeatedly from delays to Highways Agency projects, including the dualling of the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury. Although work was finally due to start on this scheme in 2011, it has now been delayed once more beyond 2015 pending further consideration by the Department for Transport and will therefore not be completed in time for the opening of the new Pembury Hospital. **We believe that the scheme can be delivered for less than half its current cost through local project management and procurement.** The Coalition Government has agreed to work with us to investigate the benefits of this approach and we will progress these discussions immediately. We also want to see further improvements to the A21 to support the regeneration of Hastings.





We will continue to support the A21 Reference Group of MPs, Council Leaders and heads of public services which is pressing for the urgent dualling of the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury and Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst. These measures will support business growth, regeneration and access to services in the A21 corridor from Sevenoaks through to Hastings.

The loss of direct rail services between the City of London, Maidstone and West Malling has forced commuters from these areas to travel by road to Tonbridge, Hildenborough and Sevenoaks, which have retained their Cannon Street services. This has in turn added to existing overcrowding problems on rail services to and from Tonbridge.

Southeastern has plans to improve the service on the Tonbridge-Hastings line when the new Thameslink programme commences in 2018. The Hastings trains would join and divide at Tonbridge, providing fast and slow portions along the line between Tonbridge and Hastings. This would improve journey times for rail passengers from principal stations on the line, while still providing a slower service for the smaller stations.

Another key aspiration is the re-introduction of direct services between Kent and Gatwick Airport, following the cessation of services from Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge via Redhill in 2008. A new service would need to be demonstrated as viable and economical in time for the renewal of the existing Southern franchise in 2015.

### Colts Hill

The A228 Colts Hill bypass scheme is required to complete a high standard and safe route between the M20 and the A21 and links to the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury dualling proposal. The A228 at Colts Hill currently suffers from poor visibility and concealed entrances

which contribute to its poor accident record and severe peak time congestion.

The scheme would incorporate a single carriageway bypass of Colts Hill village, with a climbing lane in the southbound direction. The proposed bypass would address these issues, whilst also enhancing access to the new Pembury Hospital from Maidstone. This is particularly important given the planned transfer of a number of medical units to Pembury from Maidstone Hospital when the site becomes fully operational in 2011. The scheme would also make a significant contribution to the planned improvement of bus services on the Maidstone to Tunbridge Wells corridor and assist with sub-regional integration. KCC has submitted the scheme for Central Government funding on a number of occasions since 2003; however it has so far been unsuccessful.



# Sevenoaks

The district of Sevenoaks borders Greater London to the north-west, Surrey to the west and Sussex to the south. It is largely rural in nature with most of the District designated as Green Belt (93%) and two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are three main urban areas in the District: Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge. The District is well located in terms of its proximity to London and the Continent, with a number of major transport links running through or alongside it, including the M25, M26 and M20 motorways. Railways provide links to London and Ashford.

The key transport challenges for Sevenoaks are:

- Existing and forecast overcrowding on peak train services to and from London
- Achieving a rebalancing of the transport network in favour of non-car modes as a means of access to services and facilities.
- Working towards an improved and integrated network of public transport services in and between both urban and rural areas.
- Reducing the impact of traffic on the natural and historic environment of the main urban areas.
- Tackling the 11 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the District.
- Addressing congestion hotspots in Sevenoaks and Swanley town centres, and on the A25 and the A225.

## Proposals

Provision of east facing slips on the M25/M26 to enable traffic approaching from the south to travel east on the M26 and M25.

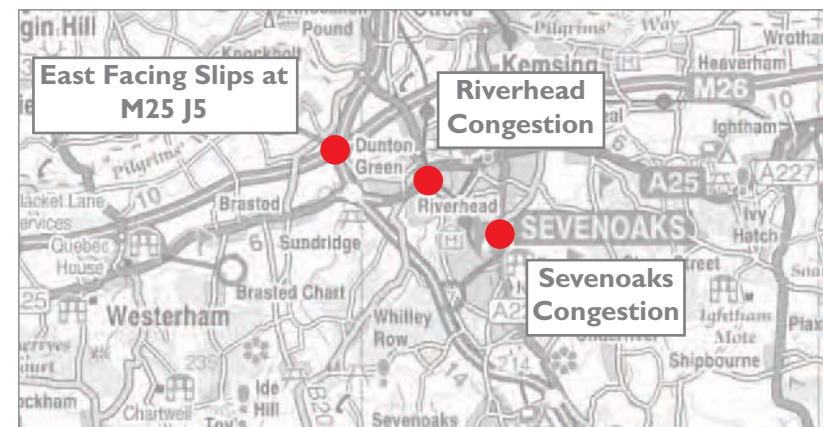
Development of Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) to maximise efficient use of the existing road network and improve air quality.

Bus lanes and bus priority measures to improve the commercial viability of operating buses to, from and within the Sevenoaks District.

Extend and improve walking and cycling routes.

Improved community and voluntary transport options.

Ensuring reliable and improved services for rail commuters into London from Sevenoaks.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved 100019238 2010

## Tonbridge and Malling

The Borough of Tonbridge and Malling has a population of approximately 112,000 and covers an area of just over 24,000 hectares. The Borough does not have a single urban focus but is comprised of a number of diverse, contrasting settlements and neighbourhoods. A considerable area of the Borough is rural in character. The M20 motorway, a key national link, cuts through the middle of the Borough and has important implications for traffic patterns on the local network.

Key transport challenges for Tonbridge & Malling are:

- Dealing with the transport implications of the range of developments in the Borough, particularly in the Medway Valley and in central Tonbridge.
- Improving air quality in a number of declared AQMAs arising from traffic-related factors, including a long stretch of the A20 and Tonbridge town centre.
- Enhancing station facilities and rail connections to the City of London on the West Malling/Maidstone East Line and tackling overcrowding on the Tonbridge line.
- Improving transport interchange at Tonbridge and West Malling stations and addressing the lack of parking at West Malling and Hildenborough stations.
- Reinstating direct rail services between the Borough and Gatwick Airport on the Tonbridge-Redhill Line.
- Minimising the adverse impacts of HGV traffic, including overnight parking
- Mitigating the impacts of traffic on the A25 corridor through Platt, Borough Green and Igtham.

### Proposals

Coordinated implementation of transport requirements arising from developments in the Medway Valley, including new bus services supported by bus priority measures – focussed on the A20 corridor.

Construction of a bypass at Borough Green.

Construction of the London Road-Hadlow Road link in Tonbridge.

Urban Traffic Management and Control system for Tonbridge.

Implement Action Plan to deal with AQMAs.

Work with Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies in the area to enhance opportunities for transport interchange at stations and improve services, particularly to the City of London, with particular focus on the service specification for the next Integrated Kent Franchise period beyond 2014.

A228 Corridor Improvements – including at Kent Street, Snodland bypass and at Colts Hill in neighbouring Tunbridge Wells Borough - to relieve the A26 corridor.

## Tunbridge Wells

Tunbridge Wells Borough is an area of 326 square kilometres bordering Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone and Ashford in Kent; and Rother and Wealden in East Sussex. The town of Royal Tunbridge Wells is the main urban centre in the district, providing social, cultural and economic opportunities. Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, Hawkhurst and 17 villages serve the extensive rural population.

The Borough benefits from a good rail service to Tonbridge, Sevenoaks and London, a bus network that covers both the urban and rural areas and good provision of car parking facilities within the town centres, many of which are free in the more rural towns.

There are very high levels of car ownership and use within the Borough, resulting in congestion and poor air quality issues.

Infrastructure improvements and increased use of high quality public transport, cycling and walking facilities have already started to reduce traffic congestion, and this is a key area for continued improvement in the future.

The key transport challenges for Tunbridge Wells are:

- Addressing congestion hotspots on the A21 between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells; on the Pembury Road; within the North Farm/Longfield Road industrial area; and on the A26 within Tunbridge Wells and Southborough.
- Tackling AQMAs across the district.
- Reducing the impact of traffic on the natural and historic environment of the main urban areas.
- Ensuring optimum accessibility to the new Pembury Hospital by a range of travel options including the proposed integrated bus and rail networks, cycling and the car

- Accommodating development pressures resulting from the Borough's location in the commuter belt in a sustainable way.

### Proposals

Development of UTMC to maximise efficient use of the existing road network.

Implement Park & Ride to help tackle congestion and poor air quality in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre, including complementary bus lanes and bus priority measures.

A21 Pembury to Tonbridge dualling to improve access to the new Pembury Hospital and the North Farm Retail Park.

A21 improvements between Kippings Cross and Lamberhurst and between Lamberhurst and Flimwell.

Extend and improve walking and cycling routes.

Ensuring reliable and improved rail services for commuters into London from Tunbridge Wells.

A228 corridor improvement at Colts Hill.

## 9. East Kent: radical solutions needed

<b>Issue:</b>	poor accessibility to East Kent leading to high unemployment and social disadvantage in East Kent
<b>Action:</b>	provision of a Thanet Parkway station to improve employment opportunities in Thanet and throughout East Kent and improved line speeds between Ashford and Ramsgate
<b>Outcome:</b>	~1,000 jobs per million passengers at KIA, rising to 6,000 jobs by 2033 increased attractiveness of East Kent to employers, reduced journey times to/from Thanet, reduction in welfare costs
<b>Cost:</b>	~£10m for Parkway station and up to £50m for line speed enhancements

HS1 Quickest Journey Times to London from:	Pre HSI (mins)	Post HSI (mins)
Ashford	84	37
Folkestone Central	101	57
Dover	116	67
Ramsgate	129	80
Canterbury	110	56
Gravesend	57	22

East Kent is made up of the Districts of Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet. East Kent is peripheral to the rest of the UK and, as such, suffers greater deprivation and social problems than West Kent and the south-east region generally. The coastal area has experienced the cumulative effects of a declining ferry port industry as a consequence of the Channel Tunnel, the aftermath of the closure of the East Kent coal-field and the loss of the holiday trade. This peripherality discourages major employers from locating in the area and has resulted in an over-reliance on jobs in the education, pharmaceutical and port-related sectors. Away from the coast, Canterbury is the predominant retail, cultural and educational centre and its priority is to protect its historic fabric while encouraging economic growth.

Economic regeneration is the key priority in East Kent and the regeneration potential of East Kent will be dependent upon improving the overall level of accessibility to this peripheral location to the rest of the UK.

### Enhancing the Benefits of High Speed Rail

On 13th December 2009, Southeastern High Speed services commenced. These services have dramatically cut rail journey times to Ebbsfleet, Ashford and other areas of Kent to Stratford (for Docklands), St Pancras and the north of the country. The improved journey times will have a significant impact and act as the catalyst to regenerate parts of the County, making them very attractive places to live, work and visit. The High Speed services provide a real opportunity to promote tourism, bringing Kent's attractions closer to visitors from London.

Further improvements are required to the rail network in East Kent to maximise the benefits of High Speed services. Journey times on the conventional rail network beyond Ebbsfleet and Ashford are still lengthy and access to a number of rail stations is poor. We are working closely with Network Rail and Southeastern to ensure that the necessary improvements are implemented.

### Thanet Parkway Station/Kent International Airport (KIA)

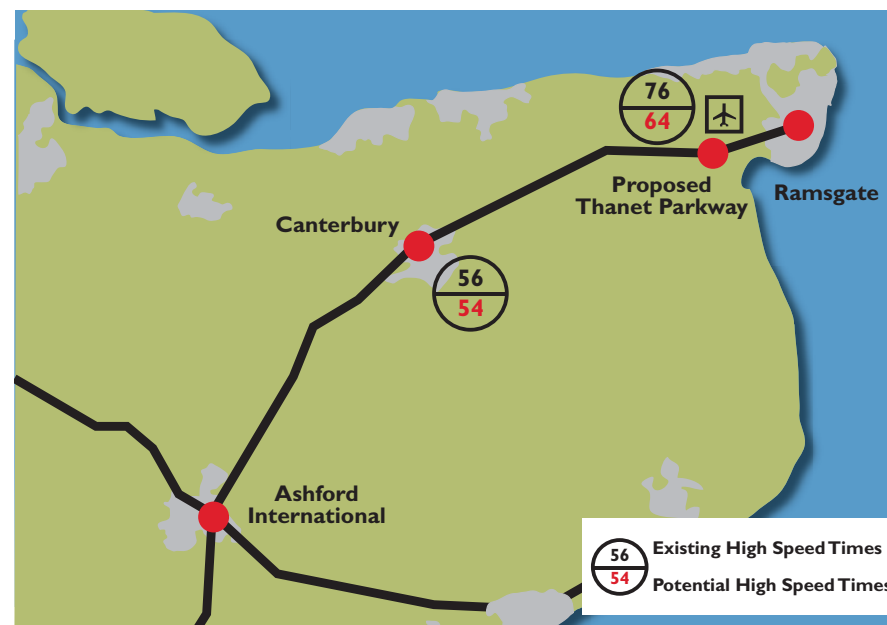
Thanet is one of England's most disadvantaged districts, with high unemployment rates and a total welfare bill of £180 million a year. The area is overly dependent on public sector and seasonal employment and has not benefitted fully from the launch of High Speed domestic rail services to London.

Kent International Airport (Manston) has the potential to develop into a regional airport and become one of the largest single generators of economic activity in the County. The airport predicts that it will serve around 5 million passengers and cater for 400,000 tonnes of freight by 2033. This could generate over 2,800 jobs by 2018 and 6,000 jobs by 2033 in a range of employment sectors, offering a huge boost to the economy of East Kent through new employment opportunities arising from the growth of the Manston and Eurokent Business Parks. Its future growth is dependent upon and will be driven by the displacement of traffic from other South East airports as they begin to operate at capacity due to continuing growth. We will continue to promote the real opportunities at Manston and press hard for enhanced access by high speed rail services to facilitate the economic benefits.

The KIA draft masterplan proposes major expansion supported by a parkway station with High Speed rail services from London, serving not just the airport but also the local area. This will be located near to the

perimeter of KIA, with improved bus links and local road improvements to link to the A299.

Many of the existing rail stations in Thanet and part of Dover District are difficult to reach by sustainable transport and offer limited car parking and development opportunities. This causes some commuters to travel significantly longer distances by car to access stations with better parking facilities. Initial feasibility analysis by the County Council suggests that there is consequently a strong business case for a Thanet Parkway station close to KIA and we will shortly be submitting a bid with Network Rail to the Government's Regional Growth Fund for a contribution to the capital cost of the project. We will also investigate the feasibility of developing parkway stations at Maidstone and Westenhanger.



**Figure 9.1 High Speed Journey Savings to Proposed Thanet Parkway**



### Ashford to Ramsgate Line Speed Improvements

The County Council and Network Rail recently commissioned a study to identify potential line speed improvements between Ashford International and Ramsgate. The study found that by increasing line speeds from the current maximum of 70mph to the 85mph allowed for by current signalling, and eliminating permanent speed restrictions at three locations, running times between Ashford and Ramsgate could be reduced from 36 minutes to a theoretical minimum of 26 minutes. This would see journey times between St Pancras and the proposed Thanet Parkway drop to approximately an hour, which would provide a significant boost to tourism and the regeneration of the area and also enhance access to private sector employment at Ashford and Ebbsfleet. Network Rail now intends to prepare a full business case for the scheme, which is currently scheduled for implementation in 2014.

### Ashford to Dover Line Speed Improvements

KCC is also working with Network Rail to identify further line speed improvements between Ashford and Dover. The aspiration is to reduce journey times between London and Dover Priory to less than an hour, which is vital to improve the attractiveness of the town to businesses and new residents.

### East Kent Access Phase 2

The East Kent Access scheme aims to improve road access between the A299 Thanet Way and the Pfizer site near Sandwich. Phase 1, which was completed in 2007, saw the A256 become a dual carriageway around the Pfizer site as far as the disused Richborough power station. Phase 2 is currently under construction and involves the improvement of the A299 from Mount Pleasant roundabout to Lord of the Manor; and the A256 from Lord of the Manor back to Ebbsfleet Lane. This scheme will open up development land in this area and strengthen Pfizer's role as the main employer for the area. Crucially, the improved road access will

have significant regeneration benefits for the area and provide a continuous dual carriageway from London to Thanet.

### Ramsgate

The Port of Ramsgate is well connected to the national road network via the A299 and M2 and is served by a modern port access road that avoids the need to travel through heavily built up areas. A car and freight ferry operates to Ostend and the port has the potential to operate up to twice as many ferries without any additional infrastructure, complementing the increased capacity planned for Dover.

Ramsgate is being used in connection with the operation of the Thanet Offshore Wind Farm, a 100 turbine development 8 miles off the north-east Kent coast and is the base for the project's operations and maintenance centre. The London Array project is a much larger development of 341 wind turbines midway out in the Thames Estuary with an investment value of £3 billion. The London Array wind farm is also planning to use the port as it gears up for offshore construction from 2011 and as a base for its future operations and maintenance.

Ramsgate has the only royal harbour in the UK and its award-winning marina offers an excellent range of facilities with significant potential to boost the local economy from the sailing market in London, the south east and the near continent.

### Sustainable Links to High Speed Stations

We will continue with the award-winning work of integrating both the proposed parkway stations and existing high speed stations with the bus network, walking and cycling routes and support these with secure cycle parking, information and other facilities.

### Ashford to Hastings Line Speed Improvements

The elimination of speed restrictions on the Ashford to Hastings line would greatly enhance travel between the two towns and to employment in the Thames Gateway and London. This has the potential to regenerate both the Romney Marsh area and Hastings in East Sussex. Network Rail is currently preparing the business case for the necessary improvement works which are scheduled for implementation in 2014.

### London Ashford Airport (LAA)

London Ashford Airport is an international airport located on the Romney Marsh near Lydd, close to the border with East Sussex. It was purpose built as a civilian airfield in the 1950s, and in recent years, over £20 million has been spent developing and upgrading the airport's facilities.

The airport has plans to extend its runway and build new terminal facilities with the ability to provide 500,000 passenger movements by 2015, capitalising on the growing passenger preference for using a regional airport and reducing surface transport times and costs. Additionally 75% of all air transport movements in the UK are in a south-easterly direction, therefore Lydd brings additional benefits by being the most south-easterly UK airport. LAA is keen to utilise the existing rail connection between Hastings and Ashford by improving access to Appledore Station, and to better integrate with the bus network when demand enables sustained economic operations.

## Canterbury

The city of Canterbury is the predominant retail, cultural and educational centre within East Kent and a principal focus for service industries. It is identified as a Regional Hub in the South East Plan. The city depends on a large net inflow of commuters to support the level of jobs in the area as well as an influx of secondary school children and students in higher education. Around 160,000 vehicles per day travel to and from Canterbury along the nine 'A' and 'B' roads that converge on the city. Although the city is bypassed to the south-west by the A2, the highway network is under acute pressure and, as a result, Canterbury suffers from significant congestion and poor air quality, especially on the inner ring road and radial routes. This congestion would be significantly worse without the three Park & Ride sites that have been used by over one million passengers every year since 2003. There are two railway stations which serve the city and Southeastern High Speed services commenced at the Canterbury West station in December 2009, cutting the journey time to London from approximately 90 minutes to 56 minutes.

The Canterbury District includes the coastal towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay. The transport priority for Whitstable is to reduce traffic delays in the main shopping streets and, for Herne Bay, to reduce the amount of out-commuting through regeneration of the town centre.

The key transport challenges for Canterbury are:

- Reducing congestion and improving air quality, particularly along the A28 and the ring road
- Linking transport investment and infrastructure improvements with development plan priorities and strategic development allocations
- Reducing the impact of traffic on the historic environment by increasing transport choice and reducing car dependency and the need to travel, especially during the peak hours

- Improving the integration of different modes of travel at transport hubs

### Proposals

Provision of A2 slip roads and a new interchange near Bridge.

Increase Park & Ride provision - in particular the provision of a site to serve the A2 north-western approach and reduce the number of city centre car parking spaces.

Development of Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) to maximise efficient use of the existing road network.

Bus improvements and priority measures to improve the speed, reliability and frequency of services .

Extend and improve walking and cycling routes.

A relief road through Wincheap and suitable junctions with the A28.

Improvements in and around Canterbury West railway station to maximise the benefits of Southeastern High Speed services.

# Thanet

Thanet is located in the north-east corner of Kent, comprising the seaside towns of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs as well as smaller villages and rural areas. The area has suffered from increasing unemployment and deprivation due to the closure of the East Kent coalfields and the decline of the traditional English seaside holiday trade. However, it has recently experienced economic regeneration through the development of the Westwood Cross shopping centre and associated business, leisure and educational development in the surrounding area.

Road connections to the rest of the UK have been improved through the dualling of the A299 Thanet Way and Phase I of East Kent Access though the recent growth at Westwood Cross has resulted in greater congestion on the local road network, especially at weekends. The introduction of Southeastern High Speed services in December 2009 has reduced journey times between London and Ramsgate from 129 minutes to 81 minutes. Kent International Airport (KIA) is located at Manston and the Port of Ramsgate offers a direct ferry service to Ostend.

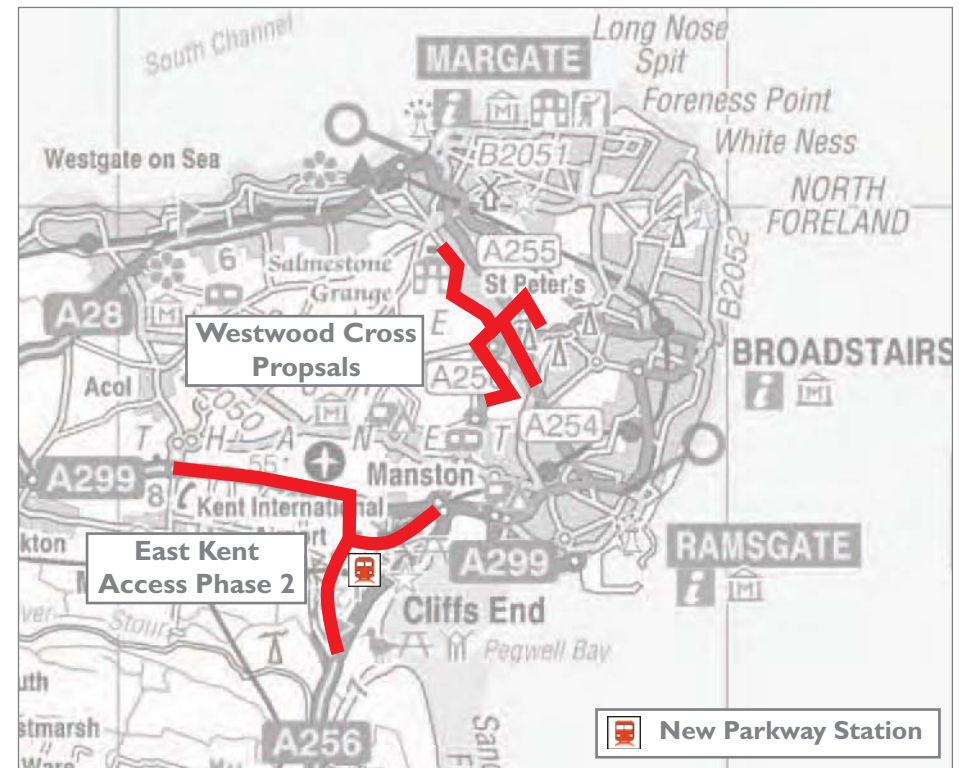
The key transport challenges for Thanet are:

- Securing the infrastructure to support the planned housing growth within the District, including 1,000 homes adjacent to Westwood Cross and the nearby mixed development at Eurokent, growth at the airport and the business site at Manston Park
- Supporting the regeneration of Thanet's coastal towns
- Maximising the benefits of Southeastern High Speed services, managing the impact on local journey patterns and improving journey times between Ramsgate and Ashford
- Supporting the expansion of KIA and the Port of Ramsgate through improved transport links

## Proposals

Local Road Improvements around Westwood Cross.

Thanet Parkway Station at Cliffs End.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved 100019238 2010

## 10. An Integrated Public Transport Network: supporting Kent's workforce

<b>Issue:</b>	growth in jobs and housing will create traffic gridlock
<b>Action:</b>	creation of an integrated public transport network
<b>Outcome:</b>	increased accessibility to goods and services, greater choice, particularly for those without access to a private car
<b>Cost:</b>	£80m

Buses have a major role to play in offering more attractive travel options to those living in urban areas and rural communities (particularly those on or closer to main roads). Some 22% of households in Kent do not have access to a car and many single vehicle households use the car for commuting, making the bus vital to allow them to reach the services and opportunities that some of us take for granted.

Access to services is one of the key issues facing Kent's rural areas and the rural regeneration agenda. Although about 30% of Kent's population lives in rural areas, most of these people live in communities which can be easily served by attractive bus services, including fast inter-urban routes. Access to the countryside from urban areas for recreation is also an important consideration.

Kent has always been a popular area for retirement and with most of us living longer, a larger proportion of our residents will be over 60. They

will rely on buses to access healthcare, shops, entertainment and their friends and family. We also know that the current financial downturn has made bus and rail travel more popular as people reconsider the cost of running and using their private car.

Significant areas of the County are not serviced by public transport. By providing short-term revenue support, expanded local bus routes operating more frequently and providing better links can generate significantly more passengers in a short space of time without an ongoing subsidy commitment.

The County Council has a successful record of working with commercial bus operators through voluntary Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) agreements. There are now seven QBPs in Kent which have seen joint investment by the County and District Councils and bus companies in infrastructure, service frequency and vehicle quality.

Overall, the funding support provided by KCC and Government (in the form of concessionary reimbursement, Bus Service Operators Grant, Kickstart grants, bus stop infrastructure etc) accounts for over half the annual turnover of Kent's bus operators - amounting to some £60m per annum.

Whilst it is right and proper that operators receive these payments in order to maintain a viable business, it is also right that they are held to account by local authorities and passengers for the way in which this



funding is spent. KCC will ensure that any new funding powers devolved by the Coalition Government are put to good use in delivering better outcomes for bus passengers across the County.

The Kent Freedom Pass scheme provides free travel on almost all public bus routes for an annual fee of currently £50 for young people living in Kent. There are currently over 25,000 passes on issue and there is evidence of a 2.6% improvement in journey times outside schools with a high take up of passes. KCC will continue to build on its success and give young people better access to life opportunities.

KCC is committed to improving the whole journey experience for public transport users. A key element of this is better integration between bus and rail services. We will work closely with Network Rail, Southeastern and Southern through the proposed Kent Quality Rail Partnership (KQRP) to deliver physical improvements to aid interchange at rail stations and encourage people to travel to the station by sustainable modes. This will include improvements to bus access and infrastructure, cycle parking and walking and cycling routes.

We are currently working with Network Rail to deliver significant interchange improvements at Sevenoaks station and with Gravesham Borough Council and Network Rail to deliver a new 'Transport Quarter' close to Gravesend station as part of the Town Centre regeneration project. We are also part-funding the procurement of new Electronic Ticket Machines (ETMs) with Smartcard readers for Kent's commercial bus services. This offers the potential for integrated Smartcard ticketing for rail and bus services, similar to London's Oyster Card, thanks to the Government's recent commitment to include a requirement to introduce Smartcard ticketing in all new rail franchises.

## An Integrated Bus Network

Without much needed key road infrastructure, the County's road network will struggle to cope with the proposed housing and employment growth planned so we need to plan and provide more efficient ways of getting people to where they want to go. The bus is a key part of the answer and lies at the heart of our proposed integrated transport network. This network will be formed around integrating and connecting four different types of bus service, bus rapid transit, inter-urban coach services, local buses and rural interchange with other forms of transport. An enhanced bus network will strengthen travel choice and allow sustainable growth where new road infrastructure is difficult to achieve.

### Bus Interchange

The crucial element of this integrated bus network is the ability to change from one kind of service to another. This would be done at passengers' key destination points in town centres, at major transport interchange points such as the local train station and at edge-of-town Park and Ride sites, which would also connect the rural bus services into the existing commercial bus network. These interchange points would be a place where parents drop their children off to catch a school bus to the urban centre, known as "kiss and ride" and would link into the local walking and cycling networks, providing additional facilities such as cycle parking. This ease of interchange will be further enhanced by initiatives such as single ticketing across modes with simpler methods of payment.

## Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Bus Rapid Transit aims to provide a service that offers a “tram-like” mode of travel through improvements to infrastructure, vehicles and simplicity of timetabling, as achieved by the Fastrack service in Kent Thameside. The improved features include sections of bus-only routes to bypass queues, a strong image/brand, very frequent service on a relatively direct route and off-bus ticketing. These improved features offer a genuine advantage over the car for local journeys.

BRT is already planned for Ashford, called Smartlink, which will link the major development areas in the town to the town centre, railway station, Park and Ride sites, business parks and the Designer Outlet.

Fastrack and Smartlink have the potential to transform bus travel in Kent to support economic growth and regeneration. To date, Canterbury, Dover, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells have been identified as potential future locations, as well as extending Fastrack itself in the Thames Gateway. The combination of the existing crossing and a Lower Thames Crossing creates the opportunity for an orbital bus rapid transit system linking the north Kent Thameside Fastrack network with the South Essex Rapid Transit (SERT) network.

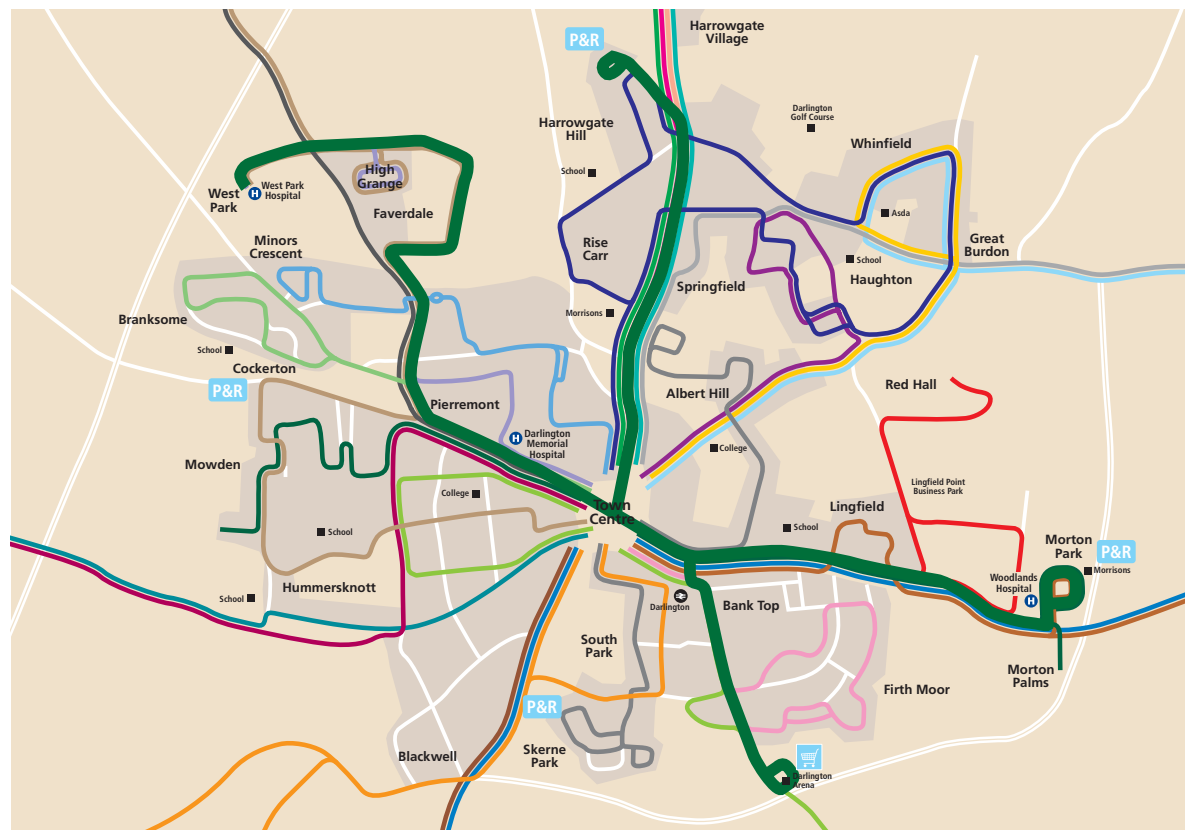
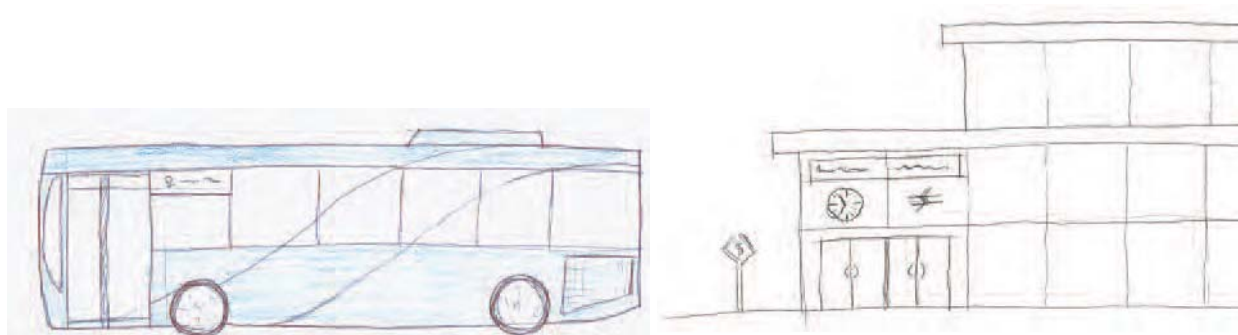


Figure 10.1 Example of BRT Network



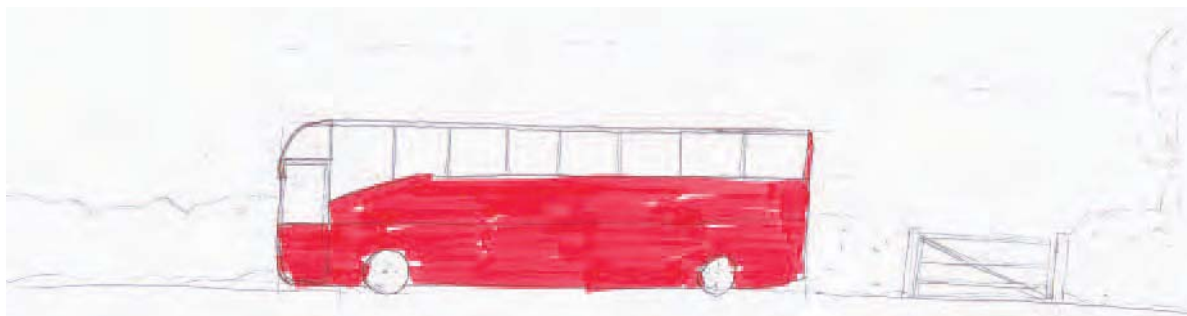
## Inter-Urban Coach Service

Kent's transport network has developed upon both historic desire lines and natural physical constraints, meaning that many routes are radial, extending outwards from London. This is especially true of the railway network, where some towns lack direct rail links. Good examples are Sittingbourne to Maidstone and Faversham to Ashford. Coach commuter services also operate from Kent into London.

In response, we will develop a network of inter-urban coach services offering direct, fast services along major corridors. A good example is the high frequency 101 service between Maidstone and the Medway towns. Whilst these services will have few stops, they will serve Park & Ride sites on the urban periphery and other significant out of town locations. In addition to urban centres, these services will also connect key transport interchange points such as our passenger ports, international rail stations and airports. These also include cross-boundary services, for example, between Folkestone and Hastings. This network can be developed through start-up revenue funding (Kickstart) in partnership with operators.



Figure 10.2 Example of Inter-Urban Coach Network



## Local Bus Services

Local bus services which penetrate into and serve local communities will continue to operate, feeding into the rapid transit and inter-urban services at key locations and via a town centre hub. The County Council has worked with district councils and local operators to increase patronage on local bus services. A good example is the Thanet Loop, where a simplified route, linking the town centres with Westwood Cross and the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) hospital has seen patronage double in four years. Features like a frequent ten minute service, low-floor buses and real-time information, connected through strong branding make The Loop easy to use and understand and these successful aspects will be extended to other local bus services across the County. Bus priority measures may also be needed for local bus services to achieve quicker and more reliable journey times. Kent's local authorities will also work with developers to secure local bus access to new housing and employment.



Figure 10.3 Example of Local Bus Network



## Rural Interchange Service

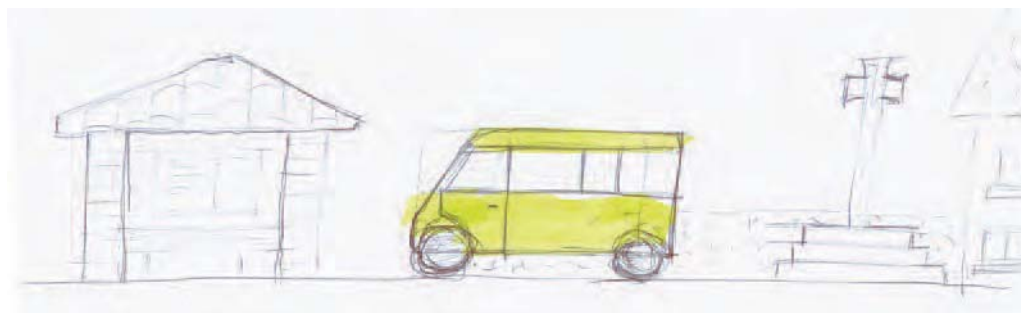
There are significant pockets of deprivation and social exclusion in our rural areas, especially where the loss of local services has necessitated a greater reliance on transport. There are almost 100 Community Transport schemes in Kent and Medway, which include “Kent Karrier” (and similar schemes in Medway and Sevenoaks), Volunteer Car Schemes, Age Concern buses and Shopmobility schemes, though almost none of these provide regular scheduled services available to the general public. Through the Rural Access to Services Programme, we are working on a pilot brokerage scheme of community transport provision to improve the sustainability of current community transport schemes.

The County Council and some districts fund a number of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services like ‘Kent Karrier’. For the most inaccessible locations, the County Council is keen to look at a rural interchange bus service which feeds into the existing commercial bus network at key interchange points on inter-urban routes.

An additional solution is that the inter-urban routes consist of some limited-stop direct services and some diverted services which serve villages and hamlets located a short distance off the main inter-urban trunk road.



**Figure 10.4 Example of Rural Interchange Network**





## A Rail Action Plan for Kent

KCC's bi-annual Rail Summits, bringing together the Department for Transport, Network Rail, Southeastern, Passenger Focus, local rail user groups, MPs and local councillors, provide a powerful collective voice in discussing the problems that the County's commuters are suffering as a result of recent timetable changes, as well as the benefits of the High Speed services and future aspirations. We are producing a **Rail Action Plan for Kent** which will be used to inform future rail investment and service plans, both in the short-term and for future rail franchises.

Major priorities for action include:

- Reinstatement of the City service to Maidstone and West Malling.
- Extending the High Speed service from Dover via Deal and Sandwich to Ramsgate.
- Feasibility of extending High Speed services from Ebbsfleet to Maidstone West.
- Improving the journey times for the High Speed service from Ashford via Canterbury and the proposed Thanet Parkway to Ramsgate.
- Improvements to the North Kent line.
- Investigating the feasibility of introducing a through service between Gatwick and Kent after 2015.
- Including Maidstone East as the principal Kent terminus for Thameslink services from 2018.

We have already developed a strong working relationship with Network Rail and are pursuing a number of these rail enhancements, which are presented graphically in Figure 10.5. It is anticipated that the majority of these schemes will be taken forward for implementation in 2014.

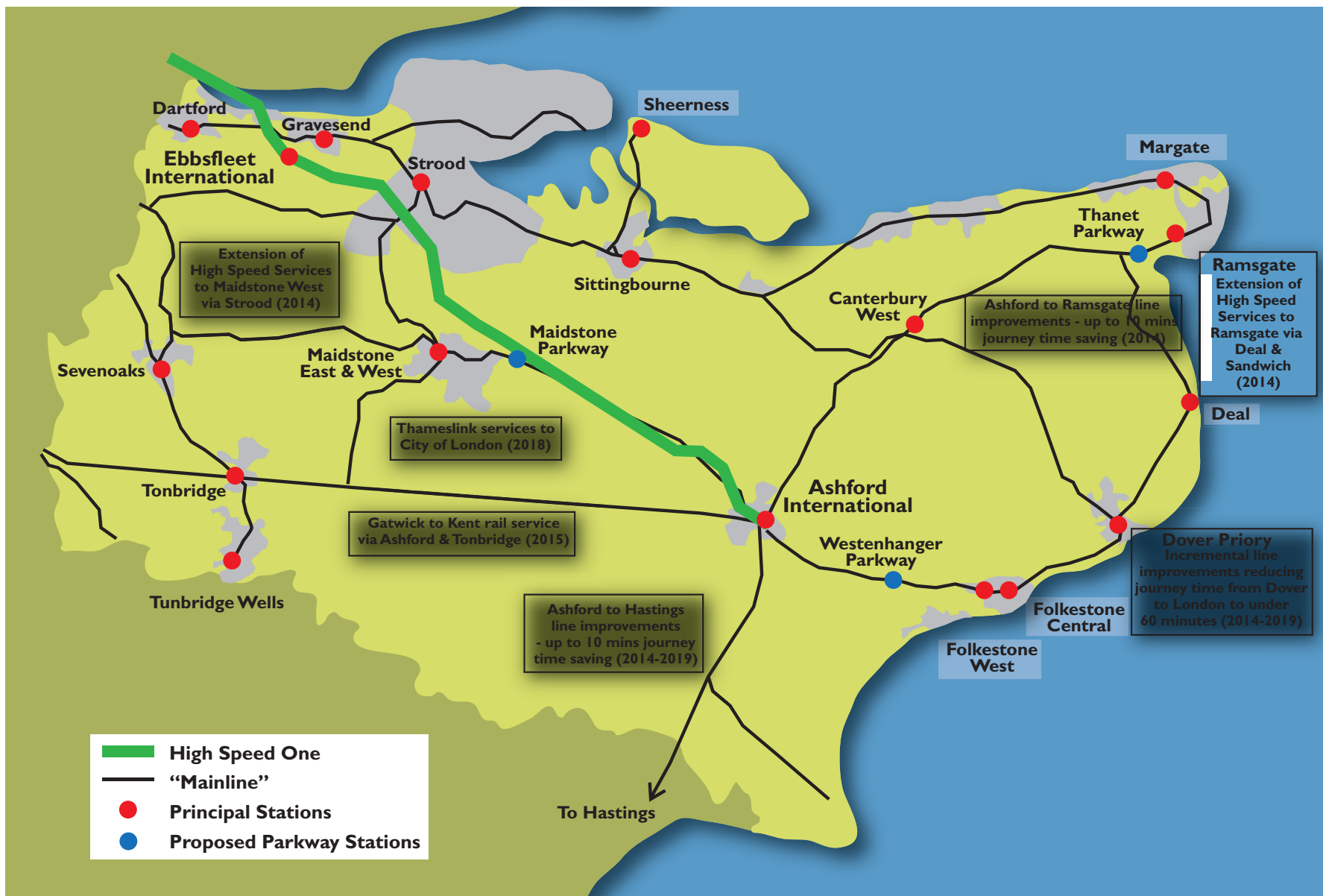


Figure 10.5 Rail Enhancements

# 11. Local Development Frameworks: securing infrastructure

This Strategy outlines a vision for the integrated transport network needed in Kent to support the planned growth in employment and housing. As such, elements of this Strategy are aspirational and the precise delivery mechanisms and timescales for its constituent projects have yet to be determined. These will be progressed according to local and national political priorities and economic conditions, which will in turn dictate the pace of housing and commercial development over the next 10-15 years. It is for this reason that the Strategy does not outline a detailed Action Plan. Some initiatives proposed still require further analysis and feasibility studies while others will require a change in attitudes and behaviours by all of us.

What is clear is that the actions will be delivered by many partners working together in two interlinked processes as shown in Figure 11.1.

1. **Spatial Planning** - deciding where development is to be located and its form. This is led by the Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) for each district.
2. **Transport Planning** - identifying which transport improvements are needed for delivery through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process and other funding mechanisms

These will be brought together at the local level through the development of Local Transport Strategies.



Figure 11.1 Planning and Delivery of the Transport Delivery Plan for Kent

Each of Kent's 12 district and borough councils has a duty to prepare a LDF to replace their existing Local Plans. The LDF determines where development can take place up to 2026 and contains a Core Strategy which provides the spatial vision and strategic policies on issues like housing, employment, biodiversity etc.

It is vital that transport infrastructure and the LDF are closely integrated since the location of development can have a substantial impact on travel demand in a particular area. Therefore, the County Council works closely with districts to ensure alignment between the LDF and the LTP. Officers in Kent Highway Services also work closely with their respective district councils to ensure that the transport implications of development proposals are identified and mitigated at an early stage in the planning process.

District councils are responsible for deciding the scale and location of housing, employment and other land uses in their LDFs. However, the decisions taken by them may have long term implications for the cost and delivery of KCC services. The County Council therefore works with district councils to ensure that their LDFs are deliverable and affordable. As part of this, KCC provides information and undertakes assessment of district council options for the scale and location of development in their area as part of the essential evidence gathering stage of the planning process. This role has become particularly important in light of the Government's proposed reduction in local authority budgets and capital funding.

KCC therefore wishes to strengthen its working relationship with district councils in the preparation of LDFs to achieve the following aims:

- to ensure that KCC's contributions to the LDF process are consistent, sound and fully explained.
- to set out clearly the implications for KCC costs and services of the development options to be examined.
- to take a consistent view of LDF proposals in the light of the Regeneration Framework and the KCC Housing, Integrated Transport and Environment Strategies.
- to work with district councils from the early stages of the LDF process in finding solutions that are be workable and affordable for KCC.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is a central part of the LDF. It sets out the infrastructure required to deliver new development, along with its location and costs, and who will deliver it. It is therefore a vital opportunity for KCC, as the authority responsible for the delivery of highway and community infrastructure, to influence the form of each district's development proposals and its implications for KCC services. Some of the major transport infrastructure identified in Kent's LDFs is listed below.

Currently (December 2010), four districts; Ashford, Dover, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells have adopted Core Strategies. The remaining districts and Medway Council are at various stages in the production of their Core Strategies.

# Transport Planning

Alongside Kent's Local Development Frameworks, the other key process which will deliver the objectives of this Strategy is the formulation, design and implementation of transport measures and initiatives. In line with the Coalition Government's devolutionary planning policies, these will increasingly be shaped by local communities.

## Local Transport Plan 3

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document produced by all local transport authorities. It contains the authority's vision, policies and objectives for local transport and outlines an implementation plan of transport schemes which will deliver these objectives for a certain allocation of funding from Central Government.

Kent County Council (KCC) has previously produced two LTPs covering the periods 2001-06 and 2006-11 respectively and a third LTP is required to be in place by 1st April 2011. Kent's approach to LTP3 has been based on the County Council's new Regeneration Framework, Unlocking Kent's Potential; and this Transport Delivery Plan, Growth Without Gridlock. Our LTP3 therefore proposes a new approach to the delivery of transport infrastructure in Kent, which prioritises investment in the County's Growth Areas and Growth Points, maximises the benefits of high speed rail, anticipates the twin challenges of an ageing population and the impacts of climate change, and draws upon new and innovative funding sources to secure the delivery of housing, economic growth and prosperity.

The strategy approach for LTP3 has been to develop five themes which are:

- Growth Without Gridlock
- A Safer and Healthier County
- Supporting Independence
- Tackling a Changing Climate
- Enjoying Life in Kent

Using these themes, a range of options has been put forward for how to prioritise the funding we expect for LTP3. The preferred methodology proposes to allocate a proportion of the budget to each of the five themes and, within these themes, to focus the investment in the areas where the challenges associated with each theme are most acute.

Consultation on a draft LTP3 commenced in October 2010 and will close on 31st December 2010. Since the level of funding that will be available for LTP3 is still not clear, a draft LTP3 Implementation Plan has not yet been prepared. However we expect there to be substantially less money available and in response, have identified possible alternative funding streams to supplement LTP3 funding.

A Final LTP3 Strategy and Implementation Plan will be adopted by the end of March 2011.





Figure 11.2 The Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex Local Enterprise Partnership

## Local Enterprise Partnership

In October 2010, the Coalition Government gave the go-ahead for England's largest Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex LEP, which will be fully implemented from April 2011, will bring together local authorities and businesses to create the right environment for economic growth. This will include identifying and promoting schemes which improve connectivity, enhance skills, deliver new housing and increase tourism. The LEP, which will cover a combined population of some 3.9 million, and a business community of 130,000 companies supporting over 1.3 million jobs, will pursue several key objectives, including:-

- positioning Kent, Essex and East Sussex to compete more effectively with the English City Regions for inward investment;
- redressing the East-West prosperity imbalance around London and exploiting the under-utilised economic capacity of Kent, Essex and East Sussex;
- championing and developing innovative solutions to the strategic infrastructure issues identified in this Strategy, including the need for a Lower Thames Crossing, greater road capacity and resilience in the Channel Corridor and improved rail access to East Kent; and
- ensuring that businesses have the skilled workforces needed to compete, through the strengthening of relationships with universities, colleges, and local authorities.

LEPs will assume many of the functions of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), which were felt to be insufficiently accountable to local communities and are to be abolished by the Coalition Government. With this in mind, the Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex LEP will seek to balance democratic mandate with a strong voice for business, with a Strategic Board including at least one representative from the voluntary or social enterprise sector. It will fully embrace the localism agenda, devolving decision-making and control wherever possible and encouraging local innovation to meet local needs.

## 12. Priorities for Growth without gridlock

### The big, key, transport drivers for change

**Plans for a Lower Thames Crossing** to unlock growth in the Thames Gateway and to relieve the congestion which costs the UK economy some £40m annually.

The “**bifurcation**” of traffic from **Dover Docks** to use both the M20/A20 and M2/A2 corridors, with freight through the Port expected to double over the next 20 years.

A **long-term solution to Operation Stack** which costs the haulage industry some £1m a day.

**Maximising the benefits of High Speed Rail**, especially to East Kent.

**Developing a Parkway station for Thanet, serving Manston Airport**, unlocking new economic development opportunities in East Kent at minimal cost.

**Integrating public transport** networks to stimulate the rural economy.

**Further improving traffic management in our towns** to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

**Linking new infrastructure more closely to local planning** through the District Local Development Framework planning process.

**Pressing for greater local control of highways spending** to provide quicker and cheaper ways of delivering strategic road infrastructure such as the urgently needed dualling of the A21.

**District priorities** - key challenges and proposals.





## **Integrated Strategy and Planning**

Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XX

**[www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)**

**Tel: 01622 221050**

This document is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages.  
Please call 01622 221050 for details.