



BIRCHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Response to Thanet District Council

New Thanet Local Plan - Scoping Consultation 2026

SD2 - Sustainable Transport Capacity

October 2026

Abbreviations			
BPC	Birchington Parish Council	TDC	Thanet District Council
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	BNP	Birchington Neighbourhood Plan
KCC	Kent County Council	DfT	Department for Transport
NTL	North Thanet Link	MRN	Major Road Network
DCO	Development Consent Order	CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance	LTP	Local Transport Plan
IDP	Infrastructure Delivery Plan	S106	Section 106 planning obligation
TTS	Thanet Transport Strategy	LTP5	Kent Local Transport Plan 5

Superscript numerals refer to the source table in Appendix B.

1. Purpose and overall position

Birchington Parish Council welcomes the preparation of the new Thanet Local Plan and supports an ambitious, integrated strategy for housing, employment and infrastructure. For transport, the central question is whether the spatial strategy is based from the outset on a realistic understanding of how people and goods will move, what sustainable alternatives exist or can be created, what residual highway capacity remains, and which interventions are genuinely fundable and deliverable. ^{1,2,14}

This response forms part of BPC's integrated scoping submission and should be read with the Core New Thanet Local Plan Scoping Response and the companion Housing, Spatial Distribution and Delivery; Economic Development and Diversification; Historic Environment and Local Heritage Assets; and Public Services, Utilities and Community Infrastructure responses, together with BPC's separate North Thanet Link representations. Together they apply the same principle: spatial choices should follow evidence of sustainable capacity and a credible delivery plan. ^{14,15,16,17,22,18}

Transport is therefore a spatial planning issue before it is a highway engineering issue. The August 2026 NPPF embeds a vision-led approach to transport plan-making, while the Department for Transport's 2026 statutory Local Transport Plan guidance similarly moves away from a simple 'predict and provide' model and requires transport, land use and investment planning to be aligned. ^{1,6}

The new Plan should demonstrate a traceable sequence: development location and scale -> movement demand -> opportunities to reduce the need to travel -> walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport provision -> residual highway demand and network capacity -> necessary infrastructure -> funding and statutory approvals -> delivery and phasing. Where an essential link in that chain is uncertain, the Plan should identify the uncertainty, test contingencies and phase development accordingly so that growth remains aligned with available capacity. ^{1,5,7}

Section summary: Transport should help determine the spatial strategy. The Plan should show how additional journeys will be avoided, shifted to sustainable modes or accommodated, and how any critical infrastructure will be funded and delivered before dependent development proceeds.

Figure 1 summarises the sequence used in this response and the link between the Local Plan and a refreshed Thanet Transport Strategy.

Highways, sustainable transport and movement

A single evidence-to-delivery sequence for the Local Plan and Thanet Transport Strategy



Figure 1. Highways, sustainable transport and movement: evidence-to-delivery framework

2. A vision-led and deliverable transport strategy

NPPF policy TR1 places sustainable transport at the beginning of plan-making. It expects early engagement, development patterns that support sustainable movement, effective use of existing or proposed transport infrastructure and evidence on connectivity and movement. Policy TR2 requires local parking standards that reflect accessibility, travel patterns and the transport vision, while the wider transport policies require plans and decisions to support safe, accessible and sustainable movement.¹

That approach is reinforced by national and county transport policy. The 2026 statutory LTP guidance asks transport authorities to work from a vision and desired outcomes, align transport plans with Local Plans and emerging Spatial Development Strategies, and consider all modes together. KCC's adopted Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the Balance (2024-2037) now

provides the statutory county framework. Its Thanet proposals include the North Thanet Link, development link roads intended to support an Inner Circuit, Bus Service Improvement Plan measures, improved rail-station access, local road-freight management and KCWIP/LCWIP walking and cycling proposals at Birchington, Westwood and along the coast. ^{6,21}

Planning Practice Guidance is equally important for the evidence base. It expects cumulative assessment of development, use of up-to-date traffic and journey data, consideration of road, rail and bus capacity, freight, pedestrian and cycle movements, seasonal or event-related peaks, development phasing and parking strategy. It also cautions against transport modelling that merely reproduces historic travel behaviour where the purpose of policy is to enable a more sustainable pattern. ⁵

The Government's 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy adds a delivery dimension. It seeks a more joined-up approach to economic, housing and social infrastructure, with clearer long-term investment priorities. For the Local Plan, that means distinguishing infrastructure which already exists or is secured from infrastructure which is proposed, dependent on a future business case, reliant on developer contributions, or otherwise subject to material delivery risk. ⁷

Section summary: Vision-led transport integrates sustainable spatial choices with a realistic understanding of network capacity. The Plan should identify the interventions needed to make the strategy work and demonstrate a credible route from policy to funded delivery.

3. Transport delivery audit of the 2020 Local Plan

The adopted 2020 Local Plan already recognised that planned growth would materially increase travel demand. Policy SP44 directs significant trip-generating development towards accessible locations. Policy SP45 requires development to be permitted only when proper provision has been made for relevant transport infrastructure. Policy SP47 safeguards strategic routes associated with the Inner Circuit, including the Birchington strategic housing site, B2050 Manston Road, Shottendane Road and the route from Columbus Way towards Manston Road. ³

The supporting text is unusually important. The Plan described the Inner Circuit as a key element of the transport strategy, intended to serve new development, reduce pressure on the existing network and provide, among other elements, a bypass for Birchington and a relief road for Westgate. It stated that these proposals were required to support proposed development and regarded the infrastructure as critical. The Local Plan Inspectors likewise accepted the growth strategy on the basis that new highway infrastructure was required, while noting the funding, phasing and interim measures then relied upon. ^{3,4}

The new Plan should carry forward the full 2026 transport baseline. Since 2020, permissions have been granted, development has progressed, traffic patterns have changed, infrastructure programmes have evolved and the North Thanet Link has emerged as the principal strategic road proposal for this part of the district. Some infrastructure assumed by the current Plan also remains incomplete and must form part of the starting position. ^{3,8,9}

A concise Transport Delivery Audit should be completed before new spatial options are fixed. It should assess both the transport requirements and assumptions of the 2020 Local Plan and the

Thanet Transport Strategy that supported it: what was proposed, what has actually been delivered, what is committed but incomplete, which transport obligations remain outstanding, what residual network capacity now exists and whether the functions assigned to earlier strategic routes are still being met by the schemes now proposed. The audit should distinguish planning permission and funding aspiration from operational infrastructure and should identify which earlier interventions remain necessary, have been superseded or require redesign. ^{3,4,20,21}

Section summary: Carry forward the full transport baseline and audit delivery against both the 2020 Local Plan and the 2018 Thanet Transport Strategy. Prepare a refreshed TTS with KCC so that the new Local Plan's spatial strategy, KCC LTP5, strategic schemes, sustainable modes, funding, phasing and monitoring form one coherent delivery framework.

3.1 Refresh the Thanet Transport Strategy in parallel with the Local Plan

The transport evidence supporting the 2020 Local Plan included the Thanet District Transport Strategy 2015-2031, prepared jointly by TDC and KCC and revised in 2018 for the Local Plan examination. Its purpose was to support planned growth, identify a package of transport improvements and interventions, and provide a funding and delivery framework. It brought together the Inner Circuit Route Improvement Strategy, the Westwood Relief Strategy, sustainable transport measures, public transport, walking and cycling, and developer and external funding. ²⁰

The Strategy expressly anticipated periodic review when local or national policy, transport or modelling evidence, development decisions or the funding environment changed. Those review triggers have now occurred. The Local Plan is being replaced; national planning and LTP policy has changed; KCC has adopted LTP5; OL/TH/20/1755 is now a major committed development; the NTL has advanced as a separate strategic project; the Manston position has developed; and Westwood, parking, active travel and public transport requirements need to be tested against a new growth strategy. ^{1,6,8,9,10,12,20,21}

The new Local Plan should therefore be accompanied by a refreshed Thanet Transport Strategy prepared jointly by TDC and KCC, with a horizon aligned to the new Plan. The refreshed TTS should operate as the district-level bridge between land-use choices and transport delivery: translating the preferred spatial strategy into a coherent multimodal network programme, defining the intended function of strategic and local routes, identifying sustainable transport measures, reconciling scheme dependencies, and setting out funding, phasing, delivery responsibility, monitoring and contingency. ^{1,5,6,20,21}

In particular, the refreshed TTS should reconcile the 2018 Strategy's Inner Circuit and Westwood Relief assumptions with KCC LTP5, the North Thanet Link, development-delivered link roads, the Bus Service Improvement Plan, KCWIP/LCWIP priorities, rail access, freight and Manston, Westwood and other strategic destinations, parking, and the transport requirements of committed and future strategic development. KCC LTP5 already identifies several of these elements for Thanet; the Local Plan and refreshed TTS should show how they fit together as one network and where additional intervention is required. ^{8,9,12,20,21}

The process should be iterative. Spatial options generate movement demand; the transport evidence and refreshed TTS identify what can be accommodated, shifted to sustainable modes or enabled through investment; and those results should feed back into site selection, infrastructure requirements and development phasing. The final Local Plan and refreshed TTS should therefore be mutually consistent rather than prepared as separate workstreams. ^{1,5,6,20,21}

4. Multimodal evidence base to measure movement

A refreshed Thanet-wide multimodal transport evidence base should be completed early enough to shape both the spatial strategy and the refreshed Thanet Transport Strategy. It should model people and goods movement by mode and purpose, with highway vehicle flows forming one part of the evidence. The evidence should cover ordinary weekday peaks, weekend and seasonal visitor demand, school travel, freight and servicing, construction traffic, public transport capacity and reliability, active travel networks and the cumulative effects of development in neighbouring parts of East Kent where those effects are material. ^{5,6,20,21}

Thanet's geography makes this particularly important. Strategic road and rail connections are concentrated westward, while coastal tourism and major destinations can produce demand patterns beyond conventional commuter peaks. A weekday morning peak alone may understate pressure generated by summer weekends, major events or concentrated retail and leisure activity. ^{5,15}

For each reasonable spatial option the evidence should identify the number and pattern of additional journeys; the proportion that can credibly be avoided through mixed use and local services; the realistic mode share for walking, wheeling, cycling, bus and rail; the residual vehicle demand; the effect on strategic and local routes; and the infrastructure or service improvements needed to achieve the assumed mode shift. Assumptions about future behaviour should be explicit and capable of monitoring. ^{1,5,6}

Accessibility should be tested in practical rather than nominal terms. The presence of a bus route or station on a map is only a starting point. Evidence should consider door-to-door journey time, service frequency, reliability, interchange, cost, accessibility for older and disabled people, gradients and severance, and whether the network actually reaches the employment, education, health, retail and leisure destinations people need. ^{1,5,15}

Section summary: A sustainable transport strategy needs evidence about real journeys and real alternatives. Route or station proximity must be supported by service frequency, capacity, safety, reliability and journey times that make the mode a practical choice.

5. Transport capacity

This section directly complements BPC's Housing, Spatial Distribution and Delivery Response. That response distinguishes the nationally derived Standard Method figure from a locally evidenced housing-needs benchmark and asks TDC to compare a range of housing quantum and spatial options. Transport accessibility, network capacity, investment and deliverability are principal tests in that comparison.¹⁵

The Local Plan should use accessibility, existing capacity, opportunities for sustainable movement, the cost and complexity of necessary improvements, land requirements, statutory approvals and funding certainty as inputs to the comparison of broad growth locations before sites are selected. The refreshed TTS should provide the district-level transport framework for that comparison, while traffic modelling and mitigation can then test and support the preferred spatial strategy. ^{1,5,7,15,20,21}

Strategic investment can create capacity and transform the sustainability of a location. The Plan should distinguish clearly between capacity that exists today, capacity that is secured and programmed, and capacity that remains aspirational. Where a higher phase of growth depends on a particular intervention, the Plan should identify the intervention expressly and link that phase to a meaningful funding and delivery milestone. ^{7,15}

For Birchington and north-west Thanet, this is essential because major committed growth, the proposed North Thanet Link, the route and role of the existing A28 and local roads, access to Westwood, and the possible operation of Manston Airport interact. Each may be acceptable in isolation while their cumulative movement demands or delivery dependencies create a materially different strategic picture. ^{8,9,10,11,15}

Section summary: Transport evidence should inform site selection from the outset. Additional capacity can support additional growth, provided the Plan identifies what creates that capacity and when it becomes available.

6. Westwood Cross as a strategic movement destination

Westwood Cross and the wider Westwood area require explicit treatment in the transport strategy. The adopted Local Plan places Westwood at the top of Thanet's retail hierarchy and recognises its district-wide and wider catchment. The 2018 Thanet Transport Strategy also contained a specific Westwood Relief Strategy, recognising congestion, through-traffic, road severance and the need for better pedestrian, cycle and public-transport access. KCC LTP5 now identifies a Westwood walking zone intended to improve access from new communities to the commercial centre and encourage walking between commercial sites. These strands should be reviewed together rather than treated as separate initiatives. ^{3,20,21}

Westwood is both a primary retail destination and a strategic movement issue. It is one of Thanet's principal journey attractors for shopping, leisure, services and employment, and a major node through which other movements pass. Its economic success and accessibility are important to the whole district. The new Local Plan should assess the sustainable movement capacity of Westwood under the combined growth scenarios being considered for the Plan period. ^{1,3,16}

That cumulative assessment should include further housing and employment growth; any intensification or change within Westwood; the continuing role of Westwood Cross as a primary retail destination; tourism and leisure demand; the changed routing effects of major highway schemes; airport-related employment or freight where relevant; and growth elsewhere in Thanet and East Kent that may affect the same corridors. ^{3,5,8,10,16}

6.1 Accessibility

Westwood's central position in the Thanet urban area and its bus connections are important advantages. Sustainable accessibility, however, depends on the quality and competitiveness of the whole journey. The evidence should map actual journey origins and modes and test the capacity, frequency, reliability and journey-time competitiveness of bus services; walking and cycling links between the component parts of Westwood; safe access from surrounding neighbourhoods; interchange with rail and other public transport; and the realistic choices available to residents of Birchington, Westgate, Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs and the rural settlements. ^{1,3,5,6}

The objective should be progressively to make sustainable access competitive and convenient in practice. KCC LTP5's Westwood walking-zone proposal provides a useful starting point, but the refreshed TTS should test how it integrates with bus priority and interchange, coherent and continuous walking and cycling links, secure cycle parking, mobility provision for older and disabled users, wayfinding and public realm improvements, and measures that reduce the need for people who have already arrived at Westwood to make further short car trips between individual retail and leisure areas. ^{1,3,6,21}

6.2 Parking

Parking should be assessed as part of an integrated access strategy rather than as an isolated numerical standard. Too much conveniently located parking can reinforce car dependency and consume land that could improve connectivity and place quality. Conversely, reducing parking substantially before credible alternatives are available can displace parking, increase circulation while drivers search for spaces, worsen congestion and reduce accessibility for users who genuinely depend on the car. ^{1,3,12}

NPPF policy TR2 requires development plans to set local parking standards which reflect the transport vision, connectivity by different modes, opportunities to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, car ownership and travel trends, electric vehicle needs and relevant business requirements. That provides a clear basis for reviewing whether the present approach to housing, at Westwood and other destinations remains appropriate for the next Plan period. ¹

6.3 Test the Parking Strategy 2024-2044

Thanet District Council's Parking Strategy 2024-2044 provides a long-term framework for effective parking management and supports wider Council objectives. Its existence is welcome. The preparation of a new Local Plan is nevertheless the right point to test whether its evidence, assumptions and proposed interventions remain sufficient for the amount and spatial pattern of development now being considered. ¹²

That review should consider higher housing growth, changes in the distribution of development, Westwood's continuing role and possible intensification, the visitor economy and seasonal peaks, future operation of Manston Airport, strategic road changes, electric vehicle infrastructure, changing patterns of town-centre use and the differing needs of residents, employees, shoppers and visitors. Its purpose should be to establish how fully the Parking

Strategy is integrated with the land-use and transport assumptions of the new Plan and whether its interventions remain sufficient to manage demand to the 2040s. ^{1,5,12,16}

There is also a governance issue. TDC directly controls only part of the parking serving Thanet's principal destinations; substantial provision at retail, leisure, rail and other sites is privately operated. The Local Plan should therefore provide a framework capable of coordinating public and private destination parking, development standards, public transport, active travel and highway management so that separate operational decisions support the transport vision. ^{1,12}

The Local Plan evidence base should include a Strategic Destinations and Parking Assessment covering Westwood and the principal coastal town centres, visitor destinations and transport interchanges. It should assess normal weekday demand, retail and leisure peaks, weekends and seasonal conditions; identify the point at which existing arrangements become insufficient; and consider shared parking, intercept or park-and-ride/park-and-bus arrangements where evidence supports them, real-time parking information, EV charging, accessible spaces, cycle and micromobility parking, coach provision and opportunities to rationalise surface parking while improving pedestrian connectivity. ^{1,5,12}

Section summary: Treat Westwood as a strategic destination and review total accessibility by all modes. Test whether the Parking Strategy 2024-2044 remains adequate for the scale, pattern and seasonality of future demand.

7. North Thanet Link

The North Thanet Link has potential strategic importance. A well-designed route that relieves existing communities, improves network resilience, supports safe active travel and provides necessary capacity could deliver significant benefits. The Local Plan should distinguish clearly between a planned project and infrastructure whose approvals, land, funding and delivery are sufficiently secure to be relied upon for a particular development phase. ^{8,18}

KCC states that the Outline Business Case was approved in 2025 and that a planning application was submitted on 26 June 2026. The project page identifies further stages including statutory processes and a Full Business Case, with full construction funding dependent on later approval. The current estimated cost is approximately £76.7 million, to be met through a combination of Major Road Network funding and developer contributions. Construction is currently anticipated from 2028 for about two years, subject to the necessary approvals and processes. ⁸

Those facts define the scheme's present delivery status. The Local Plan transport evidence should therefore test at least three scenarios: delivery broadly to the current programme; material delay; and non-delivery or partial availability during the period when allocated development would otherwise generate forecast demand. The consequences for housing phasing, junction performance, public transport, walking and cycling, existing communities and alternative mitigation should be transparent. ^{5,8}

The refreshed TTS should also state explicitly how the NTL relates to the earlier Inner Circuit strategy. KCC LTP5 lists the NTL alongside new link roads delivered through development to

maximise its connectivity and capacity benefits and to support an Inner Circuit route. The new Local Plan therefore needs to identify which Inner Circuit elements remain required, which are already committed through strategic development, which are modified or superseded by the NTL, and how the combined network performs if any element is delayed or absent. ^{8,20,21}

The Plan should also resolve what function the NTL is intended to perform within that wider network. BPC's separate NTL representations identify the tension that can arise between a strategic, relatively free-flowing relief route and a road that also has to serve substantial housing, schools, community facilities, local access, bus stops and safe pedestrian crossings. Strategic movement, place-making and local access can be compatible, but only if the design, refreshed TTS and network strategy demonstrate how the competing functions are reconciled. ^{18,20,21}

The planning merits of the NTL should remain distinct from the subsequent funding business case. The prospect of MRN funding is relevant to deliverability, while the planning assessment should continue to address safety, environmental impact, living conditions, sustainable transport and compatibility with adjacent development on their planning merits. Any allocation or development phase that depends on the NTL should be linked to sufficiently secure Full Business Case, funding and programme milestones. ^{7,8,18}

Section summary: Support the strategic opportunity presented by the NTL and scenario-test its delivery. The refreshed TTS should define how the NTL, development link roads and the earlier Inner Circuit strategy fit together, and should make dependent growth responsive to funding, programme and network-function certainty.

8. OL/TH/20/1755

The outline permission for OL/TH/20/1755 changes the starting position for Birchington. It authorises a major mixed-use extension of up to 1,600 homes with education, health and local-centre provision and a strategic link between Minnis Road and Manston Road, subject to phasing and detailed requirements. The committed transport baseline should therefore include the development's associated movement, mitigation and infrastructure in full. ^{9,16}

The relationship between the consented development and the NTL requires particular attention. The Plan should reconcile the road hierarchy, junction strategy, development access, school and community-hub movements, public transport, safe routes to school, active travel and the living conditions of future residents. A strategic relief route passing through or immediately beside a dense residential neighbourhood requires the two schemes to be planned as one coherent movement and place-making system. ^{8,9,18}

The same principle applies to phasing. If the consented development contains internal or strategic link-road triggers, and if wider network capacity depends on the NTL or other improvements, the Local Plan and refreshed TTS should establish a single interlocking phasing framework showing how those triggers relate to one another and which capacity is available at each stage. ^{5,8,9,20,21}

Section summary: Treat OL/TH/20/1755 and its infrastructure as part of the committed baseline and reconcile it explicitly with the NTL through one coherent network and phasing framework.

9. Manston Airport

The Development Consent Order position at Manston is settled: the Secretary of State approved the DCO in August 2022 for the airport proposals. The remaining Local Plan uncertainty concerns implementation, timing, operational profile, freight and employee movements, airspace approval and the scale and timing of associated surface-access demand.

^{10,11}

The airport remained within the CAA airspace-change process during 2026. The Stage 3 consultation explained that new airspace and flight procedures require CAA approval before reopening and that the proposal is being developed as a dedicated air-freight hub. The Local Plan should therefore use scenario testing across delayed or limited operation, phased growth and a credible higher operating case, rather than relying on a single operating profile whose timing and scale remain uncertain. ¹¹

The adopted Local Plan already anticipated this issue. Policy SP47 states that if further development, including at Manston Airport, materially affects the capacity or operation of identified routes such as Manston Road and Spitfire Way, alternative highway provision or proportionate contributions may be required. The new Plan has an opportunity to replace that broad contingency with current scenario evidence. ^{3,10}

Transport modelling should test a reasonable range that includes delayed or limited operation, phased growth and a credible higher operating case. It should cover HGV and freight routing, employee travel, shift patterns, public transport, the A299 and local road network, interaction with the NTL and airport-related economic development. KCC LTP5 already anticipates that its Thanet proposals will support future airport uses and some resulting transport demand; the refreshed TTS should make the assumptions, capacity consequences and required interventions explicit. This should be cross-referenced directly to BPC's Economic Development and Diversification response so that claimed employment and investment benefits are assessed alongside the passenger, workforce, logistics and infrastructure demands needed to realise them. ^{5,10,11,16,21}

Section summary: The DCO is settled; the remaining uncertainty concerns the operating profile. Model reasonable Manston scenarios and ensure that the economic strategy, freight strategy, highway capacity and sustainable employee access use consistent assumptions.

10. Sustainable movement

A vision-led approach requires the mode shift assumed in the spatial strategy to be supported by a practical network that makes different travel choices possible. For Birchington that includes the role of Birchington-on-Sea railway station, reliable bus services, safe and

continuous walking and cycling routes, links between the strategic development and the existing village, safe routes to schools and community facilities, and connections to employment and major destinations such as Westwood. KCC LTP5 provides a current county framework through its Bus Service Improvement Plan, improved local rail-station access and KCWIP/LCWIP proposals including the Canterbury-Birchington corridor, a Birchington walking zone and the Birchington-Ramsgate coastal corridor; the refreshed TTS should turn those strategic intentions into a coordinated district delivery programme. ^{1,6,13,15,21}

The evidence should test whether each route is continuous, attractive and usable by ordinary residents. Missing links, unsafe crossings, poor lighting, severance by high-speed roads, lack of cycle parking or an unreliable bus service can materially reduce the effectiveness of a nominal sustainable option. Building for a Healthy Life 2026 similarly links natural connections, getting around, healthy streets and cycle and car parking to the new NPPF transport policies. ^{1,19}

For public transport, travel-plan commitments need an operating proposition. Where a strategic site assumes a particular bus mode share, the Plan should identify the route, frequency, likely journey time, interchange, funding mechanism, duration of subsidy where relevant and the point at which the service is expected to be commercially or institutionally sustainable. For active travel, the same principle applies to network continuity and delivery timing. ^{5,6}

The made Birchington Neighbourhood Plan reinforces the local importance of integration, sustainable connections, sufficient infrastructure and the needs of an ageing population. The Local Plan should preserve that locally specific role rather than relying solely on district-wide generic transport policies. ^{13,14}

Section summary: Mode-share assumptions should be backed by an operating network. Secured sustainable capacity requires viable bus services and continuous, safe active-travel routes with the necessary crossings and supporting infrastructure.

11. Phasing, funding and delivery

The principal delivery lesson from the current Plan and the earlier Thanet Transport Strategy is the need to move from identifying desirable infrastructure to securing operational delivery. The refreshed TTS and Local Plan IDP should work together. For every strategic allocation or group of interdependent allocations, they should explain precisely what is required, when it must be operational, who is responsible, how it is funded, what statutory or land dependencies exist and what happens if the programme slips. ^{3,7,14,15,20,21}

This is particularly important where a scheme relies on a mixture of public funding and developer contributions. Up to date Infrastructure Funding Statements should ensure that contributions are accounted for once, and that development phasing remains within the capacity actually available unless a credible bridging arrangement secures the infrastructure on which later phases depend. ^{7,8,9}

Table 1 - Minimum transport delivery information for strategic growth

Requirement	What the Local Plan / IDP should show
Infrastructure	The specific road, junction, bus, rail, walking, wheeling and cycling intervention required.
Trigger	The development, occupancy or capacity threshold by which the intervention must be operational.
Cost	Current cost estimate, basis of estimate and appropriate contingency.
Funding	Secured funding distinguished from developer contributions, bids, anticipated grants or other uncommitted sources.
Responsibility	The organisation responsible for design, consent, land, funding and delivery.
Dependencies	Planning permission, statutory orders, land acquisition, utility diversions, third-party works, business cases and other prerequisites.
Contingency	What happens to development phasing if the intervention is late, altered, underfunded or not approved.
Monitoring	Capacity, mode share, safety, service and delivery indicators used to test whether assumptions are being achieved.
Review	Defined decision points at which phasing, mitigation or allocation assumptions must be reconsidered.

Where an intervention is essential to make development acceptable or to create the capacity assumed by the spatial strategy, the relevant trigger should be enforceable and related to actual delivery or capacity. The Plan should tie essential interventions to defined operational milestones. Where uncertainty remains at plan stage, it should contain a clear contingency mechanism and a corresponding adjustment to development phasing. ^{1,5,7}

Section summary: For strategic growth, every critical transport intervention should have a scheme, cost, funding route, responsible body, dependencies, operational trigger and contingency. The development trajectory should respond if any of those assumptions materially change.

12. Destination access and parking

The Westwood analysis should form part of a wider destination-access strategy. Thanet's town centres, beaches, cultural attractions, leisure venues, railway stations and other popular destinations have different demand profiles. Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Birchington experience a mix of resident, commuter and visitor demand, with coastal and event activity capable of creating pronounced peaks. The assessment should therefore test the periods of greatest pressure as well as average parking utilisation and weekday highway conditions. ^{5,12,16}

The same evidence can help reconcile apparently competing objectives. Adequate short-stay and accessible parking can support retail and visitor destinations, while effective pricing, enforcement, shared use, wayfinding, public transport and active travel can reduce unnecessary circulation and long-stay occupation of the most valuable spaces. The appropriate balance will

differ by place and should be based on function, accessibility and demand rather than a single district-wide presumption. ^{1,12,16}

This is also relevant to BPC's Economic Development and Diversification response. The future of Westwood Cross, the coastal centres and major visitor enterprises depends in part on reliable access. Transport policy should support their economic role while reducing avoidable congestion and environmental harm. Parking charges and management are strategic transport and economic instruments where they materially influence destination choice, length of stay, displacement or mode, and should be integrated with the Local Plan's wider town-centre and movement strategy. ^{12,16}

Section summary: Parking policy should reinforce the role of Thanet's principal retail and visitor destinations while managing congestion, displacement and sustainable access. The new Plan should test destination-specific needs and seasonal peaks as part of a single access strategy.

13. Character, environment and economic strategy

Transport infrastructure can unlock sustainable growth, but it can also reshape settlement form and development pressure. New or improved strategic routes should be protected from ribbon development, incremental commercialisation or settlement coalescence that would erode their intended function. Where the purpose of a route is to relieve existing communities, subsequent development should be assessed against the route's strategic function and cumulative capacity before additional traffic is committed to it. ^{1,16,17}

This is particularly relevant around Birchington, Quex, Westgate and the wider rural edge. BPC's Economic Development response supports appropriate enterprise and diversification and seeks coordinated masterplanning where cumulative development could alter landscape, heritage, agricultural function, access and amenity. The transport strategy should reinforce that spatial discipline and direct roadside development through the wider place strategy. ¹⁶

Conversely, better movement can strengthen existing centres and heritage places. Reduced traffic dominance, safe walking links, improved public realm, better station connections and reliable public transport can support footfall, dwell time, local business and visitor activity. The objectives of transport, heritage and economic policy should therefore be designed together rather than treated as competing workstreams. ^{16,17}

Section summary: Strategic routes should support the chosen spatial strategy and be protected from development patterns that would recreate congestion, encourage sprawl or weaken settlement identity. Movement investment should strengthen existing centres and communities while protecting landscape and heritage qualities.

14. Monitoring, contingency and review

A long plan period requires adaptive monitoring because housing delivery, employment, airport activity, tourism, remote working, public transport services, fuel and vehicle technology,

parking behaviour and major infrastructure programmes can diverge from the assumptions used at adoption. The refreshed TTS should therefore be treated as a live delivery framework, with review points aligned to the Local Plan monitoring process and KCC's wider transport planning where material changes occur. ^{1,5,6,20,21}

At minimum, monitoring should cover traffic and journey times on key corridors; bus patronage, frequency and reliability; rail use where relevant; walking and cycling counts; road safety; parking occupancy and displacement at principal destinations; delivery of NTL and other infrastructure milestones; transport obligations attached to strategic sites; and the relationship between development occupation and the infrastructure intended to support it. ^{5,8,12}

Where results diverge materially from the assumptions, the Annual Monitoring process should identify the cause, responsible body, corrective action and timetable. For critical infrastructure, the Plan should state in advance whether the consequence is additional mitigation, altered phasing, accelerated sustainable-transport investment, a targeted update to the TTS or review of the relevant allocation. This aligns with BPC's wider request for active delivery management across the Local Plan. ^{14,15,20}

Section summary: Monitoring should be capable of changing decisions. Define thresholds and contingencies now so that development phasing and transport interventions can respond when real-world outcomes differ from the model.

15. Requested actions for the new Local Plan

1. Audit and refresh the transport baseline - Audit delivery of the 2020 Local Plan and 2018 Thanet Transport Strategy, identifying what was delivered, remains committed, has been superseded or still constrains the network. Prepare a refreshed Thanet Transport Strategy alongside the new Local Plan and align it with KCC LTP5. ^{3,4,20}

2. Build multimodal evidence and capacity tests - Prepare district-wide movement evidence early enough to shape the spatial strategy. Compare reasonable options using accessibility, mode choice, safety, residual highway capacity, infrastructure cost, funding and deliverability rather than relying on later mitigation alone. ^{1,5,6,20,21}

3. Westwood, strategic destinations and parking - Test Westwood Cross and other principal destinations as part of one movement system. Undertake a strategic destinations and parking assessment and review the Thanet Parking Strategy so weekday, weekend and seasonal demand, private parking, sustainable access and centre vitality are considered together. ^{1,3,5,12,15,16,20,21}

4. North Thanet Link and network integration - Scenario-test the North Thanet Link for timely delivery, delay and partial or non-delivery. Use the refreshed strategy to define its relationship with the Inner Circuit and development-delivered link roads, while reconciling strategic relief-road performance with access, public transport, schools, crossings, active travel and living conditions. ^{1,5,8,12,20,21}

5. Committed development baseline - Treat OL/TH/20/1755 as part of the committed transport baseline and coordinate its link roads, phasing and sustainable-transport

requirements with the North Thanet Link, the refreshed Thanet Transport Strategy and the wider network.^{8,18,20}

6. Manston operating scenarios - Model reasonable Manston Airport operating scenarios covering freight, HGV routing, employee travel, shift patterns, public transport and interaction with the A299, North Thanet Link and local network, using assumptions that are consistent across the Local Plan, transport and economic evidence.^{9,18,20,21}

7. Sustainable transport and critical delivery paths - Require mode-shift assumptions to be supported by continuous, safe and deliverable networks and viable services. For each strategic allocation, publish a transport critical path showing infrastructure, cost, funding, responsible body, dependencies, operational triggers, contingency and monitoring.^{1,5,6,10,11,16,21}

8. Monitor and intervene - Use measurable transport and parking indicators with clear intervention thresholds. Where actual conditions diverge materially from the Plan assumptions, adjust mitigation, investment, the refreshed transport strategy or development phasing rather than allowing the gap to persist.^{7,20,21}

Section summary: The requested approach is intended to support growth and investment by refreshing the Thanet Transport Strategy alongside the Local Plan, creating sustainable capacity deliberately, demonstrating how it will be delivered, and aligning the location and phasing of growth with that capacity.

16. Conclusion

The 2020 Local Plan and its supporting Thanet Transport Strategy linked substantial development to major transport infrastructure. Circumstances have since changed: OL/TH/20/1755 is consented; the North Thanet Link has advanced but still depends on further approval, funding and delivery stages; Manston has a DCO but its surface-access profile continues to develop; Westwood remains a strategic retail and leisure destination; KCC has adopted LTP5; and national policy now places greater emphasis on vision-led, sustainable and evidence-based transport planning.^{1,3,6,8,9,10,11,12,20,21}

The new Local Plan should therefore retest inherited assumptions and be accompanied by a refreshed Thanet Transport Strategy. Together they should establish additional journey demand, credible mode shift, residual highway capacity, required interventions, funding and operational dates. The refreshed TTS should turn those conclusions into a district-wide programme of transport delivery.^{1,5,6,7,20,21}

For Birchington, further strategic growth should follow that evidence. Spatial choices and phasing should remain accountable to the Local Plan transport evidence and refreshed TTS, so that KCC LTP5, transport investment, sustainable accessibility, major destinations, parking, housing, employment and environmental quality are managed as a single delivery system.

^{14,15,16,20,21}

Appendix A - Requested actions, NPPF and wider policy matrix

This matrix breaks the eight grouped transport actions into their principal policy components and shows how they relate to the August 2026 NPPF and other relevant national and local policy. Superscript numbers refer to Appendix B.

Requested Local Plan action	NPPF 2026 basis	Wider policy / evidence	Required evidence or action
Audit the 2020 Plan and TTS	PM8; TR1	Thanet Local Plan 2020; Inspectors Report; Thanet Transport Strategy ^{3,4,20}	Compare Local Plan and TTS assumptions, schemes, obligations and funding with actual delivery; identify residual capacity, outstanding dependencies and interventions superseded or still required.
Refresh the Thanet Transport Strategy	PM8; TR1-TR3	DfT LTP guidance; KCC LTP5; 2018 TTS ^{6,20,21}	Prepare a joint TDC/KCC district transport strategy aligned with the new Local Plan, translating spatial choices into a multimodal programme of schemes, funding, phasing, responsibilities, monitoring and contingency.
Use vision-led multimodal evidence	TR1; TR3	DfT LTP guidance; Transport Evidence PPG; KCC LTP5 ^{5,6,21}	Assess all modes, real accessibility, freight, seasonal peaks and cumulative development as the evidence base for both the Local Plan and refreshed TTS.
Capacity before site selection	S1; PM8; PM9; TR1	10-Year Infrastructure Strategy; BPC housing report; refreshed TTS ^{7,15,20}	Use accessibility, capacity, cost, funding and deliverability as comparative inputs to growth-location choices, with the refreshed TTS providing the district transport framework.
Treat Westwood as a strategic destination	TR1; TR2; TC1	Thanet Local Plan incl. TP09; 2018 TTS Westwood Relief Strategy; KCC LTP5; BPC economic response ^{3,16,20,21}	Model district-wide access to Westwood, bus and active-travel capacity, internal movement, parking and cumulative growth; reconcile relief and walking-zone proposals.
Review long-term parking strategy	TR2; TC1	TDC Parking Strategy 2024-2044 ¹²	Test public and private parking, seasonal demand, EV transition, displacement and destination-specific access needs against new Plan growth.
Scenario-test the NTL	TR1; PM8	KCC North Thanet Link programme; KCC LTP5 ^{8,21}	Test on-time, delayed and partial/non-delivery cases and define its relationship to development link roads and the Inner Circuit in the refreshed TTS.
Reconcile NTL and strategic development	TR1; TR3; DP policies	OL/TH/20/1755; BPC NTL response; 2018 TTS; KCC LTP5 ^{9,18,20,21}	Coordinate relief-road function, local access, schools, crossings, buses, active travel, amenity and development phasing within one network framework.

Plan for Manston uncertainty	TR1; E1	Manston DCO; CAA airspace-change process ^{10,11}	Use common operating scenarios across economic, freight and transport evidence; assess HGV, workforce and public-transport implications.
Make sustainable modes deliverable	TR1; TR3	DfT LTP guidance; KCC LTP5; Birchington Neighbourhood Plan ^{6,13,21}	Convert mode-share assumptions and LTP5/BSIP/KCWIP/LCWIP priorities into continuous networks, viable services, funding and delivery dates.
Make infrastructure phasing explicit	PM2; PM8; TR1	10-Year Infrastructure Strategy; 2018 TTS; KCC LTP5 ^{7,20,21}	For strategic growth identify scheme, cost, funding, responsibility, dependencies, operational trigger and contingency consistently across the TTS and IDP.
Protect strategic route function	S2; TR1; TR3	BPC economic / heritage responses ^{16,17}	Avoid consuming relief-road capacity through unrelated car-dependent development or allowing new corridors to create ribbon growth.
Monitor and intervene	PM8; TR1; TR2	Transport Evidence PPG; 2018 TTS review principle; BPC main response ^{5,14,20}	Track network conditions, mode share, safety, parking and infrastructure milestones; predefine corrective action and targeted TTS review when assumptions fail.

Appendix B - Reference table

The superscript references used in the main response and Appendix A correspond to the sources below. Official Government and local-authority sources are used wherever available; BPC companion submissions are identified separately.

Ref	Source / document	Date / status	Relevance	Availability
1	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government National Planning Policy Framework	17 August 2026	Primary national planning policy, including plan-making and sustainable transport policies.	Open source
2	Thanet District Council New Thanet Local Plan - Scoping Consultation	24 August - 9 October 2026	Current Regulation 20 consultation context and scope for the new Local Plan.	Open source
3	Thanet District Council Thanet Local Plan, Adopted 2020	Adopted 9 July 2020	Current development plan transport strategy, including SP44, SP45, SP47 and TP09.	Open source
4	Planning Inspectors Report on the Examination of the Thanet Local Plan	March 2020	Inspector conclusions on growth, the Inner Circuit, capacity, funding and delivery.	Open source
5	Planning Practice Guidance Transport evidence bases in plan-making and decision-taking	Current guidance	Guidance on cumulative transport evidence, modes, capacity, seasonal demand, phasing and parking.	Open source
6	Department for Transport Local Transport Plans - statutory guidance	2 April 2026	Vision-led, outcomes-focused transport planning and alignment with spatial plans.	Open source
7	HM Government UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy	19 June 2025	Long-term coordination of economic, housing and social infrastructure and investment.	Open source
8	Kent County Council A28 North Thanet Link	Current project page; accessed September 2026	Current project status, cost, OBC/FBC, funding route and anticipated construction programme.	Open source
9	Thanet District Council OL/TH/20/1755 - Land North and East of Canterbury Road, Birchington	Outline permission issued 23 December 2025	Committed strategic development, movement infrastructure, phasing and associated facilities.	Open source
10	Thanet District Council Development Consent Order for Manston Airport site granted	18 August 2022	Confirms grant of the Manston Airport DCO and need to address implications through planning.	Open source

11	Manston Airport / CAA airspace change process Stage 3 consultation	Consultation 16 March - 22 June 2026	Current airspace-change process and relationship to proposed reopening/operations.	Open source
12	Thanet District Council Parking Strategy 2024-2044	Current strategy	District framework for effective parking management and wider strategic objectives.	Open source
13	Thanet District Council / Birchington Parish Council Birchington Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2031	Made 7 December 2023	Made neighbourhood plan: local infrastructure, integration, movement and place priorities.	Open source
14	Birchington Parish Council Core New Thanet Local Plan Scoping Response	September 2026	Companion BPC submission on sustainable capacity, infrastructure and delivery.	BPC companion submission
15	Birchington Parish Council Housing, Spatial Distribution and Delivery Response	September 2026	Companion BPC response on the locally evidenced housing-needs benchmark, housing quantum options, spatial distribution, sustainable capacity and delivery.	BPC companion submission
16	Birchington Parish Council Economic Development and Diversification Response	September 2026	Companion BPC submission on centres, Westwood, tourism, agriculture, Quex and economic infrastructure.	BPC companion submission
17	Birchington Parish Council Historic Environment and Local Heritage Assets Submission	September 2026	Companion BPC submission on local character, heritage evidence and place-led growth.	BPC companion submission
18	Birchington Parish Council North Thanet Link consultation representations	2026	Separate BPC representations on road function, OL/TH/20/1755 interface, crossings, sustainable movement and delivery.	BPC companion submission
19	Homes England Building for a Healthy Life (2026 edition)	Updated 7 August 2026	Government-backed design toolkit covering connections, getting around, healthy streets and cycle/car parking.	Open source
20	Kent County Council / Thanet District Council Thanet District Transport Strategy 2015-2031	Revised 2018; KCC decision 23 January 2019	District transport framework supporting the 2020 Local Plan: Inner Circuit, Westwood Relief, sustainable transport, funding and review triggers.	Open source
21	Kent County Council Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the Balance	Adopted 19 December 2024; 2024-2037	Statutory county transport strategy. Thanet priorities: NTL; development link roads/Inner Circuit; BSIP; rail access; freight; KCWIP/LCWIP.	Open source

22	Birchington Parish Council Public Services, Utilities and Community Infrastructure Response	September 2026	Companion BPC response on education, health, water, wastewater, energy, digital, emergency services, operational capacity and delivery.	BPC companion submission
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