

Thanet Local Plan Examination in Public

Hearing Day 12 – Wednesday 22 May 2019 (Week 4)

Matter 13 – Transport

Kent County Council’s Hearing Statement - Thanet Parkway Rail Station Project

This note sets out the position, progress and aspirations of Kent County Council in relation to the Thanet Parkway Rail Station Project.

The County Council has consistently, strongly supported the safeguarding of land to the west of Cliffsend for a new railway station (‘Thanet Parkway’) as set out in Policy SP45 of the Regulation 19 version of the Draft Local Plan.

The County Council made representations to this effect at the initial Regulation 18 consultation (letter dated 06 March 2015 to Mr. A Verrall). The Authority reiterated its full support again when Thanet District Council published proposed revisions to the Preferred Options Draft of the Local Plan (letter dated 17 March 2017 to Mr. A Verrall) and in its representations on the Regulation 19 version (letter dated 04 October 2018 to Mr. A Verrall). For completeness, and if it would assist the Planning Inspectors in their Examination of the Local Plan, all of the letters referred to can be submitted to the Programme Officer.

During the period of Local Plan preparation, Kent County Council also adopted (July 2017) *Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031* (reference CD 6.2). This sets out Kent’s strategic transport priorities, including Thanet Parkway Railway Station. The Local Transport Plan recognises that Thanet Parkway can significantly improve rail connectivity and act as a catalyst for housing and economic growth in an area with demonstrable local needs.

The County Council has continued to work with the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (Federated Board) and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to continue to deliver the Thanet Parkway station, recognising that the Project is a priority not only for KCC but is shown in SELEP’s Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) as a priority in the area to support investment and remove congestion from the roads¹.

Since the inception of the project, the County Council has been proactively exploring all possible avenues to raise funding for the project to meet the estimated project cost. On April 12th, 2019 the South East Local Enterprise Partnership allocated £14m Local Growth Funding for the project at its Accountability Board meeting. Combined with funding contributions from Thanet District Council, the East Kent Spatial Development Company and additional capital from the County Council, the project now has a complete funding package against the current cost estimate.

A planning application was submitted to Kent County Council Planning Applications Group in May 2018 and is currently being amended by the project team following comments received. A revised application will be resubmitted later this year with a proposed project completion date of December 2021.

¹ Pgs 159, 161 and 218 https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/Strategic_Economic_Plan_2014.pdf