

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee held Online on Wednesday, 8 September 2021.

PRESENT: Mr S Holden (Chairman), Mr R C Love, OBE (Vice-Chairman), Mr Baker, Mr M Baldock, Mr C Beart, Mr T Bond, Mr N J Collor, Mr D Crow-Brown, Ms M Dawkins, Mr M Dendor, Mr A R Hills, Mr B H Lewis, Mrs L Parfitt-Reid, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE and Mr D Watkins

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D L Brazier (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) and Miss S J Carey (Cabinet Member for Environment)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Jones (Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport), Mrs S Holt-Castle (Director of Growth and Communities) and Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

Mr Love took the chair for items 1 to 8 because the chairman, Mr Holden, was unable to connect to the Teams meeting until Item 9 when he took over the chair.

17. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda *(Item 3)*

No declarations were made.

18. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2021 *(Item 4)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2021 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

19. Verbal Updates by Cabinet Members and Corporate Director *(Item 5)*

1. Miss Carey began her verbal update by confirming the permanent appointment of Simon Jones as Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport. She thanked members for their involvement in the mineral, waste and heritage member sub-groups. She confirmed that KCC had been shortlisted, as one of only 10 councils, for the Local Government Chronicle's Climate Response award. Miss Carey reminded members that briefings on environment and waste had continued. She confirmed that in excess of 7,000 responses had been received for the Household Waste Recycling Centre future of the booking system public consultation.
2. Mr Brazier gave his verbal update. In relation to highways asset management, he confirmed that poor weather had significantly impacted the demand on

drainage and soft landscaping teams, whilst resurfacing continued for the remainder of the financial year. He informed members that services across Highways were recruiting, challenges caused by skills or applicant shortages were noted. Concerning traffic signal maintenance, he confirmed that £500,000 had been received from the Department for Transport, to address a backlog of life expired equipment. Regarding tranche 3 of the Active Travel Fund, he confirmed that work on forthcoming schemes continued, with local member consultation. Members were informed that Kent's Vision Zero road safety strategy would be launched on 15 September at Manston Airport. On the Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan, he explained that tight deadlines set by the Department for Transport had influenced the window for public consultation and the executive decision, which would be taken before the next committee meeting. In relation to Public Transport's role in the Reconnect Programme, he stated that the public response to the free bus pass element had been overwhelmingly positive.

3. Mr Jones addressed senior officer recruitment in his update. He confirmed that the recruitment of an Interim Director of Transport and Director of Environment and Waste was in progress.

RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted.

20. 21/00073 - Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 - 5 Year Review of 2016 adopted Plan

(Item 6)

Sharon Thompson (Head of Planning Applications Group) was in attendance for this item.

1. Miss Carey introduced the proposed decision, confirmed that the review of the plan was required under the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and the National Planning Policy for Waste 2014, and highlighted the planned updates. She acknowledged that the plan had to be thorough and protect Kent's natural resources.
2. Mrs Thompson gave a technical overview of the review. She noted that whilst the policy was adopted in 2016, it was important that the plan reflected Kent's position in 2021, whilst also incorporating changes in low carbon and waste policy. She stressed that the review did not propose any changes to Kent's core minerals policy and drew members attention to the policy conformity RAG rating outlined in the report.
3. Mrs Thompson informed members that the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 would return to the committee prior to a decision allowing a public consultation on the proposed policy updates.
4. Mr Baldock asked how the policy had been received by district councils and what impact the feedback had on the final policy. Mrs Thompson confirmed that the policy balanced housing and mineral needs, the good performance of safeguards was highlighted.

5. Mr Bond asked how the safeguarding of wharfs and jetties had been reviewed. Mrs Thompson confirmed that functional jetties were safeguarded to protect the safe import and export of goods. She agreed to look at wharf and jetty useability further, though noted national policy constraints.
6. Ms Dawkins requested that the documentation included in the public consultation be presented simply. Mrs Thompson highlighted the executive summary as an accessible overview and confirmed that national policies set out requirements.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member responsible for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan to give approval to the five-year review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 for publication.

21. Approach to monitoring Net Zero Target

(Item 7)

Christine Wissink (Interim Head of Sustainable Business and Communities) was in attendance for this item.

1. Miss Carey introduced the report and advised that KCC had monitored its carbon emission since 2005, with targets set every 5 years, which had led to a 73% reduction in emissions. She noted that quarterly key performance indicators were used to track regular progress and a wider range of greenhouse gas emissions would be included in future targets, in line with Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy standards. Members were reminded of the £20.6m funding received from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, Miss Carey remarked that a further 40% reduction in carbon emissions was expected as a consequence of the resulting projects.
2. Mrs Wissink gave a technical overview of the approach to monitoring KCC's net zero target, this included details on measurement and standards. The extent of the data sets, which covered among other areas, KCC's and its trading companies' buildings.
3. Mrs Wissink confirmed, following a question from Mr Watkins, that office waste included general waste produced by KCC's offices and paper waste. She recognised that recording of this waste type had improved over the last 2 years.
4. Mr Watkins asked, in relation to Scope 3 emissions, whether commissioned service providers would be asked to submit a record of their service-related carbon emissions. Mrs Wissink confirmed that work had been undertaken with Commissioning to explore the viability of recording service providers' work towards net zero.
5. Ms Dawkins asked what technology had been used to collect emissions data. Mrs Wissink agreed to provide clarification following the meeting.

RESOLVED that the changes to carbon emission measuring be noted.

22. Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy - Progress Update *(Item 8)*

Christine Wissink (Interim Head of Sustainable Business and Communities)
was in attendance for this item.

1. Miss Carey provided an update on the progress of the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy and reminded the committee of their input into the strategy. She confirmed that the strategy was a joint plan with Medway Council and Kent's districts, and noted that climate change had been a standing item on the agenda of Kent Leaders.
2. Mrs Wissink gave a further overview of the strategy timeline, which included the adoption of the strategy, governance arrangements and 3-year implementation strategy. She confirmed that 2 districts had decided to support but not endorse the strategy. Members were also reminded that KCC was a leading member of Low Carbon Across the South and East (LoCASE).
3. Mrs Wissink shared examples of initial local policy successes, which included Canterbury City Council adopting a low carbon vehicle requirement for their taxi licenses. She informed members that a full assessment would be available in March 2022.
4. In relation to the smart connectivity and mobility modal shift programme outlined as part of priority 6 (Transport, travel and digital connectivity), Mr Baldock asked if buses could be addressed in the March 2022 assessment. Mr Wissink confirmed that buses and other forms of active travel would be addressed.
5. Following a question from Mr Lewis on electrical vehicle charging points related to priority 6, Mrs Wissink said that plans had been put in place to contract 600 further public charging points. Mr Jones added that www.kent.gov.uk linked to www.zap-map.com, which provided details of public and commercial charging points across the country.
6. Mr Watkins asked if construction supply chain emissions could be included in the strategy. Mrs Wissink confirmed that KCC led on the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) policy for clean growth.
7. Concerning priority 10 (communications), Mr Love commented that further engagement with partners would be required to meet net zero in Kent by 2050. Mrs Wissink noted that a sub-committee of district and county council officers met to plan coordinated campaigns and engagement, this included engagement with water companies on lowering water usage.
8. Regarding priority 5 (Building retrofit programme), Ms Dawkins asked if funding would be used to train up local engineers and fitters. Mrs Wissink

confirmed that whilst the funding only covered capital works, priority 9 (supporting low carbon business) would support Kent's skills base.

RESOLVED that the progress of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy be noted.

23. Heritage Conservation Strategy

(Item 9)

Mr Holden took the chair, and thanked Mr Love for standing in as chairman.

Tom Marchant (Head of Strategic Planning and Policy) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Marchant provided a detailed verbal overview of the strategy in its final draft form. He verified the scope of the strategy, which included historic advice, assets, understanding and financial sustainability. He recognised the involvement of the heritage member working group, which last met in August 2021. In relation to future process, he confirmed that a public consultation would take place in late 2021, with the strategy returning to the committee in March 2022.
2. Mr Marchant agreed to circulate the public consultation dates to the committee at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED to endorse the draft content of the Heritage Conservation Strategy for public consultation.

24. 21/00072 - Highway Rural Swathe Contract

(Item 10)

Andrew Loosemore (Head of Highways Asset Management) and Robin Hadley (Soft Landscape Asset Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Brazier introduced the proposed decision, confirmed that the proposed contract term was 5 years with the option to extend for a further 3 years and noted his preference for three lots, as reflected in the decision report. He recognised that there was significant public interest in in swathe cutting and verges, the link to biodiversity and Plan Bee was recognised.
2. Mr Hadley provided further detail on the proposed contracted lots. He outlined the areas to be covered by each lot: lot 1, Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, and Tunbridge Wells; lot 2, Maidstone and Ashford; and lot 3, Swale, Canterbury, Thanet, and Dover. He noted that Folkestone and Hythe District Council cut rural swathes in their district under contract with KCC. He confirmed that the proposed contracts met the minimum statutory requirement and recognised the cost implications of other provisions.
3. Following multiple member questions, Mr Hadley agreed to share the approximate cost of a double cut contract option with members, following the meeting.

4. Mr Hadley confirmed, following a question from Mr Baldock, that rural swathe cutting schedules were shared with the relevant officers at district councils.
5. In response to a comment from Mr Collor, Mr Hadley reassured the committee that highway safety remained the main priority for rural swathe management.
6. Following a question from Mr Lewis, Mr Hadley agreed to provide members, at their request, with maps of the swathe cuttings areas in their division.
7. The chairman asked whether there had been any coordination between litter picking and rural swathe cutting. Mr Brazier gave reassurance that there had been extensive collaboration with district councils, given their responsibilities for waste removal.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to provide the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport with delegated authority to procure and enter into appropriate contractual arrangements for the provision of Rural Swathe, Visibility and Hedge Maintenance including any potential extension periods in accordance with the expectations set out in the report as shown in the Proposed Record of Decision.

25. 21/00071 - Highway Emergency Tree Works Contract

(Item 11)

Andrew Loosemore (Head of Highways Asset Management) and Robin Hadley (Soft Landscape Asset Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Brazier introduced the proposed decision and gave an overview of its purpose and scope. He highlighted Kent's highly wooded topography as well as the need to keep its roads safe and accessible. He confirmed that the proposed decision sought a two-lot (east and west) approach to contracting emergency tree works. Mr Loosemore added that the contract formed a business-as-usual provision and gave KCC 24/7 access to emergency tree surgeons, the success of the previous approach and contracts was noted. Mr Hadley informed members that the use of contracted emergency tree surgeons had increased in recent years, due to an increase in extreme weather events.
2. Mr Baldock asked what consideration had been given to geography when establishing east and west lots as the preferred arrangement. Mr Hadley stated that the preferred option represented the most appropriated division, based on the demand in each district and geographic grouping, he noted further that demands and challenges differed from district to district. Mr Hadley confirmed that split analysis had been carried out.
3. Following a question from Mr Collor, Mr Hadley confirmed that clearance of sign obstructing overgrowth was under the rural swathe contract rather than emergency work.

4. Mr Hadley clarified the process for emergency tree works, which first involved a KCC steward attending the reported site, followed by an emergency tree surgeon within 2 hours. He noted that trees which were not considered an imminent danger were programmed separately.
5. Mr Lewis proposed, and Mr Baldock seconded a motion that: **“That the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee recommend that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport consider Option 1 (to split the contract into three lots (West, Mid and East)), as outlined in the decision report.”**
6. Members voted on the motion. The motion was lost.
7. Mr Lewis, Ms Dawkins and Mr Baldock abstained on the motion to endorse the proposed Cabinet Member decision.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to provide the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport with delegated authority to procure and enter into appropriate contractual arrangements for the provision of Emergency Tree Works, including any potential extension periods in accordance with the expectations set out in the report as shown in the Proposed Record of Decision.

26. Winter Service Policy (Item 12)

Andrew Loosemore (Head of Highways Asset Management) and Carol Valentine (Highways Project Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Loosemore gave an operational update, confirming that: 2021/22 gritting routes had been planned, taking into account winter microclimates; the brine pilot had produced marginal improvements; KCC’s 3,000 salt bins had been checked and restocking planned, where required; and that contracts with local farmers had been renewed to facilitate rural snow clearance. The national HGV driver shortage was acknowledged, and it was confirmed that only 2 of 50 routes were affected, existing drivers were assigned to cover these routes. Mr Loosemore reassured members that he had received regular updates from the service provider, Amey.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to agree changes to the Winter Service Policy for 2021/22 as set out in paragraph 8.1 of the report.

27. Local Transport Plan 5 - Early review (Item 13)

Joseph Ratcliffe (Transport Strategy Manager) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Brazier introduced the item by setting out KCC’s relevant responsibilities in relation to local transport planning, as required by the Transport Act 2000. He reminded members that the existing Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth

without Gridlock originally planned up to 2031. Given significant developments, including Brexit and the future Lower Thames Crossing, he recognised that transport patterns needed to be re-evaluated. He confirmed that a member task and finish group, chaired by Mr Watkins, would be established to consider the issue and make recommendations, and invited members of the committee to participate.

2. Mr Ratcliffe gave further details on the timescale and purpose of the review, which served to make members aware of developments related to the Plan. He informed members that the decision to approve Local Transport Plans rested with County Council rather than a Cabinet Member. Reassurance was given that progress would be reported to the committee. He confirmed that there would be a public consultation on the Plan at the appropriate point.
3. Mr Collor asked whether the volume of traffic on the A2-M2 corridor had increased against level on the A20-M20. Mr Ratcliffe confirmed that a new transport model was able to provide analysis of traffic volumes. Mr Jones added that the traffic model was utilised by the Kent Resilience Forum and had been used to support Operation Fennel over summer.

RESOLVED to note the plan to initiate an early review of the existing Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4): Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-31) that was adopted by the County Council in July 2017 and start the process of preparing a new LTP5.

28. 21/00075 - Independent Cost Consultancy Services

(Item 14)

Tim Read (Head of Transportation) and Victoria Soames (Major Capital Project Manager) were in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Soames provided a technical verbal overview of the proposed decision. She advised that the independent cost consultancy services would be primarily used on Highways and Transport capital projects, though it would also be available to other Growth, Environment and Transport projects. She highlighted the proposal to contract a single supplier.
2. Following a question from Mr Lewis, Mrs Soames confirmed that the previous contract had cost £900k and that the proposed contract had increased costs which reflected KCC's expanded capital programme.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to give approval to:

- a) Procure a single supplier agreement to allow independent cost consultancy services to be made available to teams within Growth, Environment and Transport.
- b) Provide the Director of Transportation with the delegated authority to enter into the appropriate contractual arrangements for the provisions of Independent Cost Consultancy Services, including future extensions.

**29. 21/00066 - Kent Active Travel scheme - Cinque Ports Phase 5 - A259
Palmarsh to Dymchurch**
(Item 15)

Nikola Floodgate (Schemes Planning and Delivery Manager) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Brazier gave a verbal overview of the proposed decision. He noted the geographic scope of the scheme and reminded members that it formed part of a wider project.
2. Mrs Floodgate confirmed that the scheme would be funded by tranche 2 of the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund. In relation to public consultation, she verified that 80% of consultees had indicated their support for the scheme. She noted that construction was planned to begin in late October.
3. Mr Collor asked whether future consideration could be given to a larger Cinque Ports active travel scheme that linked Dover and Sandwich to the established route. Mrs Floodgate recognised the need for a wider strategic overview between towns and assured the committee that the Cycling Planning Team within Transport would be informed of the suggestion.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to proceed to construction for phases 5A and 5B pending satisfactory land agreements as shown at Appendix C of the decision report.

30. Performance Dashboard
(Item 16)

Rachel Kennard (Chief Analyst) and David Beaver (Head of Waste and Business Services) were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Kennard gave a verbal summary of the performance dashboard for the first quarter of the 2021/22 financial year. She confirmed that of the 19 key performance indicators within the remit of environment and transport, 14 had been RAG rated green, 5 amber and 0 red. She acknowledged that this reflected good overall performance.
2. Following a question from Mr Lewis in relation to HT13 (Streetwork permits issued), Mr Jones confirmed that permits had remained at a consistent level and that the work of utility companies was judged against their permit. He added that the impact of road closures would be considered as part of the new traffic model.
3. In reference to HT08 (Emergency incidents attended to within 2 hours), Mr Bond asked what consequences contractors faced for not meeting service requirements. Mr Jones reassured members that contractors had been held to account on their delivery, though he recognised that weather events and pandemic worker shortages had caused some delays.

4. Ms Dawkins asked for an explanation of WM08 (Overall score for mystery shopper assessment of Household Waste Recycling Centres). Mr Beaver confirmed that 60 mystery shoppers were contracted to visit Household Waste Recycling Centres each month and that the site contractors were penalised if they did not meet expectations.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

31. Work Programme

(Item 17)

RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2021/22 be noted.