

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee held Online on Friday, 18 February 2022.

PRESENT: Mr S Holden (Chairman), Mr R C Love, OBE (Vice-Chairman), Mr Baker, Mr M Baldock, Mr C Beart, Mr T Bond, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr N J Collor, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr M Dendor, Mr A R Hills, Mrs S Hudson, Mr H Rayner, Mr B H Lewis and Mr D Watkins

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D L Brazier (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport), Sir Paul Carter, CBE and Mr M A J Hood

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Jones (Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr P Lightowler (Interim Director of Transportation), Mr S Pay (Transport Integration Manager), Mr J Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer), Miss T A Grayell (Democratic Services Officer) and Miss K Reynolds (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

Mr Love took the chair for items 1 to 5 because the chairman, Mr Holden, was unable to connect to the meeting due to a power cut until Item 5 when he took over the chair.

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

No declarations were made.

60. 21/00124 - Kent Travel Saver Price Increase *(Item 4)*

1. Mr Brazier introduced the proposed key decision to increase the cost of the Kent Travel Saver from £370 per academic year to £450 and the low-income Kent Travel Saver from £120 per academic year to £150. He provided a summary of the debate on the issue at Budget County Council on 10 February. He confirmed that whilst the budget had agreed the financial provision, that a decision was required to change the Council's policy.
2. Mr Chittenden commented that the decision coincided with significant cost of living challenges and noted that it would have an impact on low income households.
3. Mr Baldock proposed and Mr Lewis seconded a motion that **“the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee recommend that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport delay the decision until New Homes funding and other related funding is received.”**

4. Members voted on the motion. The motion was lost.
5. Mr Hood commented that the decision was in contradiction with the Council's climate change commitments and would lead to an increase in car use for home to school transport. Mr Brazier reminded members that the intention of the decision was to make budget savings from discretionary spend and that other consequences had been considered.
6. Members voted on the recommendation to "endorse the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the proposed decision to increase the cost of the standard Kent Travel Saver from £370 per academic year to £450." Mr Baldock abstained on the motion to endorse the proposed decision. The motion was won.

RESOLVED to endorse the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the proposed decision to increase the cost of the standard Kent Travel Saver from £370 per academic year to £450.

61. Supported Bus Services Public Consultation

(Item 5)

1. Mr Brazier set out his intention to run a public consultation from February through April 2022 concerning a reduction in KCC's subsidy of bus routes. He asked for the committee's support for the public consultation and reminded members that a related key decision would return to the committee for its endorsement in due course.
2. Mr Lewis asked, in relation to section 3.3 of the report which confirmed that several students were provided entitled free home to school transport on the affected contracts and that this could be revised to include bespoke transport at a higher cost to the Children, Young People and Education directorate, whether there had been agreement for the directorate to fund the additional costs mentioned. Mr Brazier confirmed that the cost implications were being investigated and that the relevant Cabinet Members and officers were aware of the entitled student element on the services.
3. Mr Baldock commented that the reduction in subsidised services could have a significant impact on residents and car usage. He asked the Cabinet Member to consider the social impact of future decisions. He added that the consultation was an important mechanism for understanding the consequence of changes on residents' lives.
4. Mr Hood commented that KCC should wait for confirmation of its Bus Back Better funding before considering reductions in bus service subsidy.

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

5. Sir Paul Carter raised concern that many bus services, including Kent Karrier, were subsidised to reduce social isolation and prevent independent living amongst vulnerable residents. He asked that elderly and vulnerable residents be permitted to respond to the consultation by post. Mr Brazier reminded

members that budget savings were required from the County Council's discretionary spend and that the cost per journey of many subsidised services was significant. He confirmed that negotiations on cost and future services would be carried out with operators. Mr Lightowler confirmed that the consultation process would involve hard copies and that there was a freepost address for responses. He reassured the committee that Kent Karrier users would be written to regarding proposed changes and asked for their comments.

6. Mr Baldock abstained on the motion to support the proposed consultation.

RESOLVED to support consultation on a range of measures (including supported bus contract withdrawals) required to reduce KCC expenditure on supported bus services.