

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23rd February, 2023

10.00 am

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County
Hall, Maidstone**





AGENDA

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23rd February, 2023, at 10.00 am
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone

Ask for: **Anna Taylor**
Telephone: **03000 416478**

Membership

Conservative (10): Mr A Booth (Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King (Vice-Chairman),
Mr N Baker, Mrs R Binks, Mr T Bond, Mr N J Collor, Mr G Cooke,
Mrs S Hudson, Mr H Rayner and Mr O Richardson

Labour (1): Dr L Sullivan

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr A J Hook

Green and
Independent (1): Rich Lehmann

Church
Representatives (3): Mr J Constanti, Mr M Reidy and Mr Q Roper

Parent Governor (2): Ms R Ainslie-Malik and Mrs K Moses

*County Councillors who are not Members of the Committee but who wish to ask questions
at the meeting are asked to notify the Chairman of their questions in advance.*

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UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

A - Committee Business

- A1 Introduction/Webcast Announcement
- A2 Apologies and Substitutes
- A3 Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- A4 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2023 (Pages 1 - 10)
- A5 Short Focused Inquiry - Highway Improvement Plans - Final Report (Pages 11 - 30)

B - Any items called-in

None for this meeting.

C - Any items placed on the agenda by any Member of the Council for discussion

- C1 Vision Zero - Road Safety Strategy for Kent - Update (Pages 31 - 48)
- C2 Home to School Transport - Verbal Update

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Wednesday, 15 February 2023

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 25 January 2023.

PRESENT: Mr A Booth (Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King (Vice-Chairman), Mr N Baker, Mrs R Binks, Mr T Bond, Mr G Cooke, Mrs S Hudson, Mr H Rayner, Mr O Richardson, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Dr L Sullivan and Mr S Webb

ALSO PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Leader of the Council), Mr P J Oakford (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services), Mrs C Bell (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health), Mr D L Brazier (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport), Miss S J Carey (Cabinet Member for Environment), Mrs S Chandler (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services), Mr P M Hill, OBE (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services), Mr R C Love, OBE (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills), Mr D Murphy (Cabinet Member for Economic Development), Mrs S Prendergast (Cabinet Member for Communications and People), Mrs P T Cole (Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health), Ms S Hamilton (Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Skills), Mr A R Hills (Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment), Mrs S V Hohler (Deputy Cabinet Member for Communities), Mr D Jeffrey (Deputy Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services), Mr J Meade (Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health), Mr D Robey (Deputy Cabinet Member for Economic Development) and Mr M A J Hood

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Deputy Chief Executive), Ms Z Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance), Mrs S Hammond (Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education), Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr R Smith (Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health), Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mrs C Head (Head of Finance Operations), Mr D Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy), Mr D Adams (Reconnect Programme Director), Mr J Betts (Finance Consultant), Mr J Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

71. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting (Item A3)

No declarations were made.

72. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 (Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

73. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report - September 2022-23 (Item A5)

1. The Chairman introduced the item and reminded Members of the Committee's previous consideration of the revenue and capital budget monitoring report at its 7 December meeting, where it was agreed to defer consideration to a future meeting.
2. Mr Oakford provided a summary of the report and reminded the Committee that it contained the Council's financial position to September 2022, with an in-year overspend at financial year end forecast at £60m. A breakdown of overspend at the directorate level was provided, with Adult Social Care and Children, Young People and Education highlighted as the directorates with the largest forecast overspends at £27.7m and £33.9m respectively. The Committee were warned that the forecast set out in the report indicated that KCC would not be able to rely solely on its £25m risk reserve to offset overspend. It was explained that the remaining overspend would need to be drawn down from the general reserve as well as earmarked reserves in certain cases.
3. A Member asked Mr Oakford what actions had been taken in response to the first forecast of an in year overspend in the 2022-23 financial year and whether the agreed revenue budget had been unrealistic. He confirmed that an overspend of £70m had been predicted in the June 2022 budget monitoring report, with the prediction adjusted to £60m in the September report. He reminded Members that the risk reserve had been included in the budget to mitigate the impact of an in year overspend and that higher than forecast inflation, exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine which followed the agreement of the budget in February, had caused greater cost pressures.
4. Mrs Chandler addressed the projected overspend within Integrated Children's Services. A national shortage of social workers which had necessitated a greater use of agency staff as well as a shortage of foster carers and increased service demand were cited as the main factors. She assured Members that Early Help Services continued to offer positive prevention which reduced, over the long term, the number of children in care and pressure on the Council.
5. Mrs Bell detailed the key reasons for the projected overspend within Adult Social Care. She shared her disappointment that all earmarked savings had not been realised. Delays to the full implementation of the new operating model, inflationary costs pressures, increased demand and case complexity, a national shortage of care staff and an increase in the use of short term beds linked to hospital discharge were cited as contributing factors.
6. Miss Carey drew Members' attention to the anticipated overspend within the Environment portfolio. She explained that increased contract costs for residual waste incineration, which were tied to RPI and stood at 10% in April 2022, were the main factor. The efforts to offset overspend by increasing service

revenue, minimising costly waste processing routes as well as improvements to recycling and reuse were explained.

7. Mr Love addressed the projected overspends within Education, drawing attention to the £13.6m overspend on Home to School Transport. He told the Committee that regulations and national guidance had been adhered to and that, in addition to inflationary increases on transport contracts and an increase in demand, overidentification of children with special educational needs (SEN) had contributed, to what was a national issue. He gave assurance that eligibility was an area of continued focus.
8. Mr Hill highlighted a £200,000 overspend on trading standards as the only projected overspend within the Community and Regulatory Services portfolio. He told Members that the overspend was anticipated due to a lack of government funding to support additional provision which had been necessary following EU Exit.
9. Mr Brazier explained that the £3.6m overspend which had been predicted for Highways and Transport had been caused by a delay to the implementation of a removal of bus subsidies, under key decision 22/00052 (Supported Bus Funding Review), as well as £1.2m in increased energy costs for street lighting. He noted that increased revenue from street works permits would partially offset the predicted overspend.
10. Mr Murphy acknowledged that a £70,000 overspend was predicted for Economic Development in September 2022. He explained that legal fees related to Section 106 challenges had been the primary reason for the initial overspend prediction. He reassured the Committee that a £50,000 underspend would be achieved by the end of financial year.
11. Members cited the concerns raised by the Committee prior to the agreement of the 2022-23 revenue budget, that the forecast rate of inflation of 3% was unrealistic and did not adequately estimate cost pressures for the financial year ahead. Mr Oakford explained that the £25m risk reserve, contained within the agreed budget, served as a contingency to meet the foreseen costs and reiterated that inflation had increased considerably following the unforeseen Russian invasion of Ukraine, beginning 24 February 2022, which occurred after the budget was agreed on 10 February 2022. He noted that the budget had been considered robust by the Corporate Director for Finance, as Section 151 officer, in their Section 25 Assurance Statement to Council.
12. Concerns were raised by a Member with regard to Adult Social Care cost pressures which resulted from inflation, increased case complexity and the non-achievement of savings. Mrs Bell reassured Members that the full implementation of Making a Difference Everyday (MADE) KCC's 2022-2027 Adult Social Care Strategy and completion of the service redesign alongside greater integration with local NHS partners would increase the likelihood of achieving savings. She noted that workforce pressures within the adult social care sector posed a significant risk.

13. In response to a question from a Member on whether non-adherence to the Home to School Transport Policy had a negative financial impact on the Council, Mr Love reminded Members of the remit of appeals panels, their powers and stated that, whilst non-adherence was not a significant reason for the projected overspend, further work was required to understand the impact of non-adherence to the Policy.

14. Mr Oakford assured Members that a new process had been agreed with the Corporate Director of Finance to accelerate the budget monitoring report process, though he noted that the same level of detail may not be available.

RESOLVED to note the report.

74. Draft Ten Year Capital Programme, Revenue Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-26

(Item A6)

Committee consideration based on the draft budget issued on 3 January 2023.

1. Mr Oakford introduced the administration's budget proposals. He informed the Committee that the Council was in its most challenging financial position in recent history and that whilst the local government finance settlement from government had been better than anticipated, £39.1m in further savings were required to offset the impact of increased statutory service demand. Reassurance was given that residents and key stakeholders were consulted on savings proposals. Concerning the relationship between the revenue budget and reserves, he confirmed that it was planned for reserves to be used to reduce level of savings required for the coming year only. He explained that it was the first time the general reserve had been drawn on to balance the budget in over twenty years. It was confirmed that a £12m risk reserve was contained within the budget proposal. He stressed that the proposed savings had to be achieved to ensure the Council's financial stability. The proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.99% was highlighted, with it noted that whilst the administration was reluctant to propose the maximum possible increase, it was necessary to meet budget demands and reflected by most upper tier authorities nationally. Concerning the Future Assets Programme, he informed Members that KCC was not alone in its review and reduction of its estate to maintain financial resilience. He concluded by stating that it was the intention to make savings in areas which had the least impact on residents, with proposed savings having been reviewed and discussed with Cabinet Members, Corporate Directors and Finance.
2. Mr Gough reminded the Committee of his letter, with the Leader of Hampshire County Council, to government which urged for urgent action to address the looming financial crisis facing upper tier authorities, noting that whilst it contributed to a better settlement, financial risks which effected all authorities remained. He stressed that increased demand and costs to adult social care, SEN and home to school transport, as well as large infrastructure demands, remained the Council's core financial pressures.

3. Regarding the proposed revenue budget for Integrated Children's Services Mrs Chandler explained that the budget uplift reflected the need to accommodate increased service demand and case complexity. She assured Members that resourcing statutory services was the administration's priority and influenced where savings were proposed.
4. Concerning the Public Health Grant, Mrs Bell confirmed that the draft budget included a prediction, as KCC's allocation was yet to be agreed by government.
5. Mr Murphy summarised the key proposed savings within Economic Development which included reduced contributions to key contracted partners as well as additional income of £200,000 per annum for the next 3 years through the No Use Empty scheme.
6. Mr Brazier provided an overview of the capital programme within Highways and Transport, with it noted that Highways Asset Management comprised the majority. Proposed revenue budget savings within his portfolio were highlighted, with attention drawn to reduced costs of concessionary bus pass schemes including the KCC Travel Saver and English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) which were caused, in part, by lower demand. He reminded Members that many services within his portfolio were commissioned and continued to be affected by inflation.
7. Mr Hill addressed the proposed budgetary changes to Community and Regulatory Services. He reminded Members of the pressure on trading standards and explained that the Libraries, Registration and Archives service continued to experience reduced income. He highlighted the proposed increase to expenditure for the Kent and Medway Coroner Service, with the appointment of an additional assistant coroner planned. Regarding revenue savings, he noted that significant savings to the Community Warden service and arts contributions were proposed. With respect to the capital budget, he explained that the digital autopsies programme would create future revenue savings.
8. Members asked a range of questions in relation to the Draft Ten Year Capital Programme, Revenue Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-26. Key issues raised by the Committee and responded to by Cabinet included the following:
 - a. Concerns that the impact of proposed savings had not been detailed in the draft budget report were raised. A Member added that an impact assessment would provide an indication of saving deliverability.
 - b. The total additional borrowing planned in relation to the capital programme and what impact it would have on the revenue budget for the coming year was requested. Mrs Cooke agreed to provide Members with a written response following the meeting.

- c. Members asked that cabinet committees be provided with equality impact assessments related to savings made within their respective areas. Mr Oakford reassured the Committee that savings would be consulted on where necessary. Mr Gough added that the impact could be examined by Scrutiny and cabinet committees when considering executive decisions related to the implementation of agreed savings, which would include equality impact assessments.
 - d. In response to a question from a Member, Mr Oakford confirmed that the budget, once approved, would continue to be formally monitored on a quarterly basis by Cabinet and Scrutiny, in addition to monthly monitoring by Cabinet Members, Corporate Directors and Finance. He gave further assurance that where in-year adjustments were made by officers to realise savings, Members would be made aware through the formal budget monitoring process.
 - e. Following a question from a Member regarding whether the budget setting process had adhered to Section 11.4 (e) of the Constitution, Mr Watts, as Monitoring Officer, gave assurance that Opposition Groups had been afforded sufficient impartial advice, where required and requested, and Members had been given sufficient time and opportunity to scrutinise the proposals.
 - f. In relation to Cabinet's draft budget setting process, Mr Gough warned Members not to overestimate the Council's room for budgetary manoeuvre, with it noted that the Council's statutory duties limited its financial flexibility.
 - g. Mr Oakford confirmed, following a question from a Member, that proposed savings had factored in anticipated implementation timelines, with saving in the first and following years adjusted.
 - h. In response to a question from a Member, Mr Gough confirmed that KCC's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding allocation had yet to be agreed by the Department for Transport. He stated that the BSIP formed part of a wider discussion around KCC's long term role in public transport.
 - i. A Member asked how future savings could be made to mainstream home to school transport. Mr Love emphasised the need to deliver services in line with the agreed policy, mitigating excess provision and agreed to discuss the matter further with Members.
9. Mr Betts gave a presentation on the Safety Valve Programme. The contents of the presentation included: its purpose, as the Department for Education's (DfE) programme to reduce historic debts for local authorities with the high Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficits; that an agreement was still subject to negotiation, Ministerial agreement and confidentiality; issues which had

increased the deficit; proposed 'hard reset' solution; measures already in place; the preliminary timeline for future Member consideration; and that publication of the agreement was expected for March 2023.

10. Following questions from Members, Mr Betts confirmed that it was expected that the Council would need to get in-year spend to match the in-year grant by the 2027-28 financial year and that DfE funding, in addition to an advanced payment, would be connected to KCC meeting agreed targets.
11. Mrs Cooke clarified that the Safety Value did not impact the 2023-24 draft revenue budget and that any immediate financial risk to the Council in the area was mitigated by a statutory override. It was explained that the Safety Value would have a medium-term financial impact, beginning the 2024-25 financial year.
12. Mr Watts informed the Committee that the final agreement with DfE would be subject to the executive decision-making process and consideration by Scrutiny. The Chairman reassured Members that they would be given the opportunity to scrutinise the agreement.
13. No proposed changes to the draft capital and revenue budgets were made.
14. Mr Oakford thanked the Committee for its comments and consideration of the draft Ten Year Capital Programme, Revenue Budget 2023-24 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023-26.
15. The Chairman thanked the Leader, Cabinet Members, Deputy Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors for their attendance and engagement with Scrutiny.

RESOLVED to comment on the draft capital and revenue budgets including responses to consultation.

POST MEETING NOTE: The Committee were provided with a written answer to question b. on 1 February 2023.

75. SEND Sub-Committee Terms of Reference (Item A7)

1. Following its decision to establish a Sub-Committee to consider KCC's SEND provision, the Committee received a report which further detailed the Sub-Committee's scope, membership, responsibilities and proposed terms of reference.
2. Mr Cook informed Members that, in addition to the membership, there was an expectation that Kent Parents and Carers Together (PACT) representatives would be invited to attend all meetings of the Sub-Committee. He confirmed that this would be with observer status, without voting rights, and that their attendance was at the Sub-Committee Chairman's discretion. He shared comments made by Kent PACT's Chair which emphasised the importance of

the Sub-Committee receiving the perspectives of service users from parents and carers of SEND children and young people.

3. Following questions from the Committee, Mr Cook clarified that:
 - a. the Sub-Committee would appoint a Chairman at its first meeting;
 - b. Scrutiny Committee was not delegating the responsibility for call-in to the Sub-Committee, including when a call-in related to SEND; and
 - c. the decision to retain or disband the Sub-Committee should be taken as part of Scrutiny Committee's review after one-year.
4. Mr Watts assured Members that the Sub-Committee would not preclude Governance and Audit Committee from exercising its functions.
5. In response to a question from a Member, Mr Watts confirmed the establishment of the Sub-Committee would not be accompanied by additional resource. He explained that it was Scrutiny Committee's responsibility to decide how the resource allocation was used to exercise its functions, with regard to the establishment of time limited reviews or sub-committees. It was confirmed that the Short Focused Inquiry work programme would be paused until the Sub-Committee ceased or there was an increase in resources.
6. A Member asked that the minutes of the Sub-Committee be reported to Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED to:

- a) approve the proposed Terms of Reference of the SEND Sub-Committee;
- b) agree to review the Sub-Committee after one year; and
- c) note the suggested arrangements for progression, subject to engagement with the Sub-Committee Chair and Spokespeople designate.

76. Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People - Evaluation of Programme *(Item C1)*

1. Members received a report which set out the achievements of the eighteen month Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme which concluded on 31 August 2022.
2. Mrs Chandler gave an overview of the Reconnect Programme's performance against its four aims, to reconnect children and young people with: learning missed; health and happiness; sports, activities and the outdoors; family and community; and friends. She thanked David Adams for directing the Programme and enabling it to achieve positive outcomes.
3. Members commended the Programme's proactive approach to mitigating the long-term effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on children and young people in Kent. The positive impact on wellbeing and feedback received from children, young people, parents and carers were praised.

4. Mr Cooke moved and Mr Barrington-King seconded an amendment that the Scrutiny Committee 'note the report and congratulate the officers involved for their delivery of the Reconnect Programme.'

5. The amendment passed without a vote.

RESOLVED to note the report and congratulate the officers involved for their delivery of the Reconnect Programme.

77. Work Programme
(Item D1)

RESOLVED to note the report.

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From: Mr Robert Thomas, Chairman of the Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry (SFI)

Gaetano Romagnuolo, Research Officer - Overview & Scrutiny

To: **Scrutiny Committee – 23 February 2023**

Subject: Short Focused Inquiry – Highway Improvement Plans

Classification: **Unrestricted**

1. Introduction

- a) At its meeting of 15 December 2021 (and confirmed on 20 July 2022), the Scrutiny Committee agreed that the work programme for the Short Focused Inquiries should include an inquiry into Highway Improvement Plans.
- b) Oral evidence was gathered from the following people/organisations:
 - Nikola Floodgate, Road Safety and Active Travel Group Manager, Growth, Environment and Transport, KCC
 - Ryan Shiel, Highway Improvements Team Manager (West Kent), Growth, Environment and Transport, KCC
 - Representatives of the Kent Association of Local Councils
 - Dr Suzy Charman, Executive Director, Road Safety Foundation
 - Richard Emmett – Senior Highway Manager, KCC
 - PC Ross Dorman, Traffic Management Unit, Kent Police
- c) In addition, the Committee received written evidence from a variety of sources, including the following:
 - Several Kent's parish councils
 - Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate, KCC
 - Road Safety Foundation
- d) The recommendations and findings of the inquiry are set out in the report contained in Appendix 1.

2. Next Steps

- a) Once agreed, the report and recommendations will be submitted to the Executive.

3. Recommendation:

That the Scrutiny Committee approve the Short Focused Inquiry Report into Highway Improvement Plans, and that it be submitted to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members along with a request for a formal response to the recommendations within two months.

4. Background Documents

None.

5. Contact details

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Appendix 1

Kent County Council

Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry Report

December 2022



Headline Findings

- Highway Improvement Plans (HIPs) were introduced in 2019 with the intention of helping to streamline the way the local authority manages requests for highway improvements.
- Many local parish councils have found the introduction and use of HIPs helpful. The support provided by KCC officers has generally been viewed as very positive; once in contact with officers, productive working relationships have often been developed.
- Many parish councils have indicated that the generic point of contact they are currently given by KCC when they need support and guidance on their HIPs is unsatisfactory.
- Unparished areas can often be at a disadvantage when applying for highway improvements, because the process by which they can submit HIPs is not as clearly defined as it is for parishes, and they cannot easily access the administrative and financial support available through HIPs.
- The lack of more extensive and widespread information about HIPs has been identified by a number of parish councils as a key reason for their misunderstandings over the purpose, support and funding of HIPs, leading to unmet expectations.
- Self-enforcing highway improvements are more likely to be carried out. For highway interventions concerning speed limits and safety, the advice from Kent Police, and the use of telematic data, can help local communities to submit HIPs that do not require direct enforcement and comply with national policies.
- Parish councils are often unable to afford the funding of the schemes they propose. In the current financial climate, KCC is unlikely to be able to provide the funding for most HIP interventions. The feasibility of securing funding for HIP projects from other sources – such as developer contributions - could be explored further.

1. Introduction and Scope

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. Highway Improvement Plans (HIPs) were introduced in 2019 with the intention of helping to streamline the way the local authority manages requests for highway improvements.

1.1.2. Since parishes were the first elected body in the local government system, it was felt that they would be well placed to coordinate requests for changes to the highway. HIPs list and prioritise highway improvement proposals from parishes. KCC's Highways officers then provide advice and guidance on the technical aspects. In some cases, they also provide estimates of their costs.

1.1.3. HIPs were intended to promote a more manageable and clearer working relationship between the local authority and local parishes on highway changes, but it appears that the current system could be improved. For instance:

- guidance on how to establish HIPs could be shared more widely
- Kent's unparished areas do not currently have HIPs, and
- the funding to deliver the interventions required is insufficient.

1.1.4. The aim of this inquiry was to explore Highway Improvement Plans' mechanisms, governance and funding, to evaluate their effectiveness, and to identify actions that KCC could take to improve the current arrangements.

1.2. Committee Membership

1.2.1. The membership of the inquiry consisted of the following KCC Members:

Mr Rob Thomas (Chairman, Conservative)

Mr Neil Baker (Conservative)

Mr Mike Baldock (Swale Independents)

Mr Ian Chittenden (Liberal Democrat)

Ms Mel Dawkins (Labour)

Mr Mike Dendor (Conservative)

Ms Sarah Hamilton (Conservative)

Mrs Sarah Hudson (Conservative)

Mr Harry Rayner (Conservative)

Mr Andy Weatherhead (Conservative)

1.3. Scope

1.3.1. The scope of the inquiry was:

1 To define, and briefly put into context, Highway Improvement Plans.

2. To explore Highway Improvement Plans' governance and funding arrangements, and to evaluate Highway Improvement Plans' efficacy.

3. To identify measures that KCC could take to enhance Highway Improvement Plans' mechanisms and effectiveness.

2. Background

2.1. Definitions

2.1.1. Kent County Council (KCC) is the **Local Highway Authority** in Kent. It has a statutory responsibility for maintaining the public highway network in the county.¹

2.1.2. **The Localism Act 2011** promoted more decision-making at local level and empowered local communities. As parish councils are the elected, corporate bodies at the most local level, it was felt that they were best placed to reflect resident's views on the most necessary local highway improvements.²

2.1.3. **Highway Improvement Plans (HIPs)** were introduced in 2019 with the intention of streamlining and improving the process by which parishes requested highway changes. Feedback from parishes had shown that they received insufficient support and inconsistent advice. This made it difficult for them to secure effective highway improvements in their local areas.³

2.1.4. **HIPs** are documents in which local parishes and community groups list, prioritise and keep track of interventions to improve the highways in their own areas. HIPs also include professional advice and feedback from KCC officers on the feasibility and implementation of such interventions.⁴

¹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

² Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

³ Ibid

⁴ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

2.2. Highway Improvement Plans - Outline

2.2.1. There are no statutory regulations about the use and promotion of HIPs. Kent is the only highways authority in the country to have adopted this approach.⁵

2.2.2. KCC Members and officers, Kent's parishes, the Kent Association of Local Councils, and individual community groups came together to improve the way KCC's Highway Improvements Team managed, coordinated and prioritised new proposals for improvements to the highways in Kent. This led to the development of the Highway Improvement Plan, which was officially launched in April 2019.⁶

2.2.3. HIPs were devised to ensure that local parishes and community groups could keep a single record of their highway improvement priorities and of the advice that had been given by KCC officers. HIPs are living records that can be modified and updated. KCC is committed to reviewing each HIP annually, so that each parish has a fair opportunity to have their views considered.^{7 8 9}

2.2.4. The number of suggested highway improvements in a HIP can vary greatly. Some parishes produce extensive lists of projects, while others identify only a few, or none at all.^{10 11}

2.2.5. There is no dedicated funding for HIPs, and there is no guarantee that projects in a HIP can be delivered. Projects in the HIP that *are* implemented are usually funded either by KCC or the parish, or jointly. Work only begins once a project has been approved. This is subject to the agreement of KCC, the allocation of a budget, and a successful consultation process.^{12 13 14 15}

⁵ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁶ Kent County Council (2022) Parish/Town Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) - Guidance Notes

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

¹⁰ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

¹¹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

¹² Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

¹³ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

¹⁴ Kent County Council (2022) Parish/Town Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) - Guidance Notes

¹⁵ Eythorne Parish Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plan

2.2.6. There are 309 parish councils in Kent. About 230 currently have active HIPs. Figure 1 and figure 2 show the distribution of active HIPs in each Kent District.

Figure 1: Distribution of active HIPs by District, East Kent (August 2022).

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF PARISHES	NUMBER OF LIVE HIPs
Ashford	40	31
Canterbury	26	22
Dover	35	30
Folkestone & Hythe	30	9
Swale	38	27
Thanet	10	9
TOTAL	179	128

Figure 2: Distribution of active HIPs by District, West Kent (August 2022).

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF PARISHES	
Dartford	8	4
Gravesham	6	4
Maidstone	42	38
Sevenoaks	31	22
Tonbridge & Malling	27	22
Tunbridge Wells	16	11
TOTAL	130	101

Source: Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

3. Key Issues and Recommendations

3.1. Communication and Engagement

Communication and engagement - KCC

- 3.1.1. Highway Improvement Plans (HIPs) were introduced in Kent in order to streamline the process by which parish councils and local community groups could request highway improvements in their own areas. An important part of this process was the professional advice and guidance given by KCC officers.¹⁶
- 3.1.2. Feedback from parish councils suggests that many have found the introduction and use of HIPs helpful. The support provided by KCC officers has generally been viewed as very positive; once in contact with officers, productive working relationships have often been developed.^{17 18}
- 3.1.3. Nonetheless, evidence from many parish councils suggests that communication and engagement from KCC could be improved.^{19 20} The scope for improvement is recognised by KCC's Road Safety and Active Travel Group. This is largely due to the lack of a dedicated team that can respond to the demand created by HIPs, and the requirement for the service to prioritise statutory casualty reduction programmes and other funded interventions that have delivery deadlines, such as Section 106 schemes.²¹
- 3.1.4. The service is attempting to rectify this shortcoming with the recent establishment of a Community Engagement Team which can engage with local parishes in a more proactive manner.²² The identification of a single point of contact in each parish would also be helpful. In some cases, KCC officers are contacted by different parish representatives; this can inhibit clear communication and hinder the HIP process.²³
- 3.1.5. Many parish councils have indicated that the generic point of contact they are currently given by KCC when they need support and guidance on their HIPs is unsatisfactory and does not promote the streamlining of the HIP process.²⁴

¹⁶ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

¹⁷ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

¹⁸ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

¹⁹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

²⁰ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

²¹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

²² Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 14 November 2022

²³ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

²⁴ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

- 3.1.6. While KCC's Highway Improvement Teams can signpost them to colleagues who can deal with more technical queries, such as those about highway maintenance, this inevitably lengthens the process.²⁵
- 3.1.7. Many parish councils consider that the introduction of a generic email address removes the reassurance that there is a dedicated officer they can contact who can take personal responsibility for a HIP.²⁶ The use of generic emails, with no clear path for escalation, can cause frustration for many parish councillors, clerks and residents.²⁷
- 3.1.8. Communication and engagement could be improved by identifying the most relevant officers who can provide guidance for specific HIPs. Additional support could be provided by enabling greater engagement by Kent County Councillors.
- 3.1.9. KCC Members, as elected representatives of their own divisions, also represent and serve the interests of local communities. They can act as additional conduits between Kent's residents and parishes and KCC services, and facilitate communication between them.^{28 29}
- 3.1.10. They can also directly support improvements to local highways by using their Combined Members Grants. These consist of £10,000 (in the financial year 2022-23) that is allocated to each KCC Member annually to support local community projects.^{30 31}
- 3.1.11. However, the support that KCC Members can offer is not always maximised and they could be more closely involved. One way of achieving this could be by making sure that they are invited to the meetings where HIPs in their own divisions are discussed, prioritised and finalised. This is not always the case at present.^{32 33}
- 3.1.12. Also, as HIPs are living records that can be modified and updated³⁴, the Committee believes it is important and beneficial that KCC Members should be kept informed of any changes to the HIPs in their own divisions.

²⁵ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 14 November 2022

²⁶ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

²⁹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 14 November 2022

³⁰ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

³¹ Kent County Council (2022) Combined Members Grants, online, <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-grants-and-funding/our-current-funding-opportunities/community-funding/combined-members-grant#tab-1>

³² Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

³³ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 14 November 2022

³⁴ Kent County Council (2022) Parish/Town Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) - Guidance Notes

Communication and engagement - unparished areas

- 3.1.13. HIPs are normally prepared, communicated and submitted through parish/town councils or local community groups. In Kent there are 309 parishes. Some cover significant geographical areas, with considerable parish precepts and numerous personnel. The size of the HIPs that have been prepared by Kent's parishes varies greatly, ranging from over 75 items to none.³⁵
- 3.1.14. In Kent there are also several 'non-civil parish areas' (NCP), or 'unparished areas'. These are areas in a local authority, mostly in urban settings, that are not part of parishes.^{36 37}
- 3.1.15. Unparished areas can often be at a disadvantage when applying for highway improvements, because the process by which they can submit HIPs is not as clearly defined as it is for parishes, and they cannot easily access the administrative and financial support available through HIPs.^{38 39 40} HIP requests can only be submitted by parish and town councils and, in unparished areas, by local elected bodies.⁴¹ In addition, unlike parish councils, unparished areas do not have the power to raise funds through precepts.⁴² While Combined Members Grants can be used to make local highway improvements in these areas, this funding is limited and has reduced in recent years.⁴³
- 3.1.16. KCC is trialling an approach in Canterbury, where KCC Members have coordinated and facilitated the preparation of a HIP for their own division, based on feedback from local communities.⁴⁴
- 3.1.17. The involvement of the local county councillor is key, as is community ownership of the HIP's objectives. Schemes with active community support have been shown to be more successful and achieve greater compliance benefits.⁴⁵

³⁵ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

³⁶ Office for National Statistics (2022) Detailed information on the administrative structure within England, online, <https://cy.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/administrativegeography/england>

³⁷ House of Commons Library (2022) Why do Parish Councils Only Exist in Some Parts of England? Online, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/why-do-parish-councils-only-exist-in-some-parts-of-england/>

³⁸ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

³⁹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

⁴⁰ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 25 October 2022

⁴¹ Kent County Council (2022) Parish/Town Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) - Guidance Notes

⁴² Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁴³ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

⁴⁴ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁴⁵ Kent County Council (2022) Parish/Town Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) - Guidance Notes

3.1.18. KCC Members are well placed to act as effective conduits between local residents and KCC highway services. They can also help to identify funding streams.⁴⁶ As formally elected politicians with a mandate, they can enhance the political legitimacy and authority of locally formed committees when submitting HIP requests.⁴⁷

3.1.19. Having considered all of the above issues, the Committee makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1

KCC's Road Safety and Active Travel Group should:

- **Produce a contact list of the most appropriate KCC officers who can provide guidance and support on HIPs, and circulate it to all Kent communities with a HIP.**
- **Ensure that KCC Members are invited to meetings at which HIPs in their own divisions are discussed and finalised, and are kept informed about any changes to those HIPs.**

Recommendation 2

KCC's Road Safety and Active Travel Group should enable greater involvement of the relevant KCC Members in Kent's unparished areas, by supporting them when they facilitate the setting up of local community groups that are tasked with the preparation and submission of HIPs.

⁴⁶ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁴⁷ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 14 November 2022

3.2. Information and Training

- 3.2.1. Evidence from parish councils indicates that many have found the introduction of HIPs beneficial. They provide a structure to log and actively discuss local highway issues, ensuring that they remain on both local and county council agendas. They allow experienced local knowledge to be heard, acknowledged and documented, with professionals then advising on appropriate solutions. They offer a useful tool to demonstrate to local communities that highways issues have been recognised by KCC, and that action will be taken where possible.^{48 49}
- 3.2.2. HIPs have been adopted widely. 230 of the 309 parish councils in Kent are actively using them. In the 2021-22 financial year alone, 96 HIPs schemes were delivered.⁵⁰
- 3.2.3. KCC's Road Safety & Active Travel Group has sought to be proactive in making the HIP process clear and accessible. The service has developed guidance on what HIPs are, their purpose and process. It has also produced a 'Highway Works Information Pack' which provides information about the different types of highway improvements, their suitability, potential cost and maintenance.⁵¹ However, the evidence suggests that the guidance has not been widely shared. The information pack has not been reviewed since 2019 and is out of date, as Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine have increased maintenance construction costs by at least 30%.^{52 53}
- 3.2.4. The lack of more extensive and widespread information about HIPs has been identified by a number of parish councils as a key reason for their misunderstanding the purpose of HIPs, leading to unmet expectations, disillusion and limited involvement with this initiative.^{54 55 56}
- 3.2.5. Some parish councils reported that they did not fully understand the HIP process, for example for updating and reviewing their plans. Others were unsure about how often they could submit HIPs, and what happened after their submission or completion. One parish council was even unaware of the existence of guidance on HIPs.^{57 58}

⁴⁸ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

⁴⁹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁵⁰ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁵¹ Kent County Council (2022) Parish/Town Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) - Guidance Notes

⁵² Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁵³ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

⁵⁴ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁵⁵ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

⁵⁶ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁵⁷ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁵⁸ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

- 3.2.6. Although the guidance states that HIPs are intended to bring together requests for highway *improvements*, and that highway maintenance issues should not be included in a HIP but should be reported separately using a different channel, parish councils often use HIPs to report maintenance problems.^{59 60}
- 3.2.7. The guidance indicates that KCC cannot guarantee that all requests for highway improvements will be delivered. It explains that KCC has limited resources, and that the majority of the schemes will need to be funded by the parish/town council and/or external sources.⁶¹
- 3.2.8. However, many local parish councils seem to be unaware that a HIP is simply a list of *potential* highway improvements, not an agreed work programme. They are also unaware that the funding for any highway projects in their list is unlikely to be provided by KCC. This can raise residents' expectations that highway improvements on a HIP will be implemented, and can lead to complaints to parish councils when these expectations are not met.^{62 63}
- 3.2.9. There are also misunderstandings over KCC officers' level of support, timescales and the cost of projects. The main statutory functions of the Road Safety & Active Travel Group – such as crash remedial measures, Local Transport Plan schemes and Section 106 improvements – take precedence over HIPs. The fact that HIPs schemes are not the highest priority for delivery can cause frustration amongst local communities.⁶⁴
- 3.2.10. If a parish submits a HIP, there is no guarantee that officers can be deployed immediately to review it. The Road Safety & Active Travel Group works to a 20-working-day service level agreement, within which local communities should expect clear and detailed responses.⁶⁵
- 3.2.11. HIP guidance indicates that, while KCC's Highway Improvement Teams can provide initial advice on HIPs at no cost, officers' time for their design and delivery has to be charged. This is because there are costs associated with developing traffic regulation orders, safety audits and detailed designs that must be met. While officers' rates tend to be lower than those of private consultants, this charging regime is rarely understood and accepted by local parishes.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ Kent County Council (2022) Parish/Town Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) - Guidance Notes

⁶⁰ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁶¹ Kent County Council (2022) Parish/Town Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) - Guidance Notes

⁶² Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁶³ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁶⁴ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁶⁵ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁶⁶ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

- 3.2.12. The Committee believes that actions could be taken to clarify the purpose and process of HIPs, create more realistic expectations and enhance their effectiveness.
- 3.2.13. There is some evidence that the name ‘Highway Improvement Plans’ does not fully explain their nature and aims.⁶⁷ The Committee believes that this is mainly an issue of semantics, and that no term can fully capture their nature and processes, or the expectations they generate. The widespread provision of information and training about HIPs would be more effective in achieving this aim.
- 3.2.14. It is paramount that the information and guidance about HIPs is current, clear and widely circulated. It would be appropriate and sensible if the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) was involved in the presentation and revision of all guidance and information on HIPs, and in ensuring its dissemination.
- 3.2.15. The recent delivery, by the Road Safety & Active Travel Group, of online seminars and presentations on highway topics, was well received by parish councils.⁶⁸ Highway Improvement Plans was one of the topics that generated most interest and questions from parish councillors, some of whom said that HIPs would be better understood if there were bespoke tutorials for them, and if they were delivered in person.^{69 70}
- 3.2.16. The Committee believes that virtual and in-person seminars would be an excellent way of cascading information and promoting clarity about the purpose, procedures and funding of HIPs, as well as disseminating good practice examples of their use.
- 3.2.17. Kent’s Joint Transportation Boards (JTBs) facilitate discussion and co-operation between KCC, District/Borough Councils and other stakeholders on local highway and transportation issues. Although JTBs currently have no defined role in HIPs, it was suggested that they could provide a helpful channel to promote HIPs and share best practice.^{71 72}

⁶⁷ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, written evidence

⁶⁸ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

⁶⁹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁷⁰ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

⁷¹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁷² Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 14 November 2022

Recommendation 3

KCC's Road Safety and Active Travel Group should:

- **Revise the current guidance and information about HIPs, and ensure that it is disseminated to all parished and unparished areas in Kent. This should be done in collaboration with the Kent Association of Local Councils and the local KCC Members.**
- **Arrange in-person and virtual seminars to provide training on the purpose, procedures and funding of HIPs, and to disseminate good practice examples of their use.**
- **Explore the feasibility for greater involvement of Kent's Joint Transportation Boards in promoting and improving HIPs, and in sharing best practice.**

3.3. Enforcement and Funding

Enforcement

- 3.3.1. There are projects that are submitted on HIPs, such as the introduction of lower speed limits, that may require a level of enforcement to be effective. Their enforcement is achieved either through direct interventions by Kent Police (for example, by issuing speeding fines), or through self-enforcing engineering solutions.⁷³
- 3.3.2. Because of financial and other resource constraints, Kent Police would normally only endorse HIP interventions that are self-enforcing. For instance, national guidance states that compliance with a new lower local speed limit is achieved when at least 85% of vehicles are travelling within that new limit.^{74 75}
- 3.3.3. The Committee believes that there are a number of actions that could be taken to minimise the number of HIP proposals that are unlikely to be implemented. The expectations of local communities would then be more likely to be met.
- 3.3.4. Information and guidance on HIPs should make it clear that self-enforcing highway improvements are more likely to be carried out. For all highway interventions concerning speed limits and safety, advice should be sought from Kent Police before their inclusion in a HIP.
- 3.3.5. KCC has recently bought sophisticated telematic data from ordnance surveys in order to carry out high level desktop assessments of highway speeds.⁷⁶ This data should be more readily available, on a self-serve basis, to help local communities to submit HIPs that comply with national policies.

⁷³ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 26 October 2022

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Department for Transport (2013) Setting Local Speed Limits

⁷⁶ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 14 November 2022

Funding

3.3.6. There are a number of issues concerning the funding of HIPs. As already indicated, many parish councils are unaware that, in the current financial climate, KCC is unlikely to be able to provide the funding for most HIP interventions. While KCC can provide some support through a 'Small Works Fund', and Combined Members' Grants, many highway improvements are expensive and cannot usually be met solely from these limited resources.^{77 78} HIPs information, guidance and training should make this clear.

3.3.7. As KCC's HIP guidance states, the majority of the schemes have to be funded by the parish/town councils themselves or other sources.⁷⁹ However, parish councils – especially smaller ones – are often unable to afford the funding of the schemes they propose.⁸⁰

3.3.8. The Committee believes that the feasibility of securing funding for HIP projects from developer contributions could be explored further.⁸¹ Key types of developer contributions include:

- Section 106 Agreements: these are negotiated between a developer and the Local Planning Authority to meet, or contribute to, the cost of providing new infrastructure to mitigate the impact of a new development.⁸²
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): this is a levy that allows local authorities to raise funds from the owners or developers of land who are undertaking new building projects. The CIL helps local authorities to deliver infrastructure to support the development of their areas. In Kent, CIL funding is collected by District Councils.^{83 84}
- Section 278 Agreements (S278). Under this legislation, highway authorities are able to secure planning obligations, through legally binding agreements with developers, in order to fund highway alterations or improvements.^{85 86}

⁷⁷ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 19 October 2022

⁷⁸ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 17 October 2022

⁷⁹ Kent County Council (2022) Parish/Town Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) - Guidance Notes

⁸⁰ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 25 October 2022, Maidstone

⁸¹ Kent County Council (2022) Highway Improvement Plans Short Focused Inquiry, 14 November 2022, Maidstone

⁸² House of Commons Library (2019) Planning Obligations (Section 106 Agreements) in England, London

⁸³ Kent County Council (2021) Infrastructure Funding Statement

⁸⁴ MHCLG (2020) The Incidence, Value and Delivery of Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy in England in 2018-19, London

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Kent County Council (2021) Infrastructure Funding Statement

3.3.9. The Committee recommends that KCC's Road Safety and Active Travel Group should engage with the relevant planning officers when considering responses to planning applications - at the formal or pre-application stage - and encourage them to consider HIPs when allocating the funding from developer contributions.

3.3.10. Having considered all of the above issues, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 4

KCC's Road Safety and Active Travel Group should:

- **Ensure that advice is sought from Kent Police before HIPs that include safety and speed limit issues are approved.**
- **Ensure that data is more readily available, on a self-serve basis, to help local communities to submit HIPs that comply with national policies.**

Recommendation 5

KCC's Road Safety and Active Travel Group should urge the relevant planning officers to consider HIPs when allocating the funding from developer contributions. This should be done at the earliest opportunity in the planning process.

By: Mark Bunting – Vision Zero Strategy Manager

To: Scrutiny Committee, 23 February 2023

Subject: Vision Zero Update paper

Status: Unrestricted

Summary: The Scrutiny Committee has requested an update on the work done by the road safety team towards Vision Zero.

Recommendation:

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to **note** the contents of the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council had a previous Casualty Reduction Strategy which ran from 2014 to 2020. The general approach of this strategy was that road safety funding is prioritised to schemes where the most serious casualties have occurred. Our approach to road safety investment required refreshing to take account of new approaches in the road safety industry and an emphasis on shared responsibility.
- 1.2 In July 2021 'Vision Zero – The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2021 – 2026' was formally adopted by Kent County Council. This report summarises progress, changes that have been implemented and work that has been undertaken to support the aims and objectives of the Vision Zero Strategy since it was adopted. The detailed work under each workstream is set out in Appendix A.
- 1.3 The longer-term vision behind the strategy is that by 2050:
 - There will be Zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries;
 - The Safe System is the norm;
 - Walking and cycling is a safe and easy choice; and
 - Kent at the forefront of road safety innovation.
- 1.4 The shorter-term strategy covers the five-year period between 2021 and 2026 and sets out the following aims:
 - Reduce fatalities, serious injuries, number, and severity of collisions;
 - Develop an evidence base, including research and trials, monitoring of existing approaches and developing toolkits and programmes;
 - Improve collaboration between partners and stakeholders;
 - Embed the Safe System approach;
 - Promote Vision Zero to Kent's public; and
 - Increase levels of safety for walking and cycling
- 1.5 Work carried out as part of the Vision Zero Strategy contributes to Kent County Council's statutory duty as laid out in Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act. This section of the act states that each local authority:

“(a) Must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or parts of roads, other than trunk roads, within their area;

(b) Must, in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of roads, the giving of practical training to road users or any class or description of road users, the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are the highway authority and other measures taken in the exercise of their powers for controlling, protecting or assessing the movement of traffic on roads; and

(c) In constructing new roads, must take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to reduce the possibilities of such accidents when the roads come into use”

- 1.6 Work carried out in support of the Vision Zero Strategy directly contributes to the ‘Infrastructure for Communities’ priority area of the ‘Framing Kent’s Future’ strategy. It is particularly relevant to the following commitment that is included in this priority area:

Our commitment is to ensure residents have access to viable and attractive travel options that allow them to make safe, efficient and more sustainable journeys throughout Kent.

2. The Safe System



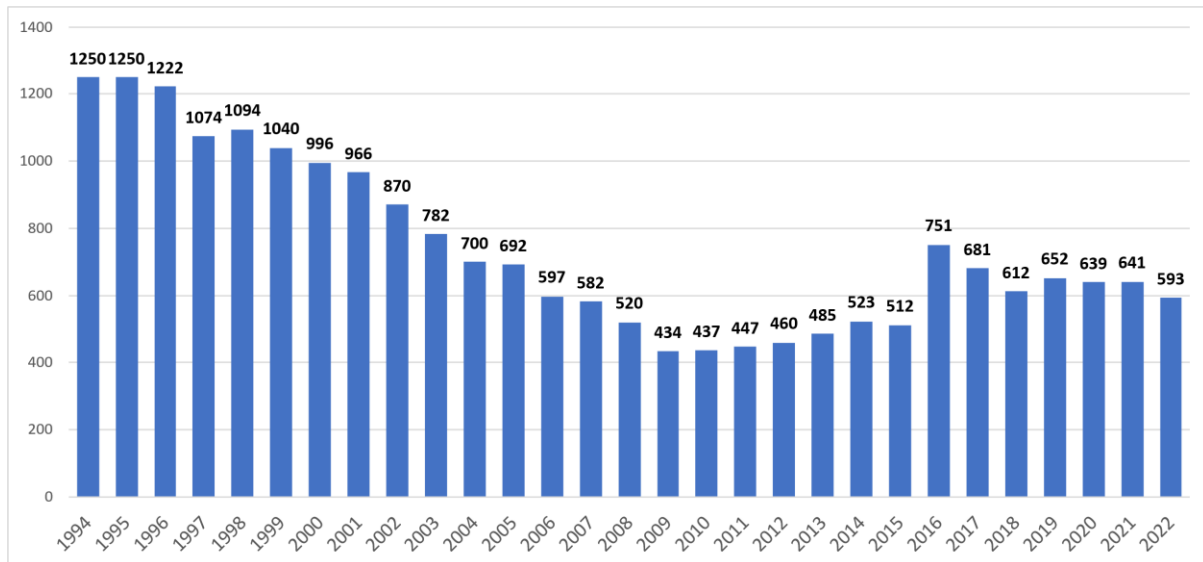
Diagram 1: The Safe System

- 2.1 Safe System is an approach to road safety and traffic management that starts with the idea that everyone has the right to be safe on the highway network. This is rooted in the belief that every traffic death reflects a failure in the system, and that none are acceptable. It is a methodology that sees all

aspects of the system interacting with each other and looks at network risks to prioritise interventions. The Safe System Approach is a proactive methodology to achieve zero deaths. This approach comprises the following themes:

- Safe roads and streets – designing our highway network to reduce the chances and consequences of collisions.
- Safe speeds – designing roads and enforcing speed limits appropriate to the usage and environment.
- Safe behaviour – education, training, publicity, engineering, enforcement, and technology to improve the way people use Kent's roads and streets.
- Safe vehicles – ensure the vehicles on the Kent network are as safe as they can be by promoting safer technology for car and goods vehicle fleets.
- Post collision response – react as quickly as possible to crashes, study the causes of the most serious collisions, and provide support for the victims of road crashes.

3. Road Casualty Data Update



Graph 1: Numbers of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties on KCC managed roads 1994 to 2022 (Notes: a. The graph does not include data for roads managed by National Highways or Medway Council. B. Data for 2022 is provisional and subject to slight changes prior to final DfT sign-off)

- It can be seen from the above graph, that the number of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) casualties occurring on KCC managed roads dropped steadily until 2009 when a gradual annual increasing trend became evident.
- In 2016, Police Forces nationally changed the way in which casualty data was recorded from a system where casualty severity was based on the opinion of the reporting officer to a system that automatically attributed severity classification based on the injuries sustained. This led to a national increase in the numbers of casualties being classified as 'Serious' and the local effect of these changes can be seen in the graph.
- A downward trend can be seen in the number of recorded KSI casualties from 2016 onwards and the Vision Zero Strategy - Safe Systems approach aims to ensure that these reductions continue.

4. Progress on Vision Zero Strategy Implementation

- 4.1 Work has been undertaken to make improvements to the over-arching approach towards reaching the vision and to support each of the individual five Safe Systems pillars that are:

- Safe Behaviours
- Safer Roads and Streets
- Safe Vehicles
- Safe Speeds
- Post Collision Response

Leadership

- 4.2 An internal restructure within the Transportation Service saw the introduction of the Road Safety and Active Travel Group to streamline the delivery of road safety and active travel interventions and better enable a safe systems approach to be taken. This redesign has facilitated additional resources within the group to provide dedicated Community Engagement officers and engineers to be able to support our stakeholders, elected members and the public with their concerns. The team also now has a small but dedicated team looking at road safety research and innovation which is explained further in this report with detail in Appendix A.

- 4.3 The Kent and Medway Casualty Reduction Partnership has recently been re-invigorated and builds on the emphasis of shared responsibility which is at the heart of Vision Zero (VZ). This includes appointing the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner as chair of the board and re-naming the partnership 'The Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership'.

• *Co-ordinating & Collaborating*

- 4.4 Weekly partnership meetings involving representatives from Kent County Council, including an operational highways officer, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, National Highways and Medway Council have been introduced as a member. These meetings discuss incidents that have occurred in the week as well as enforcement activity, educational interventions other aspects that support the VZ pillars to ensure that partners are delivering consistent messaging and engagement and are avoiding duplication. Bi-monthly meetings to discuss possible solutions to the most serious of recent incidents have also been introduced. The aim of these meetings is to ensure that accurate, up-to-date information on incidents is shared so that a consistent and coordinated responses are made and that lessons are learned from the factors that may have contributed to each incident.
- 4.5 Officers have been working with representatives from Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, National Highways and Medway Council to develop a new structure for the Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership. The new structure incorporates the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership and has a Safe Systems focus with Working Groups covering all the pillars of the system. The outline structure was approved by the partnership board in

January 2023 and work to implement the structure is currently ongoing. The new structure and Safe Systems focussed working groups will enable us to combine resources with partners to maximise our ability to deliver against the actions laid out within the VZ Strategy.

Data led.

- 4.6 Officers have developed an internal data platform that brings traffic and incident data on the network together into one place, meaning officers do not solely base decision making on where crashes have occurred. The platform is used by officers such as engineers, and planners to inform their decision making about when and how highway improvements can be prioritised and delivered. Information relating to the flow, average speed of vehicles, and past collision and damage events on the network helps provide context to decision makers when considering the implementation of mitigation measures.
- 4.7 The platform is also being used to support the identification of high-risk collision routes in the county, by analysing the number and severity of collisions in relation to the traffic flow around the network. This risk analysis produces a prioritised list of routes for safety intervention and supplements the annual 'hot spot' analysis to identify further locations for investigation and intervention.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 4.8 Officers have been involved in local and national discussions about suitable Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs) and collection methodologies with colleagues from other local authorities, charities, transport consultants and central government representatives. Through this liaison, they have identified several indicators across the Safe System and have begun the collection process through a commission of a revised road user survey and a new research project in partnership with a leading transport consultancy.
- 4.9 The development of the SPIs is assisting our proactive understanding of collision risk on the network. The performance indicators help us to identify locations on the network that inherently do not comply with Safe System principles. Mitigation can then be applied to these parts of the network to improve their safety, without a collision having to occur to identify an unsafe location.

Promotion

- 4.10 Presentations on the vision, the Safe System and the VZ strategy have been given to internal staff, contractors, and Parish Councils to encourage all to get behind the message and become 'Vision Zero Heroes'.
- 4.11 Officers have commissioned a suite of short films, suitable for social media, to raise awareness of Vision Zero. These films, which are in the final stages of development, will be used to raise the profile of the vision, the strategy and the safe system both internally and externally.

5. Supporting Safe System Pillars

- 5.1 Much of the work undertaken since the development of the VZ strategy overlaps more than one of the Safe Systems pillars. Within the following

sections of this report some activities have, therefore, been included under more than one the pillar.

- 5.2 Services, projects and other interventions that have been delivered in support of each pillar have been listed under the appropriate pillar heading – more detail for each of the listed items is included within the report appendices.

Safer Roads and Streets Pillar

- School Street Schemes.
- Near-miss recording trial development.
- Active Travel Infrastructure Work.
- Active Travel Interventions Team's work.
- Highway Improvements Teams work.
- School Crossing Patrol Service.

Safe Speeds Pillar

- Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership.
- Community Speed Watch.
- Active Travel Infrastructure Work (20 MPH Zones).
- Town-wide 20 mph trials
- Average Speed Camera Trials in local communities with established Community Speed Watch schemes

Safe Behaviours Pillar

- Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Campaign Interventions.
- Kent Driver Education Courses.
- Cycle Training.
- Pedestrian Skills Training.
- Walking Bus.
- Active Travel Interventions Team's work.

Post Collision Response Pillar

- Weekly partnership meetings involving representatives from Kent County Council, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, National Highways and Medway Council have been introduced. These meetings discuss incidents that have occurred in the week as well as enforcement activity, educational interventions other aspects that support the VZ pillars. Bi-monthly meetings to discuss possible solutions to the most serious of recent incidents have also been introduced.

Safer Vehicles Pillar

- Fleet Engagement.
- Surround the Town events.
- Driving for Better Business

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Positive strides have been taken towards implementing the Vision Zero Strategy aspirations since it was adopted.

- 6.2 The work being undertaken to build on the collaboration with partners with a mutual desire to implement a county-wide Safe Systems approach will further strengthen this position.
- 6.3 Each of the partnership working groups will be tasked with carrying out a gap analysis to identify any Safe System areas within their pillars that are not currently being met, require greater focus or specific actions to be taken.
- 6.4 Whilst this strong collaboration with partners will enable Kent County Council to deliver a vast majority of the action points within the strategy, there will be actions that emerge that are KCC focussed and may not be relevant to our partners. Once identified, these 'orphan' actions will be assigned to internal champions to ensure that they are driven forward.

Appendix A– Service, project, and intervention detailed updates

Service, Project, or Intervention	Delivery update since adoption of VZ Strategy
Active Travel Infrastructure Work	<p>The Active Travel Infrastructure team consists of Highway Design Project Managers who are responsible for the design and delivery of active travel schemes, developer funded projects via S106 contributions, community infrastructure levy and other Department for Transport bids.</p> <p>The team delivers innovative active travel measures to support the Kent economy, tackle congestion, reduce pollution and improve public health. We work closely with KCC Members, local councils and stakeholders to design, construct and implement these highway and transportation schemes.</p> <p>During 2022 the team delivered the following projects:</p> <p>A259 Palmarsh – Dymchurch Redoubt Active Travel scheme – This scheme is to create an attractive 1.5-kilometre-long walking and cycling route along the A259. The scheme was designed in 2022 and constructed between November 2022 and January 2023</p> <p>Scanlons Bridge Road, Hythe Traffic Signal Improvements – The traffic signal junction was upgraded to improve pedestrian crossing points and widening footways making it safer to cross for pedestrians and cyclists at this junction. Construction was completed in December 2022.</p> <p>Canterbury and Herne Bay Active Travel schemes – These schemes seek to improve walking and cycling infrastructure in Canterbury and Herne Bay. Over the last year the team have developed the designs and undertaken a series of public consultations with local residents and businesses. These schemes have Joint Transport Board approval to proceed, and Officers are currently seeking approval to proceed with construction in 2023.</p> <p>20mph zones – As part of a move to improve road safety and encourage active travel, a number of 20mph limits have been implemented by the Highway Improvements teams. This includes areas around Wingham village, Temple Ewell, and Newington. These schemes follow the implementation of 20mph limits in Tonbridge, Faversham and Canterbury delivered previously.</p> <p>Looking ahead to the coming year, the team will be looking at the construction of Canterbury and Herne Bay Active Travel schemes, the detailed design and consultation of Sevenoaks and Gravesham Active Travel schemes, and the construction of the Littlebourne Rd Toucan crossing and Old Drover Road Zebra Crossing. The team will also be getting involved with the Active Travel Tranche 4 schemes, taking a closer look at the design and costings as they move forward to future bids with Active Travel England.</p>
Active Travel Interventions Team (ATIT) Work	<p>The ATIT evolved from the need to have a stronger active travel presence in KCC following the success of a number of active travel behaviour change programmes within the community, business, and education and in response to Central Government’s ambition. In 2021/22 the team delivered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful submission and delivery of the DfT funded 2021/22 Capability Fund (£387,540) which encompassed 11 active travel behaviour interventions and support to three districts with delivery of their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active Travel Challenge ○ Lets Talk Travel Events

- Adult Bike Training
- Community Route Champions
- Bike donations and Bicycle Recycle Events
- Kent Community Rail Partnership
- Small Steps into primary schools
- Youth Travel Ambassador into secondary schools and activity groups
- Big Bike Revival
- Active Travel Marketing and Comms

- Successful submission of the 2022/23 Capability Fund (£565,439) to be delivered in 2023 involving support and interaction with Kent's districts and boroughs to enable more active travel capability building activities and behaviour change.
- Negotiation of a permissive agreement for a cycle path on the National Cycle network at Fordwich, Canterbury including securing the long-term maintenance of this route by KCC
- Working with the leading national cycle charity, Sustrans, to support their improvement projects to the NCN in Kent and identifying where these projects could be improved. For example, persuading Sustrans to expand a study for a linear improvement to also include a larger 20mph zone.
- Responding to immediate maintenance enquiries from members of the public and community cycle groups including resurfacing, vegetation and tree removal, and repairing signage on the cycle network
- Engaging with district and borough stakeholders to ensure their active travel work and KCC's are mutually supportive, such as supporting funding bids that can enhance district Levelling Up and Rural England funding.
- Collating district/borough and community opinions on current active travel infrastructure schemes and feeding back where appropriate to make scheme amendments.
- Completion of Phase 2 of the Cycle Mapping_Project to create an accurate map of all cycle routes in Kent.
- Instigation of Phase 3 of the Cycle Mapping_Project to establish land ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the entire Kent cycle network to support the long-term maintenance and expansion of the network.
- Working with Schools to enable them to create, store and maintain a School Travel Plan (STP) document. The site also signposts information (such as road safety, crossing patrol information and other campaigns) and provides the opportunity to apply for grant funding to help encourage and promote active and sustainable travel to and from schools.
- Grant Funding £50,000: For those schools engaged with formulating travel plans via their STP Co-ordinator we invite them each year to apply for up to £5k [grant funding](#), towards projects which promote and enable sustainable and active travel.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Parking Toolkit to encourage responsible and considerate parking through the offer of banners, flyers and informative leaflets Delivery of two permanent School Streets: School Streets are effective in reducing conflict between families and cars/vans/motorcycles etc. This is achieved by closing the road outside the school entrance at school drop-off and pick-up times (during term times only). The restriction applies to school traffic and through traffic but allows and enables access for students/pupils and parents/guardians using 'active' travel modes such as walking, cycling, or scootering Continuous development of the Active Travel website Kent Connected and the Kent Connected app with ongoing social media presence through Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Attendance at a number of public-facing events to promote active travel and the environment including Business Vision Live, Kent Environment Strategy, Swale Sustainable Transport event, Road Safety Police Open Weekend.
Average Speed Camera Trials in local communities with established Community Speed Watch Schemes	<p>Average speed cameras have been deployed in a local community as a trial where traditionally the ambient speeds do not warrant formal enforcement by Kent Police but where we are seeing regular inappropriate speeding through villages. The local community had raised a lot of concerns about speeding vehicles, however, data collected recorded in the local area showed very little excessive speeding and there were no serious speed related crashes in this area, so it did not meet the criteria for permanent installation of safety cameras. It was agreed to promote a trial scheme to support community concern and gather more information about driving habits in this area.</p> <p>Prior to installation of the equipment attitudinal surveys were undertaken with the local community to gain an understanding of how they feel about traffic in their village. The aim of the trial is to monitor, manage and enforce traffic speeds during the trial and then to measure its success, or otherwise, by running a follow-up survey once the trial is over and studying data collected during the trial. Speed data and offender profiles and area postcodes will be studied to gain a better understanding of any speed related issues. A second, similar, site has been identified and the equipment will be moved to this location to broaden the extent of the trial.</p>
Community Speed Watch	<p>In 2022 there was an average of 60 Community Speed Watch groups in active operation. 335,000 drivers passed an operational Speed Watch group, resulting in 30,673 recorded speeding. Most of the drivers recorded in the previous year 2021 were local and of those, 93% of those were not recorded again in 2022, indicating that this education tool is extremely effective. In 2022 there was 10,500 hours of volunteer time conducting CSW operations, but there were 214 recorded cases of abuse to the volunteers.</p>
Cycle Training	<p><u>Bikeability</u> Bikeability branded, National Standard training is delivered to children in Key Stage 2 and 3. It teaches them correct control of their bicycles, how to make manoeuvres safely and improve hazard awareness. The national standard course comprising of 3 levels (Level 1 & 2 delivered in primary school and Level 3 in secondary school), is designed to give the next generation the skills and confidence to ride bicycles on today's roads.</p>

	<p>The team delivers training to over 4000 children each year and have expanded the provision offered to include Learn to Ride sessions and training for parents and families.</p> <p><i>Adult Cycle Training</i></p> <p>The team delivers cycle training for adults, ranging from Learning to Ride, Confident Road Cycling courses and advanced courses. They also now offer Introduction sessions and Confident Riding sessions on Electric assisted cycles (E-Bikes).</p> <p>The purpose is to increase clients' ability and confidence to cycle, with the aim of improving road safety and increasing active and sustainable travel. These courses are currently offered at different venues across the county, with bicycles and helmets being made available at a number of our training venues.</p> <p>From September 2021 to end August 2022 the team delivered 152 adult cycle training courses with 229 attendees.</p>
Driving for Better Business	<p>Driving for Better Business is a government-backed National Highways programme to help employers in both the private and public sectors reduce work-related road risk, control the associated costs and improve compliance with current legislation and guidance.</p> <p>Kent and Medway Safer Roads partners have promoted the programme in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of Driving for Better Business to Kent Fire and Rescue Service's Primary Authority Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information shared via email with members via the building safety team. • Promotion of Driving for Better Business via Kent Fire and Rescue Service's Business Bulletin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A monthly email bulletin coordinated by KFRS marketing team to businesses in Kent • Promotion of Driving for Better Business by Kent Police officers using the information postcards produced for the project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kent Police officers to share DfBB information with businesses/business owners when stopped at the roadside
Fleet Engagement	<p>Officers are undertaking an audit of internal 'travelling for work policy and procedure' documents with an emphasis on ensuring that KCC operates a safe and compliant fleet of vehicles and drivers. This includes employees who drive their own car. This will help us to develop our work in the wider community as we engage with organisations and businesses across the county that operate any size of fleet or have any employees that drive for work.</p>
Highway Improvements Teams work	<p>Following the introduction of the Vision Zero Strategy changes were made to the way that the Highway Improvements Teams work. Dedicated Community Engagement (CE) officers were appointed in each team to deal with local community concerns. Community Engagement is at the heart of Vision Zero and the CE team helps local groups and communities, including Members and Parishes to feel heard, empowered and supported.</p> <p>The Highway Improvements Teams actively take on board the ideas of collective delivery across many stakeholders and engage with them to encourage collaborative working. The teams use some of their small works budgets for the funding and deployment of 20 and 30mph speed toolkits, whilst also encouraging other stakeholders to share responsibility and fund works from their own budgets too.</p> <p>The teams work with communities and encourage them to play a leading role, prioritising their concerns on the Highway Improvement Plans. The teams advocate and promote the use of Community Speed Watch volunteers, where appropriate, to help in our aim of lowering speed and encourage local community members to take a key role in this too. The teams encourage them to take a key role in this.</p>

	<p>The teams seek to help local communities to understand local issues, take some responsibility for helping to resolve issues and encourage them to fund some of their local initiatives. The teams aim to ensure that local communities feel listened to and that they feel safer in their communities and be more active walking and cycling.</p>
Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership	<p>KMSCP enabled 43,920 speeding offences to be detected across the county during 2022: Fixed Cameras 27,463 Mobile vans 16,457 This data does not include offences recorded on the Motorway network. In addition to detecting speeding offences the number of seatbelt non-compliance offences detected by camera vans in 2022 was 1033. Of these, 893 of those detected not wearing seatbelts were male, 43 were female and in 97 cases the offender's gender was not recorded.</p>
Kent Driver Education Courses	<p>The Kent Driver Education (KDE) Team are Course Providers, Licenced by the Governing Body UK Road Offender Education (UKROEd), to deliver National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) courses on behalf of Kent Police. These courses are offered as an alternative to prosecution for a road traffic offence. This service has an overarching goal of improving road safety across the UK and supports the delivery of the KCC Vision Zero Strategy</p> <p>These courses are based on behavioural change and below is an excerpt from the UKROEd website.</p> <p><i>A report by Ipsos MORI in 2018 showed that targeting the behaviour of motorists through the courses provided by UKROEd reduced the likelihood of reoffending within six months by up to 23 per cent. The report also showed that over a period of three years, taking part in the course was more effective at reducing speed reoffending than a fine and penalty points.</i></p> <p><i>The report is based on data provided for 2.2 million drivers using records made available by 13 police forces in England for the period 2012 to 2017. Of these, 1.4 million had accepted an offer to participate in the National Speed Awareness Course.</i></p> <p>The KDE Team provide the administrative roles to enable KCC to provide this service. This includes setting up courses, assigning trainers to deliver them and supporting clients with both bookings, preparing, and attending their course. Courses are now delivered via the virtual digital platform of Zoom as well as at venues across Kent ensuring accessibility for all clients who wish to attend a course.</p> <p>Clients can choose any of the 21 Course Providers and as most of the courses are now delivered online, this enables clients to attend courses from not only the UK but also from anywhere in the world if they have stable internet and meet all the security requirements required.</p> <p>Last year the service arranged over 3000 courses for more than 28,000 clients to attend. Due to the increase in driving offences this year, officers have already increased our course availability for 2022/23 to over 3500 courses with the expectation of more than 33,000 clients attending and completing courses this year.</p>
Near-miss	<p>As part of our commitment to take a proactive approach to road safety and consider locations of concern to the community, we are working on an innovation project with a transport technology company to identify "near-miss" collision events. Near-miss events can teach us lessons</p>

recording trial development.	about the safety of a particular location before an injury collision has to occur. Near-miss events can be highly subjective and difficult to identify. Historically, identifying and learning from near miss events could only be achieved through witnessing such events first-hand, however we are now to use roadside sensors and Artificial Intelligence to automatically record near miss events. It is planned that these can be analysed much like collision data to understand the factors and behaviours at play at specific locations. This project could bring about future opportunity to understand collision risk at locations that may be of concern to communities which do not have a history of personal injury collisions.
Pedestrian Skills Training	<p>'Small Steps' is Kent County Council's primary school practical pedestrian training scheme and is run by the Safer Active Journeys Team.</p> <p>The Small Steps scheme uses trained volunteers under the guidance of the Small Steps co-ordinator, to teach practical skills at the roadside to 6 and 7-year-olds over a six-week period. It is built around three fundamental and transferable skills; choosing safer places to cross the road; the dangers of junctions; and a strategy to use when crossing near parked cars. In the last 18 months we completed an independent evaluation of the scheme which found that there was a significant improvement in the participating children's knowledge of how to cross a road safely.</p> <p>Where a school is unable to have the full Small Steps scheme, usually due to the road environment around the school, the team offer School Steps – a playground training session teaching the green cross code using a road map and props. This scheme was developed during the pandemic as an intervention which could be delivered in a covid safe way, but the team soon realised the benefits of the school for those schools which could not undertake Small Steps. The team is, therefore, continuing to offer this training and to refine and improve the course.</p> <p>During the 2021/22 school year the team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered 9 Small Steps and 29 School Steps interventions. • Launched Every Step a series of videos to help parents and carers teach their children how to cross the road.
Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity Campaign Interventions.	<p>Young Driver and Passenger intervention and 'Speak Out' Campaign</p> <p>Virtual Young Driver & Passenger is a pre-driver/young driver intervention for 16- to 18-year-olds that aims to improve the participant's safety as a driver and passenger via the completion of 4 online modules:</p> <p>Driving and Seeing, Impairment, Impulse Control and Speed and Force.</p> <p>Our Speak Out campaign, complements the intervention – maintaining positive role modelling and encouraging all individuals within a car to say something when they feel uncomfortable. This could be regarding the way the driver is behaving but could also relate to how the passengers are interacting in the car.</p> <p>All post 16 establishments were offered Young Driver & Passenger Programme (this include colleges and Pupil Referral Units). 49 schools undertook the programme, evidencing a growth of 58%. However, the number of pupils increased delivered to in this full academic year increased by 202%.</p> <p>Kent County Council has delivered the programme to 6522 year 12 and 13 pupils, of which all will have seen a minimum of 4 pieces of Speak Out Campaign creative.</p> <p>Specialist school providers have been able to access the programme, but further work here is required to highlight the relevance to them.</p>

Youth Travel Ambassador intervention

Youth Travel Ambassador Programme is a project based intervention aimed at Secondary school pupils across Kent. Kent Safer Road Users Team (formally Road Safety) have created a blended approach to delivery using pre-recorded sessions delivered by a facilitator and school staff.

Schools engaged on the programme access 6 skills based sessions and are expected to complete a project submission to the team relating to road safety, active travel or independent travel. Each school completing the elements can be awarded funds in order to activate their project idea.

120 schools offered YTA Programme, resulting in 38 schools having consultations with coordinator.

11 schools commenced the programme, with 6 schools completing project submissions in the time frame. 26 different YTA projects have been submitted this year.

Through the programme there were a total of 6153 school pupils engaged against a target of 5000

Cambridge City Council requested permission to use our programme and resources within their schools.

Kent Road Safety Club

The Kent Road Safety Club is a pedestrian education programme designed for children between the ages of 4-11 and delivered in primary schools across Kent. Pupils are engaged through Kagan co-operative learning to understand and promote safer pedestrian behaviour. Key road safety messages are delivered each year of children's formal primary education to act as building blocks to safer pedestrian and cyclist behaviour.

This school year saw us reach our largest number of schools and pupils to date, despite further disruption from covid. After a strong start to the year, our delivery in schools was badly affected at the end of December and through January as covid cases rose considerably in schools. However, we were able to get back into schools after this and reached our best figures to date.

The programme was delivered to 13207 pupils though 126 visits to 67 different schools.

BRAKE Road Safety Week Activities

Officers from the Road Safety and Active Travel Group developed initiatives to support this national event. Some of this activity was delivered jointly with our casualty reduction partners and followed the theme of 'Safer Roads for All.'

As well as arranging a busy week of activities in schools across the county, 'Driving for Better Business' was promoted to some Kent based companies by partner organisations and general road safety messages were promoted to the public through the Social Media channels of the partnership organisations.

In addition to this, a week of sustained public engagement in Canterbury City centre was arranged to promote Vision Zero and raise awareness of key road safety issues. Extreme wet weather conditions during the week meant that the team had to relocate to an indoor

venue at Bluewater Shopping Centre for two days. Joined by representatives from our partners such as Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service, officers engaged with all road user groups. Emphasis was given to promoting messaging aimed at protecting vulnerable road user groups. Separate sessions were delivered to tackle drink driving and raise awareness of the risk to pedestrians when they are under the influence of alcohol, as well as promoting active travel through the walking and cycling routes not just in Canterbury but the whole of Kent.

The team encouraged residents to create road safety pledges and become 'Vision Zero Heroes,' cascading important road safety messages to their friends, loved ones and local communities.

Mature Drivers Intervention

Four Mature Drivers seminars were delivered during November 2022 to a total of 140 delegates across Maidstone and Canterbury. A further ten are booked on for the first three months of 2023 and seven after April. We estimate that we will reach a further 600 delegates during the courses that are scheduled so far.

HASTE Intervention

Officers delivered two HASTE (Hazard Awareness, Space, Time and Eco-driving) seminars, one to a local RoSPA advanced driving group on the 8th December 2022 and one to the KCC Safe Mobility Team on the 3rd January 2023. we will have the myth buster videos completed in time for the new year and we are starting to plan in delivering the HASTE program to the parents of pupils who have engaged with the YDC program.

Be Bright, Be Seen Campaign

The Be Bright Be Seen campaign runs for two weeks at the time the clocks change in the Autumn. The purpose of the campaign is to promote wearing bright and reflective clothing/accessories during the darker mornings and evenings. This year the campaign used radio adverts (as well as being discussed by Radio presenters) on KMFM, along with articles on Kent Online, in the KM newspapers and on social media posts. Officers also provided an interview that was used in the KMFM news bulletins. As part of this campaign, schools can apply for reflective keyrings for their children. This campaign continues to be very popular with schools and other organisations such as Beavers/Scouts/Brownies. Below are some of the key statistics from the 2022 campaign:

- Quarter page newspaper advert in various local papers - 179,082 readers
- Radio advert played 982 times.
- Requests for keyrings - 732 entrants - totalling 161,638 keyrings requested (a total of 25,000 were available)
- Advert on Kentonline - 1,050,033-page impressions, 340 clicks, a CTR of 0.03%
- Article on Kentonline - 2933 views
- Article on MyKentFamily.co.uk - 426 views (also promoted on newsletter sent to 12,400 people)
- Promoted on KMFM social media (Facebook page has 271,693 followers and Twitter page has 28,213 followers)

Safety in Action intervention

Safety in Action is a multi-agency delivered, interactive experience is presented to pupils in Year 6 and focuses on key safety topics. It is

	<p>delivered in short 10-minute lessons as children move from one scenario to the next in groups of approximately 10. The road safety lesson involves pupils discussing, interacting and making decisions about potentially dangerous situations, with a particular focus on distractions. In total, approximately 6891 pupils across Kent attended these scenarios in 2022. Officers were unable to attend every day due to other commitments, but they did attend the majority of sessions.</p>
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6. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- **Note** the contents of the report.

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