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To: Environment, Highways & Waste Cabinet Committee

Date: 20 September 2012

Subject: This report outlines the consultation responses to the Freight Action Plan for Kent 2012 – 2016 prior to the formal adoption of the plan.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the responses to the public consultation on the draft Freight Action Plan for Kent and consequent amendments to the Plan. The consultation period was open from 28th May 2012 until 23rd July 2012 but late submissions were accepted. The report asks that the Committee discuss and endorse the plan.

Recommendations: Members are asked to note the intention of the Cabinet Member to approve the formal adoption of the Freight Action Plan for Kent.

1. Introduction

The *Freight Action Plan for Kent* (FAP) identifies the issues facing the county in relation to road freight, develops a series of objectives and outlines a number of key actions. It focuses on road haulage as this is the mode that predominantly affects the county's residents, visitors and workers, as well as the road network itself. However, the FAP expressly supports alternative modes of transporting goods that are considered more sustainable, such as rail and water. The EHW Cabinet Committee was updated on the progress with the FAP and its action points at the meeting in May 2012.

The FAP was subject to internal consultation in February 2012 and subsequently sent to stakeholder groups for six weeks during April and May. During this time the Plan was also sent to KCC Members and Joint Transportation Boards. This produced 39 written representations and significant amendments to the document were made as a result of this process.

A final draft version of the FAP was released for public consultation online from Monday 28th May to Monday 23rd July 2012. The same stakeholder groups were again notified of the public consultation. The public consultation resulted in a further 25 written representations and 25 responses online.

This report outlines the results of the consultation process, which has been largely positive with many respondents supporting the FAP and offering assistance in completing the action points. Final improvements have now been made to the FAP and it is ready to be approved by the Committee.

2. Financial Implications

Some of the actions in the Plan have implications for officer time and consequently a new Freight Officer role was created in July 2012 and will be appointed in September 2012. There are no further financial implications beyond agreed budgets.

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

The action points in the Freight Action Plan for Kent contribute towards all three of the key priorities in Bold Steps for Kent.

1. To help the Kent economy grow

The plan recognises the importance of the economic growth of the county and seeks to:-

- Work with the freight industry to seek solutions
- Provide information to the haulage industry to help them plan their journeys

2. To put the citizen in control

The plan identifies the impact that freight has on the community and seeks to work with the industry by:

- Developing a community Lorry watch scheme
- Provide a method of recording problems as they occur
- Working with the community and freight industry in raising the awareness of decisions that individuals make when ordering goods

3. To tackle disadvantage

The plan identifies the problems faced by the community and sets out the objectives to:

- Improving air quality
- Ensure lorries are kept away from residential areas

4. Discussion

The stakeholder consultation in April/May produced a number of very detailed and helpful responses. As a result the FAP was significantly amended to rectify any omissions identified and for general improvement. This ensured that the draft released to the public was as close to the final version as possible.

The public consultation was promoted online on the Roads and Transport page on www.kent.gov.uk and also picked up by the industry website *Commercial Motor*. Other local papers had published a previous press release about the development of the FAP, although this was before consultation dates had been finalised.

The responses to the public consultation can be split between the written representations made and the online responses.

The written representations were overall positive in nature, committing support and future assistance in carrying out the actions. One area of concern (expressed by three respondents) was not having carried out a Habitats Regulation Assessment. However, it has been decided that this is unnecessary at this stage because the document is a high-level overview of what KCC will work towards. Once the actions develop into projects and schemes more detailed planning and assessment will be carried out. This reasoning has now been explicitly included in the Plan. More of the responses requested that specific local issues are acknowledged in the document but largely this has not been possible to prevent the document from becoming cumbersome. Others suggested specific interventions, such as additional mirrors on HGVs. Again these have not been added to the Plan to avoid it containing too much detail; however, it is envisaged that these types of interventions will develop out of the individual action points.

The online questionnaire received 24 responses the majority agreed with each objective. Many of the additional comments made by respondents offered suggestions for additional actions or expressed support and a need for urgent action. For the same reasons as above, significant amendments have not been made although the comments made have been taken into account.

New suggestions that were added to the Actions Table as a result of the consultation are:

- To review HGV signing across the county and work with the Highways Agency to consider signing to discourage diversion off the Strategic Road Network.
- To consider if routes are reaching capacity in terms of HGV movements and how this can influence planning decisions.

The Freight Transport Association provided a comprehensive consultation response offering both practical advice, for example in relation to Lorry Watch,

and support for the objectives and actions. We look forward to working with the organisation more closely in the delivery of the Plan.

More detail on the consultation responses can be found in the appended reports.

5. Conclusions

The *Freight Action Plan for Kent 2011 – 2016* provides a framework for dealing with the problems generated by road freight in the county. Through the public consultation the Plan has been well received and no significant amendments have had to be made.

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the intention of the Cabinet Member to approve the formal adoption of the Freight Action Plan for Kent.

7. Background Documents

Attached are:

- A copy of *The Freight Action Plan for Kent 2012 – 2016*;
- The updated Equalities Impact Assessment;
- Online consultation summary report;
- Written representations summary report;

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