

From: Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

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To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 4 May 2016

Subject: Draft Active Travel Strategy - Consultation

Non-Key Decision

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 21 July 2015

Future Pathway of Paper: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – date TBC

Electoral Division: Countywide

Summary:

The Kent Active Travel Strategy aims to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys made by Kent residents and visitors. By developing and promoting accessible, safer and well-planned active travel opportunities, the strategy will help to establish Kent as a pioneering county for active travel.

In Kent, almost half of adults fail to meet recommended levels of physical activity required for good health, and one third of Kent's children are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school.

Objectives and measures to increase active travel will have positive outcomes across all KCC directorates including improved health, reduced traffic congestion and reduced pollution.

This report outlines the progress to date of the draft report following introduction of the project to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee meeting on 21 July 2015. The Project Group now plan to go out to public consultation on this draft and approval for this is sought from the Cabinet Member.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposed decision to agree that the draft Active Travel Strategy go out for public consultation as attached at appendix A

1. Introduction

1.1 Active travel (specifically choosing journeys by bicycle and on foot instead of by car wherever possible) can reduce congestion, improve the environment and

improve the air we breathe. It can improve our health and can increase levels of physical activity in school-aged children leading to improved attainment. It is crucial to establish healthy habits in young people in order for them to be sustained in later life.

- 1.2 In Kent, almost half of adults fail to meet recommended levels of physical activity required for good health, and one third of Kent's children are overweight or obese by the time they leave Primary School. One in three adults in Kent is at high risk of developing a disease condition through a lack of physical activity. Evidence suggests that objectives and measures to increase active travel will help deliver positive outcomes across all KCC directorates.

2. The Active Travel Strategy

- 2.1 In the Growth Environment and Transport Business Plan (2016-2017), the Strategy accords with cross-cutting directorate priorities 4 and 5, and divisional priority B1: to contribute to the delivery of the growth and infrastructure outcomes, create successful bids to secure funding; facilitate partnerships between transport providers; delivery of the Kent Environment Strategy; and specifically to contribute to Public Health by facilitating and promoting active travel.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the draft Active Travel Strategy go out for consultation and subsequently be adopted as County Council strategy. The strategy will be cost-neutral and provide strategic guidance in order to maximise investment in projects.

Progress to date

- 2.3 The Active Travel Strategy Project Group comprises representatives of relevant KCC departments including Highways, Public Health and Countryside, Leisure & Sport and is chaired by Clive Pearman; Barbara Cooper is the Vice Chair. The Project Group ensures an integrated approach that will help to prioritise investment, and promotes innovative resourcing of both infrastructure and promotional activity. The Project Group meets regularly as required and smaller Task and Finish Groups are set up to deliver actions.
- 2.4 To support the development of the Active Travel Strategy (ATS) for Kent, two engagement events were held to discuss the development of the strategy with partners and stakeholders. A Task & Finish group was tasked by the main Project Group with delivering this engagement process.
- 2.5 Over 70 representatives of external stakeholder organisations were involved in the workshops which sought to
 - Explore interest in active travel from a range of different stakeholder groups;
 - Provide an opportunity to think about issues relating to the infrastructure required to promote active travel interventions;
 - Seek ideas about how KCC can support behaviour change that encourages more cycling and walking for short journeys across the county;

- Allow participants to shape thinking at an early stage and influence detailed work going forward.
- 2.6 The two main points that came out of all discussions at workshops and in follow-up discussions with stakeholder organisations and Kent residents were that:
- Kent needs joined-up pedestrian and cycle routes that people actually want to use
 - Effective and widespread promotion of active travel opportunities is needed.
- 2.7 Further information on the engagement workshops can be found in Annexe 3 of the Draft ATS.
- 2.8 Following the engagement workshops a Members Task and Finish Authoring Group was put together to deliver a draft ATS. This group met twice and consisted of 4 Members across the political parties, officers, and was chaired by Clive Pearman. The attached draft ATS is the product of these meetings.
- 2.9 Officers attended Kent Youth County Council Transport Campaign Group on 20th March 2016 and held a facilitated discussion on active travel. The three main points raised from the discussion were
- Infrastructure - Separated cycle lanes away from roads
 - Infrastructure – Maintenance of routes
 - Behaviour – promotion on how to use shared footpaths

The group also agreed to share the consultation and respond once the consultation goes live.

Consultation

- 2.10 The Project Group would now like approval to go out to public consultation to engage with stakeholders and to further develop the Strategy.
- 2.11 An 8 week consultation is planned following approval from the Cabinet member. The consultation will be promoted through KCC digital and social media platforms, through the Libraries service and by directly contacting a number of key organisations for a response. These will include Kent County Council staff, the Kent Youth County Council, and all attendees of the stakeholder engagement workshops. Kent County Council's business intelligence team will assist with analysing the responses.

Next Steps

- 2.12 Following consultation, the Strategy will be finalised and presented to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee for discussion and comment.
- 2.13 The Strategy will act as a commissioning framework to deliver the agreed outcomes and will be supported by an implementation plan to deliver, through partnership working, the objectives outlined within. The Active Travel Strategy will complement existing adopted strategies and will inform development of future strategies in the field of transport, health and sustainability.

2.14 The Strategy is planned to be adopted by Kent County Council.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Strategy will be developed as a cost-neutral document and require no additional investment from Kent County Council budgets. The strategy will act as a commissioning framework to provide strategic guidance on where existing programmes of work can deliver higher returns and maximise existing investment in projects
- 3.2 Furthermore, the Strategy will be used to support bids for external income, including anticipated Government funding through the Infrastructure Act (2015) which specifically provides for investment in walking and cycling.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 None.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 An EqIA has been carried out and is appended to this report. Emerging issues included that any measures to promote active travel should address the gender gap in rates of cycle commuting and that active travel infrastructure should be accessible to all user groups, including older people and disabled people.

6. Other corporate implications

- 6.1 The strategy has been written with input across directorates through the Project Group, as outlined above.
- 6.2 The Strategy delivers against objectives in the Public Health Outcomes Framework, specifically indicators 2.13i (proportion of adults achieving at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week), 2.13ii (proportion of adults classified as inactive) and 1.16 (utilisation of outdoor space for exercise or health reasons).
- 6.3 Schools, Early Years Settings and Children's Centres have responsibilities to promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people. The Strategy will support their efforts. Both Kent's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the KCC Health Inequalities Action Plan, 'Mind the Gap' also highlight the importance of the early years of a child's life, and most crucially that health prevention through increasing levels of physical activity at this age will deliver long-term benefits for all family members, and improve a child's readiness for school.

7. Governance

- 7.1 The main delegations via the Officer Scheme of Delegation are to the Safer Mobility Team Leader (Highways, Transportation and Waste) and the Physical Activity Programme Manager (Public Health) who will be the lead officers

seeking to ensure that all such steps as are necessary to implement the decision are undertaken.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Increasing the number of journeys made by active modes of travel will have benefits for the residents and visitors to Kent. In order to maximise those benefits a strategy is required to give direction to all parts of the system.
- 8.2 Approval is therefore sought to consult on the draft Active Travel Strategy as outlined above.

9. Recommendation(s):

- 9.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposed decision to agree that the draft Active Travel Strategy go out for public consultation as attached at appendix A

10. Background Documents

- 10.1 The following documents are included as background:
- Draft Active Travel Strategy
 - Equality Impact Assessment

11. Contact details

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