

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

To: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Decision No: 17/00020

Subject: Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 21 July 2015
Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 4 May 2016

Future Pathway of Paper: None

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 updated Strategy (Appendix B) following consultation and the creation of an accompanying Action Plan (Appendix C).

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport is asked to approve the Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan.

In addition, to endorse delegation to the Corporate Director, Growth Environment and Transport the authorisation to make any further minor modifications which may be needed such as formatting changes and typographical errors in order to publish the Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Active travel (specifically choosing journeys by bicycle and on foot) has a range of beneficial effects; it can help to reduce congestion, contribute to economic development, improve the environment and the air we breathe, improve our health through being more active and is a way of encouraging physical activity in school-aged children.
- 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.
- 1.3 It is proposed that the Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan are adopted as County Council strategy. The strategy will be cost-neutral and provide strategic guidance in order to maximise investment in projects.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The Strategy is a cost-neutral document and requires 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. Furthermore, the Strategy will be used to support bids for external income.

3. Policy Framework

- 3.1 The Strategy contributes to all three of the Strategic Outcomes in KCC's Strategic Statement 2015-2020: Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life; Kent Communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life; Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently.
- 3.2 In the Growth Environment and Transport Business Plan (2016-2017), the Strategy accords with priority 4- develop and implement GET's county-wide strategies and priority 5- GET's role enabling KCC to be a Public Health Authority.
- 3.3 The Strategy strongly contributes to all five of the Draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) priorities: economic growth and minimised congestion; affordable and accessible door-to-door journeys; safer travel; enhanced environment; and better health and wellbeing. Active Travel is a Kent wide priority within the Draft LTP4; the Active Travel Strategy is a daughter document and will help to meet this priority.

4. The Report

Relevant History

- 4.1. The Active Travel Strategy Project Group comprises representatives from across KCC including Highways, Public Health and Countryside, Leisure & Sport and is chaired by the Deputy Cabinet Member. The Director of Growth, Environment and Transport 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.
- 4.2 The Project Group meets as required to develop the strategy. Four members from across the political parties join this group at the key stages to give advice and direction. Smaller Task and Finish Groups are set up to deliver specific actions, such as drafting the action plan.
- 4.3 A previous report was considered by the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 4 May 2016, where approval was given to go to public consultation with the draft strategy.

Consultation

- 4.4 The consultation ran for eight weeks from 18 May to 13 July 2016. It was publicly available for anyone to respond to and was also sent to a range of public, private and community sector organisations.
- 4.5 561 responses were received, of which 486 were from people responding in an individual capacity, 18 were responding in a professional capacity, and 57 were responding on behalf of organisations.
- 4.6 The responses showed overwhelming support for active travel, as did the consultation feedback for the Draft Local Transport Plan 4, showing that Kent's residents consider this a very important issue. At least 8 out of 10 respondents agreed with the ambition of the strategy and the measures outlined in Actions 1-3. A full analysis of the Public Consultation is included in Appendix D.
- 4.7 Changes were made to the Strategy. A consultation feedback document was written to highlight these changes and this can be viewed at Appendix E. Two of the main changes were:
 - Added a policy context section to demonstrate how the Active Travel Strategy links to other KCC policies.
 - Set out measurable targets in the Strategy, including how and when they will be monitored.

Strategy and Action Plan

- 4.8 The Action Plan has been created to help us achieve our targets. It focuses on new actions and changes/improvements to existing activities.
- 4.9 The Action Plan will be formally reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The Steering Group made up of officers across KCC and Members from across the political parties will meet on a quarterly basis to monitor progress towards the activities within the Action Plan. The relevant strategy targets (1 and 3) will be monitored annually.

5. Legal implications

5.1 None.

6. Equalities implications

6.1 An EqIA has been carried out and can be found at Appendix F. 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.

6.2 Disabled people were less likely to agree with the Active Travel Strategy itself. 43% of disabled respondents strongly agreed with the strategy; 55% of all respondents strongly agreed.

6.3 The Strategy Action Plan contains actions specifically relating to people with disabilities, the elderly and female cyclists.

6.4 The EqIA Action Plan sets out actions to engage with these groups and promote the Active Travel Strategy.

7. Implications for property portfolio

7.1 None.

8. Other corporate implications

8.1 The strategy has been written with input across directorates through the Project Group, as outlined above.

8.2 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).

8.3 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.

9. Delegations

9.1 The main delegations via the Officer Scheme of Delegation are to the Safer Mobility Team Leader (HTW) and the Senior Public Health Programme Manager (Public Health) who will be the lead officers seeking to ensure that all

such steps as necessary to implement the decision are undertaken.

10. Conclusions

10.1 The benefits of improving accessibility and opportunity for active travel are well documented and this strategy outlines Kent's commitment to achieving these.

10.2 Approval is therefore sought for the Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan.

11. Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport is asked to approve the Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan.

In addition, to endorse delegation to the Corporate Director, Growth Environment and Transport the authorisation to make any further minor modifications which may be needed such as formatting changes and typographical errors in order to publish the Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan.

12. Background Documents

The following documents are included as background:

- Appendix A - Active Travel Strategy
- Appendix B - Action Plan
- Appendix C - Public Consultation Analysis Report – <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD4990&ID=4990&RPID=12528018>
- Appendix E - Consultation Feedback Document – <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD4991&ID=4991&RPID=12528048>
- Appendix F - Equality Impact Assessment <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD4992&ID=4992&RPID=12528035>

13. Contact details

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