

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 8 September 2022.

PRESENT: Mr S Holden (Chairman), Mr N J Collor (Vice-Chairman), Mr N Baker, Mr T Bond, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr M Dendor, Mr A R Hills, Mrs S Hudson, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr A Sandhu, MBE, Mr D Watkins, Mr A Weatherhead, Ms M Dawkins, Mr B H Lewis, Mr I S Chittenden and Mr M Baldock.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D L Brazier (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) and Miss S J Carey (Cabinet Member for Environment).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr M Smyth (Director of Environment and Waste), Mr P Lightowler (Interim Director of Transportation) and Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2022

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2022 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Verbal Updates by Cabinet Members and Corporate Director

(Item 5)

1. Miss Carey gave a verbal update. Members were reminded that quarterly environment and waste member briefings had been circulated in advance of the meeting and provided a broad overview of recent portfolio developments. She confirmed details that a conditional offer had been received for a grant of £98,500 to establish trees at 22 school sites and 2 NHS sites over the next two years.
2. Mr Brazier gave a verbal update. He noted the current situation involving bus service withdrawal, including those commercial services withdrawn by the bus operators. He noted that the council was not able to support all services but was working on abbreviated services with the priority of getting children into school. He informed the committee that after meeting with Eurostar representatives that a decision on international trains leaving Kent stations had not yet been decided. An update was provided on Millwall football club's option to purchase land near Brands Hatch Circuit. He informed members that he had authorised the Bird e-scooter trial in Canterbury to be immediately wound down due to misuse and concerns for public safety, after reports of injuries. He updated the committee on the progress of the cycling and walking plan infrastructure member working group, part of the authority's desire to work with districts and boroughs to make healthy emissions-free travel infrastructure attractive. He noted that he planned to set up an all member

briefing so their plans can be considered and debated by the wider membership.

3. In response to a question from Mr Baker, Mr Brazier clarified that the Bird e-scooter trial had now been limited to the corridor between the city centre and the university and will be in operation until the completion of the trial in November.
4. Mr Jones gave his verbal update. He noted that all services were very busy, with many at capacity. But the volume of work had remained high and all planned work programmes had continued unabated over the summer period. He stated that it was important to note however that many areas had been impacted by market scarcity and increased costs of delivery, this was not limited to highways as it affected numerous services across the county. He added that members should be aware that this would continue to be a risk for the rest of the year. He reiterated Mr Brazier's comment on the scale of work done by public transport officers in coordinating transport requests and in persuading and influencing service providers to vary and amend routes for the benefit of Kent residents and commuters. He provided an update on buses, additional funding had been made available for bus operators in the short term and a discussion with the Department for Transport about what this meant for Kent was ongoing, while work on the Bus Service Improvement Plan continued, with good progress being made. He stated that since the last meeting support had been provided to districts, boroughs and city councils for their levelling up bids. It was also explained that a county-wide application for Levelling Up funding had been made with news on this expected to arrive by the end of September or into October. He added that Operation Brock had been removed the previous weekend after being on operation for the full summer. He noted that discussions about alternatives to this challenging operation would continue to be held with the relevant government departments. He commented that over £200,000 of funding had been obtained from the Low Carbon Skills Fund to develop a heating decarbonisation plan, action plans would be identified for the top 35 energy-consuming sites on the estate and provide detailed feasibility studies on 16 buildings to ensure a coherent strategy is in place going forward with a view to getting further grant funding and make the most of potential decarbonisation opportunities. He highlighted that an extension had been granted to the Planning Performance Agreement with National Highways on the Lower Thames Crossing this had resulted in further funding which was used to hire an external consultant to investigate the impact of the Lower Thames Crossing on the local roads which left the county well positioned to secure future funding for the most adversely affected areas impacted by the opening of the crossing from 2030. He provided an update on the Pothole Blitz Framework, which had carried out over £4 million worth of work in all districts and would continue until November. He informed members that the team would present to the committee the case for recommissioning the framework at a later date. He noted that the Road Surfacing and Road Treatment Programme had a positive summer with over £30 million invested into roads and £2 million into footway works.

(At this point the chairman, Mr Holden, informed the committee that he was standing down for the remainder of the meeting. From this point on the vice-chairman, Mr Collor, was in the chair)

RESOLVED to note the update.

Performance Dashboard

(Item 6)

Rachael Kennard (Chief Analyst) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Kennard gave a verbal summary of the performance dashboard up to June 2022. She stated that 10 of the 17 Key Performance Indicators were rated green. While 5 were rated amber (with 2 of these due to raised targets), 2 were rated red. One of the red rated areas concerned pothole repairs, she added that data for July and August indicated improvements in this area. In summary, she stated that the results of the performance dashboard reflected a positive position overall.

RESOLVED to note the Performance Dashboard

Winter Service Policy for 2022/23

(Item 7)

Andrew Loosemore (Head of Highways) and Richard Emmett (Senior Highways Manager) in attendance.

1. Mr Brazier introduced the report. He noted that he was pleased with the report and stated that in years past the Winter Service Policy was carried out successfully and expects the same for 2022/23.
2. Mr Loosemore noted that some minor changes had been made to the plan for this year. Firstly, that 5000 tons of rock salt be held in reserve as an operational contingency, and secondly, created individual identification for each salt bin helping both residents to report their salt bin and allowing operators to respond.
3. Mr Emmett noted that improvements made on gritting routes, such as improvements to forecasting on specific routes, had meant that less rock salt was required.
4. Mr Emmett responded to a question from Mr Baldock regarding turnaround times for salt bin applications from member funds and reiterated the reporting process if salt bins were low or empty.
5. Mr Jones agreed to circulate last year's performance and budget to clarify any misunderstanding regarding spending in response to a question from Mr Bond.

6. Mr Jeffery sought clarification over why parish councils were required to pay to refill salt bins, the officers replied by stating that the costs were low with the refilling process much more efficient now than in years past. Mr Loosemore confirmed that at the current moment no electric gritters were available to be used on routes.

RESOLVED to note the report.

Levelling Up Fund - Update

(Item 8)

Lee Burchill (Head of Major Capital Programme Team) was in attendance.

1. Mr Brazier introduced the update. He provided a summary of how the process worked to secure funding from the fund.
2. Mr Burchill explained that Kent County Council's (KCC) role was largely focused on supporting district and borough councils and that time constraints and pressure had created difficulties in the first round. He noted that in the second round two bids had been submitted firstly, with KCC regarding access improvements in Dover, and secondly, with Maidstone Borough Council regarding M20 junction 7 improvements. News on the outcome of the bids was expected for the end of October or early November.
3. In response to a question from Mr Baker, Mr Jones confirmed that improvements to the Thanet Way A299 remained high on the agenda and other funding avenues were sought despite the bid from the Levelling Up Fund not being progressed.

RESOLVED to comment on and note the report.

Transport for the South East Strategic Investment Plan Consultation

(Item 9)

Joe Ratcliffe (Transport Strategy Manager) and Mark Welch (Principal Transport Planner)

1. Mr Brazier provided a verbal overview of the report and noted that Mr Watkins, in his capacity as Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, was KCC's representative to Transport for the South East.
2. Joe Ratcliffe reiterated that KCC was a constituent member of Transport for the South East, a partnership of all the local highway and transport authorities in the South East and reminded members that a Leader Decision had been recently taken for KCC to enter and continue in the partnership following the unsuccessful bid to central government for statutory status. Consultation for Transport for the South East's Strategic Investment Plan closed the week of 12 September after which a revised document would be released to be brought back to the committee in early 2023 before a key decision from the Leader on whether or not to adopt it.

3. Mark Welch outlined KCC's proposed response to Transport for South East's Strategic Investment Plan. Firstly, the Strategic Investment Plan must ensure that the foundations of the local transport network were properly funded before further work was carried out. Long-term aspirational plans were welcomed however, halting the decline in the local transport network was an investment priority first and foremost as a prerequisite for KCC to accept the Plan in 2023. Secondly, the Plan's funding must be additional to, and not instead of, the funding that KCC is already calling for through various plans and strategies. Thirdly, the Plan must fully fund current transport plans and strategies, such as the Bus Service Improvement Plan. He noted that this was also a prerequisite.
4. Mr Baldock and Mr Lewis raised several concerns about both Transport for the South East and the Strategic Investment Plan. Mrs Hudson noted the need for further improvements. Joe Ratcliffe responded and clarified some of these points.
5. The vice chairman called for a recorded vote.
6. Members voted on the motion. The motion passed. The votes cast were as follows:

For:
Mr N Baker, Mr T Bond, Mr I Chittenden, Mr N Collor, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr M Dendor, Mr T Hills, Mrs S Hudson, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr D Watkins and Mr A Weatherhead

Against:
Mr M Baldock, Ms M Dawkins and Mr B Lewis

RESOLVED to endorse the response to the consultation.

National Bus Strategy - Update

(Item 10)

Dan Bruce (Public Transport Policy, Infrastructure and Community Officer) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Brazier introduced the report. He confirmed that a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) had been created and submitted while the Council worked in an enhanced partnership with bus operators in the county. A bid of £213 million had been made but only £35.1 million had been received, he remarked that although this was disappointing it was more than other local authorities received.
2. Mr Bruce provided a technical update on the National Bus Strategy. He confirmed that all the aspirations of the BSIP could not be achieved due to the funding falling below the level bid for. He explained that the enhanced partnership aimed to achieve as much of the BSIP as possible and that a

further report would be brought back to the committee if further funding is received.

3. In response to a question from Mr Chittenden, Mr Bruce stated that the exact location of priority corridors was not yet known due to potential changes, however, an external consultant had been hired to investigate 9 possible corridors and recommend the 3 that would bring the most benefits to Kent residents.
4. Mr Chittenden asked about special passes for carers. Mr Lightowler said the matter was being explored and that further information on special passes would be forthcoming.
5. Mr Jeffrey asked about multi-operator ticketing, in response, Mr Lightowler confirmed that this was being investigated locally and in conjunction with the Department for Transport and the Competition and Markets Authority who were planning a possible national platform.
6. Mr Bruce confirmed that an aspect of the BSIP included the creation of an Interactive Transport Map, in response to Mr Bond's question about making it easier to access timetable information.

RESOLVED the report be noted.

22/00086 - Fastrack Electrification and ZEBRA Commission (Pages 63 - 70)
(Item 11)

Shane Hymers (Fastrack Development Manager) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Watkins, as Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and chair of Fastrack Board Thameside and Dover, introduced the report. He stated that the bid to the Department for Transport, for electrification of both fleets, Thameside and Dover, had been successful. He reported that Thameside had been running a very successful service with the diesel buses being replaced by green electric buses. In Dover, in conjunction with Dover district council, routes were being planned and from day one the buses on this route will be electric.
2. Mr Hymers noted that bus passenger levels had returned to pre-Covid levels. The report set out a wish to procure 4 items, firstly, operating contracts for the Thameside and Dover schemes. Secondly, the charging infrastructure for the electric buses. Thirdly, a preferred supplier for the next generation of Fastrack bus stops, with living roofs. Finally, new real time information screens to display all key information for users.
3. Mr Jeffrey, Mrs Hudson and Mr Weatherhead all spoke in support of the report, especially the living roof bus stops. All called for an extension of the scheme across the county.

RESOLVED to endorse the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport on the following proposed decisions in connection to Kent Fastrack services:

- (a) grant permission to procure contracts required to implement the electrification of Fastrack Bus Services in Kent, including the roll-out of environmentally friendly infrastructure across the Fastrack bus networks; and
- (b) grant permission for contract award decisions (including the award of any future contract extension(s)) relating to these contracts to be taken by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member insofar as:

- 1. Electric Fastrack Bus Services to operate the future electric Fastrack bus networks:

- a. Fastrack Kent Thameside network effective from 2024.

- b. Dover Fastrack network (pending completion of infrastructure works).

- 2. Electric Bus Charging Solutions to power the new zero emission electric bus fleet(s) including:

- a. Electric Vehicle Charging Systems.

- b. Electricity Supply.

- 3. Environmentally focused Bus Shelter Services for the repair and maintenance of bus shelters including the phased replacement of existing bus shelters with pollinator-friendly living roof bus shelters.

- 4. Real Time Information (RTI) Display Services providing real time passenger information and media advertising at bus shelters.

Presentation from Southern Water

(Item 12)

Dr Toby Willison (Director of Quality and Environment, Southern Water) was in virtual attendance for this item.

- 1. Dr Willison gave a presentation. Topics covered included: Environment Performance Assessment, Investment in Kent, Catchment Management, How Future Growth informs Southern Water, Storm Preparation, Customer Protection and Water Quality Testing Buoys.
- 2. Mr Baker asked whether Southern Water had planned further investment in its Public Relations capabilities. Dr Willison agreed to update the committee on the company's public relations and communications efforts when he next presents to the committee.

3. Dr Willison explained, following a further question from Mr Baker, that it was not always Southern Water assets that drained sewage onto beaches. He added that misconnections also had an impact and that Southern Water had a misconnections team, members were asked to pass on any reports of misconnections. He confirmed that a decision had been taken to block the emergency inshore overflow at Swalecliffe, in favour of out sea overflow. Members were told that overflows near beaches were being analysed, with commitment given that a list of outfalls would be provided as part of the next update.
4. Dr Willison clarified Southern Water's target for an 80% reduction in pollution by 2025 and confirms that they are on target to achieve this. A further target was to reduce spilling from overflows by 2030 and he confirmed that current spilling is permitted, moreover, he remains confident that this will be achieved. This was in response to a question by Mr Chittenden.
5. Mr Baldock raised concerns that Southern Water was not maintaining infrastructure to a sufficient standard. Dr Willison affirmed Southern Water's plan to accelerate work on two pipelines on the Isle of Sheppey.
6. Due to time constraints, the vice chairman informed Ms Dawkins and Mr Weatherhead that their questions could be submitted and answered by email.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the presentation and request that Southern Water update the committee at the appropriate time.

22/00085 - Moving Traffic Enforcement Contract (Traffic Management Act 2004: Part 6)
(Item 13)

Chris Beck (Network Manager) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Brazier introduced the proposed decision to enter into appropriate contractual arrangements for the provision of the Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 6 - Moving Traffic Enforcement contract.
2. Mr Beck confirmed that these powers to enforce against moving traffic offences had only previously been used by the London Boroughs and Welsh authorities. KCC has applied directly to the Department for Transport to acquire these powers. These powers were granted at the beginning of July and now procurement for a service provider had begun. This would begin with a trial in 7 sites, with a further 51 planned. The infrastructure required to implement the powers was shared and included cameras and an operating system so all of Kent could be monitored from one position, with a contract value of £4 million over 5 years. He informed the committee that any potential profits would be ringfenced to be reinvested highway improvements.
3. Mr Jeffrey asked how the measure was going to approach the issue of successfully enforcing penalty notices on vehicles registered overseas. Mr

Beck replied stating that measures were in place for enforcing penalty notices on European drivers with a debt recovery agency, however, there were difficulties and further means were being investigated.

RESOLVED to endorse the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport on the proposed decision to provide the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport with the delegated authority to enter into appropriate contractual arrangements for the provision of the Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 6 - Moving Traffic Enforcement contract, including any possible future extensions as shown at Appendix A.

22/00087 - Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2023-2038

(Item 14)

Sharon Thompson (Head of Planning Applications) was in attendance for this item.

1. Miss Carey introduced the report and gave an overview of her proposed decision. She confirms that members had been asked to endorse a further consultation to take place and to have sought potential site(s) for a further supply of ragstone. She stated that any action in this area must be permitted within the relevant legislation.
2. Mrs Thompson stated that the Local Plan had to be updated every five years in accordance with planning legislation and was an important strategy document against which planning applications are determined. She drew attention to the supporting evidence for the Local Plan work. She noted that the report outlined feedback on comments made during the recent public consultation and that most of the views received were supportive. She identified that as a result of the consultation, the new Plan horizon was now 2038, rather than 2030 and that the County Council needs to plan for additional hard rock (likely to be ragstone) capacity in the county. This requires an updated Mineral Sites Plan. The report has set out the process for achieving this.

RESOLVED to endorse the Cabinet Member responsible for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan in respect of her proposed decision to:

- (i) Approve and publish for public consultation a draft updated Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan covering the period 2023 – 2038 and associated supporting evidence, for a minimum six-week period of public consultation in line with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
- (ii) prepare an update of the Mineral Sites Plan for Kent in respect of (hard) rock;
- (iii) undertake a 'Call for Sites' to support the Minerals Sites Plan work;

(iv) agree timetables for preparation of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2023-38 and updated Kent Minerals Sites Plan to be published in a revised Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme;

(v) agree the draft Site Selection Methodology to be used in assessing the suitability of sites for publication for consultation; and

(vi) delegate to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport the authority to approve any non-material changes to the draft Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2023-2038 and the Site Selection Methodology in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment prior to their publication for consultation.

Plan Tree

(Item 15)

Elizabeth Milne (Natural Environment and Coast Manager) was in attendance for this item.

1. Miss Carey introduced the report. She confirmed that as part of the proposed Strategy KCC would be funding the member's tree scheme for the next three years, with a target of 350 trees per division. She also commended officers for their work on the project.
2. Ms Milne gave a verbal overview of the consultation. She stated that the 8-week consultation had received a good response with a strong level of support, and agreement with, the Strategy's ambitions. Based on the responses to the consultation the plan had been adapted to include affording better protections and restorations for already existing woodland and trees. Further clarification on the management of the new trees was offered based on concerns raised during the consultation. She clarified that there would be clearly defined targets, with a rigorous monitoring process in place which was in line with what respondents had called for. 45% of respondents were doubtful that KCC would remain committed to, and deliver on, the Strategy ambitions. In response to these concerns Ms Milne noted that KCC's good progress on the Strategy since 2019 and attainment of all necessary funding ought to reassure respondents on KCC's commitment to the ambitions. There have also been further changes made to the plan to make clear woodlands impact on biodiversity and what challenges face tree establishment.
3. In response to a question from Mr Jeffrey, Miss Carey stated that the removal of tree stumps would not be beneficial due to the environmental good that they produce, confirmation was given that the scheme was not designed to remove them.
4. In response to a question for Mr Chittenden, Miss Carey replied that the tree officer would spend any tree money which is not spent by members and a list of sites for potential tree establishment had been created to advise members on how best to use their funds.

5. Ms Milne responded to a question from Mr Dendor confirming that currently, no powers existed to stop developers from removing trees on private land, however, avenues to protect trees were under investigation.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment, to adopt Plan Tree as the Council's Tree Establishment Strategy.

Work Programme

(Item 16)

RESOLVED that the committee considered and endorsed the work programme.