

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment, Highways and Waste Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 11 May 2012.

PRESENT: Mr D L Brazier (Chairman), Mr J R Bullock, MBE, Mr N J Collor, Mr G Cowan, Mr M J Harrison, Mr W A Hayton, Mr C Hibberd, Mrs J P Law, Mr M B Robertson, Mr C P Smith, Mr K Smith (Substitute for Mr R F Manning) and Mrs E M Tweed

ALSO PRESENT: Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Austerberry (Corporate Director, Environment and Enterprise), Mr J Burr (Director of Highways and Transportation), Dr L Harrison (Minerals & Waste LDF Project Manager), Mr D Latham (Roadworks & Enforcement Manager), Mr S Palmer (Head of Highway Operations), Mr T Read (Head of Highway Transport), Mr A Westwood (Traffic Manager) and Mrs K Mannering (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

3. Election of Vice Chairman

(Item A3)

Mr M J Harrison proposed and Mr W A Hayton seconded that Mr N J Collor be elected Vice Chairman.

Carried

4. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item A4)

(1) Mr Robertson declared an interest in Item B1 as a Member of the Kent Enviropower Ltd. Community Liaison Committee

(2) Mr C Smith declared an interest in Item B1 as a Member of the Minerals & Waste Development Framework IMG.

5. Minutes of the meeting on 29 March 2012

(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2012 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

6. Dates of future meetings

(Item A6)

RESOLVED that the following dates for meetings of the Committee in 2012/13, commencing at 10.00am, be agreed:-

4 July 2012
20 September 2012
15 November 2012

10 January 2013
23 April 2013
19 June 2013
19 September 2013
14 November 2013

7. Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan - Mineral Sites Plan and Waste Sites Plan Consultation at 'Preferred Options' Stage

(Item B1)

(1) The report summarised the progress that had been made on the preparation of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) documents and explained why it was now necessary to carry out a county wide consultation on the preferred options for both the 'Mineral Sites Plan' and the 'Waste Sites Plan'.

(2) A cross party Informal Members Group, chaired by David Brazier steered the preparation of the minerals and waste plans. The Kent MWLP would consist of three main documents supported by a range of evidence base topic papers, a Sustainability Appraisal, a Habitats Regulation Assessment and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The three main minerals and waste plan documents being prepared, which would contain policies and site allocations were:-

- (a) The Minerals and Waste Plan (formerly the Core Strategy);
- (b) The Minerals Sites Plan; and
- (c) The Waste Sites Plan

(3) The consultation would involve arranging a series of stakeholder meetings and drop-in sessions in community halls around the county during June 2012. The total costs for the consultation including the hire of the venues, printing of consultation documents and CDs was estimated at £6.5K, which would be funded from the Minerals and Waste Planning Policy team's revenue budget.

(4) The MWLP would become part of the statutory development plan, alongside the District Council Local Plans. Once the MWLPs had been through an independent examination process, they would need to be adopted by the Council. After adoption, all future minerals and waste applications would be assessed against their policies and site allocations. The May 2012 consultation would ask for views on the preferred options for minerals and waste sites required to meet Kent's needs up to the end of 2030.

(5) Mr Sweetland and Dr Harrison answered questions and noted comments from Members which included the following:-

- the documents presented to the Cabinet Committee were the preferred options
- in response to a query as to whether the 8 week consultation period would be long enough, Dr Harrison assured Members that the issue had been raised last year, and all Parish Councils were aware of the whole process
- Members supported the county wide consultation stage
- It was important that the work of the IMG continued, even if it proved necessary to establish a revised forum.

(6) Mr Sweetland thanked Mr Brazier and Dr Harrison for the hard work that had been carried out in producing very helpful and informative documents.

(7) During discussion Mr Brazier moved, Mr C Smith seconded a change to the wording of the recommendation in the report, to read as follows:-

'Members of the Cabinet Committee are asked to consider and either endorse or make recommendations on the decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste'.

Carried

(8) RESOLVED that the commencement of the 8 week consultation on the Mineral Sites Plan and Waste Sites Plan at 'preferred options' stage commencing on 28 May 2012, be endorsed.

8. Environment, Highways and Waste Forward Plan - current entry (Item B2)

RESOLVED that the current entry in the Forward Plan for Environment, Highways and Waste, be noted.

9. Cabinet Member's and Corporate Director's Update (Item D1)

(1) Mr Sweetland gave a verbal report on the following issues:-

Planning & Environment

Rail Summit

Waste

Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres

Highways & Transportation

Road Safety; Village “Caretaker” Scheme; and Street Lighting – Energy Saving Initiative

Major Projects

Development work would start on 6 major road schemes, including the A21 Tonbridge – Pembury widening scheme.

(2) Mr Austerberry gave a verbal report on the following issues:-

Corporate performance indicators; Highways drainage; professional services contract; preparations for the Olympics; East Kent Access Road Phase 2; HWRC and transfer station network; and Smart Campaign.

(3) RESOLVED that the updates be noted and a copy circulated to Members of the Committee.

10. Member Highway Fund Update

(Item D2)

(1) The report updated the Committee on the recent Member Highway Fund (MHF) IMG group meetings which took place on 27 March and 27 April 2012. A number of recommendations had been put forward to tackle the areas for improvement as identified in the report to the EHW Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee (POSC) held on 14 March 2012.

(2) The report submitted to the POSC on 14 March 2012 outlined the performance to date of the Member Highway Fund initiative. In summary the key points raised were:-

- £5.8 million had been committed to highway schemes and projects, half of which was committed in the last 12 months of the scheme.
- A total of 1,197 schemes had been designed; a majority of the committed sums were spent on new or improved pedestrian crossings (£874k).
- The existing team consisted of 12.5 FTE staff supported by 3 full time temporary staff. There were 6 area engineers who dealt with approximately 14 members each. Each engineer had to deal with an average of 64 applications per year. This allowed on average an engineer to spend less than 3 working days per application from inception to delivery.
- As of the end of January 2012, nearly £700k of works had been ordered through the term contractor Enterprise; approximately £270k works had been completed.
- The delivery time (from inception) for a typical scheme could take on average 10 to 12 months following the current procedures. Contributions could take between 4 to 6 months.

POSC resolved to form an Informal Members Group to discuss the issues raised and report back to the Cabinet Member with suggested improvements on how the MHF operated.

(3) During discussion the following issues were raised:-

- The need for clarification on 'delegated authority'
- Further discussion was needed on the principle of self-regulation
- The importance of retaining officer support and advice

(4) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the outcomes of the two Informal Member Group meetings on 27 March and 27 April, be endorsed, specifically that:-

- (i) delegated authority be given to the Director of Highways and Transportation for the approval of expenditure on MHF schemes;
- (ii) Expenditure on schemes not in accordance with current Highways & Transportation policies, procedures and practice be referred to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste;
- (iii) Members complete their spend within the 2012/13 financial year in view of the County Council elections in May 2013; and
- (iv) Officers provide a list of scheme types with typical costs and timescales; continue to develop the online scheme information system; and implement the "walk, talk and build" and Member sign-off for completed improvements as soon as possible; and

(b) a briefing on the MHF initiative be arranged for all Members.

11. Management of Roadworks

(Item D3)

(1) Following a report to the Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2011, it was agreed that a working group be formed to review the management of roadworks across Kent. Whilst the report was positive about progress in recent years, particularly relating to the Kent Permit Scheme, Members perceived through their experiences and those of their constituents that this did not reflect the reality. The purpose of the group was to explore the disparity and opportunities for further improvement.

(2) Minimising the disruption caused by works in the highway was essential to delivering growth without transport gridlock, which was a key element to the Bold Steps aim of driving economic prosperity. The group consisted of 3 Members: Roger Manning, who led the group; Malcolm Robertson and Steve Manion; and 2 Officers,

Spencer Palmer – Head of Highway Operations; and David Latham – Roadworks and Enforcement Manager.

(3) The working group's agreed terms of reference included the following key elements for the scope of the review:-

- The legislative framework - legal powers, processes and responsibilities;
- The Kent Permit Scheme;
- Incentives for work promoters (carrot Vs stick);
- Public and Member perceptions;
- Organisational structure, roles and level of resource;
- Communication and flow of information;
- Key challenges;
- Benchmarking and performance monitoring; and
- Future initiatives, e.g. Lane Rental.

(4) The group found that KCC were making good use of the legislative tools available to manage roadworks effectively. Kent was the first County to have a Permit Scheme approved and had been running the scheme since 25 January 2010. Evidence from the Kent Permit Scheme Annual Report showed the Scheme had delivered benefits in its first year.

(5) As a result of the review the Working Group agreed the following recommendations for further consideration:-

(a) to ensure better compliance with Permit Conditions, the following management action could be considered to increase the number and frequency of roadwork inspections:-

- (i) Appoint an additional county-wide inspector to be funded from fine income generation;
- (ii) Make better use of existing "eyes" out on the network, particularly through existing KCC resource (e.g. highways stewards and safety inspectors) but also the general public;
- (iii) Carry out additional inspections on weekends.

(b) expand the interface with works promoters and their contractors to drive a culture change. This could be achieved by:-

- (i) More regular targeted performance meetings with selected works promoters;
- (ii) Leading by example – demonstrating to other works promoters how we were managing to improve quality and minimise disruption of our own works;

- (iii) Continuing to take an active role in national and regional committees, rewarding and sharing best practice and where necessary naming and shaming poor performers;
 - (iv) Considering the development of a Kent Code of Conduct for all works promoters to sign up to when working in Kent, similar to the initiative implemented by the London Mayor.
- (c) to help improve perceptions, more could be done to publicise successes and promote projects that had exceeded or met challenging targets and delivered customer satisfaction.
- (d) Continue to develop a Lane Rental scheme for Kent as set out in the Highways and Transportation business plan.
- (6) RESOLVED that the recommendations in paragraph (5) above be supportive.

12. The Olympics and Keeping Kent Moving

(Item D4)

(1) The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games would have a significant effect on the County. To identify the issues and what mitigation might be necessary to ensure that Kent kept moving an Integrated Olympic Transport Plan had been developed. The plan was a multi agency approach to managing the road network to ensure that the County was prepared and included a number of mitigations to the impact of the games. The plan did not have a financial impact although the publicity plan did require financial support that the Olympic Delivery Authority had offered to fund. The plan sought to utilise existing resources and use the Highways Management Centre (HMC).

(2) The Olympic Games and Paralympics would have an impact on Kent, due to a number of issues that the County faced as the Gateway to Europe. With the importance of the access to mainland Europe through the Channel ports and the use of the strategic road network (M20/M25 & M2/A2) the County would be facing challenges as travel patterns changed. The challenges faced by the County included the Olympic Torch Relay, the Paralympic Cycling event at Brands Hatch and Ebbsfleet International station being used as a transport hub during the main games. Planning and mitigations to the impact of each were set out in the report.

(3) Highways & Transportation staff had taken an active role in working with the multi-agency partners in preparing for unexpected events that could occur in Kent, which had involved taking part in incident simulation exercises that tested the communications and readiness of all partners to respond in the event of emergencies. In preparation for the games Kent Police would be following their normal emergency response procedures and would have silver command at Medway Police Station throughout the period of the Torch Relay and the games. A District Manager from H&T would be present as part of the road cell within the command structure during the Relay and games periods. At the same time the HMC would be open for 24 hours during both games time and would be available to deploy resources as necessary. There had also been plans developed for dealing with a number of unexpected incidents that could occur across the county. Examples included:-

- Dealing with the real possibility of Operation Stack
- Incidents on the HA network that could lead to increased congestion on Kent roads particularly around Ebbsfleet
- Working with the HA on strategic diversion when the A20 was shut

(4) During discussion Members expressed concern in relation to

- Access for local residents during the cycling event at Brands Hatch
- Fire authority coping with massive crowds at Ebbsfleet
- Operation Stack
- Adequate arrangements for coping with foot passengers
- Impact on County Show

(5) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the work being planned to ensure that the Olympics were a success for the travelling public in the County, be endorsed; and
- (b) a briefing on the impact upon the Kent's highway and transportation network, and the actions being planned to mitigate them, be arranged for all Members.

13. Current progress with the actions in the draft Freight Action Plan for Kent (Item D5)

(1) The report set out the progress with current actions from the draft Freight Action Plan for Kent, including the development of a Lorry Watch Scheme, the Government's recent Sat Nav summit, and the commissioning of a lorry journey planner to sit on the kent.gov.uk website. The Plan identified the issues facing the County in relation to road freight, developed a series of objectives and outlined a number of key actions.

(2) The Kent Lorry Watch scheme currently being developed had implications for officer time and would form part of a business case for creating the role of a Freight Officer. The action points in the draft Freight Action Plan for Kent contributed towards all three of the key priorities in Bold Steps for Kent.

(3) The Freight Action Plan was a strategic plan that identified the problems faced in Kent caused by the impact of road freight. The document focused on road haulage because KCC, as the Highway Authority, had the greatest influence on this mode. Further, the majority of community concerns were around HGVs. The Plan identified the following main issues:-

- Operation Stack
- Overnight lorry parking

- Ensuring HGV traffic used the strategic road network
- Addressing problems caused by lorry traffic in communities
- Using KCC's planning powers to reduce the impact of freight
- Encouraging sustainable freight distribution

Within each of the objectives a number of actions had been devised to contribute towards the mitigation of the impacts of road haulage in Kent. An update on the following was set out in the report:-

Kent Lorry Watch; Freight Gateway – lorry journey planner; District refuse collection; Sat Nav Summit; Commercial driver leaflets; and Outcomes and Future actions.

(4) During discussion the following issues were raised:-

- Overnight parking – feasibility studies for truckstops at various locations along the M20/A20 and M2/A2 corridors were being carried out. Working in partnership with the private sector to secure and promote sites would be looked into.
- Kent Lorry Watch – Members would be informed of the locations proposed for the scheme.

(5) The Freight Action Plan for Kent provided a framework for dealing with the problems generated by road freight in the county. It identified the problems and set out a series of objectives to tackle this important issue. Work was now underway on delivering the Plan.

(6) RESOLVED that the progress with the actions in the draft Freight Action Plan for Kent, be endorsed.