

**80. Canterbury District Transport Plan**  
*(Item B5)*

The Committee received a report setting out the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member to endorse the principles of the Canterbury local Transport Strategy. The Chairman explained that the report was returned to the Committee despite having been discussed previously owing to a number of administrative errors that, whilst not substantive, could have called in to question the proper consideration of the matter by the Committee.

The Chairman had agreed that three members of the public may speak to the item, Ms Barwick, Mr Hirst and Mr Baker, as well as local member for Canterbury City South West, Mr Vye.

Ms Barwick addressed the committee. She referred to the Car parking strategy to gradually reduce car by the means of parking tariffs to encourage park and ride and sustainable transport, at paragraph 462 of the strategy. As Chairman of the Canterbury Independent Traders Alliance, and representing their views at that time, she held the following:

- i. That the City Council policy of reducing car parking spaces, by 18% as identified in the strategy, would have a detrimental effect on small business and shops in Canterbury city centre.
- ii. That figures showed that businesses had already suffered as a result of the policy to date. Referring to papers handed out at the beginning of the meeting showing a reduction of car visits and a reduction in park and ride use to the city centre, each, it was claimed, costing businesses £35 per trip not taken.
- iii. That the letter from the Chief Executive and Leader of Canterbury City Council containing assurances for KCC in relation to this element of the strategy and included in the papers for the meeting, had not been adhered to to date and as such should not be relied upon by Kent County Council.

Finally Ms Barwick urged the Committee to only endorse the transport strategy with a recommendation that reference to city centre parking closures be removed.

Mr Baker addressed the Committee; he particularly referred to the issue of parking at Canterbury West Railway Station. He argued that, since the introduction of high speed rail at that location, patronage had increased dramatically placing additional and unsustainable pressure on car parking spaces. He maintained that all 120 available spaces were taken by 10am each day, with approximately 15 regular commuters already parking in the nearby city council car park intended for casual rail users and shoppers. A copy of a petition signed by 49 taxi drivers who also supported an increase in spaces in order that they had a designated waiting area had been distributed before the meeting.

Mr Baker also referred to the findings of an independent consultant who had recommended that 120 parking spaces were needed at that location. He argued that not only was that figure not met, being only 99 currently, but that the City Council intended to reduce that number, citing as evidence the Local Plan which identified both the overflow car park and the city council car park for development. He urged the committee to seek further assurance that there would be no reduction in car

parking in that location without alternative arrangements in place and that he and the taxi drivers referred to previously asked the committee to also encourage Canterbury City Council to utilise the unused railway depot on Railway Road for additional parking.

Mr Hirst, a Canterbury City Councillor, addressed the Committee. He referred again to the letter that had been sought and received from the Chief Executive and Leader of Canterbury County Council containing assurances regarding the parking strategy and argued that it did not satisfy the concerns that had led to it being requested. He was concerned that it did not mention railway station parking nor did it require evidence of public support for any future disposal of car parking space. He maintained that this would allow the sale of car parking spaces even where consultation showed that it was unpopular and cited the recent agreement of the Canterbury City Council Executive to sell spaces at Ivy Lane as evidence of this.

Furthermore he urged the committee not to rely on the letter as it had not been democratically agreed by Canterbury City Council elected members and the signatories would not be in place for the life of the Local Plan. He claimed that it was not good practice that the Transport Strategy, a public document, was not in line with views expressed in a private letter which would not be considered as part of the inspection in public of the Local Plan.

For all of those reasons, he urged the Committee to disregard the letter and only endorse the proposed Cabinet Member decision to endorse the strategy if the strategy itself was in line with the views of the County Council, without the need for any additional assurance and also asked the Committee to recommend that further assurances be sought from Canterbury City Council that any spare land be bought forward for additional parking spaces.

Mr Vye, local member for Canterbury City South West addressed the Committee, he believed that the strategy was undeliverable for three reasons:

- i. The 4000 houses identified for building in South Canterbury; and the concomitant
- ii. Off-slip at The Bridge interchange
- iii. The off-slip from the A2 at Wincheap

He continued in order to explain his concerns and in particular referred to the following:

- i. That the complicated nature of people's movements across and around the city centre had not been properly considered.
- ii. That he did not believe it would be possible to create an off-slip at Wincheap based on developer contributions from the Wincheap Industrial Estate and that without them and the intended off-slip, congestion in the area would become unmanageable, particularly along the A28
- iii. That there were no sensible mitigation proposals for the proposed development of 4000 houses in South Canterbury and congestion on both the old and new Dover Roads was likely to be increased, particularly if lanes were squeezed to create an additional bus lane.

He concluded by welcoming the most part of the strategy, particularly the emphasis on cycling and urged the Committee and Cabinet Member to consider the

endorsement of the strategy with the three projects to which his concerns were addressed included, very carefully.

The Chairman requested that the members of the public now left the table and brought Ruth Goudie, Strategic Transportation and development Planner, KCC to address the Committee.

Ms Goudie brought the following information to the attention of the Committee:

- i. That a report had been considered, and the principles endorsed, by the Committee in December 2014. However, the draft strategy presented at that time had not been the most up to date and therefore had not included some of the changes made by the Executive at Canterbury City Council nor the JTB as it should have. The report was therefore returned with the current version of the strategy appended and the amendments detailed within the report. The two major amendments were:
  - The removal of a reference to a site identified for a fourth park and ride at Harbledown
  - Additional clarity that city centre parking would only be reduced if evidence that there would continue to be an adequate overall supply and following a public consultation.

Finally Ms Goudie apologised for the inconvenience caused by the administrative error at the last meeting and asked the committee to endorse the principles of the updated strategy and the proposed Cabinet Member decision once more.

The Chairman opened the floor to members and the following comments were made:

- i. That the wishes of the members of the public appeared to be satisfied within the report.
- ii. That the strategy referred to the reduction in car parking as having been promoted as part of the 'Park Plan' but that for the consent of the public to a direction of travel in 2015 should not be assumed from a document adopted in 1989.
- iii. That the letter from the Leader and Chief Executive of Canterbury City Council, referred to by speakers, suggested that the plans and proposals being considered would, if adopted, have status beyond the current administration and would be binding on future administrations. If that were the case it would be contrary to the fundamental principles of democracy inherent in the British system of governance.
- iv. That neither the strategy nor the principles inherent within it should be endorsed before an open and honest investigation in to what is proposed had taken place.
- v. That the principles for which the committee and ultimately the Cabinet Members endorsement were sought were undermined by some of the detail and conversely, lack of detail within the draft strategy.
- vi. That the welcoming of assurances from Canterbury City Council, a reference to the letter, should be deleted as it could not be relied upon.
- vii. That it was difficult to identify where the principles of the strategy were contrary to the aims and objectives of Kent County Council and its plans as a highway authority and therefore endorsement should follow.

- viii. That the detail of the strategy was a matter for Canterbury City Council and should not be considered by the County Council.
- ix. That if the County Council did not support the City Council in its adoption of an appropriate and democratically determined Local Plan it would leave the area vulnerable to inappropriate and unwanted development, often on green field sites.
- x. That the JTB had requested that the Roper Road site should be considered by the City Council as overflow, or new parking, for the Railway station but that this did not appear to have happened.

The Corporate Director and Cabinet Member made the following comments in response to parts of the debate:

- i. That the heavy emphasis on developer contributions to meet infrastructure needs was appropriate for Canterbury but it was recognised that it would not be possible in some other areas of Kent and the Growth and Infrastructure Framework was intended to identify such funding gaps and potential funding solutions, such as LEP funding.
- ii. That insertion of the word 'generally' into the recommendation regarding developer contributions was not considered necessary as it already included the word 'largely' as opposed to exclusively.
- iii. That the Canterbury Local Plan had already been placed 'on deposit' and would in the near future be subject to an 'examination in public'. It was for this examination that the support of Kent County Council to the Transport element of the local plan was important to its successful passage to adoption. It was recognised that best practice would be to work alongside districts in order to place on deposit a document already supported by both the District and the County.
- iv. That the wording in recommendation 2. Be amended to include the words "Canterbury City Council and" after "Where this is the case".

It was RESOLVED by a vote of 12 in favour to 2 against that the recommendations within the report be agreed with a minor amendment to the wording of recommendation 2. as noted above.

Mr Baldock and Mr MacDowell requested that their votes against the proposed recommendations be recorded.