

From: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

To: Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee – 11th September 2015

Decision No: 15/00079

Subject: An Active Travel Strategy for Kent

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Verbal report to Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee

Future Pathway of Paper: The draft Strategy will be considered by Members in spring 2016, prior to a Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

Active travel (specifically choosing journeys by bicycle and on foot instead of by car wherever possible) is recommended by NICE as a means of improving levels of physical activity across the life-course. Active Travel can reduce traffic congestion, improve the environment, improve air quality, and reduce noise pollution.

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 and that these will be across all KCC directorates.

It is proposed that an Active Travel Strategy be developed and adopted as County Council policy. The strategy will be cost-neutral and provide strategic guidance in order to maximise existing investment in projects.

The development of the Strategy was reported verbally to the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee on 21st July 2015, and will come back to a future meeting of that committee. A report to the Education & Young People's Cabinet Committee is to be considered on 18th September 2015

Recommendation:

The Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee is asked to comment on the proposal to develop an Active Travel Strategy for Kent

1. Introduction

- 1.1. By 2050, the NHS cost attributable to obesity and overweight will be £9.7 billion and the total costs will be £49.9 billion. The direct costs of illness as an outcome of physical inactivity to the NHS are quoted to be as much as £1.0 billion per annum, while costs to the whole economy are estimated at £20 billion per annum.
- 1.2. Over 26% of adults in Kent are classed as physically inactive and at high risk of developing disease conditions as a result of their sedentary lifestyle. Over 43% fail to meet recommended levels of activity required to maintain good health. 21% of children in Kent are above a healthy weight when starting primary school, increasing to 33% by the time they leave.
- 1.3. Robust evidence has highlighted how active travel, specifically journeys made by cycle and on foot, can contribute to a wide range of outcomes. Active travel gives people an opportunity to be physically active as part of their daily routine, which will contribute to improved health as well as preventing or managing a range of chronic diseases. It can also contribute to improved air quality, reduced congestion and reduced carbon emissions through reducing the number of cars on the road. Kent currently has no strategic policy to meet these objectives through increasing active travel.
- 1.4. Kent County Council currently does not have a corporate strategy for increasing active travel for every day journeys such as to school, to work or for shopping. Evidence suggests a co-ordinated set of policies and measures will have a positive benefit to reduce traffic congestion, improve the environment and improve public health. Further, if developed, an Active Travel Strategy will provide a commissioning framework for all directorates and partner organisations, it will inform local transport and health policies, it will provide a context for bids for external funding and deliver an increase in walking and cycling to contribute to keeping Kent moving and healthy.
- 1.5. This strategy will support National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) commissioning guidance that recommends that schools foster a culture that supports physically active travel for journeys to school and during the school day, through encouraging children to walk or cycle.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 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
- 2.2 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.

3 Supporting KCC Strategic Priorities

- 3.1 Improving transport is identified in the KCC Strategic Statement 2015-2020 under outcome 2: Kent Communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life. It also relates to priorities 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 within the Growth Environment and Transport Business Plan 2015 – 2016:
 - Contribute to the delivery of the Growth & Infrastructure outcomes,
 - Create successful bids to secure funding,
 - Facilitate partnerships between transport providers,
 - Delivery the Kent Environment Strategy, reducing the impact of traffic,
 - Contribute to Public Health by facilitating and promoting active travel.
- 3.2 The strategy will contribute to outcomes in the Kent County Council Strategic Outcomes Framework by improving the health, environment and sustainability opportunities for Kent. This strategy will deliver key public health outcomes as identified in the Public Health Outcomes Framework, specifically indicators 2.13i (proportion of adults achieving at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week) and 2.13ii (proportion of adults classified as inactive). The actions in this strategy will be informed by NICE Commissioning Guidance PH8 (improving the physical environment to encourage physical activity) and PH41 (local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation), and deliver objectives in the Public Health England physical activity strategy Everybody Active, Every Day.
- 3.3 This strategy will also support Growth without Gridlock and act as a complement to the Local Transport Plan for Kent (2011-16) and contribute to outcomes in the Road Casualty Reduction Strategy for Kent (2014-2020).

4 Timescales for consultation and adoption

- 4.1 The Strategy will be developed by a cross-directorate working group. Partner engagement is planned to take place between September and October 2015. Workshops are proposed in October in the east and west of the county, with further engagement planned for schools and young people. A draft Strategy will be developed between October and December, with full consultation

beginning in January 2016. A final Strategy, taking into account consultation responses, will be presented for consideration to the three Cabinet Committees reviewing this paper during Spring 2016. It is proposed to recommend to the respective Cabinet Members that the Strategy be adopted as Kent County Council policy, subject to the views of these Cabinet Committees at that time.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 Approval is therefore sought to scope, develop and produce an Active Travel Strategy as outlined above.

6. Recommendation(s):

The Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee is asked to comment on the proposal to develop an Active Travel Strategy for Kent

7. Background Documents

The evidence base for policies to promote active travel includes the following:

- National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (2012) - Walking and Cycling: Local Measures to Promote Walking and Cycling as forms of Travel or Recreation.
- Public Health England (2014) - Everybody Active, Every Day. A Physical Activity Strategy.
- Public Health England (2014) - Public Health Outcomes Framework.
- Kent & Medway Public Health Observatory Library (2014) - Active Travel Literature Review (unpublished).
- Department of Health (2011) - Start Active Stay Active: A Report on Physical Activity from the 4 Home Countries.
- National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (2008) - Physical Activity and the Environment.

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