

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 4 May 2016.

PRESENT: Mrs P A V Stockell (Chairman), Mr C R Pearman (Vice-Chairman), Mr M Baldock, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr C W Caller, Mr I S Chittenden, Dr M R Eddy, Mr P M Harman, Mr M Heale, Mr P J Homewood, Mr R A Marsh (Substitute for Mr C Simkins), Mr J M Ozog, Mrs C J Waters and Mr M A Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs S V Hohler, Mr M A C Balfour and Mr A Berendt

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr R Wilkin (Interim Director of Highways, Transformation and Waste), Mr J Farmer (Projects Manager - Major Projects), Mr B Stiff (Project Manager, Major Projects), M D Beaver (Head of Network Management and Performance), Mr R Clark (Street Light LED Programme Manager), Mr S Horton (Road Safety Team Leader), Mr P Lightowler (Head of Public Transport), Ms K Williams (Mid-Kent Highways Manager), Ms H Allard (Business Development Team Leader), Mr A Fairhurst (Public Health Programme Manager) and Ms C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

171. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item A2)

Apologies were received from Mr Simkins substituted by Mr Marsh, Mr MacDowall, substituted by Mr Heale, Mr Whybrow, substituted by Mr Harman; and the Cabinet Member for Community Services, Mr Hill substituted by the Deputy Cabinet Member, Mrs Hohler.

172. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item A3)

No declarations of interest were received

173. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2016

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2016 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

174. Verbal updates

(Item A5)

1. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Services, Mrs Hohler, advised that the Cabinet Member for Community Services, Mr Hill, attended the Consumer

Challenge Quiz for children with learning difficulties held at Wyvern school, Ashford. This aimed to give those children the opportunity to be more informed consumers.

2. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Mr Balfour, advised on the following:-

Local Growth Fund Round 3 update

(a) This funding would be allocated by the Government through a competitive bidding process. It was anticipated that £1.8bn would be made available nationally. In addition, there was also the opportunity for Local Enterprise Partnerships to bid for a limited amount of Large Local Major Schemes development funding which would be made available by the Department for Transport to support project development work for a small number of Large Local Major transport projects across the County. For the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, these schemes were defined as those with a scheme cost of in excess of £75 million.

LTP4 and GIF update

(b) The new Local Transport Plan 4 was undergoing a period of pre-consultation engagement with the districts to identify their strategic priorities for inclusion within the plan. A draft document would be brought to this Cabinet Committee in July before the launch of a statutory 12 week public consultation. The current engagement with the districts was also identifying projects for potential inclusion in the third round of bidding for the Local Growth Fund (LGF), a bid for development funding for potential Large Local Major Transport schemes and the update of the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF).

Specific Schemes:

Operation Stack Lorry Area

(c) There was no further news on Operation Stack. It was hoped that the Department for Transport would make an announcement by the end of May or early June.

Lower Thames Crossing

(d) KCC has sent a response to the Highways England consultation supporting the Western Southern Link and for additional mitigations, particularly to air quality and increased tunnelling. The Government's decision was awaited on the final route as there was also to be an extra airport run way in the South East.

Department for Transport (DfT) and New Southeastern Franchise

(e) The formal DfT public consultation on the New Southeastern franchise would run from June to October 2016. KCC would submit a full and detailed response, which would be discussed at a Member's Briefing on 21 July and by this Cabinet Committee on 7 September prior to Cabinet approving the final response on 26 September.

Highways Operations Update

(f) It was noted that the weather had been unseasonably cold for April. Our weather forecast advised that this would lead to colder road surface temperatures with the risk of ice and hoar frost which could pose hazards for road users. Therefore the winter service period was extended for an extra week to 29 April. On Wednesday, 27 April the roads were gritted as road surface temperatures fell below zero.

(g) Around 300 road and footway resurfacing schemes during 2015/16 were delivered totalling £17 million. Members noted the Capital funding pressures and that safety auditing competing priorities for this investment was being carried out. The county would be publishing details of this year's resurfacing schemes in two tranches. The first of which was shared with Members in March.

(h) In 2015/16 the County Council received 7,500 drainage enquiries. A quieter year by comparison as there were fewer weather events. The Drainage Team responded to 500 drainage and flooding emergencies. January 2016 was the busiest month. 45,000 gullies on main roads were cleaned on a scheduled basis whilst a further 3,200 reactive cleansing jobs were carried out in response to customer enquiries. The Drainage Team delivered 450 small and medium sized drainage renewals and improvements with a total value of £1.5m.

(i) In 2016/17 the Drainage Team plan to deliver a range of larger schemes, including drainage improvements to the Thanet Way and Sandwich Bypass. The scheduled cleansing programme would remain relatively unchanged with a focus on main roads and flooding hotspots.

(j) The street lighting team received almost 20,000 enquiries during 2015/16 and attended a little over 2000 emergency call outs and carried out over 27,000 reactive repairs in response to customer calls and faults reported by night patrols. Street light replacement works to a value of £2.65m were also carried out.

(k) The Street Lighting LED conversion project had commenced and has started well and a more detailed report was on today's agenda.

Pothole Blitz

(l) A pothole Find and Fix campaign was starting in June and would continue through the Summer months. At the same time, the re-painting of white lines on the roads and cleaning road signs would take place.

3. Mr Balfour responded to questions by Members as follows:-

- a) Following a request Mr Balfour agreed to circulate his notes on his verbal update outside the meeting.
- b) Mr Balfour shared the frustrations of Members with the reduction of funding from the highways base budget. He considered that repairs would be carried out in a prioritised basis at a local level.
- c) Members welcomed the news of white lines being repainted on the roads as there were concerns with safety at some junctions where the road marking were worn.
- d) Members gave their support regarding the issues of the reduced budget.
- e) Mr Balfour agreed to make enquires regarding the Key Street roundabout but supported local Members making direct enquires about matters within their electoral divisions as they had local knowledge.
- f) Mr Balfour explained that a criteria was being defined on what qualified as local works. A report providing more information would be publicised.

4. RESOLVED that the comments and the responses to questions by Members and the information in the verbal updates be noted with thanks.

175. Performance Dashboard

(Item B1)

1. The Business Intelligence Manager - Performance, Mr Fitzgerald, introduced a report on the end of year performance against targets for the Key Performance Indicators with RAG alerts to show progress. He highlighted that there had been good overall results which were mainly green in the RAG rating summarised on page 34 of the report. He advised Members of late information stating that results for March for the Environment Planning and Enforcement showed that none of the indicators had changed status but had improved and the Kent Scientific Services indicator was now green with a final figure of 739k.
2. Mr Fitzgerald responded to questions by Members as follows:
 - a) Dr Eddy welcomed the report being moved to the beginning of the agenda
 - b) Mr Wilkin advised that there was a note of caution in terms of the information on page 36 as this dealt with volume. He explained that Highways teams carried out testing on the highway networks. If the number of enquiries from the public were low this did not indicate the state of the road but what the public had observed.
 - c) Mr Balfour explained the red RAG rating for the Public Rights of Way (PROW) was due to problems with the PROW website for fault reporting. He considered that this reinforced the point about highways and safety, as increasing the use of the PROW it was difficult keeping up the preferred standard as it was too expensive. Following a safety audit decisions had to be made to close bridges and pathways as they were deemed unsafe. There would be a conflict with the budget moving funding to support vulnerable groups or the public rights of way system.
 - d) A comment was made that borough and district councils also had to make financial savings and questioned whether devolving some of the services was too much. Mr Balfour explained that devolving the services was about ensuring effectiveness and efficiency.
 - e) Mr Wilkins assured Members that KCC was not complacent and worked in partnership with the twelve Kent borough and district councils on waste management but agreed that the enforcement of the recycling of materials could be revisited ensuring that the public put the right materials in the correct bins. He added that when the market value of recyclable materials was low in value the collectors were more particular that the recyclable material was not contaminated.
 - f) Mrs Cooper advised that the Trading Standards performance would, in future, include where it had made an impact.
 - g) Mr Wilkin advised that it was unlawful to put waste into someone else's bin.
 - h) Mr Wilkin confirmed that customer statistics were taken seriously and the figures were lower than hoped. When issues were reported by the public, officers were not good at reporting back giving the public updates on their issue. This needed to be improved and the department was currently looking at mechanisms to send text messages.
 - i) Mr Pearman sought acknowledgment that 98% of the work was a good effort with reduced resources. The performance dashboard was a method

of giving early warnings on what was going well and what was going in the wrong direction.

j) Mr Balfour agreed to forward the details of how long the PROW fault reporting system had been off line outside the meeting.

3. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the report be noted.

176. A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way, Greenhithe - Junction Improvement and Construction of New Bus Lanes
(Item C1)

1. Project Manager (Major Projects), Mr Farmer introduced a report that sought the Cabinet Committees support to take the highway improvement for the A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way through the next stages of development and delivery including authority to progress statutory approvals and to enter into funding and construction contracts. He explained the location of the junction and proposed improvement that would reduce congestion and assist public transport services. He also explained that the need for improvement had been identified for a number of years and had secured full funding in principle.

2. Mr Harman, Local Member for Swanscombe and Greenhithe, advised that he had attended a useful site meeting regarding the proposal with Mr Stiff. He advised the Cabinet Committee that this was a viable option and supported the recommendations set out in the report.

3. Mr Ozog requested that a solution be considered for the Steele Avenue junction as traffic sat at the junction for some time waiting to access Clements Way. The Project Manager, Mr Stiff, advised that, this would be looked at and a pedestrian crossing to the right of the junction could help but it was a constrained site and he did not want to raise expectations..

4. RESOLVED that:-

(a) the comments by Members be noted and consideration be given to Mr Ozog's request detailed in paragraph 3 above; and

(b) the Cabinet Committee endorsed the proposed decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport as follows:

- i) approval be given to the feasibility design for A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way, Greenhithe Improvement Scheme for development control and land charge disclosures shown in principle on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.
- ii) approval be given to progress to a detail design stage, the A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way Improvement Scheme shown as a feasibility design on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B, including such work as drainage and environmental mitigation.

- iii) approval be given to progress all statutory approvals and consents required for the scheme shown in principle on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.
- iv) approval be given to carry out public engagement for the scheme shown in principle on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.
- v) approval be given to enter into Single Local Growth Fund funding agreement subject to the approval of the Corporate Director of Finance & Procurement.
- vi) approval be given to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to the approval of the Commissioning Board to the recommended procurement strategy.
- vii) approval be given for any further decisions required to allow the scheme to proceed through to delivery to be taken by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member.

177. Young Persons Travel Pass - Petition Scheme Debate (Item D1)

1. The Chairman advised that the Lead Petitioner Nicola Hibbard had been invited to attend the meeting to speak to the petition but Ms Hibbard had notified the clerk that she would be unable to attend the meeting, but would like the petition to be considered in her absence.

2. The Chairman then invited the Cabinet Committee to debate the petition. During debate the following views were expressed and concerns were raised:

- a) Mr Baldock questioned whether the item should be postponed until Ms Hibbard was able to attend the meeting. The Chairman advised that the statement from Ms Hibbard had been circulated in the meeting papers and should be debated at this meeting.
- b) Mr Caller said that he had sympathy with the Petitioners as parents often had no choice in which school their children attended.
- c) Mr Balfour reminded Members that the YPTP had been debated at length and the decision made last year when it was noted that any increase to the cost of the YPTP would be in line with the increase in charges made by the bus companies to KCC and that this would be passed on to the users of the service. He stated that this was still a valuable and generous scheme for Kent children subsidized by taxpayers. He reiterated that this scheme was not carried out by other local authorities and was discretionary.
- d) Mr Lightowler reiterated the basis of the operator fare increases using examples of current operator fares for children travelling to and from school over 190 school days per year to demonstrate that the YPTP gave value for money. He considered that the challenge for some parents was paying for the fare up front.
- e) Mr Lightowler advised that fuel was part of the cost but was not the predominant cost.
- f) A comment was made that Members did not require lessons in business from officers.
- g) Members agreed with Mr Balfour on the benefits of the scheme but considered that there was an impact on those who earned just over the average annual

income of £16k per year and would therefore not be entitled for free school travel. It was suggested that this could affect the decision to send their child to a grammar school.

- h) Mr Balfour reiterated that he fully appreciated that any increase in costs would not be easy for many families but the Local Authority had to make choices in how it spent its budget.
- i) A comment was made that the bus operator could extend the scheme to include weekends.
- j) A Member compared the cost of Stage Coach tariffs to the cost of flights to Europe and suggested that there should be more competition from alternative bus companies.
- k) A comment was made that subsidizing school travel was a benefit to all who lived in Kent as driving from one area of Kent to another took twice as long in term time.
- l) Mr Baldock proposed that the £20 increase to the YPTP be delayed for this year but as there was no seconder, the proposal could not be pursued.

3. Mr Caller proposed, seconded by Mr Bowles that the recommendation set out in the report be moved. By 9 votes to 2 the proposal was carried.

4. RESOLVED that the comments and responses to questions by Members on the petition statement be received.

178. Draft Active Travel Strategy - Consultation

(Item D3)

(The Chairman agreed to bring this item forward to allow a member of the public, who had been given permission before the meeting, to speak on this item)

1. The Chairman welcomed Mr Adrian Berendt, who represented 20's Plenty for Kent, Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group, the Sevenoaks Cycling Forum and SPOKES East Kent Cycle Campaign to the meeting and invited him to speak for the allocated three minutes. Mr Berendt stated why the groups he represented would not support the Active Travel Strategy consultation document without the proposed amendments regarding reducing traffic speeds, traffic volume and segregated infrastructure to support cyclist as set out in the paper forwarded to the Cabinet Committee by email and tabled at the meeting.

2. The Chairman of the Active Travel Strategy Project Group, Mr Pearman, advised that the approach adopted by the Group was to improve health and reduce pollution. He said that it was not unexpected that the document would have flaws but this was not a cycling strategy. He considered that this would be addressed through the contributions to the consultation.

3. Members of the Cabinet Committee made comments as follows:

- a) A comment was made that the draft consultation lacked connectivity. It was considered the request for 20mph zones in key areas to promote safety was an important statement. Mr Pearman agreed that this would be looked at as a response to the consultation.
- b) Dr Eddy suggested that Deal/Walmer would be ideal areas for 20 mph zones if a pilot scheme was part of the outcome of the consultation. Mr

Balfour advised that KCC already has a 20mph Zones Policy and any changes would need to be value for money.

- c) Mrs Waters asked that areas of Romney Marsh be considered for a pilot scheme for cycling.
- d) A suggestion was made that the consultation be forwarded to all Parish and Town Councils in Kent.
- e) A comment was made that Kent did not have the necessary public transport infrastructure and that this draft Strategy would require a change of mind set when developing major schemes to develop safe areas for cyclists and walkers.
- f) It was suggested that the Strategy should include leisure.
- g) A Member questioned where the funding would be sourced from to enable the draft Strategy to succeed.
- h) Members noted that following the eight week consultation the Strategy would be finalised and brought back to the Cabinet Committee for discussion and comment and then the Cabinet Member could take the decision.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the comments and responses to questions by Members be noted; and
- (b) the Cabinet Committee endorsed the recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposed decision to agree that the draft Active Travel Strategy go out for public consultation as set out in appendix A to the report.

179. Members Highways Grant

(Item D2)

1. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Mr Balfour, introduced a report that reviewed the cost effectiveness of the Highway element of the Combined Member Fund since the amalgamation of Member grants and a recommendation to deliver a simpler highways scheme. He highlighted that Officers held a briefing for all Members of the County Council. He explained that the aim was simplify the process. This would be achieved through a single point of access, the District Managers, who would work with Members to identify highway projects under the Combined Members Grant.

2. The Mid-Kent Highways Manager, Ms Williams, advised that the recommendations A to D set out in the report were developed as part of the annual review. She then spoke on the recommendations and the role of the District Manager, the annual list of highways schemes and scheme fees.

3. Mr Balfour and Ms Williams responded to questions by Members as follows:

- a) A suggestion was made that the title should be changed to “Combined Members Grant – Highways Schemes”
- b) Ms Williams confirmed that if a highways scheme was passed to a district or borough council that it would become a community project but this did not mean that the money would be despatched quicker.

- c) A Member questioned how much of the combined Members grant was allocated to Highways. Ms Williams advised that in 2014/2015 the spend from the Combined Members grant for Highways was approximately £600,000 and approximately £1,228,320 for Communities.
- d) Referring to the table on page 65 of the report a Members questioned the average turnaround of 10 weeks for lining of roads saying that yellow lines tended to exceed that time.
- e) Ms Williams advised that the definition of a "Scheme" would be in the Members Handbook.
- f) Members commented that they looked forward to working closely with the District Managers
- g) A Member commented that often one highway scheme could take half of the allocated budget, rise in cost and/or be withdrawn. It was questioned whether there was an opportunity to pay for quick fixes such as potholes where accidents would be averted.
- h) Dr Eddy advised that he had already met with the District Manager for his area and had a list of projects. He considered the table of average turnaround times helpful when relaying information on the projects to people in his area. He considered that it was crucial that the advice on the costings of the projects was correct. Mr Balfour stated that he wanted there to be greater communication and hoped that this was the right formula and where necessary tweaks would be made to achieve this.

4. RESOLVED that the comments and responses to the questions by Members be noted; and the Cabinet Committee agreed recommendations a to d identified in the report as set out below:-

- (a) District Managers take the lead in working with County Members to identify highway projects under the Combined Members Grant. District Managers will provide support in identifying priorities within the context of the wider area, maximising wider community benefits and ensuring that good solutions are identified which can deliver the desired outcomes.

This support would be part of the core duties of the District Managers who were already funded and therefore the site visit/advice cost would be scrapped. As providing District support to County Members is a core function of the District Manager role, there is less opportunity for the staff to be moved to other duties providing a more reliable longer term contact.

- (b) An annual list of schemes be compiled to demonstrate wider community benefit and good outcomes in terms of the identified community need for each District. This list can be compiled from all areas of Highways, Transportation and Waste and be recommended to the County Member for consideration.

The County Member can work with the District Manager to identify schemes which they may be interested in full or partially funding. Additional schemes of their own can also be added and jointly prioritised.

The programme of works would be communicated through the District Manager at the Joint Transportation Board for each District.

Members reserved the right not to fund highway schemes through their Combined Members Grant.

- (c) District Managers can advise Members how they can continue to support schemes which were related to the highway but were not generally within the core duties of the Highway Authority, through a contribution to third parties such as Borough/District Councils, Parish Councils and residents groups. These applications would go through the Community Grant process and delivery organised locally. It was proposed that a list of scheme types which cannot be delivered through Community or Highway routes was compiled to advise County Members.
- (d) For 2016/2017 highway schemes delivered through the Schemes Delivery Team, the works cost would include a 15% fee to cover officer costs.

Some works may attract an upfront fee such as traffic surveys; this would be advised to the County Member as required.

A £500 upfront fee was required for more than two scheme applications so that a bespoke quote could be obtained for scheme design.

180. LED Street Light Conversion Project Update

(Item D4)

1. The Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste, Mr Wilkin, introduced a report that provided an update of the project following a three month mobilisation period, work commenced on 14 March 2016 in the Borough of Ashford. He advised that the project had been a positive experience to date. The Street light (LED) Programme Manager, Mr Clark, explained that the plans to start the works in Shepway in two weeks' time were going to plan. Regular updates would be posted on the County Council's Website

2. Mr Balfour, Mr Wilkin and Mr Clark noted comments and responded to questions by Members as follows:

- a) Mr Clark advised that a number of areas had been covered in Ashford including Wye and Charing.
- b) Mr Clark advised that the designs had already been started for Dover and works would begin next month.
- c) Mr Clark explained that he was working and meeting officers with each district and would be meeting with Finance chief officers at the borough and district councils to provide further information with regards to converting their lights to Light Emitting Diode (LED).
- d) Mr Balfour agreed that the Joint Transport Boards would receive an update report at the right time.
- e) Member were pleased to note that arrangements were being made for the old lighting and the new lighting to be filmed and posted on the website to show the difference. A Member site visit may be arranged in the future.
- f) Mr Wilkin advised that complements regarding the lighting had been received directly by the crews on site changing the lights and through KCC's website. This information would be provided to Members as the programme rolled out.

3. RESOLVED that the comments and responses to questions by Members and the report be noted.

181. Work Programme 2016

(Item D6)

1. RESOLVED that subject to the LTP4 report being added to the July meeting the work programme 2016 be noted.

182. Waste Strategy for Kent County Council

(Item D5)

1. The Cabinet Committee considered a report on the draft waste disposal strategy and recommended that the Cabinet Committee endorse a consultation process on the strategy in the summer of 2016.
2. The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, Mr Pearman, thanked the officers and Members for their hard work on the Strategy.
3. Dr Eddy welcomed the report and recommendation.
4. RESOLVED that the Cabinet Committee recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport undertakes a consultation on the draft waste disposal strategy in the summer 2016.