

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 Thursday, 12 January 2017.

PRESENT: Mr M J Harrison (Chairman), Mr C R Pearman (Vice-Chairman), Mr C W Caller, Mr I S Chittenden, Dr M R Eddy, Mr P J Homewood, Mr B E MacDowall, Mr J M Ozog, Mr C Simkins, Mrs C J Waters, Mr M E Whybrow and Mr M A Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE and Mr M A C Balfour

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs B Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mrs L Whitaker (Democratic Services Manager (Executive) for minutes 232-241 and 245-246 and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer) for minutes 242- 244

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

232. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item A2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Baldock. Mr Shonk attended as his substitute.

233. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item A3)

There were no declarations of interest.

234. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016
(Item A4)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016 are a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman
(Item A4)

235. Dates of Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee in 2017/18
(Item A5)

- (1) Mr Harrison asked that he be advised if any Member of the Committee who could not attend the meeting arranged for 18 January to discuss the budget.
- (2) Resolved that meetings of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee be held on 18 January 2017, 15 June 2017, 21 September 2017, 30 November 2017, 31 January 2018 and 20 March 2018.

236. Verbal updates

(Item A6)

- (1) Mr Hill (Cabinet Member for Community Services) gave a verbal update. He said that there were effective and productive links between KCC and Kent Police and in particular through the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel and the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP). He said the activities of the KSCP were reviewed annually by the Scrutiny Committee meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee and there were regular meetings with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable.
- (2) Mr Hill said Kent Police had recently been assessed as outstanding following a recent inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. He had written to congratulate the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- (3) Mr Hill concluded his update by saying the Chief Constable's employment contract had been extended by three years to 2022.
- (4) Mr Balfour (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport) gave a verbal update. He said the Kent Environment Strategy had been launched at an event led by the Kent Environment Champions at Allington Castle on 1 December. The event was hosted by Sir Robert Worcester and the key note speakers included John Selwyn Gummer - Baron Deben (Chairman of the Independent Committee on Climate Change) and Emma Howard Boyd (Chairman of the Environment Agency). The Kent Environment Strategy Impact report 2011-16 setting out achievements to date was released at the event and copies were available for Members today.
- (5) Mr Balfour said that following the Member Task and Finish Group on Highway Soft Landscaping, officers had engaged with parish councils about the future of the service. 49 parishes had expressed interest and two confirmed their wish to take up the service. He said a detailed report would be brought to the Cabinet Committee in due course.
- (6) Mr Balfour said that the £40m LED street lighting conversion project was on target for completion in residential areas by May 2017. 45,000 lights had been converted to LEDs to date. Following completion of conversions in residential areas it was planned to convert lights in town centres and on high speed roads.
- (7) Mr Balfour said the winter programme was underway and precautionary salting of roads was carried out on 22 nights between October and December 2016 with a further six runs so far in January 2017.
- (8) Mr Balfour said the Maidstone Bridges new traffic layout had opened on 1 December in time for Christmas trading period and although some work on soft landscaping and phasing of the traffic lights needed to be completed, he considered the project to be a success.
- (9) Mr Balfour said that he and Mr Carter (Leader of the Council) had met with Chris Grayling (Secretary of State for Transport) who was supportive of Kent's

plans. Since that meeting, it had been confirmed that Kent's bid for funding to improve Brenley Corner had not been successful. However the Minister appeared to understand the problems in Kent and was supportive of schemes being developed which would enable Kent to bid for funding from the Investment Strategy II fund and the pinch point funding scheme when they were announced by government.

(10) In response to comments and questions, Mr Balfour said the contractors were to be commended for their work on the LED conversion; and the letter confirming funding had not been received for the Brenley Corner improvements, had said the fund had been over-subscribed with 50 bids received and the 12 short-listed subject to further assessment before the funding was released.

(11) Resolved that the verbal updates be noted.

237. 16/00146 Adoption of the Kent Waste Disposal Strategy

(Item B1)

Roger Wilkin (Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste), David Beaver (Head of Waste Management and Business Services) and Hannah Allard (Waste Business Development Manager) were in attendance for this item

(1) Mr Pearman (Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport) introduced the report which asked the Cabinet Committee to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposed decision to adopt and publish the Kent Waste Disposal Strategy. He said that the strategy was a high level document looking forward to 2030/35 and the next step would be to develop an implementation plan. He also thanked officers and Members who had been involved in the working group.

(2) A number of Members commented on the usefulness of the Member and officer working group and said they would be happy to be involved in any working group established to develop the implementation plan.

(3) Comments were also made about considering the feasibility of providing access to some waste and recycling sites for people bringing waste on foot and about increasing the amount of waste that was re-used. Issues were also raised about specific sites in Thanet which Mr Balfour (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport) undertook to answer outside the meeting.

(4) In response to questions, officers said that:

- In 2015/16, 6.5% of waste was sent to landfill which placed KCC among the top performing councils. It was, however, anticipated that the figures for 2016 would show that less than 3% of waste went to landfill and this would put KCC among the top 4 or 5 councils nationally
- It was envisaged that Members would be closely involved in the development of the implementation plan associated with the strategy particularly as there was a small possibility that the Brexit negotiations might result in changes to legislation.

- (5) Resolved that the proposed decision to adopt and publish the Kent Waste Disposal Strategy be endorsed.

238. 16/0068(2) Implementing Our Approach to Asset Management in Highways

(Item B2)

Roger Wilkin (Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste), Andrew Loosemore (Head of Highways Asset Management) and Alan Casson (Road and Footway Asset Manager were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Pearman (Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport) introduced the report which asked the Cabinet Committee to consider and endorse or make recommendations on the proposed decision.
- (2) Mr Pearman said the development of an asset management approach to highways maintenance was essential as the government had changed its rules for funding local road maintenance to encourage local authorities to fully embed the use of asset management techniques into their management of highway maintenance and their decision-making around funding and priorities.
- (3) Mr Pearman also thanked the officers and Members who had participated in the working group to develop the strategy.
- (4) Officers said that the approach was necessary to ensure the current level of funding from the Department of Transport was maintained and that there was no additional funding on offer. It was also said that decisions relating to highway maintenance were currently taken using engineering data and annual surveys, however there was now a requirement to consider lifecycle costing and asset management. The condition of local roads and the funding of maintenance were national issues and not unique to Kent.
- (5) Members supported the adoption of the asset management approach to highway maintenance but concerns were raised about the reduction in overall funding and the need to make information available to Members to enable them to deal with queries from residents.
- (6) In response to questions and comments, officers gave the following information.
 - (i) A new Code of Practice entitled "Well-managed Highway Infrastructure had been introduced and local authorities had two years to implement it. The main change from existing guidance is a move from suggested standards to a risk based approach to dealing with highway maintenance. An officer group had been set up to understand and evaluate the implications for Kent. It was also explained that safety critical work on the highway was dealt with separately from the asset management approach.
 - (ii) A pro-forma for an asset management strategy had not been provided by government, however there tended to be a large degree of similarity across authorities.

- (iii) Authorities were not required to provide evidence that they met a particular standard, however, their self-assessments had to be approved by the Section 151 officer and were subject to audit.
- (7) Resolved that the proposed decision for the Implementation and Publication of Our Approach to Asset Management in Highways be endorsed.

239. 16/00147 Revision of KCC Environment Policy
(Item B3)

Katie Stewart (Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement), Carolyn McKenzie (Head of Sustainable Business and Communities) and Deborah Kapaj (Sustainable Estates Programme Manager) were in attendance for this item.

- (1) Officers introduced the report which set out a proposed revision to the KCC Environment Policy. They said the Kent Environment Strategy was a Kent-wide policy and this policy set out KCC's approach to contributing to the strategy. The policy was similar to the previous policy adopted in 2012. The key changes were that it is more succinct and written in plain English as well as being closely aligned with the revised Kent Environment Strategy priorities and incorporated requirements arising from the revised ISO14001 Standard.
- (2) In response to questions and comments, officers said the document that had been circulated during the Member visit to Allington could be re-circulated and that progress on the achievement of targets set out in the policy could be reported to the Cabinet Committee in conjunction with reports on the Kent Environment Strategy.
- (3) Resolved that the proposed decision to approve the revised KCC Environment Policy to the report be endorsed.

240. New South Eastern Franchise: key points for Kent County Council response to Department for Transport public consultation
(Item C1)

Stephen Gasche (Principal Transport Planner – Rail) was in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Balfour (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport) said it was important to ensure that the specification for the next franchise for train services in Kent met the needs of people in Kent.
- (2) Mr Gasche introduced the report which set out the key points to be included in Kent County Council's response to the Department for Transport's public consultation on the new South Eastern franchise due to start in February 2017. He referred to the Council's rail policy set out in the Rail Action Plan for Kent and to the new Local Transport Plan that was being prepared. He also drew Members' attention to the schedule for consultation, the principal requirements to be included in the franchise specification, capacity issues at some key locations in relation to the high speed and mainline services, station improvements and community rail partnerships.

- (3) He answered a number of questions relating to specific services and stations. He also said that station car parks were owned by Network Rail and operated by South Eastern who sub-contracted the management of them to private operators. He said that the revenue generated from the car parks covered the maintenance and upkeep of the car parks; however it was desirable that consideration be given to “decking” car parks at some stations where demand exceeded the spaces available.
- (4) In response to further questions, Mr Gasche said:
 - The opportunities to reduce journey time to be included in the specification for the franchise related to changes to stopping patterns rather than infrastructure intervention
 - The significant increase in demand for services from Ebbsfleet and other areas of North Kent was recognised
 - It was unlikely that the current problems relating to driver-only trains would apply to South Eastern because current working practices did not envisage driver-only operation.
- (5) A Member suggested that in addition to reflecting their business location stations should also reflect their heritage location.
- (6) Mr Balfour said that smart ticketing was important and its use should be extended to include other forms of public transport.
- (7) Mr Balfour said that Mr Gasche, at the request of the Department for Transport would be embedded in the new franchise team to ensure that the interests of Kent’s rail passengers were recognised in the service specification for the new franchise.
- (8) Resolved that the key issues to be included in KCC’s response to the Department for Transport’s public consultation on the new South Eastern Franchise be endorsed.

241. Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock - consultation results

(Item C2)

Katie Stewart (Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement) and Katie Pettit (Principal Transport Planner – Strategy) were in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Pearman (Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport) introduced the report which set out a high level summary of the consultation on a new draft Local Transport Plan (LTP4). He said that consultation had been extensive with responses from a range of organisations and individuals. He thanked the Members and officers involved in the task and finish group.
- (2) Officers said the draft LTP4 had been presented to the Cabinet Committee before the consultation and the final draft would also be presented to it before it was considered by Cabinet and adopted by County Council.
- (3) In response to comments and questions, Mr Balfour said that Gravesham Borough Council’s response to the consultation, including any comments

about the siting of the Lower Thames Crossing, would be considered and taken into account. He said that the government announcement on the preferred site might be made and that he would talk to Mr Caller and Mr Sweetland (Member for Gravesham Rural) about the Lower Thames Crossing before the LTP4 was finalised.

- (4) Comments were also made about transport issues in particular areas, including traffic access to Dover, dualling of the A256, the A20 tunnel to connect Dover town centre to the seafront, traffic flows at the Dartford Tunnel and the Thanet Parkway.
- (5) Resolved that the summary of consultation comments on the draft LTP4 be noted.

242. Ash Dieback – Update *(Item C3)*

Katie Stewart (Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement) and Tony Harwood (Resilience and Emergencies Manager) were in attendance for this item.

- (1) Mr Balfour said that ash was Kent's most common tree and their large scale loss would have a significant impact on the landscape. He said he was concerned about the number of ash trees growing in verges adjacent to the highway because this could have a big impact on the Highways Maintenance budget. He also said that efforts were being made to convene a national conference to bring the relevant organisations together to share information and best practice in dealing with ash die back.
- (2) In response to questions, Ms Stewart said she would provide information about White Horse Wood to Mr Harrison. Mr Harwood said that expenditure on dealing with ash die back was closely monitored and if the Bellwin threshold was reached a detailed application for a grant within the scheme would be submitted.
- (3) Mr Harwood referred in particular to paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 of the report which set out information about the prevalence of ash trees in the county and the minimum intervention approach being pursued.
- (4) Mr Pearman said that in country parks only diseased limbs were lopped off and any resulting wood was chopped, logged and sold. He also said that contractors had to bring sterilised equipment to and from sites in order to prevent the spread of the fungus.
- (5) Mr Harwood said that tree safety surveys were conducted regularly and minimum interventions to ensure safety and to minimise the spread of the fungus were taken. Where ash trees on private or unregistered had to be lopped for safety reasons, every effort was made to establish the ownership so costs could be recovered.
- (6) Mr Harwood said that Managing Ash Die Back Guidance, developed by the Forestry Commission, KCC, Arboricultural Association and Kent Downs AONB

Unit which had been developed by the Kent Tree Officers' Group had been rolled out nationally and was available on the KCC website.

(7) Resolved that:

(a) The serious threat posed to the environment and economy of Kent by ash die back be noted;

(b) The approach being adopted by KCC and outlined within the report be endorsed.

243. Kent Resilience Team - Review of the business case for the permanent establishment of KRT

(Item C4)

Mike Overbeke (Group Head of Public Protection) was in attendance for this item

(1) Mr Hill (Cabinet Member for Community Services) introduced the report which asked the Cabinet Committee to consider and endorse the proposal to establish a Kent Resilience Team on a permanent basis from April 2017, through a shared Service Level Agreement between Kent County Council, Kent Police and the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority.

(2) In response to questions, Mr Overbeke said discussions were taking place with Medway Council about its involvement in the Kent Resilience Team and that KCC was making a larger financial contribution at the moment. It was however considered that joint working was the most efficient way of meeting its statutory duties.

(3) Resolved that the proposal to establish the Kent Resilience Team on a permanent basis from April 2017, through a shared Service Level Agreement between Kent County Council, Kent Police and the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority be endorsed.

244. Freight Action Plan (Consultation Draft)

(Item C5)

Andrew Westwood (Traffic Manager) and Sam Yates (Transport Planner) were in attendance for this item

(1) Mr Balfour (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport) introduced the report which included a draft Freight Action Plan designed to mitigate the negative impacts of road freight in Kent. Mr Balfour said that this draft was subject to an eight-week public consultation and the Cabinet Committee would have another opportunity to comment before a final decision to adopt the plan was taken.

(2) Mr Balfour said it was important to provide safe, secure and serviced parking for HGV and their drivers and that KCC had participated in round table discussions with the Department of Transport. He said that both Helen Whately (MP for Faversham and Mid Kent) and John Hayes (Minister of State at the Department of Transport) had been supportive of KCC's efforts to find a

solution to unofficial lorry parking. Mr Balfour also said that the proposed lorry park at Stanford was currently subject to judicial review.

- (3) Mr Westwood said that road freight in the county had increased by 84% over the last 20 years, just under 11,000 HGVs crossed the Strait of Dover each day and the road freight industry was worth £74 billion to the UK economy. He outlined some of the successes of the previous Freight Action Plan and the key actions proposed to mitigate the negative impacts of road freight to the county. He also said that there would be some minor changes to the photographs in the final consultation draft compared with the draft currently being considered.
- (4) In response to a question, he confirmed that the Freight Action Plan was subservient to the Local Transport Plan 4 and the results of both public consultations would be taken into account.
- (5) In response to a further question relating to Operation Stack and the Dover Traffic Assessment Project, Mr Balfour it was important to continue to lobby Highways England to put appropriate signage and variable speed limits with the Dover TAP to minimise disruption to residents when Operation Stack was put in place.
- (6) Mr Balfour said that KCC supported Thanet District Council's efforts to regenerate Ramsgate, however, it was not possible for force operators to use Ramsgate or other ports in the county.
- (7) Mrs Cooper said that signage for Operation Stack was checked whenever the authority was advised that there might be an issue resulting in congestion.
- (8) Resolved that the proposed decision to approve the draft content of the Freight Action Plan for Kent and release it for public consultation be endorsed.

245. KCC draft response to Highways England's discussion paper "The Road to Growth"
(Item C6)

Joe Ratcliffe (Transport Safety Manager) was in attendance for this item

- (1) Mr Balfour introduced the report which outlined KCC's response to Highways England's discussion paper "Roads to Growth: Maximising the Economic Contribution of Highways England and the Strategic Road Network. He e said that KCC was responsible for more miles of road than Highways England had nationally. He also said Highways England received approximately £200,000 per mile for the maintenance of its roads while KCC received £6,000 per mile.
- (2) Mr Ratcliffe referred to the summary of the discussion paper set out in paragraph 2 of the report, the discussion paper at Appendix A and to the full response at Appendix B.
- (4) In response to comments and questions, Mr Balfour said that the creation of a "smart motorway" and the use of variable speed limits between junctions 3-5

of the M20 was a more realistic and affordable option compared with expanding the motorway.

- (5) Resolved that the draft response to the consultation be noted.

246. Work Programme 2017
(Item C7)

- (1) The Chairman encouraged Members of the Cabinet Committee to suggest items for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.
- (2) In response to a suggestion that the rules associated with Waste and Recycling Centres be reviewed, Mr Balfour said that these centres would be part of the implementation plan to be developed following the adoption of the Waste Disposal Strategy and the Cabinet Committee would have the opportunity to consider the implementation plan in due course.
- (3) Resolved that the work programme for 2017 be noted.