

Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee

Tuesday, 22 November 2022

19:30pm

Present:

Cllr Lauren Sullivan (Chair)
Cllr Brian Sangha (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Dakota Dibben
Brian Francis
Leslie Hills
Leslie Hoskins
Nirmal Khabra
Bob Lane
Emma Morley

Simon Hookway Assistant Director (Communities)
Shazad Ghani Service Manager (Planning)
Tony Chadwick Principal Transport and NSIP Project Manager
Keith Grimley Senior Economic Development Officer
Ben Clarke Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

118. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Harold Craske.

119. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee held on Monday, 10 October 2022 were signed by the Chair.

120. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

121. Construction Infrastructure Innovation & Skills Hub

The Committee were provided with a presentation from the Senior Economic Development Officer on the Construction Infrastructure Innovation & Skills Hub. The Senior Economic Development Officer guided Members through the presentation in detail highlighting key points to note.

The presentation has been published and could be accessed through the main agenda at item 5:

- [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee, 22/11/2022 19:30 \(gravesham.gov.uk\)](#)

The Senior Economic Development Officer agreed to circulate a short video to Members via email after the meeting; the video contained information on the OHOB Training Academy Open Day.

Following the presentation, Members had their questions answered by the Senior Economic Development Officer:

- The intention was to have a physical hub in the Town Centre which would be funded by several opportunities available to Gravesham such as working with Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) and the tier one contractors that were bidding for projects worth significant amounts of money. The Council would be involved in acquiring funding and an operator for the business and would then provide support to the hub to make sure it became successful and upskilled Gravesham's workforce. The Senior Economic Development Officer was also in discussions with the local Colleges, private training providers, London Resort, and the Government
- Before any work could begin on the hub, the Senior Economic Development Officer needed to acquire funding for the feasibility study of the hub
- There weren't any Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) training providers in Gravesham; the nearest CITB providers were in Erith and Central London; however, the Senior Economic Development Manager had been having discussions with a CITB provider, through planning obligations, concerning a construction academy and they were interested in several proposals
- There had been an indication from the LTC that the Council would be able to approach them for money for the feasibility study; the LTC published a Skills, Education & Employment Strategy which made commitments to increase employment and raise skills in the local area as well as drive economic growth. These commitments would be delivered, primarily through contractual requirements imposed on Tier 1 contractors and their supply
- The LTC had also put money into pre-employment courses delivered by organisations including Runway Training and the Construction Youth Trust which supports the work of the Skills, Education and Employment Advisor directly-employed by LTC and has been into local schools to discuss different careers available to the school children. Work had also been carried out with Job Centre Plus to get people into viable working roles.

In response to a Members question, the Principal Transport and NSIP Project Manager advised that construction for the LTC was likely due to start in 2024/25; Members were also advised that there were a number of jobs that there were a shortage of, but not typically thought of, such as archaeologists and they would be needed during construction of the LTC.

The Committee discussed the difficulties of upskilling the workforce and reinforced the need for a suitable CITB training provider to be encouraged to set up a base in Gravesend. Member suggested the use of the Victoria Centre and the old court building.

The Chair informed the Senior Economic Development Officer that whatever approach was taken with the Hub and the process behind it needed to be guided by Members.

The Chair thanked the Senior Economic Development Officer for a detailed presentation.

122. Local Cycling and Working Infrastructure Plan Report

The Committee were provided with a presentation on the Gravesham Local Cycling & Walking Implementation Plan.

The presentation had been published and could be accessed the below the below link:

- [\(Public Pack\)Supplementary - Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan Presentation Agenda Supplement for Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee, 22/11/2022 19:30 \(gravesham.gov.uk\)](#)

The Principal Transport and NSIP Project Manager advised that the full Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan had been published as a supplementary to the main report.

In response to Member questions, the Principal Transport and NSIP Project Manager and the Service Manager (Planning) advised that:

- With regard to creating a cycle/walking path that linked Meopham and Istead Rise, the Council needed to create a viable scheme that could be developed; previously one of the biggest barriers to the path was the need to acquire access over land. If the proposal was to moved forward, it was possible that a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) may have to be pursued for the necessary land. The link between Istead Rise Primary School and the expansion of Meopham Secondary School may help the case for a path. Previously, a bid had been submitted under the Active Travel Fund which was now managed by Active Travel England however the bid was unsuccessful, and no feedback was received as to why it was unsuccessful
- KCC would not expand the A227 as they do not have the funds for such schemes unless funded by development; the Chair had met with National Highways and KCC to discuss designated funds as where the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) had a significant impact on an area it had a duty to correct or manage any issues.. The Principal Transport and NSIP Project Manager was looking at the flow of traffic on the A227 to build a business case for a scheme and would talk to the LTC about criteria for various funding pots in Designated Funds
- Transport modelling would be part of the contracts for the LTC and feed into the wider responses
- The Council did not pay for the Local Cycling & Walking Implementation Plan; the work was funded by the Government via KCC and Designated Funds from National Highways
- The LCWIP did not take into account some other significant projects where details are emerging in the area as outlined on page 31; as a result, for planning applications it provides evidence for section 106 agreement asks, and other aspects requested as part of those developments. However, the Service Manager (Planning) advised Members of viability issues with certain developments within the Borough, which meant not all section 106 asks could be funded on every occasion
- The Northfleet Harbourside site application was validated recently and the target was to report the planning application to the Planning Committee in February/March 2023; in terms of delivery not all of the land was owned by the applicant, as such delivery would not commence immediately. The Service Manager (Planning) estimated that the project was a 10-15 year build plan that would most likely start in 2025/26
In response to Members concerns that the LCWIP would be shelved in a few years' time, the Service Manager (Planning) assured Members that Planning Officers would consider the LCWIP in term of specifics when considering planning applications. For

example, the Canal Basin application had cycling routes built into the scheme after discussions with KCC. Discussions had also been held regarding a safe walking route from the Canal Basin to the Town Centre and the LCWIP would inform those discussions. In due course, the LCWIP would also inform the emerging Local Plan

The Chair reminded Members to make their KCC Members aware of any pressing issues; Cllr Dibben was encouraged to speak to his KCC Member regarding funding for the cycle route between Meopham and Istead Rise.

In response to a Members concern, the Chair advised that in order to access Government money for active travel, a Local Cycling & Walking Implementation Plan had to exist. Hopefully the work that went into creating the plan would also be able to get used in a response to the construction of the LTC.

123. Dropped Kerbs and EV Charging Guides

The Committee were presented with draft Dropped Kerb and Electric Vehicle Charging Guidance documents for consideration and feedback. The guidance was intended to be simplified so that residents could easily understand the rules around dropped kerbs and local charges.

The guidance document did not apply to houses converted into flats or commercial premises or properties on A and B roads where planning permission had to be sought. A simple flow chart had been attached at appendix 1b for residents to follow if they wanted to apply to KCC for a dropped kerb. In the future, the Service Manager (Planning) advised that the intention was to create another document which gave guidance on actual driveways, clarified what permitted development rights for driveways and what driveways should be used for.

Following a discussion, Members requested that:

- Photos or illustrations of dropped kerb examples should be included in the guidance
- The guidance should be made simpler so that all residents would be able to understand it
- The guidance should be included in some form in the Your Borough magazine

The Service Manager (Planning) agreed to Members suggestions and agreed to bring the final published version back to the Committee.

124. Corporate Performance Report: Q2 2022-23

The Committee was presented with an update against the Performance Management Framework, as introduced within the council's Corporate Plan, Quarter Two 2022-23 (July to September 2022).

The Chair advised that performance was on target and being monitored dutifully.

The Chair thanked the officers for a detailed report.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 20:58pm.