

Scrutiny Sub-Committee  
7 pm, Wednesday 28 February 2024  
The Guildhall

DRAFT minutes

Present:

Councillor Rachel Carnac (chair)  
Councillor Clare Turnbull (vice chair)  
Councillor Alister Brady  
Councillor Dane Buckman (substitute)  
Councillor Lee Castle  
Councillor Roben Franklin  
Councillor Joe Howes  
Councillor Harry McKenzie  
Councillor Keji Moses  
Councillor Paul Prentice  
Councillor Dan Watkins

In attendance:

Peter Davies - Director, Strategy and Improvement  
Caroline Marlow - Head of Digital, Data and Improvement#  
Richard Moore - Head of Transport and Environment  
Andrea James - Democratic Services Officer

581. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Tom Mellish and Steph Jupe.

582. Substitutes

Councillor Dane Buckman was present as a substitute for Councillor Mellish.

583. Declarations of any interests by councillors or officers

There were no declarations of any interest by councillors or officers.

584. Public Participation

There were no public speakers for the meeting.

585. LUF Quarterly Updates

The Head of Digital, Data and Improvement introduced the report, which gave an update on progress made on the Connected Canterbury Levelling Up project following the last

monitoring return submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Members asked questions, made points and asked for clarifications, including the following:

- In the next report, could active project strands be reported on individually with clear timelines and cost breakdowns. Individual project monitoring on the key strands with highest public interest, such as the castle, the bus station and the Westgate Square, would be very welcome.
- The weighting given to environmental and sustainability aspects when purchasing / assessing bids would be reviewed, and the Principal Policy Officer (Climate and Environment) consulted on the programme as a whole.
- Sustainability was a key consideration in all project design, but cost was also an important factor.
- There was a geographical constraint on what LUF funds could cover in terms of street lighting. The design of any lighting provided under LUF would be informed by a broader strategic overview so that it would fit in with 'the bigger picture' developed for the city and the district.
- Improving street lighting was always a complex issue as approximately 80% of the lights in the district were owned and managed by Kent County Council (KCC). The City Council had to work in partnership with KCC to review what could be done to improve lighting across the city in a holistic manner.
- The LUF team would look to have conversations with further / higher education providers in the city to see if they could be involved in the programme in some way, to maximise opportunity.
- The bus station works were key for the whole project. They had to take place during the school summer holidays to allow time for construction works to be undertaken. It had been decided to push this work back a year from summer 2024 to summer 2025 to ensure that it could be properly planned for and successfully completed. However, if the works did not take place in summer 2025 there was no other contingency plan.
- It would be useful for the responsible Cabinet Member to attend a Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting to discuss the bus station works, once the draft Local Plan documents and strategies had been published for public consultation.
- Some things that looked like easy wins on the timelines published on the council LUF project web pages could not be actioned early as there was a chronological necessity for other work to take place first.

It was agreed by general assent TO NOTE the report.

#### 586. Park and Ride Monitoring

The Head of Transport and Environment gave a verbal overview of current park & ride monitoring and performance, and what could be provided going forward once the Sturry Road Park & Ride site reopened on 1st April. He referred to a graph showing Park & Ride usage since 2000 that had been circulated to members before the meeting by email, and which is attached to these minutes for reference.

Members asked questions and for clarifications and made comments, including the following:

- Peak Park & Ride usage had been in 2007.
- Members had been considering how to boost Park & Ride usage when the Covid pandemic occurred, which had had a huge impact on Park & Ride use in particular, and public transport usage in general.
- Usage at the two currently functioning Park & Ride sites was still only at 50-60% of

pre-Covid usage.

- The following could be accurately monitored within current budgets and working regimes: individual Park & Ride parking acts; numbers of people in each car using Park & Ride; levels of footfall in the city and correlation with Park & Ride usage; where people using the service came from (via regular surveys).
- It was suggested two reports each year should be made to the Scrutiny Sub-Committee on this subject.
- Timing of the first report would be finalised once the Scrutiny Sub-Committee schedule of work for the next municipal year had been reviewed (with a view to balancing the number of reports coming for each meeting).
- The draft Transport Strategy going to Cabinet on 11th March set an annual target of 1 million parking acts at the city's Park & Ride sites by 2040. This aspirational target would require demand management.
- The break-even point for each Park & Ride site would be calculated and the income / cost of each site each monitored in the reports.
- Any correlation between reduced city centre parking and increased use of Park & Ride could be reported.
- Impact on air quality in the city would be difficult to attribute, but a calculation of the carbon benefit of each car using the Park & Ride not driving into the city centre could be made.
- Stagecoach reported to the council on Key Performance Indicators that reflected Park & Ride bus performance, including reliability. This information could be shared with the Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
- Live tracking was not part of the Park & Ride package as the buses were generally expected to run every 10-12 minutes. Delays were usually due to incidents in the city centre that were outside the operator's control. When such incidents happened, staff would inform passengers at the Park & Ride sites.
- It would be useful to monitor early morning and evening usage, with a view to considering extending the service if there was demand.
- 200 - 300 car parking events each day at Sturry Road Park & Ride would not make a significant impact on traffic going through Sturry, which was currently over 12,000 per day. It was unlikely there would be a big difference either way for air quality in Sturry as a result of the Park & Ride reopening, but the reduction of car parking in the city centre would make a positive impact on that environment.
- The Park & Ride sites were unlikely to negatively impact on ordinary bus usage, but if they did, Stagecoach would be well placed to inform the Council of this.
- Usage figures had taken a dip in 2018 possibly due to the Council introducing a price rise.
- Marketing of the service had previously been patchy. There was £30,000 in the budget for 2024/25 to cover marketing of the Park & Ride service.
- Use of the Sturry Road Park & Ride would have to increase massively to make it work in terms of reducing carbon emissions, as with minimal use, the buses caused more pollution than they prevented.
- Step changes in bus, and Park & Ride, usage would come about when an additional bus lane was put in place, the Sturry relief road was complete and city centre car parks were reduced in size or closed.
- The decision to reopen the Sturry Road Park & Ride had not been made on a business case, but as a part of a new strategic approach to buses and transport in general.
- Target figures for usage could be developed, but they would need to reflect the overall vision for transport, rather than just the reduction in subsidy for the Park & Ride sites.
- The budget for Park & Ride was part of the 'parking' parcel under the budget; Park & Ride couldn't be considered in isolation from parking.
- The new draft strategies under the draft Local Plan would set out ways to measure

- their success, but would not provide annual targets.
- Park & Ride needed to be monitored alongside the bus-first strategy, active travel initiatives, etc.
  - Cars parked at Park & Ride usually stayed there for 3-4 hours, whereas in city centre car parks they stayed for 1-2 hours on average.
  - Usage surveys could tell the Council where Park & Ride users were coming from.
  - Usage surveys should be annual for the first three years.
  - Could the universities canvass students to find out levels of usage among them?
  - Usage data could be broken down day by day.
  - Stagecoach should be invited to report to the Sub-Committee on Park & Ride performance once all three sites were fully open.
  - The timing of the reports to Scrutiny Sub-Committee would be confirmed, but September and March were suggested.

It was agreed by general assent that the monitoring reports should include the following: Data on daily usage (cars and passengers), length of parking stays; income generated; data on city centre congestion / carbon benefit of Park & Ride parking acts; survey feedback (profile of users and where they came from); impact of marketing spend; annual / longer term targets for increased P&R usage;

587. Any other urgent business to be dealt with in public

There was no other urgent business to be dealt with in public.

588. Exclusion of the press and public

This item was not required.

589. Any other business which fall under the exempt provisions

There was no other business which fell under the exempt provisions.

The meeting ended at 20:10.