

KCC Draft Freight Strategy Consultation: Portfolio Holder Report

Summary

KCC is currently consulting on a draft Freight Strategy for Kent. The strategy aims to promote safe and sustainable freight distribution networks, whilst minimising the impact of freight movements on communities and local environments. The proposed response focuses on three objectives that are considered to be the most significant in Sevenoaks District. These are keeping HGV traffic on the Strategic Road Network for as much of their journey as possible, minimising the impact on communities and using development control powers to reduce the impact of freight traffic. The key points of the proposed response are that SDC:

- welcomes moves to develop a Kent freight map and online journey planner and work with Sat Nav manufacturers to provide a setting to produce suitable routes for freight vehicles;
- welcomes proposals to develop the 'Lorry Watch' scheme to allow residents to monitor vehicles contravening road restrictions, subject to sufficient resources being available at KCC to take action where there are persistent contraventions; and
- suggests that a county-wide review of Vehicle Parking Standards, particularly for non-residential developments, is undertaken.

Recommendation

That the proposed response is sent to KCC.

Proposed Response

Thank you for consulting Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) on KCC's draft Freight Action Plan for Kent. SDC is supportive of the objectives of the strategy, in particular the objectives which seek to:

- Manage the routing of HGV traffic to ensure that such movements remain on the strategic road network for as much of their journey as possible (objective 3);
- Take steps to address problems caused by freight traffic to communities (objective 4);
- Ensure that KCC continues to make effective use of planning and development control powers to reduce the impact of freight traffic (objective 5).

Proposals to develop a Kent freight map (para 8.33) and online journey planner (para 8.28) and work with Sat Nav manufacturers to have a setting to show HGV appropriate routes (para 8.31) are welcomed. KCC should work with neighbouring authorities in preparing its freight map and journey planner to ensure that suitable routes into and out of the County are chosen.

The strategy suggests that KCC is considering developing the Lorry Watch scheme so that local residents can monitor and report vehicles that are contravening the different restrictions that may be used to control the use of roads by HGVs (para 8.52). It is also suggested that local communities may be invited to help develop a methodology for assessing whether or not a local road is suitable for HGVs (para 8.53). SDC supports the empowerment of local people in this way and considers the proposals to be a cost-

effective way of monitoring these issues. However, it is important that sufficient resources at KCC are made available to follow up persistent contraventions of the restrictions to ensure that the use of unsuitable roads is minimised and that the people involved in the monitoring do not feel that their work is being ignored.

The strategy (para 8.18) refers to the fact that Kent's Vehicle Parking Standards are currently 'guidance only pending the final National Planning Policy Framework, which will enable local authorities to specify what facilities are required in their area'. SDC considers that parking standards, particularly for non-residential development, are best produced on a county-wide basis and that the Kent standards should be reviewed and adopted as soon as possible.

SDC notes the support of the strategy for a 3rd Thames Crossing and the 'bifurcation' of access to the Dover ports and Channel Tunnel (para 4.8), which would direct traffic to use the M2 or M20, depending on which dock vehicles are using. It is considered that any assessment of the implementation of these schemes should take account of any positive or negative impacts on Sevenoaks District, including traffic levels and air quality issues on the M20, M25 and M26.

The strategy (para 5.5) states that KCC does not support a road-to-rail freight interchange within the county but supports an interchange closer to London and the M25, including the Howbury Park facility in Slade Green. This position is supported. Any proposal to develop such a facility in Sevenoaks District would almost certainly need to be in the Green Belt and would be inappropriate development, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.