

Strategic Transport Group

Minutes of a Meeting of the Strategic Transport Group held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **20th September 2019**.

Present:

Cllr. Feacey (Chairman);
Cllr. Barrett

Also Present:

Cllrs. Burgess, Michael, Ledger

Abi Roscoe – Transport Innovations Team – Kent County Council; Sukky Choongh-Campbell – Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders; Matthew Arnold– Stagecoach in East Kent; Russell Coleman – Ashford Driving Instructors Association; Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager – Ashford Borough Council; Parking, Highways and Transportation Technical Officer – Ashford Borough Council; Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader – Ashford Borough Council; Member Services Liaison Manager – Ashford Borough Council.

Apologies:

Cllr B Heyes, Jason Atkinson - Kent Police, Yvonne Leslie – Govia Thameslink, Chris Vinson – Southeastern Railway, Paul Coombs – Ashford Independent Taxi Drivers Association.

1 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Burgess made a “Voluntary Announcement” as he was the Borough Council representative on the Marshlink Steering Group.

Councillor Feacey made a “Voluntary Announcement” as he was the Managing Director of Energyshift who worked with members of the taxi trade and was on the Management Committee of UK LPG.

2 Minutes – 5th October 2018

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Group held on the 5th October 2018 be approved.

3 Kent’s Vision for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Growth

- 3.1 Abi Roscoe of the Transport Innovations Team at Kent County Council gave a presentation on Kent’s Vision for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Growth.

3.2 Abi Roscoe advised that the Vision stemmed from the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Road to Zero document published in 2018. Furthermore there was a growing demand from members of the public for electric charging points. She further explained that the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emission Strategy was currently subject to consultation, which would formally end on 23rd September. Following the consultation, the feedback would be analysed with a view to agreeing a formal policy for approval by the end of the year. She further explained that the actions covered within the presentation were still in draft and therefore they might change when the formal policy was adopted. The current policy thinking was that the charging points would be installed in hubs and she referred to the recent work with the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) on the establishment of 14 charging points for taxis in Kent.

3.3 The titles of the slides used in the presentation are set out below and a copy of the presentation would be made available in due course:-

- Achievements to date
- Kent and Medway Energy & Low Emission Strategy
- Draft Actions
- Role of Kent County Council (KCC) in EV uptake and Next steps

3.4 The Chairman then opened up the presentation for questions and a summary of the responses given by both Abi Roscoe and Sukky Choongh- Campbell is shown below.

- In terms of electric buses, Stagecoach would be trialling an electric bus for a week on the Canterbury Park and Ride Service.
- For on street charging points, when allowed, the majority would be at the front of the footway (450mm from the road)
- UK Power Networks were responsible for measuring local capacity on the grid and would provide an estimate of the cost if there was a need to enhance the local connections and infrastructure, for example, sub stations, to enable charging points to be installed.
- KCC had gone out to tender for the installation of charging points throughout Kent and it would be possible for all district and parish council's to use the successful tenderer for installations if they wished to. The KCC contracts would also have a decommissioning element for when the charging points needed to be removed.
- Although KCC would be intending to have hub car parks, it was accepted that the public would still want the convenience of charging overnight from their own properties.
- There were restrictions in terms of placing charging points on the street as often parking was limited and also there was a need to avoid the charging point creating a trip hazard. The public would need to be flexible in terms of utilising charging point facilities which were in other locations.
- It was acknowledged that as technology advanced it might be possible to utilise wireless charging. KCC were aware that there was a need to keep up to date in terms of such developments.
- Car manufacturers had different approaches to the provision of

batteries, ie some retained the ownership of the units, whilst some were owned by the purchaser of the vehicle. The supply of batteries was a key issue as they currently took 40 days to manufacture.

- In terms of funding for charging points, KCC was building a model to involve the private sector and government with a view to limiting the cost for local council tax payers. There was a government scheme called the Home Charging Grant which was ongoing and was for individuals wishing to install charging equipment at their home, ie on their driveway.
- There was a need to provide charging points for both AC and DC as technology differed from vehicle to vehicle.
- Rapid charging was available for batteries but if this was used often it would lead to quicker degradation of the battery units.
- Hydrogen fuelling stations were currently very limited in the UK with only 23 which were mostly located in Aberdeen. Manufacturers were of the view that hydrogen might be the best long term option to develop particularly in terms of heavy machinery.

3.5 The Chairman thanked Abi Roscoe for her presentation.

4 Air Quality and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles

4.1 Sukky Choongh – Cambell, Environmental Manager for Air Quality and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Limited gave a presentation titled ‘Reducing Air Pollution Through New Technology and Partnership Working: Updates from the Automotive Industry’. She explained that the overall turnover of the UK automotive industry was £82b and it employed 856,000 people. There were currently 34.7m cars on UK Roads. The increased number of vans was indicative of the populations changing lifestyle with internet shopping and home delivery.

4.2 The titles of the slides used in the presentation are set out below and a copy of the presentation would be made available in due course:-

- Motor Industry Facts
- Vehicles on the road in the UK
- Emissions since 1970
- Particulate Matter emissions 1990 -2017
- Nitrogen dioxide emissions 1990-2017
- Megatrends Transforming Transport
- All Fuel Vehicle Registrations 1998-2018
- Alternative Fuelled Vehicles
- Charging Infrastructure
- Partnership – Go Ultra Low, LEVC and Sharenow
- Who is leading in alternatives – a look at global markets
- Convergence: a future of ACES
- The new normal

4.3 The Chairman then opened up the presentation for questions and a summary of the responses given by Sukky Choongh - Campbell is shown below.

- The technology for heavy vehicles and for towing loads was not currently available, although Volvo had developed a concept vehicle. There was a problem as there was not a definition of ultra low emissions in terms of trucks. It was considered that if EV was to be developed for trucks the vehicles would have to use hydrogen as a fuel.
- As the technology developed the cost of low emission vehicles would reduce, however, their cost would still be prohibitive for the poorer sections of society who would still look to petrol vehicles for their transport.
- There was a need to accelerate the availability of electric vehicles via the second hand market. Fiscal incentives such as reduced VAT on their purchase might help improve the affordability of such vehicles.
- There would still be both diesel and petrol vehicles in 2040 as that was the date the government had set to end the sale of such vehicles.
- Hybrid vehicles were still an appropriate technology for many people as it offered the best of both worlds.
- Manufacturers generally offered an 8 year warranty on batteries, but depending on the charging regime they could realistically last for between 10 and 15 years.
- Options existed for batteries to be bought or leased.
- The filters on diesel engines could get clogged up at low speed and there was a need to burn off the residue at higher speed.
- The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Limited did not currently have a position on the most suitable model for levying tax on vehicles. There was a need to consider models used in other countries.

4.4 The Chairman thanked Sukky Choongh-Campbell for her presentation.

5 Industry Updates Discussion

Stagecoach

5.1 Matthew Arnold said that the bus industry was still setting its stall out with hybrid vehicles and he explained that electric buses were expensive to purchase and maintain. He referred to the forthcoming electric bus trial in Canterbury mentioned earlier in the meeting and said that this was being done in partnership with Canterbury City Council. By way of example he said that a new Euro 6 bus cost in the region of £160/170k, with the electric bus costing £350k. The cost of a hydrogen bus, currently being used in Aberdeen was in the region of £1m plus. At the end of the day he said that electric buses would be purchased if a business case could be made and it was possible to ensure that appropriate infrastructure could be put in place to enable the buses to be charged.

- 5.2 In terms of service updates, he explained that the company was pleased that Newtown Road was now open again after the prolonged road closures and an additional bus had been added to the G route and from 19 October 2019 a new S route would run from the outlet centre to the town centre on weekends and on school holidays.
- 5.3 There were also changes to KCC tendered services, with Routes R and WS5 being withdrawn. Route R had now been combined with the 666 service. These changes would save the KCC budget in the region of £600k. Problems were still being experienced in terms of the traffic signals on the accommodation bridge at Bridgefield, particularly during wet weather. The Parking, Highways and Transportation Technical Officer advised that KCC had replaced the interface card on the signals so this problem should now be resolved.
- 5.4 Matthew Arnold said that one of the major challenges being faced by Stagecoach was in planning for what may happen to the road network in the event of a no deal brexit on 31 October. One of the major concerns was the ability of buses to serve the William Harvey Hospital. He also referred to congestion at the station forecourt in Ashford and said that he hoped to work with the new franchisee to help redesign the area. It was noted that this issue had been discussed at the JTB on 10th September 2019.

Ashford Driving Instructors Association

- 5.5 Russell Coleman – Ashford Driving Instructors Association said that there were a number of signage issues he wished to bring to the attention of the meeting. He explained that there were problems with drivers on Junction 10 using the left hand lane for Kennington Road to turn on to the lane serving the A20 and Tesco. He believed that the problem related to the signage on Hythe Road. In terms of when the motorway was shut between J9 and 10 he said that there was a need for permanent diversion signs to be in place which would take drivers via the A28 and the Kennington/Willesborough Road rather than via the town centre. He also referred to discrepancies in terms of the speed limit signage when accessing the Civic Centre from Tannery Lane and from Station Approach and said that he considered that for safety a dedicated footpath needed to be established from the rear of the Civic Centre to the skatepark.

Southern/Govia

- 5.6 Tabled at the meeting was an update from Southern and Govia Thames Link Railway.

Southeastern Railway

- 5.7 Tabled at the meeting was an extract from the Minutes of the Joint Transportation Board meeting on 10 September 2019 which had received a presentation from Chris Vinson, Senior External Communications Manager of Southeastern Railway.

6 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was Friday 3rd April 2020.

Councillor Feacey
Chairman of the Strategic Transport Group