

**COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Thursday 12 September 2019**

**Question by Barry Lewis to Paul Carter, Leader of the County Council  
and Cabinet Member for & Health Reform**

Would the Leader consider implementing climate change assessments, as well as equality assessments, on any relevant policy decisions?

**Answer**

Considering implementing climate change assessments, relevant to the appropriate activities and policies is a good one.

Kent County Council takes the issue of managing its environmental impact seriously and has for some time had in place an ISO14001 environmental management system to mitigate and minimise any negative impacts from its activities. The ISO14001 Standard has recently changed to become more strategic and now includes assessing policy, strategy and strategic decision making. As part of this change, KCC is already exploring how we integrate assessing the impact on and from climate change. This work is being monitored by an officer group, the KCC Environment Board, chaired by Barbara Cooper.

I am told, we are currently consulting with stakeholders on a Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment for Kent and Medway which will inform KCC in developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan. We have agreed a member Select Committee on Climate Change which will start in early 2020, enabling us to review how we can work towards reaching our net zero target in 2050, as agreed at the County Council in May 2019.

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**Thursday 12 September 2019**

**Question by Antony Hook to Mike Whiting,  
Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste**

Many local residents have raised concerns about the safety of the A251 between Faversham and Ashford, which is a busy rural road with many twists and points of limited visibility and on which a small minority drive dangerously fast. Will the Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste look into steps to improve safety including cameras to detect to irresponsible minority who drive too fast?

**Answer**

Thank you, Mr Hook. Tackling death and injury on Kent's roads is a key priority for the County Council and the A251 is reviewed annually by officers.

In terms of safety cameras there must be a demonstrable speeding problem for these to be considered, and the crashes recorded must be fundamentally caused by speeding. Speed surveys and our annual crash cluster site analysis does not identify the A251 as meeting that criteria.

However, unlike other Local Highway Authorities, we do not simply rely on the crash record of the past to assess safety. We are undertaking pioneering studies in "risk rating" the Major Route Network to look at wider factors on specific routes and the A251 will be part of that project as it develops in the future.

I understand the road has an accident rate around half the national average for a rural "A" class road, despite it carrying much higher volumes of traffic than similar roads in many other parts of the UK, however I can assure you that the A251 will remain under review.

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**Thursday 12 September 2019**

**Question by Trudy Dean to Roger Gough,**  
**Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education**

The unemployment rate among 18-24 year olds in Kent has jumped from 2.8% in July 2018 to 3.9% in July 2019. This now puts the youth unemployment rate in Kent above the national average, when it has traditionally been below the national average. This is particularly pronounced in Thanet which now has an unemployment rate of 8.1% for 18-24 year olds, while Swale and Dover are also significantly above the national average, at 6.2% and 6.1% respectively. This is in huge contrast to the more affluent districts of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells which are both below 2%. In light of these alarming figures, would the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education please explain what measures the council will be undertaking to tackle the growing rate of youth unemployment, whilst ensuring that that are more opportunities created for those in the most disadvantaged areas?

**Answer**

I agree with Mrs Dean that any increase in youth unemployment is a cause for concern. Both overall unemployment and youth unemployment, in Kent and nationwide, has risen over the last year, albeit from historically low levels. Some of this may reflect the statistical effects of the introduction of Universal Credit. Taking into account fluctuations in monthly data, the increasing trend has been broadly similar in Kent and across the country. It is true that the highest levels of youth unemployment are in Districts with the greatest deprivation, though these have not been the areas of most rapid increase over the last year.

The Authority continues to give high priority to tackling youth unemployment, and I will set out the variety of programmes aimed at improving the life chances of our young people.

**1. Improving Education Outcomes**

Raising standards in schools and improving educational outcomes continues to be a strategic objective of the County and a priority focus for the work of The Education People (TEP); there is particular focus in the current School Improvement strategy on reducing the disadvantaged achievement gap by supporting all schools to use best evidential practice in this area.

This is the basis of the Council's partnership with schools and the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) to support school improvement, further improve outcomes for all children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and enable Kent schools to receive match funding to take part in nationally recognised, evidence-based projects.

**2. Improving employer engagement with schools and providing routes to employment**

TEP is working with the Kent and Medway Guilds and the Carers Enterprise Council (CEC) to establish clear links and engagement between schools, colleges and employers.

TEP working with the CEC, through this joint work, the number of coordinators across Kent and Medway has risen, as has the number of industry specialist enterprise advisers working with schools. The aim is to ensure that all secondary schools will be matched by the end of academic year 2019/20.

TEP provides additional support for the Employer Guilds to develop work placement, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities and ensure a variety of 'routes to employment' for young people.

The Guilds also focus on improving the skill levels of the unemployed and recruitment in skill shortage areas, with a particular focus on areas of high deprivation and unemployment.

### **3. Improving the apprenticeship offer across the county**

Kent saw a 24% decrease in apprenticeship starts, between the introduction of the levy and Sept 2018, far below the national decrease of 46%. The January to March quarter saw Kent's first positive increase.

TEP work with young people to increase the uptake of apprenticeships across the county with a target to achieve over 7000 starts annually for 16-24 year olds by 2022 compared with a current 4840.

TEP continue to provide a range of engagement activities for young people, including Made in Kent and Kent Choices 4u.

The Council is committed to reaching its target of 2.3% of all staff being an apprentice and have also committed to using its levy funding to support non levy paying businesses in Kent with recruiting an apprentice.

### **4. Reducing NEETs**

The number of 16 and 17 year olds who are NEET or 'Not Known' continues to decline, with 5.9% of young people NEET or Not Known in July 2019, compared to 7.7% in July 2018. This stands in contrast to the trend of overall youth unemployment.

### **5. Reviewing current 14-19 offer**

The council (Education lead) is conducting a full review of the current 14-19 provision. This aims to understand the gaps in education provision and next steps within the sector as well as identifying ways of improving engagement, particularly for those from disadvantaged groups. This is linked to the work of Economic Development in developing 2050 Kent and Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy (currently still in draft).

### **6. Providing community learning and skills support.**

The County Council's Community Learning and Skills (CLS) team runs its Study and Work Ready programmes for young adults aged 16-18. These are full-time programmes for people identified as NEET, which provide students with the skills and pathways necessary to progress into continued education and employment. It also offers apprenticeship opportunities for both young adults and adults. CLS targets its resources towards areas of relatively high unemployment in the County, including Thanet.

In addition, the council continues to support Young people with a disability (physical, learning difficulty, autism, sensory) through Kent Supported Employment, empowering them to access paid work opportunities through a Supported Internship, Apprenticeship or paid employment as appropriate to their needs.

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**Thursday 12 September 2019**

**Question by Andy Booth to Mike Whiting,**  
**Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste**

I would be interested to know the financial impact upon the Council and it's taxpayers regarding the recently introduced charging levy imposed at the KCC operated household waste disposal sites, together with the effect of mitigation against the perceived increases in fly tipping - when working in conjunction with the Police.

**Answer**

The financial impact is that as of 1st September, Kent County Council has received income of £120,286 for the handling of non-household waste. Volumes for this non-household waste are currently reduced by 69% compared with the same period last year.

The budgeted savings target for this year was £1m. If tonnages (not limited to soil, rubble and hardcore) continue at the current reduced rate, there is a possibility of this increasing further by £950k p.a, the net saving approaching £2m.

When compared with the same period last year;

1. HWRC tonnage is down 21% (3,728 tonnes)
2. Soil, rubble and hardcore tonnage is down 69% (2,527 tonnes)
3. Plasterboard tonnage is down 61% (64 tonnes)
4. Applications for skip permits are up 45% (increase of 153 applications)
5. Trade waste through KCC's waste transfer stations is up 6% (41 tonnes)
6. Initial findings are that liaison with Districts has not seen an increase of fly tipping
7. Residents have not reported an increase in fly tipping on the Highways when compared with previous years

With our partners, we have implemented an action plan to tackle fly tipping which includes;

- Doubling the frequency of Operation Assist to two per month
- Investing in signage at fly tipping and litter hotspots
- Working with the Magistrates Association to raise awareness of fly tipping and the harm it causes to encourage higher fines and longer sentences as well as coordinating training for JPs by districts and police
- Investing in a Duty of care communications campaign for residents to ensure they have a clear understanding and awareness of their obligations for disposing of waste and to not be duped by rogue traders

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**Question by Karen Constantine to Mike Whiting,  
Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste**

What reassurances can you offer the concerned people of Thanet about their worries that Thanet could become gridlocked due to the Brexit Crisis? The prospect of lorries queuing and tailing back for both the Channel Tunnel and the Port of Dover and the implementation of Operation Yellowhammer at Manston are alarming.

**Answer**

KCC Highways, as part of the Kent Resilience Forum, has worked with partners including Kent police, Highways England and local District Councils to develop a Traffic Management plan to mitigate the possible traffic issues in north east Kent to keep Kent moving and minimise the impact on local communities.

Under the Operation Brock plan, lorries will be held at dedicated locations, only to be released when there is capacity at the ports. When Manston airport is used, lorries will be released as required, before being held on the A256 as Whitfield, to then complete their journey to the Port of Dover. Traffic flows from Manston through to the Port will be constantly monitored to help ensure that there is no congestion caused by the flow of lorries.