

**ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE POLICY  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, 27th September, 2011**

**10.00 am**

Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone







## AGENDA

# ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, 27th September, 2011, at 10.00 am** Ask for **Karen Mannering**  
**Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone** Telephone **01622 694367**

*Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the meeting*

### Membership (12)

Conservative (11): Mr D A Hirst (Chairman), Mr N J Collor, Mr J M Cubitt,  
Mr M J Harrison, Mr J D Kirby, Mr S Manion, Mr R F Manning,  
Mr R A Pascoe, Mrs E M Tweed, Ms A Hohler Mr M J Northey

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr M B Robertson (Vice-Chairman)

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### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

#### Item No

#### **A. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

- A1 Introduction/Webcasting
- A2 Substitutes
- A3 Declaration of interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting
- A4 Minutes - 5 July 2011 ( 1 - 12)
- A5 Dates of Meetings - 2012

The Committee is asked to note the following dates for its meetings in 2012

Thursday, 12 January

Wednesday, 4 April  
Thursday, 5 July  
Thursday, 20 September  
Thursday, 15 November

All meetings to commence at 10.00am

A6 Cabinet Member's Update

#### **B. PERFORMANCE REVIEW ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

*Members are requested to inform the Chairman should they have a question relating to Item B1. Any such questions will be dealt with immediately prior to the close of the meeting or in writing.*

B1 Financial Monitoring Report 2011/12 ( 13 - 32)

#### **C. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

C1 Reducing Congestion (Management of Road Works) ( 33 - 36)

C2 EHW Annual Complaints, Comments and Compliments Report 2011 ( 37 - 46)

C3 Connecting with Communities - 2010/11 Annual Report on Consultation, Engagement and Involvement Activity in Environment, Highways and Waste ( 47 - 58)

C4 Winter Service Policy 2011/12 ( 59 - 72)

#### **D. SELECT COMMITTEE UPDATE**

D1 Select Committee - update ( 73 - 74)

#### **MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

#### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

(During these items the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

1 Review of the operation of Household Waste Recycling Centres in Kent ( 75 - 96)

Peter Sass  
Head of Democratic Services  
(01622) 694002

**Monday, 19 September 2011**

*Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report*

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 5 July 2011.

PRESENT: Mr D A Hirst (Chairman), Mr M B Robertson (Vice-Chairman), Mr R E Brookbank (Substitute for Mr R A Pascoe), Mr A D Crowther (Substitute for Mr N J Collor), Mr J M Cubitt, Mr M J Harrison, Mr W A Hayton (Substitute for Mr J D Kirby), Ms A Hohler, Mr S Manion, Mr R F Manning, Mr M J Northey Mrs E M Tweed

ALSO PRESENT: Mr A H T Bowles, Mr D L Brazier Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs C Arnold (Head Of Waste Management), Mr J Burr (Director of Kent Highway Services), Mr N Caddick (Resource Manager), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Mrs S Garton (County Performance and Evaluation Manager), Mr D Hall (Future Highways Manager), Mr R Hallett (Head of Finance and Resources - EHW), Ms C McKenzie (Sustainability and Climate Change Manager), Mr H Miller (Acting Finance Business Partner), Mr M Tant (Flood Risk Manager), Mrs C Valentine (Highway Manager), Mr D Whittle (Policy Manager) Mrs K Mannering (Democratic Services Officer)

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

*Prior to the commencement of the meeting-*

- (a) *the Chairman informed Members that it was his intention to take Item C5 following Item C1; and*
- (b) *Mr Manning was given the opportunity to explain a misquote in the Sevenoaks Chronicle regarding corporate manslaughter.*

#### **30. Minutes - 8 April 2011**

*(Item A4)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2011 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

#### **31. Cabinet Member's and Directors' Update (Oral report)**

*(Item A5)*

- (1) Mr Sweetland gave a verbal report on the following issues:-

- Household Waste Recycling Centres
- KHS Restructure/Mobilisation of the new contract
- Member Highway Fund
- Find and Fix 3/Winter Damage Works
- Kent Environmental Strategy

Growth without Gridlock  
A21 Dualling Scheme  
Thames Crossing  
Rail Action Plan for Kent  
Regional Growth Fund

(2) Mr Brazier gave a verbal report on the following issues:-

Minerals and Waste Development Framework  
Flood Risk

(3) RESOLVED that the updates be noted and copies circulated to Members of the Committee.

### **32. EHW Directorate/Portfolio Financial Outturn 2010/11**

*(Item B1)*

(1) The report summarised the 2010/11 financial outturn for each of the service units within the EHW Portfolio. Previously, outturn reports to POSCs had included performance outcome information, but this was now covered in the separate Core Monitoring report.

(2) At its meeting on 26 May, Scrutiny Board considered how POSCs could be more engaged in the budget planning process. Scrutiny Board recommended that each POSC should establish an Informal Member Group of up to 5 members which should meet between July and October in order to report back to the November POSC meeting on options for the forthcoming budget. The 2010/11 outturn report was identified as one of the core pieces of information that IMGs would need for the series of meetings.

(3) The overall position for the EHW Portfolio was an under spend of £0.602m. The figure included a rephasing of £0.364m for the MIDAS financial system replacement project, leaving a net real underspend of £0.237m (the Directorate was given a target underspend of £0.2m to contribute towards alleviating future budget pressures). Table 1 of the report set out the original budget, final approved cash limit and spending for each service unit within the EHW Portfolio. The changes between the original budget and final approved cash limit were all within KCC's "virement" rules as set out in Financial Regulations. This represented a movement of £29k compared to the third quarter's monitoring.

(4) The under spend for 2010/11 included a number of areas of committed expenditure which Cabinet agreed should be rolled forward into 2011/12. The figure for this portfolio was shown in table 2 of the report. The balance of the uncommitted underspend (£2.128m) for the County Council was transferred to the Economic Downturn reserve in accordance with the recommendation agreed by Cabinet.

(5) Table 3 of the report identified the planned and actual spend on all capital projects in 2010/11 and the total approved and forecast spending over the lifetime of the projects.

(6) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the revenue and capital financial outturn for 2010/11 including rollovers for committed projects and changes to the capital programme, be noted;
- (b) the potential impact of variations since the 2011/12 budget was approved, be noted; and
- (c) (i) a Budget IMG be set up to consider options for the forthcoming budget; and
  - (ii) Members provide any comments and guidance on the potential impact for 2012/13 and future years' budgets, to the Democratic Services Officer for reporting to the IMG once established.

### **33. 2011/12 Budget Savings**

*(Item B2)*

(1) The report set out the process that had been followed to ensure the delivery of the 2011/12 budget savings allocated to the services overseen by this POSC. The delivery of the £95m of savings would be a major factor in delivering the 2011/12 budget on target. However, the overall net budget for 2011/12 was £908m and it was crucial to ensure that the whole budget was delivered on target.

(2) In March responsible managers were asked to 'RAG rate' each of their savings according to the following guidelines:

- Red – detailed plans not yet finalised and/or delivery not totally within our control
- Amber – anything that is between 'Green' and 'Red'
- Green – delivery of savings has already started

Subsequently 'Blue' had been added to the rating for savings that were already delivered and 'in the bag'. The 'BRAG rating' of savings had been an iterative process, and responsible managers provided several updates.

(3) The total savings for 2011-12 for the services covered by the Committee was £11.212m. The savings fell currently under the following "BRAG" categories:

Red	£0m
Amber	£0.250m
Green	£8.097m
Blue (delivered)	£2.865m

(4) Highways saving had recently changed from amber to green as it was largely delivered. The major element of the required service efficiencies would be delivered through the implementation of the new highway maintenance contract which had now been signed and would commence in September 2011. Highways was also nearing completion on its major staffing restructure, which would bring significant staff efficiencies and result in a new approach to highway safety inspections, assessment surveys and customer service and combining activities such as Sustainable Transport and Road Safety.

(5) Other efficiencies were also being secured across all areas of highways business including; revisiting and improving contractual arrangements for traffic and works management systems; improved maintenance capability using more up to date asset inventories, the upkeep of which would now be done through business as usual; reduction in assessment / condition surveys; reductions in energy consumption for streetlights and traffic signals and signs; rationalisation of vegetation control; further reductions in use of term consultancy and the full year-effect of the route optimisation for drainage that commenced in 2010-11 and the continuation of the process through street lighting and highway inspection.

(6) The Waste Service was reviewing the third party recycling credits scheme because the cost of this discretionary function in Kent was very large compared to other waste disposal authorities, and it was believed that the current administration arrangements of the scheme had led to inequalities across Kent.

(7) To date the focus of attention had been on the £95m savings in the 2011/12 budget. It was important to shift the focus to monitoring the overall 2011/12 budget of £908m and to ensure delivery was on target.

(8) During discussion the following issues were raised:-

- (a) Mr Northey referred to reductions in energy consumption for streetlights and asked if there were any plans to switch off streetlights overnight. Following debate it was suggested that the topic could be discussed at JTBs or Locality Boards, with a view to one of the Districts carrying out a pilot study.
- (b) Mrs Tweed requested that at any such discussion, the condition/suitability of pavements be taken into account.

(9) RESOLVED that the progress against the delivery of savings covered by the POSC, be noted.

### **34. Core Monitoring Report**

*(Item B3)*

(1) The report informed Members about key areas of performance and activity relating to Environment, Highways and Waste, as reported to Cabinet. It included information up to the end of March 2011.

(2) Of the indicators relating to Environment, Highways and Waste in the Core Monitoring, three had a current status of Green, which was up from one indicator previously. Three indicators were currently rated as Red, which was up from two indicators previously. The current Red indicators were :

- UKPN streetlight repairs times (previously Red)
- Routine highway repairs times (previously Amber)
- Freedom Pass (previously Amber)

(3) It should be noted that the Freedom Pass was shown as an activity indicator within Core Monitoring with the RAG rating based on variance to budget. The Red

rating reflected the position that take-up had exceeded the budget and a financial pressure had resulted. The Red rating for the Freedom Pass was not a reflection of performance and overall the Freedom Pass was considered to be a successful scheme with many positive benefits, including reduced congestion and improved choice and access for pupils (ie increased Freedom).

(4) The new reporting framework for 2011/12 was under development and would replace the current Core Monitoring. Within the new framework, attention would be given to ensure activity indicators with financial implication were treated separately from service performance and outcomes for residents/users of services.

(5) Certain Members expressed concern at the timing of the report and that the information submitted was 3 months out of date. The situation was constantly changing and Mr Burr gave a verbal update.

(6) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) in future a verbal or brief written update be submitted to the Committee shortly before each meeting; and
- (b) the report be noted.

### **35. KCC's Performance Management Framework - Delivering Bold Steps**

*(Item C1)*

(1) The report set out the steps being taken to finalise the performance framework for delivering 'Bold Steps for Kent' which would go to County Council for approval on 21 July. Attached to the report was the latest iteration of the framework which was still draft and required further development.

(2) Two structured workshops were held with POSC members during May to help develop the performance framework by seeking views on the following areas for each of the 17 strategic priorities set out in 'Delivering Bold Steps':

- The success factors i.e. what was needed to be delivered by March 2015
- The key milestones
- How to measure performance. This was not just about quantitative PI data but should also include the use of qualitative data as well as formal evaluation of the outcomes delivered towards the end of the four year term of 'Bold Steps' for some key projects.

(3) Feedback from the two POSC workshops was being used to help finalise both the milestones and measures for each of the 17 strategic priorities. Whilst Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team had inputted into earlier iterations of the milestones and performance measures, they had yet to endorse or approve the latest draft. Once the measures and milestones had been finalised they would then go to County Council for approval in July.

(4) RESOLVED that the steps being taken to finalise the performance framework, be noted.

### **36. Member Highway Fund**

*(Item C5)*

(1) Further to Minute 13 of 18 January 2011, recommendations were introduced from 1 April 2011 and included:-

- A more flexible Investigation Fee process
- Shortening the lead time for Cabinet Member approval
- Use of external contractors

The re-structuring of KHS offered many opportunities for greater efficiency across the service. One of the key issues slowing down Member Highway Fund schemes had been the handover across different delivery teams. The new KHS structure would facilitate a more efficient process by creating a “start to completion” team for schemes including those funded through Member Highway Fund. This would shorten lead times and left the whole responsibility for delivery with one team. A team of six dedicated officers had been assigned to deal with highway fund scheme development.

(2) The idea of linking the Member Highway Fund with Locality Boards was an interesting one and worthy of consideration. The Boards could add a great deal of value by being a conduit for schemes and it could act as watchdog and balance for both the type of schemes being chosen by Members and the delivery time taken to complete the work. A more radical solution would be for Member Highway Fund to be pooled into a Locality Board.

(3) Changes introduced to the Member Highway Fund in April were bedding in. There remained a concern amongst Members that schemes were being delivered too slowly and this was justified in some cases. The re-structuring of KHS offered a real opportunity to make a step change improvement in this regard.

(4) Locality Boards could have a pro-active role in guiding Members on scheme content and acting as a “policeman” on scheme delivery.

(5) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

### **37. Kent Environment Strategy Update**

*(Item C2)*

(1) The report gave an annual update on progress towards delivery of KCC’s commitments under the Kent Forum’s Kent Environment Strategy. It replaced the annual sustainability and climate change update to Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Kent Environment Strategy had now been agreed by Kent Forum and all Districts. Appendix 1 of the report gave an overview of the key Themes and Priorities and Red/Amber/Green rates progress against each. The Strategy would be launched on the 22 July in Thanet.

(2) As the environment and climate change agenda was so disparate and diffuse, it was essential that KCC focussed on those issues that were most important and which we as a public sector body could influence. Indeed, delivering the Kent Environment Strategy was one of the key priorities identified in Delivering Bold Steps,

KCC's draft medium term plan. It was recommended that KCC put a greater focus on the three following areas:

- More efficient use of resources and reduction in carbon emissions, in particular:
- Building resilience to climate change and making the most of emerging opportunities:
- Conserve and enhance the quality of Kent's natural and heritage capital:

(3) Many areas of policy were still unclear. If KCC was to deliver real improvement another step change in approach would be needed to accelerate change. Strong and visible leadership was crucial. KCC would need to examine in full the way it operated and behaved, identifying smarter ways of working and new ways of delivering services. This would need to include greater virtual working, better use of tele/video conferencing and increased online delivery of services or functions online. Step change physical improvements in the KCC estate, as well as increased stimulation of capital investment in local energy efficiency and renewable energy installations in Kent would need the development of innovative finance arrangements and partnerships. Creating a positive and vibrant green image for KCC and Kent would be essential. Much would need to be developed in partnership and require meaningful engagement with residents and businesses. A key aspect of the engagement would be to raise the profile of the issues outlined in the Kent Environment Strategy and create clear communications that informed, engaged and excited residents, Kent businesses and potential inward investors in Kent.

(4) KCC continued to meet the ISO 14001 Environmental Management Standard, with a successful external assessment in May 2011. The next assessment was due in November. The picture for carbon emissions was mixed. The non-school buildings emissions had reduced by just over 5% since 2004 and further reductions were expected during the next 2 years as the estate efficiency programme made an impact. KCC continued to invest in energy, water and carbon reduction, mainly through its Energy and Water Investment Fund (EWIF) hosted by Enterprise and Environment.

(5) The latest waste data showed office waste recycling was at best practice level at 66%, exceeding the 2010 target set of 50%. The end of year data for 2010/11 showed mileage claimed for EHW as just less than one million miles, representing an overall decrease of 21.5% when compared to the previous year and a decrease of 23% when compared to 07/08.

(6) In March this year, KCC was awarded the Improvement Efficiency South East award for Progress through Innovation for the development of the Kent Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Kent was now a leading case study for its approach to tackling the impacts of climate change, and KCC sat on the Government's Local Adaptation Advisory Panel.

(7) Through the creation of the Carbon Hub online support service, using an ERDF grant of almost £400,000, KCC was now moving towards more virtual low carbon support that could reach a greater number of businesses in Kent. To date over 500 businesses had registered on the Carbon Hub and received regular support from energy/water advice, travel and green marketing. A targeted green business support package, building on the work of the Carbon Hub was being developed in partnership

with Business Strategy and Support and Economic Development in Environment and Economy. Bids were being considered for ERDF funding and also the KCC Regeneration Fund.

(8) Much progress had been made, and some quite significant savings. However, the trajectory with regards to environment being seen as a national priority was upwards, and if KCC wished to be on the front foot and at the forefront of change then a new level of activity would be needed to ensure continued progress and innovation.

(9) During discussion the following issues were raised:-

- (a) Mr Crowther requested more detail on the £60,000 in trialling new technologies including 6 LED lighting projects. Mrs Arnold undertook to supply the details to Mr Crowther direct.
- (b) Mr Manion referred to the increase in emissions from the schools estate and asked if it still included Academies. Mrs Arnold stated that KCC was still accountable for Academies carbon emissions, but was an issue that needed to be debated.

(10) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the overall progress made by KCC and the Enterprise and Environment Directorate, especially the re-accreditation to ISO14001, be noted; and
- (b) the priorities and recommended approach outlined in the report, be noted.

### **38. Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Kent** *(Item C3)*

(1) The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) had been prepared to meet KCC's duties to manage local flood risk and deliver the requirements of the Flood Risk Regulations (the Regulations). The Regulations were a transposition into UK law of the EU Floods Directive (Directive 2007/60/EC). The PFRA provided a high level overview of flood risk and identified areas of significant flood risk that needed to be investigated in subsequent stages of the Regulations.

(2) Kent County Council was defined as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Regulations. As such, Kent County Council was required to undertake the PFRA for local flood sources of surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses (all watercourses other than main river). The Environment Agency was responsible for the assessment of fluvial (main river) and coastal flood risks.

(3) The PFRA had been produced in accordance with Environment Agency and Defra guidance, which required KCC to report on:-

- (a) Areas of significant flood risk;
- (b) Past flood events with significant harmful consequences; and

(c) Future flood risks

(4) Kent was estimated to have the highest risk from surface water flooding in England. Approximately 70,000 properties across Kent were estimated to be at risk during a severe rainfall event. As Lead Local Flood Authority, KCC would have to address the risk through appropriate flood risk management.

(5) As Lead Local Flood Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 KCC had new duties to prepare a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (the Local Strategy). The Local Strategy would be funded through the new Lead Local Flood Authority element of the Local Services Support Grant, and would have an impact on other areas of service delivery in KCC, including Highways and Emergency Planning.

(6) KCC was required by the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 to produce a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) by 19 August 2011, and the PFRA would be used to develop a strategy for managing the risks to properties from those sources of flooding as required by our Lead Local Flood Authority role (Flood and Water Management Act 2010).

(7) RESOLVED that the flood risk that Kent now had a strategic duty to oversee, be noted.

### **39. Winter Service 2010/11 Review**

*(Item C4)*

(1) The report detailed the actions taken due to the severe weather experienced at the end of 2010 and other actions taken by Kent Highway Services to manage the winter service. It was generally accepted that the winter service during 10/11 was a significant improvement on the previous year, and it was vital that year on year learning and improvements continued to be built into the winter plan.

(2) The allocated budget for winter service for 2010/11 was £2,490,581. There were two snow emergencies on 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> December 2010 the respective cost of which were £718,010 and £925,922. Apart from these the total expenditure on winter service for 2010/11 was circa £3,160,000.

(3) Last year a consultation exercise was carried out of the winter service delivered by Kent Highway Services. The final consultation report was produced by Ipsos MORI on 12 June 2010. As a result of the consultation a number of specific actions which included - Joint working with district councils; Salt bags; and Media and communications.

(4) Over 180 famers assisted in clearing snow in rural areas on snow days. Last year the decision was taken to renew the existing contracts and replace them with new three year contracts. The majority of the farmers renewed and a few new ones were taken on.

(5) There were currently over 2000 salt bins located around the county. The 2010/11 winter service policy stated that salt bins were purchased by KHS after they had been assessed by an engineer. A set budget was allocated and salt bins were provided according to the score up to the budget limit. KHS then filled and maintained

the bins. Additionally Members could use their Member Highway Fund to purchase salt bins on behalf of parishes (this would be allowed even if the proposed site did not meet the required score).

(6) Some parishes and community groups had expressed a desire to purchase and maintain their own salt bins and therefore Members of the committee were asked to consider the two options presented below and make a recommendation on which option should be included in this year's Winter Service Policy:

Option 1 – Status Quo – as stated above

Advantages – salt bins were limited and managed by KHS and this limited the proliferation of salt bins around the county. Costs could be managed for future maintenance and filling

Disadvantage – did not meet the wishes/needs of all parishes and community groups

Option 2 – Parishes and community groups purchased their own salt bins

Advantages

- (i) Parishes took control of what was bought for their own area
- (ii) They take responsibility for future maintenance and filling

Disadvantages

- (i) Increase in salt bins across the county, potentially with some that were not necessary in areas where KHS already provided winter service gritting
- (ii) From previous experience it was likely that in time these might become the responsibility of KHS in respect of maintenance, replacement and filling

(7) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Option 2 above be recommended for adoption for the provision of salt bins for the 2011/12 winter period; and
- (b) the report is to be noted.

#### **40. Select Committee - update**

*(Item D1)*

(1) The report updated Members on the following reviews which were underway – Educational Attainment at Key Stage 2; The Student Journey; and Dementia.

(2) RESOLVED that:

- (a) the review work currently underway be noted; and

- (b) Members advise the Democratic Services Officer of any topics which they would like to put forward for consideration for inclusion in the future Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme.

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**TO:** Environment, Highways and Waste (EHW) Policy  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 27 September 2011

**BY:** Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways &  
Waste  
Mike Austerberry, Corporate Director of Enterprise & Environment

**SUBJECT:** Financial Monitoring 2011/12

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:**

Members of the Policy Overview Scrutiny Committee (POSC) are asked to note the first quarter's full budget monitoring report for 2011/12 reported to Cabinet on 19 September 2011.

**FOR INFORMATION**

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This is a regular report to this Committee on the forecast outturn against budget for the EHW portfolio.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 A detailed quarterly budget monitoring report is presented to Cabinet, usually in September, December and March, and a draft final outturn report in June. These reports outline the full financial position for each portfolio and are reported to POSCs after they have been considered by Cabinet. In the intervening months an exception report is made to Cabinet outlining any significant variations from the quarterly report. The first quarter's monitoring report for 2011/12 is attached.
- 2.2 The approved A-Z of budgets have been realigned for the first quarter's budget monitoring to reflect the new portfolio responsibilities and new directorate structures to give a new starting position for the year.

**3. Revenue**

- 3.1 There are no exceptional revenue changes since the writing of the attached report.

**4. Capital**

- 4.1 There are no exceptional capital changes since the writing of the attached report.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 Members of the POSC are asked to note the budget variations for the EHW Portfolio for 2011/12 based on the first quarter's monitoring report to Cabinet.

### **Contact Details:**

**Contact:** Hugh Miller, Acting Finance Business Partner

**Telephone:** 01622 694035

**Email:** [Hugh.Miller@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Hugh.Miller@kent.gov.uk)

# ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE SUMMARY

## JULY 2011-12 FULL MONITORING REPORT

### 1. FINANCE

#### 1.1 REVENUE

1.1.1 Cash limits for the A-Z service analysis have been adjusted since the budget was set to reflect the transfers required to reflect the new directorate and portfolio structures. In addition, the cash limits that the Directorate is working to, and **upon which the variances in this report are based**, include adjustments for both formal virement and technical adjustments, the latter being where there is no change in policy.

The Directorate would like to request formal virement through this report to reflect adjustments to cash limits for the following changes required in respect of the allocation of previously unallocated budgets where further information regarding allocations and spending plans has become available since the budget setting process. This primarily relates to how the directorate has allocated savings in relation to Total Contribution Pay and Superannuation changes. These savings were 'parked' within Strategic Management and Directorate Support when the budget was approved and have now been allocated to the individual service units based on detailed analysis by Finance. In addition, Kent Highways Services (KHS) has undergone a major restructure, which impacts upon both staffing and work budgets, and budgets have been adjusted to reflect the new structure. In addition KHS gross and income budgets have been realigned in the light of 2010-11 outturn. These adjustments have had an impact on the gross and income budgets which has increased them both by £0.359m. Furthermore, there is a significant transfer between gross and income of £3.346m which reflects a correction to the accounting treatment for capitalised staff costs, this had previously been treated as income but should have been a credit to gross expenditure.

A transfer has also been made between gross and income within Public Transport of £0.417m which predominantly reflects a revision of the income budget related to the Freedom pass. Changes to the gross and income budgets within Waste Management and Waste Disposal have also been reflected, as a result of revisions to contract prices affecting both spend and income levels and the use of new waste processing outlets for managing various recycle waste streams, all of which were not known when the budget was set. These amount to an increase of £0.744m in the gross budget and a similar increase in the income budget.

There have also been a number of corporate adjustments to cash limit to reflect the allocation of roll forward, a virement of £0.130m from the underspending on the Finance & Business Support portfolio to offset the Commercial Services contribution because CSD are to fund two new audit posts and some outsourced work thereby reducing their ability to make the budgeted contribution, and where budgets have moved as a result of the restructure, but there has been no change to what the budget is being used for. These adjustments total +£0.145m (-£0.245m gross and +£0.390m income).

Therefore the overall movement in cash limits shown in table 1a below is a reduction in the gross expenditure budget of £2.071m (£0.359m - £3.346m + £0.417m + £0.744m - £0.245m from above) and a reduction in the income budget of £2.216m (-£0.359m + £3.346m - £0.417m - £0.744m + £0.390m from above).

Table 1a shows:

- the published budget,
- the proposed budget following adjustments for both formal virement and technical adjustments, together with roll forward from 2010-11 as approved by Cabinet in July,
- the total value of the adjustments applied to each service line.

**Cabinet is asked to approve these revised cash limits.**

1.1.2.1 Table 1a Movement in Cash Limits since published A-Z budget in the new portfolio format:

Budget Book Heading	Cash Limit			Revised Cash Limit			Movement		
	G	I	N	G	I	N	G	I	N
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
<b>Environment, Highways &amp; Waste portfolio</b>									
E&E Strategic Management & Directorate Support Budgets	7,528	-1,014	6,514	7,373	-388	6,985	-155	626	471
<u>Environment:</u>									
- Environment Management	3,880	-2,647	1,233	4,180	-2,830	1,350	300	-183	117
- Coastal Protection	733		733	686	0	686	-47		-47
	4,613	-2,647	1,966	4,866	-2,830	2,036	253	-183	70
<u>Highways Services:</u>									
- Adverse Weather	2,655		2,655	3,159	0	3,159	504		504
- Bridges & Other Structures	3,077	-433	2,644	2,753	-294	2,459	-324	139	-185
- General maintenance & emergency response	13,236	-1,027	12,209	13,572	-345	13,227	336	682	1,018
- Highway drainage	3,845	-206	3,639	3,431	-74	3,357	-414	132	-282
- Highway improvements	4,272	-2,356	1,916	2,105	-515	1,590	-2,167	1,841	-326
- Road Safety	2,921	-1,280	1,641	2,827	-1,213	1,614	-94	67	-27
- Signs, Lines & Bollards	2,046	-74	1,972	1,819	0	1,819	-227	74	-153
- Streetlight energy	4,955		4,955	5,104	0	5,104	149		149
- Streetlight maintenance	4,085	-271	3,814	3,924	-325	3,599	-161	-54	-215
- Traffic management	5,569	-2,860	2,709	5,506	-2,924	2,582	-63	-64	-127
- Tree maintenance, grass cutting & weed control	3,822	-102	3,720	3,352	-192	3,160	-470	-90	-560
	50,483	-8,609	41,874	47,552	-5,882	41,670	-2,931	2,727	-204
<u>Integrated Transport Strategy &amp; Planning:</u>									
- Planning & Transport Policy	861	-15	846	774	-15	759	-87		-87
- Planning Applications	1,118	-500	618	1,102	-500	602	-16		-16
	1,979	-515	1,464	1,876	-515	1,361	-103	0	-103
<u>Transport Services:</u>									
- Concessionary Fares	16,304		16,304	16,332	-27	16,305	28	-27	1
- Freedom Pass	12,544	-1,700	10,844	13,625	-2,230	11,395	1,081	-530	551
- Subsidised Bus Routes	9,951	-1,777	8,174	9,259	-1,637	7,622	-692	140	-552
- Sustainable Transport	2,684	-1,525	1,159	2,503	-1,448	1,055	-181	77	-104
	41,483	-5,002	36,481	41,719	-5,342	36,377	236	-340	-104
<u>Waste Management</u>									
<u>Recycling &amp; Diversion from Landfill:</u>									
- Household Waste Recycling Centres	8,391	-719	7,672	8,416	-1,109	7,307	25	-390	-365
- Partnership & Behaviour Change	892	-126	766	805	-126	679	-87		-87
- Payments to Waste Collection Authorities (DCs)	5,500		5,500	5,334	-102	5,232	-166	-102	-268
- Recycling Contracts & Composting	9,674		9,674	10,262	-609	9,653	588	-609	-21
	24,457	-845	23,612	24,817	-1,946	22,871	360	-1,101	-741
<u>Waste Disposal:</u>									
- Closed Landfill Sites & Abandoned Vehicles	743	-276	467	779	-266	513	36	10	46
- Disposal Contracts	29,463	-768	28,695	29,476	-430	29,046	13	338	351
- Landfill Tax	7,040		7,040	6,880	0	6,880	-160		-160
- Transfer Stations	8,203	-84	8,119	8,583	-75	8,508	380	9	389
	45,449	-1,128	44,321	45,718	-771	44,947	269	357	626
Commercial Services		-7,261	-7,261	0	-7,131	-7,131		130	130
<b>Total E, H &amp; W portfolio</b>	<b>175,992</b>	<b>-27,021</b>	<b>148,971</b>	<b>173,921</b>	<b>-24,805</b>	<b>149,116</b>	<b>-2,071</b>	<b>2,216</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Regeneration &amp; Enterprise portfolio</b>									
Development Staff & Projects	1,311	-1,311	0	1,311	-1,311	0			0
<b>Total E&amp;E controllable</b>	<b>177,303</b>	<b>-28,332</b>	<b>148,971</b>	<b>175,232</b>	<b>-26,116</b>	<b>149,116</b>	<b>-2,071</b>	<b>2,216</b>	<b>145</b>

1.1.2.2 **Table 1b** below details the revenue position by Service Unit against adjusted cash limits as shown in table 1a:

Budget Book Heading	Cash Limit			Variance			Comment
	G	I	N	G	I	N	
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	
<b>Environment, Highways &amp; Waste portfolio</b>							
E&E Strategic Management & Directorate Support Budgets	7,373	-388	6,985	-69		-69	Vacancy management (Waste)
<u>Environment:</u>	0	0					
- Environment Management	4,180	-2,830	1,350			0	
- Coastal Protection	686	0	686			0	
	4,866	-2,830	2,036	0	0	0	
<u>Highways Services:</u>							
- Adverse Weather	3,159	0	3,159			0	
- Bridges & Other Structures	2,753	-294	2,459			0	
- General maintenance & emergency response	13,572	-345	13,227			0	
- Highway drainage	3,431	-74	3,357			0	
- Highway improvements	2,105	-515	1,590			0	
- Road Safety	2,827	-1,213	1,614			0	
- Signs, Lines & Bollards	1,819	0	1,819			0	
- Streetlight energy	5,104	0	5,104			0	
- Streetlight maintenance	3,924	-325	3,599			0	
- Traffic management	5,506	-2,924	2,582		-83	-83	Additional s74 and fixed penalty notices income
- Tree maintenance, grass cutting & weed control	3,352	-192	3,160			0	
	47,552	-5,882	41,670	0	-83	-83	
<u>Integrated Transport Strategy &amp; Planning:</u>							
- Planning & Transport Policy	774	-15	759			0	
- Planning Applications	1,102	-500	602			0	
	1,876	-515	1,361	0	0	0	
<u>Transport Services:</u>							
- Concessionary Fares	16,332	-27	16,305			0	
- Freedom Pass	13,625	-2,230	11,395			0	
- Subsidised Bus Routes	9,259	-1,637	7,622			0	
- Sustainable Transport	2,503	-1,448	1,055		69	69	Reduction in forecast grant income for Local Sustainable Transport Fund
	41,719	-5,342	36,377	0	69	69	
<u>Waste Management</u>							
<u>Recycling &amp; Diversion from Landfill:</u>							
- Household Waste Recycling Centres	8,416	-1,109	7,307	73	-100	-27	Additional income received from sale of lead acid batteries
- Partnership & Behaviour Change	805	-126	679	-41		-41	Reduction in campaign activity
- Payments to Waste Collection Authorities (DCs)	5,334	-102	5,232			0	
- Recycling Contracts & Composting	10,262	-609	9,653	-510	7	-503	reduced waste tonnage & improved contract prices when compared with working budget
	24,817	-1,946	22,871	-478	-93	-571	

Budget Book Heading	Cash Limit			Variance			Comment
	G	I	N	G	I	N	
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	
<b>Waste Disposal:</b>							
- Closed Landfill Sites & Abandoned Vehicles	779	-266	513	1	-3	-2	
- Disposal Contracts	29,476	-430	29,046	-2,079		-2,079	Reduced residual waste tonnage compared to budget, less waste processed via Allington, more waste to landfill
- Landfill Tax	6,880	0	6,880	905		905	waste diverted to landfill from Allington WtE due to operational issues
- Transfer Stations	8,583	-75	8,508	-356		-356	reduced waste tonnage
	45,718	-771	44,947	-1,529	-3	-1,532	
Commercial Services	0	-7,131	-7,131			0	
<b>Total E, H &amp; W portfolio</b>	<b>173,921</b>	<b>-24,805</b>	<b>149,116</b>	<b>-2,076</b>	<b>-110</b>	<b>-2,186</b>	
<b>Regeneration &amp; Enterprise portfolio</b>							
Development Staff & Projects	1,311	-1,311	0			0	
<b>Total E&amp;E controllable</b>	<b>175,232</b>	<b>-26,116</b>	<b>149,116</b>	<b>-2,076</b>	<b>-110</b>	<b>-2,186</b>	
<b>Assumed Management Action</b>							
- EHW portfolio							
- R&E portfolio							
<b>Forecast after Mgmt Action</b>				<b>-2,076</b>	<b>-110</b>	<b>-2,186</b>	

### 1.1.3 Major Reasons for Variance: [provides an explanation of the 'headings' in table 2]

Table 2, at the end of this section, details all forecast revenue variances over £100k. Each of these variances is explained further below:

#### **Environment, Highways & Waste portfolio:**

##### 1.1.3.1 **Waste Management:**

The waste tonnage for the first three months of 2011-12 indicate that the experience of the last two financial years is likely to be repeated and the final tonnage figure is forecast to be less than the affordable level. Based on actuals to date, an estimated level of 735,000 tonnes is predicted which is 25,000 tonnes below the affordable level. This is a prudent forecast to allow for any potential growth in future months. Details of activity are shown in section 2.4.

##### 1.1.3.1.1 **Recycling & Diversion from Landfill**

###### a. **Household Waste Recycling Centres**

An underspend of £100k is predicted as a result of additional income generated from a new income stream – the sale of lead batteries which were previously collected at zero cost or for a small charge.

###### b. **Recycling Contracts & Composting**

A combination of reduced waste tonnage, approximately 14,000 tonnes, for recycling and composting and improved contract prices are anticipated to deliver an underspend of £510k in this financial year. Approximately £126k is due to improved prices and £384k is due to reduced activity.

### 1.1.3.1.2 Waste Disposal

a. Disposal Contracts

An underspend of £2,079k is forecast for this budget line due to reduced residual waste tonnage being processed at the Allington Waste to Energy Plant when compared to the budget profile. The final tonnage figure for processing waste via Allington is expected to be 27,000 tonnes less than budget, however it is forecast that an additional 16,000 tonnes of waste will be sent to landfill due to operational circumstances at Allington.

b. Landfill Tax

An overspend of £905k is forecast due to operational circumstances at the Allington waste to energy plant during the early part of the financial year when it was necessary to divert a greater tonnage than anticipated to landfill, approximately a further 16,000 tonnes will be landfilled than planned.

c. Transfer Stations

An underspend of £356k is anticipated as a result of a reduction in forecast waste tonnage.

Overall annual forecast tonnes is expected to reduce by 25,000, which is made up of 27,000 tonnes less via Allington and 14,000 tonnes less via recycling/composting, however due to operational changes at Allington a further 16,000 tonnes is forecast to be landfilled.

**Table 2: REVENUE VARIANCES OVER £100K IN SIZE ORDER**

(shading denotes that a pressure has an offsetting saving, which is directly related, or vice versa)

Pressures (+)			Underspends (-)		
portfolio		£000's	portfolio		£000's
EHW	Landfill Tax - diversion of waste to landfill due to operational issues at Allington Waste to energy plant	+905	EHW	Disposal Contracts - lower then budgeted residual waste tonnage processed through Allington WtE	-2,079
			EHW	Recycling & Composting - lower then budgeted waste tonnage	-384
			EHW	Transfer Stations - lower then budgeted waste tonnage	-356
			EHW	Recycling Contracts & Composting - improved contract prices	-126
			EHW	Household Waste Recycling Centres - income from sale of lead batteries	-100
		+905			-3,045

#### 1.1.4 Actions required to achieve this position:

None

#### 1.1.5 Implications for MTFP:

Waste will be reviewing the trends of recent years in respect of waste tonnage and disposal costs when considering savings and pressure for the development of the 2012-15 MTFP. There is no guarantee that tonnage will continue to reduce so contingency arrangements will need to be incorporated to deal with any reversal in trends.

#### 1.1.6 Details of re-phasing of revenue projects:

None

### 1.1.7 Details of proposals for residual variance:

The most significant element of the Directorate's forecast underspend arises from Waste Management. This is directly related to tonnage and whilst the forecast reflects the previous year's experience and tonnage data to date, it must be treated with an element of caution. The Directorate has a direct influence over the disposal and recycling of waste, but limited control over the amount of waste that is put into the system. Any surge in waste tonnage will impact the financial outturn of the Directorate and the forecast underspend reported in this report. It must be noted that previous years underspend on Waste Management was negated by additional costs arising in Highways as a result of hard winters and this could be repeated in 2011-12.

## 1.2 CAPITAL

1.2.1 All changes to cash limits are in accordance with the virement rules contained within the constitution and have received the appropriate approval via the Leader, or relevant delegated authority.

The capital cash limits have been adjusted since last reported to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011, as detailed in section 4.1.

1.2.2 **Table 3** below provides a portfolio overview of the latest capital monitoring position excluding PFI projects.

	Prev Yrs Exp £000s	2011-12 £000s	2012-13 £000s	2013-14 £000s	Future Yrs £000s	TOTAL £000s
<b>Enterprise &amp; Environment Portfolio</b>						
Budget	239,529	95,191	77,223	70,334	242,583	724,860
Adjustments:						
- Re-phasing at Outturn	-567	568	-1	-200	200	
- Outturn changes	-320					-320
- Sittingbourne Northern Relief Rd		-167				-167
- Ashford Ring Road		-65				-65
- Ashford Station Forecourt		190				190
Revised Budget	238,642	95,717	77,222	70,134	242,783	724,498
Variance		6,181	-3,031	-4,841	10,307	8,616
<b>split:</b>						
- real variance		+8,782	-166			+8,616
- re-phasing		-2,601	-2,865	-4,841	+10,307	0
<b>Real Variance</b>		<b>+8,782</b>	<b>-166</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+8,616</b>
<b>Re-phasing</b>		<b>-2,601</b>	<b>-2,865</b>	<b>-4,841</b>	<b>+10,307</b>	<b>0</b>

### 1.2.3 Main Reasons for Variance

Table 4 below, details all forecast capital variances over £250k in 2011-12 and identifies these between projects which are:

- part of our year on year rolling programme of maintenance and modernisation;

- projects which have received approval to spend and are underway;
- projects which are only at the approval to plan stage and
- Projects at preliminary stage.

The variances are also identified as being either a real variance i.e. real under or overspending which has resourcing implications, or a phasing issue i.e. simply down to a difference in timing compared to the budget assumption.

Each of the variances in excess of £1m which is due to phasing of the project, excluding those projects identified as only being at the preliminary stage, is explained further in section 1.2.4 below.

All real variances are explained in section 1.2.5, together with the resourcing implications.

**Table 4: CAPITAL VARIANCES OVER £250K IN SIZE ORDER**

portfolio	Project	real/ phasing	Project Status			
			Rolling Programme	Approval to Spend	Approval to Plan	Preliminary Stage
			£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
<b>Overspends/Projects ahead of schedule</b>						
EHW	Highway major Maintenance	real	4,060			
EHW	A2 Cyclo Park	real		2,800		
EHW	Victoria Way	real		1,000		
EHW	Integrated Transport	real	786			
EHW	Ashford Drivers & J9 Foot Bridge	real		650		
EHW	HWRC-Ashford Transfer Station	phasing			350	
EHW	Commercial Services	real	320			
			<b>+5,166</b>	<b>+4,450</b>	<b>+350</b>	<b>+0</b>
<b>Underspends/Projects behind schedule</b>						
EHW	Kent Thameside Transport	phasing			-1,314	
EHW	HWRC-Herne Bay	phasing		-750		
EHW	Major Preliminary Design	real	-300			
EHW	Sittingbourne Northern Relief Rd	real		-384		
EHW	Integrated Transport	phasing	-300			
			<b>-600</b>	<b>-1,134</b>	<b>-1,314</b>	<b>0</b>
			<b>+4,566</b>	<b>+3,316</b>	<b>-964</b>	<b>-0</b>

#### 1.2.4 Projects re-phasing by over £1m:

##### 1.2.4.1 Kent Thameside Strategic Transport Programme - re-phasing of -£10.374m (-£1.314m in 2011-12, -£3.502m in 2012-13, -£5.558m in 2013-14 and +£10.374m in future years)

This programme is designed to deliver a package of Strategic Transport schemes in the Kent Thameside area, funded by Government Grants and Developer Contributions.

Following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, the public sector funding commitment for the programme was deferred and subject to further review. Subsequently, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) agreed to fund £13m for phase 1 schemes with a further £10m for phase 2 schemes subject to review. The Department for Transport (DfT) indicated that their funding commitment (approx £23m) towards the programme would not be available in the current spending review period (2011-2014) and is unlikely to be available before 2017-18. Developer contributions will be required to balance the cost of the project.

Negotiations are taking place to ensure that the programme will be implemented on a phased basis dependent on securing relevant funding.

As limited funds are currently guaranteed, the programme has been re-phased with the bulk of the works planned post 2015.

Revised phasing of the scheme is now as follows:

	Prior Years	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	future years	Total
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
<b>BUDGET &amp; FORECAST</b>						
Budget	263	2,688	8,313	14,852	119,195	145,311
Forecast	263	1,374	4,811	9,294	129,569	145,311
Variance	0	-1,314	-3,502	-5,558	+10,374	0
<b>FUNDING</b>						
<b>Budget:</b>						0
Revenue	231					231
Developer		519	3,040	7,278	88,292	99,129
grant	32	2,169	5,273	7,574	30,903	45,951
TOTAL	263	2,688	8,313	14,852	119,195	145,311
<b>Forecast:</b>						
Revenue	231					231
Developer				463	98,666	99,129
grant	32	1,374	4,811	8,831	30,903	45,951
TOTAL	263	1,374	4,811	9,294	129,569	145,311
<b>Variance</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1,314</b>	<b>-3,502</b>	<b>-5,558</b>	<b>+10,374</b>	<b>0</b>

#### 1.2.4.2 Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road - re-phasing of -£1.321m in (2012-13)

This scheme was started in autumn 2009 and is progressing well, with completion expected in December 2011. The spend profile for 2012-13 has been re phased into 2013-14 to cover the liability under the Land Compensation Act where claims cannot be made until 1 year after the scheme is opened for use. Payments under the Act are for depreciation to the value of properties affected by physical factors such as traffic noise which cannot be properly assessed until the scheme has been operational for this period of time.

Revised phasing of the scheme is now as follows:

	Prior Years	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	future years	Total
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
<b>BUDGET &amp; FORECAST</b>						
Budget	21,866	7,530	1,703	1,100		32,199
Forecast	21,866	7,146	216	2,421		31,649
Variance	0	-384	-1,487	+1,321	0	-550
<b>FUNDING</b>						
<b>Budget:</b>						
Ex Other		639				639
Revenue	153				0	153
Developer grant	67		1,703	1,100		2,870
	21,646	6,891				28,537
TOTAL	21,866	7,530	1,703	1,100	0	32,199
<b>Forecast:</b>						
Ex Other		839				839
Revenue	153					153
Developer grant	67		216	2,421		2,704
	21,646	6,307				27,953
TOTAL	21,866	7,146	216	2,421	0	31,649
Variance	0	-384	-1,487	+1,321	0	-550

#### 1.2.5 Projects with real variances, including resourcing implications:

There is a real variance of +£8.617m (+£8.782m in 2011-12 and -£0.165m in 2012/13)

**Preliminary Design Fees: -£0.300m** (in 2011-12): Current intelligence indicates that the DfT will not accept any bids for major schemes in the short term and consequently an underspend is declared against this budget. It is proposed that this funding should be transferred to the Integrated Transport Schemes to support the Maidstone High Street development in 2011-12, allowing £0.300m from capital receipts to be re-phased to 2012-13 to fund the balance of the cost and **Cabinet are asked to approve this transfer of funds.**

**Highway Maintenance: +£4.060m** (in 2011-12): Major patching and full surface dressing works are being undertaken on parts of the road networks that have been worst affected by winter damage. This approach is more cost effective and better value for money than simply dealing with individual pot holes and enhances the capital value of the County Council's assets. The bulk of the cost (£4m) will be covered by a Government revenue grant designed to address winter damage on the County's roads with a small contribution (£0.060m) being provided by third parties.

**Integrated Transport Schemes: +£0.786m** (in 2011-12): There are two elements to this forecast overspend:

- +£0.486m relates to schemes that are funded by S106 developer contributions which have already been received, but an adjustment to the cash limit to reflect this is awaited.
- +£0.300m relates to works in Maidstone High Street which are proposed to be funded by a cash limit transfer from the Preliminary Design Fees cash limit with a further £0.300m being made available by slipping capital receipts to 2012/13.

**Commercial Services Vehicle & Plant: +£0.320m** (in 2011-12): this will be matched by an increased contribution from their Renewals Fund so there is no funding implication.

**Energy Usage Reduction Programme: -£0.150m** (in 2011-15): The programme was funded 50% grant from Carbon Trust and 50% by prudential borrowing. The forecast underspend is due to the repayment of the Carbon Trust grant. The overall funding for this programme will be reduced by the underspend.

**Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road: -£0.550m** (-£0.384m in 2011-12 and -£0.166m in 2012-13): A prudent approach has been taken throughout the construction phase regarding DfT

funding ensuring that a contingency is maintained to fund any unforeseen works. As the scheme approaches completion, a further review of cost and risk has been carried out which has enabled the forecast scheme cost to be reduced by £0.550m. An element of the savings amounting to £0.584m relates to grant funding and has been reported to DfT. The reduction in construction cost has also reduced the developer contribution liability by £0.166m. However, additional work has been carried out for Southern Water for which their contribution will be increased by £0.200m. The net result has been to reduce the scheme cost by £0.550m.

**A2 Cyclopark: +£2.800m** (in 2011-12): This unique scheme was reported to Cabinet in November 2010 along with a list of potential external funding partners. Capital funding from the various contributors has now been secured and the scheme is now progressing. This secured funding has allowed the project to expand to undertake construction of the pavilion.

**Victoria Way: +£1.000m** (in 2011-12): The scheme provides a new urban street with public realm and in particular to locate existing and future utility needs into the road corridor to provide clear development sites. Difficulties with the utilities aspects because of uncharted services, phasing and utility companies' lack of performance in particular has fully utilised the contingency allocation. Utility works have continued to have a significant impact on the contract and disturbance and prolongation costs together with residual risks have been on an upward trend over recent months that now lead to forecast overspend of £1.000m.

A robust approach to minimising and reducing the overspend is being taken with the contractor, the consultant and the utility companies. As this scheme is fully externally funded, there is no capacity within the capital programme to meet the forecast overspend funding which will be claimed from Growth Area Funding (GAF) which is held by Ashford Borough Council on behalf of the Ashford's Future Partnership Board. The AFPB has agreed in principle that the major highway schemes in Ashford (ie Victoria Way and Drovers Roundabout / J9 and Footbridge) should have first call on the GAF pot of some £2.7m (see also below). The £0.397m commuted sum for future maintenance has already been received and will be redirected to reduce the funding deficit.

**Drovers Roundabout, J9 and Footbridge: +£0.650m** (in 2011-12): The net overspend is due to the following:

- **Construction +£1.697m:** An overspend of £0.300m was reported in 2010-11, to be funded from GAF. A further overspend of £1.697m is expected in this financial year which has resulted in a total forecast construction overspend of approximately £2.000m. The main cause of the overspend has been issues related to the unique cable stayed footbridge over the M20. The contractor has made very significant claims relating to design aspects, disturbance and prolongation and the consultant working for Kent County Council has indicated that there is some limited legitimacy to these claims. In common with Victoria Way, this scheme is fully externally funded, with KCC acting as delivery agent for the Ashford's Future Partnership Board and funding to cover the overspend will be claimed from GAF. As stated above, the AFPB has agreed in principle that any overspend on this scheme and Victoria Way should have the first call on the remaining GAF budget of approximately £2.7m. This would cover the forecast overspend on Victoria Way and Drovers, but would mean that the proposed improvements to the Station Forecourt, Ashford which were discussed by PAG on 21 February 2011 would not be able to proceed from GAF funds.
- **Committed Sum - £1.047m:** The cash limit includes £1.047m for committed sum which has to be transferred to the revenue balance sheet until it is paid out to the Highways Agency for the future maintenance of the Footbridge and Junction 9.

Taking these into account, there is an underlying nil variance.

## 1.2.6 General Overview of capital programme:

### (a) Risks

As Victoria Way, Drovers Roundabout, M20 Junction 9 and Footbridge and East Kent Access Phase 2 near completion the key risk is around delivering the schemes within the current forecast expenditure levels.

### (b) Details of action being taken to alleviate risks

**Victoria Way** - Outside of the normal contract management procedures, a risk workshop has been held with the contractor and consultant to seek to give added certainty to the out-turn cost prediction. The final account negotiations with utility companies will continue to be actively pursued to ensure we only pay valid costs and that we also maximise our income where works have been carried for them. Similarly, claims from our contractor will continue to be robustly assessed to ensure that payments are only agreed where there is proven entitlement. Instructions to the contractor will continue to be limited to those only required to complete the works.

**Drovers Roundabout, M20 Junction 9 and Footbridge** - We are in effect in dispute with the contractor on the content and quantum of his claims. Final contract costs may only be decided if agreement cannot be reached, after contractual provisions for mediation and arbitration are followed. A strategy has been put in place with our consultant to assess the claims and that is being progressed. Independent cost consultant's have been appointed to provide KCC with audit advice and to identify what components of the claims may relate to the bridge design.

**East Kent Access Phase 2** - Management of the contract is supported by independent cost consultants. As construction progresses closer to the anticipated completion date of March 2012, the risks related to construction inflation reduce. The contract is being robustly managed to ensure that claims by the contractor are only agreed where there is proven entitlement. Similar efforts are being made in respect of third party costs for the utility diversion works and Network Rail fees for the two major railway structures.

## 1.2.7 Project Re-Phasing

Cash limits are changed for projects that have re-phased by greater than £0.100m to reduce the reporting requirements during the year. Any subsequent re-phasing greater than £0.100m will be reported and the full extent of the re-phasing will be shown. The possible re-phasing is detailed in the table below.

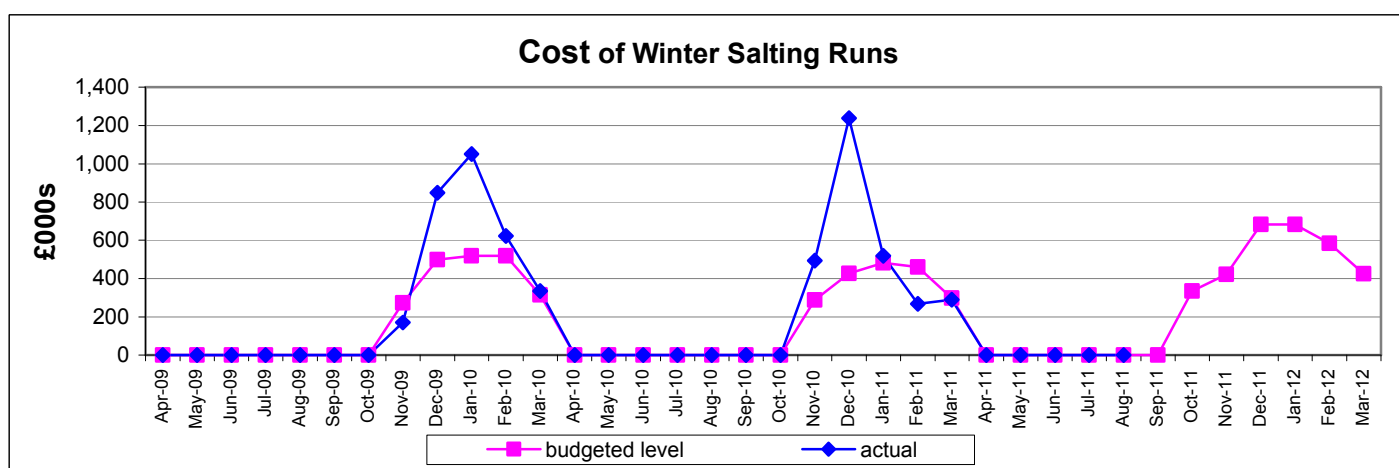
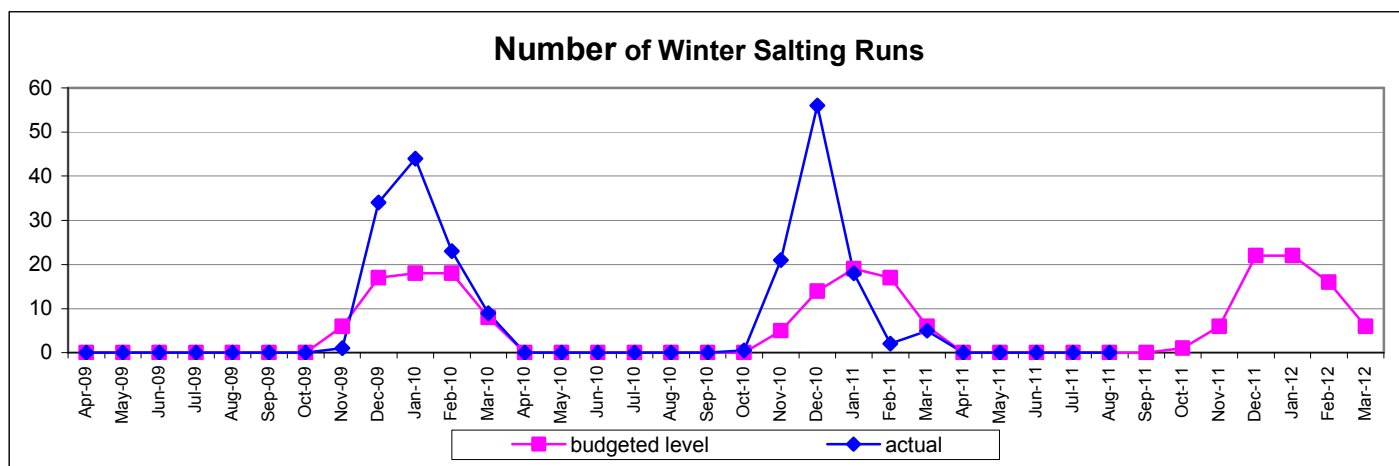
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Future Years	Total
	£k	£k	£k	£k	
<b>Integrated Transport Scheme</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+3,291	+2,966	+3,824	+3,058	+13,139
re-phasing	-300	+300			0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+2,991</b>	<b>+3,266</b>	<b>+3,824</b>	<b>+3,058</b>	<b>+13,139</b>
<b>Non TSG Land Compensation Claims</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+2,665	+706	+367	+249	+3,987
re-phasing	-100	+100			0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+2,565</b>	<b>+806</b>	<b>+367</b>	<b>+249</b>	<b>+3,987</b>
<b>Energy and Water Efficiency Investment</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+238	+129	+125	+248	+740
re-phasing	-175	+79	+163	-67	0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+63</b>	<b>+208</b>	<b>+288</b>	<b>+181</b>	<b>+740</b>

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Future Years	Total
	£k	£k	£k	£k	
<b>Energy Usage Reduction Programme</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+150	+50	+94		+294
re-phasing	+113	-19	-94		0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+263</b>	<b>+31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+294</b>
<b>Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+7,530	+1,703	+1,100		+10,333
re-phasing		-1,321	+1,321		0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+7,530</b>	<b>+382</b>	<b>+2,421</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+10,333</b>
<b>East Kent Access Phase 2</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+27,894	+912	+3,217		+32,023
re-phasing	-222	+895	-673		0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+27,672</b>	<b>+1,807</b>	<b>+2,544</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+32,023</b>
<b>A2 Cyclo Park</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+2,003				+2,003
re-phasing	-203	+203			0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+1,800</b>	<b>+203</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+2,003</b>
<b>Kent Thameside Strategic Transport Programme</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+2,688	+8,313	+14,852	+119,195	+145,048
re-phasing	-1,314	-3,502	-5,558	+10,374	0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+1,374</b>	<b>+4,811</b>	<b>+9,294</b>	<b>+129,569</b>	<b>+145,048</b>
<b>HWRC - Herne Bay</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+1,500				+1,500
re-phasing	-750	+750			0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+750</b>	<b>+750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+1,500</b>
<b>HWRC - Ashford Transfer Station</b>					
Amended total cash limits	+400	+4,600			+5,000
re-phasing	+350	-350			0
<b>Revised project phasing</b>	<b>+750</b>	<b>+4,250</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+5,000</b>
<b>Total re-phasing &gt;£100k</b>	<b>-2,601</b>	<b>-2,865</b>	<b>-4,841</b>	<b>+10,307</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other re-phased Projects below £100k</b>					
<b>TOTAL RE-PHASING</b>	<b>-2,601</b>	<b>-2,865</b>	<b>-4,841</b>	<b>+10,307</b>	<b>0</b>

## 2. KEY ACTIVITY INDICATORS AND BUDGET RISK ASSESSMENT MONITORING

### 2.1 Number and Cost of winter salting runs:

	2009-10				2010-11				2011-12			
	Number of salting runs		Cost of salting runs		Number of salting runs		Cost of salting runs		Number of salting runs		Cost of salting runs	
	Actual	Budgeted Level	Actual £000s	Budgeted Level £000s	Actual	Budgeted Level	Actual £000s	Budgeted Level £000s	Actual	Budgeted level	Actual £000s	Budgeted Level £000s
April	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
May	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
June	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
July	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
August	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
September	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
October	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	6	-	-	1	-	335
November	1	6	171	273	21	5	494	288	-	6	-	423
December	34	17	847	499	56	14	1,238	427	-	22	-	682
January	44	18	1,052	519	18	19	519	482	-	22	-	682
February	23	18	622	519	2	17	268	461	-	16	-	584
March	9	8	335	315	5	6	291	299	-	6	-	425
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>3,027</b>	<b>2,125</b>	<b>102.5</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>2,816</b>	<b>1,957</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,131</b>

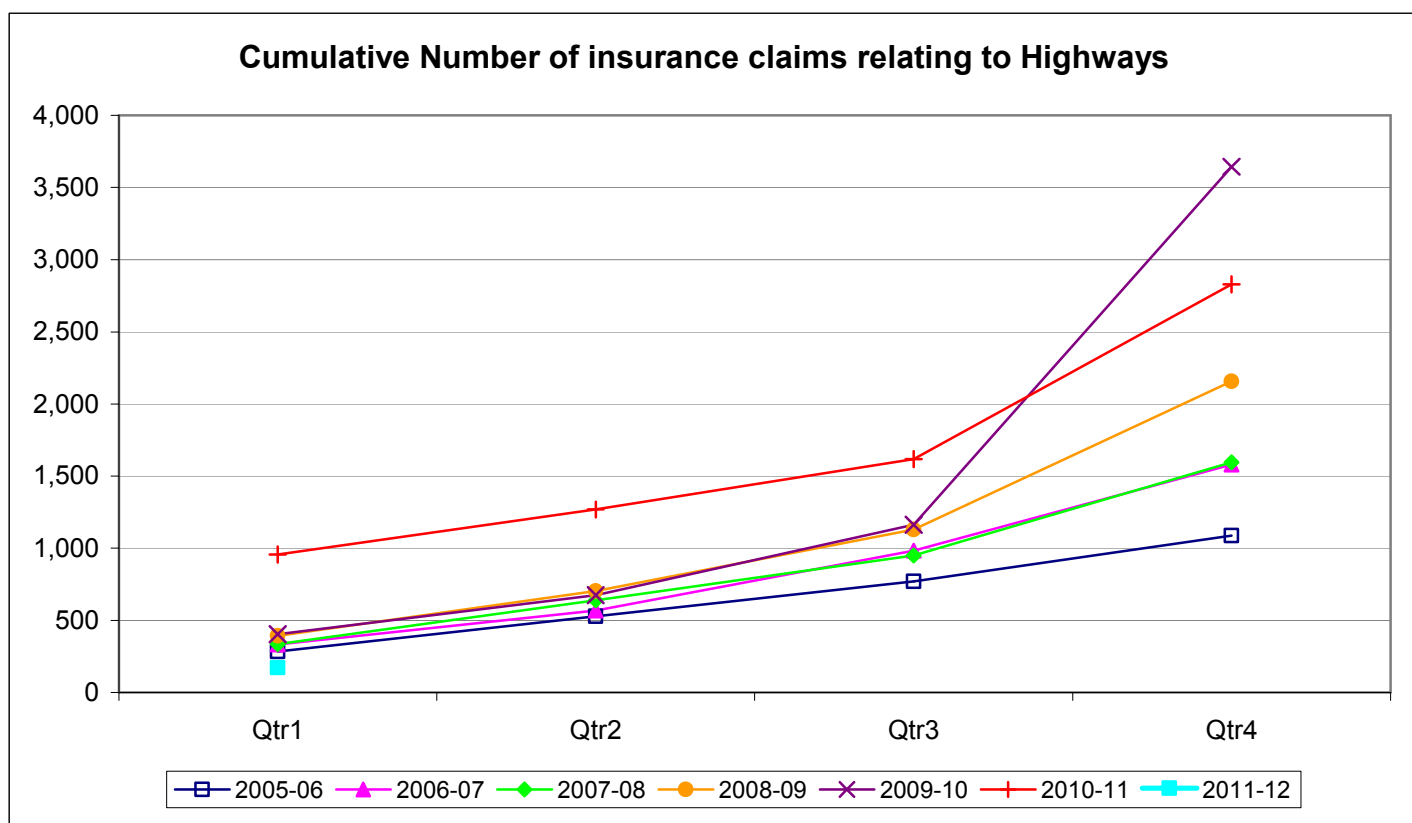


Comment:

- Under the Ringway contract, local and specific overheads and depot charges were dealt with separately and were consequently excluded whereas the new Enterprise contract is for an all inclusive price so these costs are now included, hence the increase in the budgeted cost in 2011-12 compared to previous years.

## 2.2 Number of insurance claims arising related to Highways:

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
	Cumulative no. of claims	Cumulative no. of claims	Cumulative no. of claims	Cumulative no. of claims	Cumulative no. of claims	Cumulative no. of claims	Cumulative no. of claims
April-June	286	335	337	393	404	956	172
July-Sept	530	570	640	705	675	1,268	
Oct-Dec	771	982	950	1,130	1,162	1,618	
Jan- Mar	1,087	1,581	1,595	2,156	3,643	2,830	

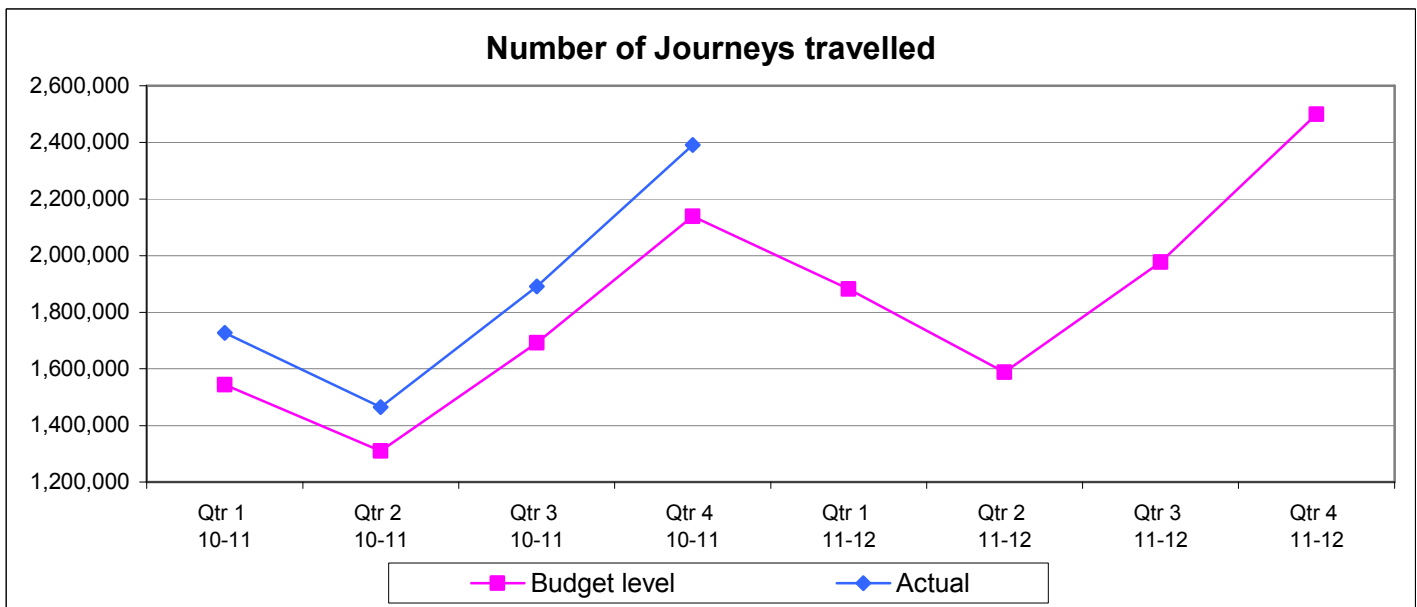
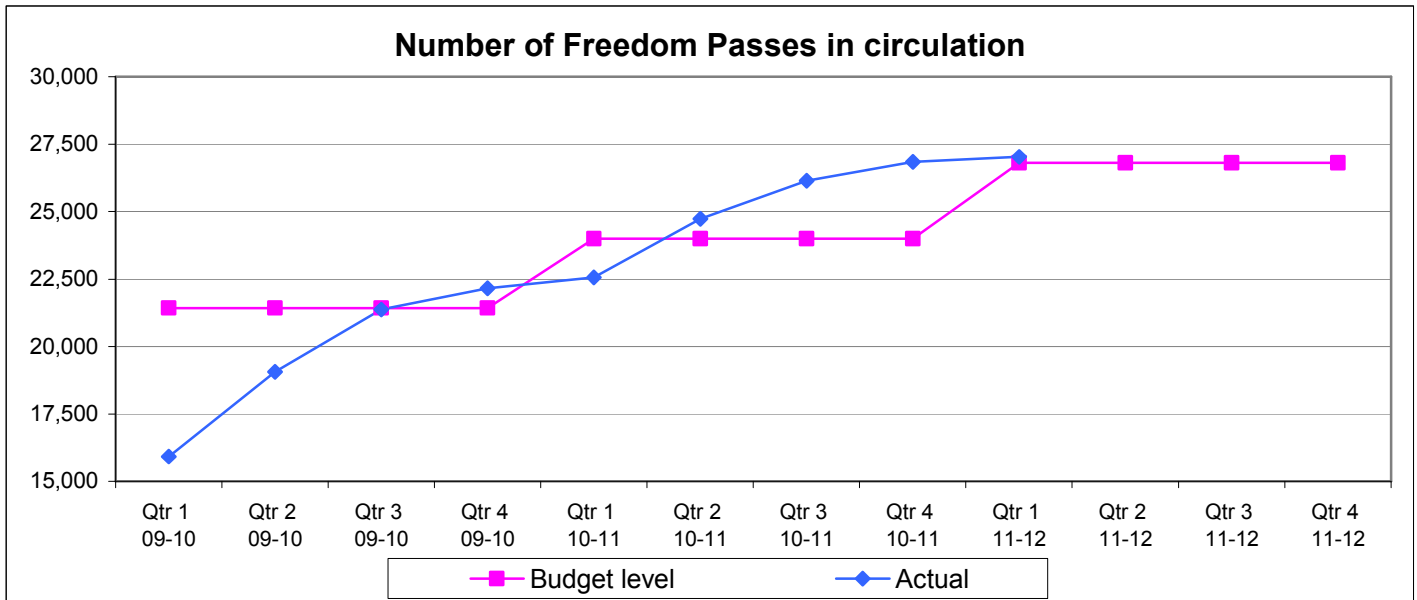


### Comments:

- Numbers of claims will continually change as new claims are received relating to accidents occurring in previous quarters. Claimants have 3 years to pursue an injury claim and 6 years for damage claims. The data previously reported has been updated to reflect claims logged with Insurance as at 26 July 2011.
- Claims were high in each of the last three years largely due to the particularly adverse weather conditions and the consequent damage to the highway along with some possible effect from the economic downturn. These claim numbers are likely to increase further as more claims are received for incidents which occurred during the period of the bad weather.
- The Insurance section continues to work closely with Highways to try to reduce the number of successful claims and currently the Authority is managing to achieve a rejection rate on 2011-12 claims where it is considered that we do not have any liability, of about 71%.

2.3 Freedom Pass - Number of Passes in circulation and Journeys travelled:

	2009-10				2010-11				2011-12			
	Passes		Journeys travelled		Passes		Journeys travelled		Passes		Journeys travelled	
	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual
<b>Qtr 1</b> April - June	21,434	15,923			24,000	22,565	1,544,389	1,726,884	26,800	27,031	1,882,098	
<b>Qtr 2</b> July - Sept	21,434	19,060			24,000	24,736	1,310,776	1,465,666	26,800		1,588,616	
<b>Qtr 3</b> Oct - Dec	21,434	21,369			24,000	26,136	1,691,828	1,891,746	26,800		1,976,884	
<b>Qtr 4</b> Jan - Mar	21,434	22,157			24,000	26,836	2,139,053	2,391,818	26,800		2,499,462	
							6,686,046	7,476,114			7,947,060	



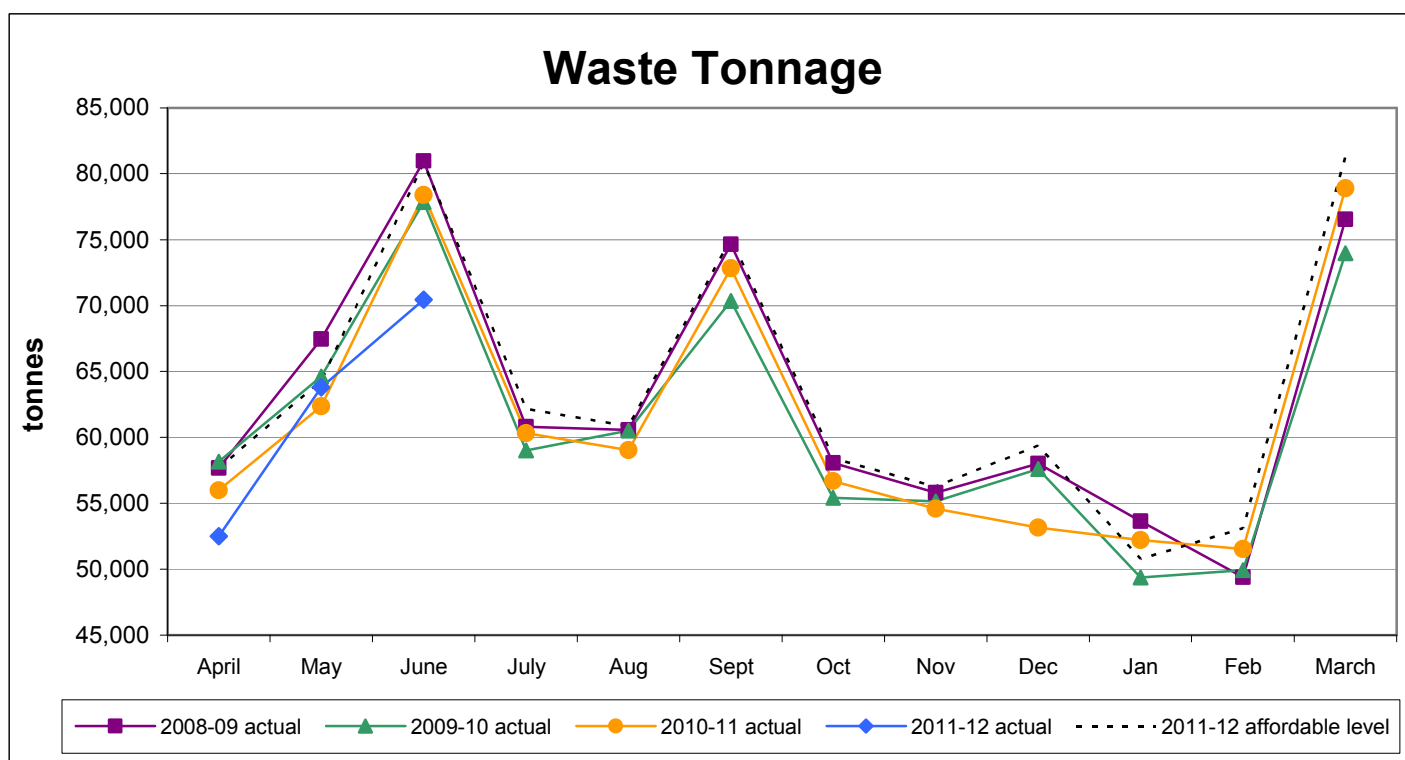
## Comments:

- The figures above for journeys travelled represent the number of passenger journeys which directly or indirectly give rise to reimbursement to the bus operator under the Kent Freedom Pass scheme. It is forecast that the increase in the cost of the pass from £50 to £100 this year will limit the increases in demand that have been experienced since the introduction of the pass. However, the number of journeys may not change in line with pass numbers as those students who are more likely not to take up a pass because of the increased cost, will be those travelling the least number of journeys, whilst those who do continue to take out the pass may increase journeys to gain maximum value from the pass. It is too early to accurately predict the effect of the increase in cost of the pass, but this should become clearer once the September applications are processed.
- The above figures do not include journeys travelled relating to home to school transport as these costs are met from the Education, Learning & Skills portfolio budget and not from the Kent Freedom Pass budget.
- The actual journey numbers travelled in quarter 1 is not yet available as the bus operators are paid on projected numbers and this is reconciled to actual journeys based on claims later on. This data is expected to be available for the quarter 2 report.
- Comparable figures for 2009-10 journeys travelled are not available because the scheme was still being rolled out and was changing radically year on year and we do not have the data in order to split out the home to school transport journeys.
- There is an issue with the accounting for the increase charge for the pass from September and it may be the case that the resulting increase in income may need to be accrued to reflect the proportion that relates to April to August 2012 (the pass relates to the academic year as opposed to the financial year). This issue will be examined and the result may affect the affordable levels highlighted above.

## 2.4 Waste Tonnage:

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	
	Waste Tonnage	Waste Tonnage	Waste Tonnage	Waste Tonnage *	Affordable Level
April	57,688	58,164	55,975	52,495	57,687
May	67,452	64,618	62,354	63,791	64,261
June	80,970	77,842	78,375	70,463	80,772
July	60,802	59,012	60,310		62,154
August	60,575	60,522	59,042		60,847
September	74,642	70,367	72,831		75,058
October	58,060	55,401	56,690		58,423
November	55,789	55,138	54,576		56,246
December	58,012	57,615	53,151		59,378
January	53,628	49,368	52,211		50,766
February	49,376	49,930	51,517		53,093
March	76,551	73,959	78,902		81,315
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>753,545</b>	<b>731,936</b>	<b>735,934</b>	<b>186,749</b>	<b>760,000</b>

\* Note: waste tonnages are subject to slight variations between quarterly reports as figures are refined and confirmed with Districts



### Comments:

- These waste tonnage figures include residual waste processed either through Allington Waste to Energy plant or landfill, recycled waste and composting.
- To date, the cumulative total amount of waste managed for the first quarter is approximately 16,000 tonnes less than the affordable level stated above.
- The current forecast as reflected in section 1.1.3.1 of this annex assumes waste volumes will be around 25,000 tonnes below budget by year end. This is a prudent forecast to allow for any potential growth in future months.
- Cumulative tonnage activity for the first quarter of 2011-12 shows a 5% reduction when compared with the corresponding quarter for the last financial year. If this trend continues, the savings forecast in section 1.1.3.1 of this annex will increase.

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**By:** Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste  
John Burr, Director of Highways & Transportation

**To:** Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 27 September 2011

**Subject:** Reducing Congestion (Management of Road Works)

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** Work carried out on the highway, whether by utility companies or Kent as the Highway Authority, can unavoidably cause disruption to highway users. It is necessary to balance the rights that people have to access services against the right to use the highway.

The various Acts in national legislation seek to balance these rights, enabling the Highway Authority to Co-ordinate work to minimise disruption to the travelling public, but equally to allow the statutory undertakers to carry out what is required of them by statute.

Kent utilises the very latest legislation and approaches with the Kent Permit Scheme to drive improvement in how work on the highway is carried out. The first year report for the permit scheme shows several areas of improvement.

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## 1. Introduction

This report addresses questions raised by a member for inclusion in September's Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The questions under the broad header of 'Reducing Congestion' are as follows:-

- The policy of the water company running large district to district water pipelines under roads.
- Unnecessary road openings or openings left un-worked for many days.
- The health and safety factors used in deciding on road closure. Who decides?

Part of the answer to these questions is progress made with the Kent Permit Scheme in its first year and part lies in national legislation and codes of practice. Key facts and references to the Kent Permit Scheme annual report and national legislation will be made in this report.

## 2. Background Information

There are principles in law that people have a right to access all available services and use the highway to pass and repass. Work carried out on the highway, whether by utility companies or Kent as Highway Authority, can unavoidably cause disruption to highway users. It is necessary to balance the rights that people have to access all available services against the disruption that may be caused in providing, maintaining, and enhancing the pipes and cables that supply these services.

The New Roads and Street Works Act and Traffic Management Acts are a methodology by which this can be accomplished and requires the Highway Authority to Co-ordinate work to minimise disruption to the travelling public but equally to allow the statutory undertakers to carry out what is required of them by statute.

To provide the Highway Authority with the powers to co-ordinate work there are two principal pieces of legislation, The New Roads and Street Works Act and the Traffic Management Act and the key clauses are summarised below:-

There are three fundamentally important sections of the NRSWA: Section 59, which places a duty on the street authority to co-ordinate works of all kinds on the highway, Section 60, places a parallel duty on undertakers to co-operate in the process; and Section 74 which covers the time to complete the work.

The Traffic Management Act which was introduced to provide the basis for better conditions for all road users. There are various parts to the Act that have been introduced over time. Part 2, Section 16 of the TMA introduced a network management duty on traffic authorities to manage their network. Part 3 of the TMA contains legislation to give effect to permit schemes. Sections 32–39 outline the broad framework within which permit schemes will operate. Part 4 includes new measures to control utility work.

To provide water and sewerage services within their licence area Water undertakers have certain rights with regard to the development of these services and the continuing maintenance of their apparatus. These are covered in Part VI of the Water Industry Act, 1991 and the key clauses are summarised below:-

s.155 Allows an undertaker to purchase compulsorily any land required by the undertaker for the purposes of, or in connection with, the carrying out of their functions, subject to authorisation by the Secretary of State.

s.158 Confers the power to lay relevant pipes for the carrying out of its functions in, under or over any street (and keep that pipe there). There is also the power to inspect, maintain, adjust, repair or alter any pipe in, under or over any street.

This section also allows for the erection of street notices indicating the position of the apparatus. This can be onto any building or fence abutting the street.

s.159 Confers the power to lay relevant pipes for the carrying out of its functions in, under or over any land which is not a street (and keep that pipe there). There is also the power to inspect, maintain, adjust, repair or alter any pipe in any such land. These powers are only exercised after reasonable notice (at least three months for new pipes but 21 days if requisitioned) of the proposed exercise has been given (except in an emergency where shorter notice periods can be given).

Note – Other Undertakers – the gas, electricity and telecoms utility suppliers all have powers to lay their apparatus within streets but are more restricted than water and sewerage undertakers in that they need to come to private agreements with regard the laying of their apparatus in, under or over private land. They do, however, have CPO powers which they can utilise should they be unable to reach an agreement with a private landowner.

The wording for this is similar for all the various utility acts.

The safety at road works sites is governed by the Code of Practice for Safety at Street Works and Road Works. This sets out signing standards and minimum widths of safety zones and traffic running lanes based on speed and the type of traffic. This is the basis for the decision on road closures. Whilst the way in which work will be carried out is discussed as part of the permit application process, the

safety of a site always remains the ultimate responsibility of the company carrying out the work. Closing a road is never taken lightly and all other options have to be explored before a closure is agreed to.

### **3. The situation in Kent**

Kent was the first authority in the UK to have a permit scheme approved. The Kent Permit Scheme was made statute and law operative from 25 January 2010. The first year report is available at

[http://kent.gov.uk/roads\\_and\\_transport/highway\\_maintenance/kent\\_permit\\_scheme.aspx](http://kent.gov.uk/roads_and_transport/highway_maintenance/kent_permit_scheme.aspx)

and some key points raised in the report are:-

- There has been an increase in the number of times all work on site is completed and the road fully restored to a permanent condition, removing the need for a repeat visit.
- Nearly 6 years occupation of a highway have been saved through extending working hours and joint working with several companies completing work at the same time. This equates to saving 1 day in every 20.
- The better planning of work has meant that the number of sites where work has been completed to its original programme or, even better, earlier has increased to 94%. Records show that for the three months preceding the permit scheme just 86% of work was completed to time.
- Complaints and enquiries have steadily reduced giving a 26% reduction at year end as better information has been made available and implementation of works have improved.

In response to the specific water main issue there have been several grid mains laid in Kent recently, many of which have been laid in private land only affecting the highway to cross the road and access the next piece of open land. An example of this is the new main from Stansted reservoir to Exerdown.

An example from the gas industry is Farningham to Hadlow Gas storage main which again used private land.

Kent can, under the New Roads and Street Works Act, deny access to a highway for new pipes if there is a viable alternative. However, it can not unreasonably withhold permission as statutory water companies have powers of their own. Recent examples in Kent where private land has not been available are where SSSI's are in place or the land is ancient woodland or a private airfield.

Whatever the situation, Kent's roadwork co-ordination teams work with utility companies to reduce inconvenience and delays arising from road works to an absolute minimum.

An example of this is Spring Hill, between Fordcombe and Penshurst where the planned duration of work proposed by South East Water to replace nearly a kilometre of water main was 8 weeks. At a site meeting it was determined that a Road Closure would be required. However, as Spring Hill is a busy through-route, directional drilling was used to expedite the programmed works. To further minimise disruption, the roadwork's co-ordinator insisted that an extended hours work programme including weekends was implemented. As a result of the stringent permit conditions and innovative work method the works were completed in just over 4 weeks.

### **4. New Legislation**

On 22 August 2011 the Government announced the start of a consultation on its new Lane Rental proposals. In essence this is an additional tool to provide an incentive to companies working on the highway to complete work at less disruptive times and in a quicker and more effective way. A quote from the consultation referring to road works is:- “Although the Government understands that such works are essential they do cause significant disruption to road users and local communities, and so is determined to reduce the adverse impacts of these works.”

## **5. Recommendations**

Specifically, the Kent Permit Scheme has enabled Kent Highway Services to better co-ordinate the timing of Road Works, so that gas, water, telecoms, electricity companies and its own works are on the same part of the road at the same time, thereby reducing the number and duration of Road Works and minimising their impact on motorists and other road users.

The Kent Permit Scheme annual report commits to several actions to continue improving in this important area:

- That we work to consolidate and improve the number of joint occupations of the highway and use of extended working hours to maximise the amount of time the highway is available for use.
- To continue to work with all work promoters to improve the quality and timeliness of information and to explore innovative ways of working. This will improve information to highway users, improve the reliability of journey choices, and deliver more effective working practices.
- To continue to promote examples of excellent work in the press to improve the public perception of road works.

KCC Highways and Transportation are keen to formally explore the possible benefits of the newly suggested Lane Rental trial. It would further incentivise those working on the highway at the most difficult locations to do so as quickly and with as little inconvenience as possible. Kent is looking positively at the potential of this proposal and seeks the support of the POSC.

### **Contact Details:**

Contact: David Latham, Roadworks & Enforcement Manager

Telephone: 01233 614110

Email: [david.latham@kent.gov.uk](mailto:david.latham@kent.gov.uk)

**By:** Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste  
Mike Austerberry, Executive Director for Enterprise & Environment

**To:** Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 27  
September 2011

**Subject:** EHW Annual Complaints, Comments & Compliments Report 2011

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**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** This report informs the POSC of the operation of the complaints, comments and compliments procedure by Enterprise & Environment, formally Environment, Highways and Waste (EHW) between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011.

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As the expectations of customers increase and they demand the same levels of service from KCC that they expect and receive from the private sector, Enterprise & Environment, formally Environment, Highways and Waste (EHW) need to actively seek ways to enhance customer service delivery and raise levels of customer satisfaction when they interact with the Directorate.
- 1.2 One mechanism used to review feedback from customers is through complaints, compliments and comments monitoring. This is an important source of 'unsolicited' customer feedback that we have used to demonstrate that we actually listen to and learn from our customers and are striving to continuously improve our customer service delivery whilst maintaining a focus on achieving 'value for money' for our citizens through local government expenditure.
- 1.3 This report provides information on complaints, comments and compliments received during 2010/11 and gives examples of where analysis of the feedback has led to service change across the Directorate. The report also outlines complaint trends, the source of complaints, overall performance on handling complaints, diversity data and an update on Local Government Ombudsman complaints.

## **2. The number of Complaints received**

- 2.1 Across EHW, we received 2272 complaints from April 2010 to March 2011 compared to the same time period in the previous year when we received 1641 complaints.
- 2.2 As our two frontline services, Kent Highway Services (KHS) and Environment & Waste (E&W) received the majority of the complaints with KHS receiving 1959 complaints (86%) in 2010/11 and E&W receiving 313 complaints (14%). No complaints were received within Integrated Strategy & Planning (ISP.)
- 2.3 A number of factors have contributed to the increase in complaint volumes including high numbers of pothole and insurance complaints in April/May 2010 and the severe weather conditions experienced across the county in December 2010.

- 2.4 We have also continued to refine how complaints have been captured and this, coupled with increasing customer expectations as they become more aware of what information they are entitled to access, has contributed to an increasing trend in our recorded complaints data.
- 2.5 Although these factors have been largely outside of our control, we have also seen an increase in complaint volumes due to the standard of work completed or where staff have been perceived by our customers as being rude or unhelpful and this is something that we have looked to address in our aim to put our customers at the centre of everything that we do. This is summarised under sections 6 – 7 of this report.
- 2.6 Comments from complaint snippets are outlined in Appendix A.

### **3. KHS Complaints**

- 3.1 During 2010/11, KHS received 1959 complaints compared to the same time period in the previous year when 1259 complaints were received. This represents a 56% increase in complaint volumes compared to 2009/10.
- 3.2 1066 of the complaints (54%) were received between April and September 2010 and several of these concerned potholes – either related to the number of potholes on Kent roads that had not been repaired followed the extraordinary weather conditions (which lasted from December 2009 to February 2010) or linked into the quality of the resurfacing works carried out. In some cases customers were unaware of the actions that had been taken to move this forward.
- 3.3 Of the 646 complaints received in Q3, 269 (42%) were received in December 2010 during the severe weather and related to the winter service. The majority of these complaints were about the perceived lack of action around clearing ice and snow from pavements and side roads.
- 3.4 The Contact Centre answered 291,953 Highways calls in 2010/11 of which less than 1% were complaint related. (0.7%) 13,210 of the calls concerned potholes, 6177 were about drainage/flooding issues and 1994 were related to the winter service.
- 3.5 893 complaints were received from October 2010 to March 2011 of which 175 (20%) were upheld and 101 (11%) were partially upheld. The remaining 617 complaints (69%) were not upheld. (This data was not captured until October 2010 so is not available prior to this date.)

### **4. E&W Complaints and Comments**

- 4.1 During 2010/11, E&W received 313 complaints compared to the same time period in the previous year when 380 complaints were received. This represents an 18% decrease in complaint volumes compared to 2009/10. The Country Parks also received 119 comments, predominately through comment cards or books.
- 4.2 Of the 313 complaints received in E&W, the majority came from two main service areas – Country Parks which received 102 complaints and the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) which received 201 complaints.

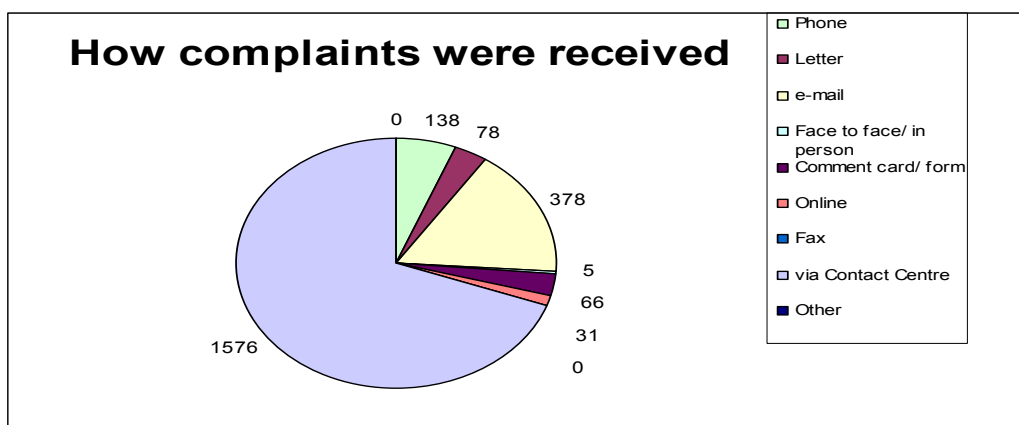
- 4.3 The key issues highlighted through the HWRC complaints related to height barriers/the twin axle policy, walking waste onto the sites, service delivery (staff behaviour, site opening/closing times) or poor communication (incorrect information being given to customers or the policy on removing waste items from HWRCs.)
- 4.4 Although the twin axle policy was introduced more than 18 months ago, it has still generated a number of complaints. Whilst some of these have been received from members of the public who are potentially trying to dispose of their domestic waste, there have also been a number of complaints from traders who have tried to dispose of their trade waste incorrectly.
- 4.5 Across the Country Parks, the key issues highlighted by customers through complaints were similar to last year and related to café queues/prices, car parking charges and litter (including dog fouling.)

**5. Complaint Handling Performance**

- 5.1 Across EHW, we received 2272 complaints from April 2010 to March 2011 compared to the same time period in the previous year when we received 1641 complaints.
- 5.2 2263 complaints (99.6%) were acknowledged within the corporate standard of 3 working days and 2094 complainants (92%) received a full response within 20 working days.)
- 5.3 Complaint response times were as follows:

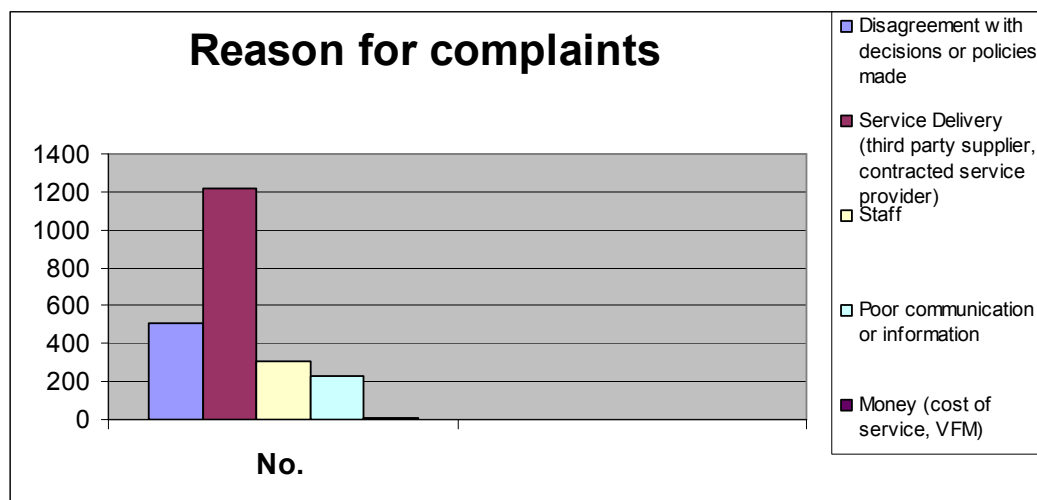
Complaint Response Times	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Complaints acknowledged within 3 working days	411 (96%)	1559 (95%)	2263 (99.6%)
Full response to complaints within 20 working days	416 (97%)	1601 (98%)	2094 (92%)

- 5.4 Complaints were received as follows:



- 5.5 1576 (69%) of the complaints were initially received through the Contact Centre and a further 378 complaints (16%) were received via email.

5.6 The reasons for these complaints were as follows:



## 6. Customer Service Improvements implemented across KHS following complaints

- 6.1 The complaints received across KHS throughout 2010/11 have provided valuable customer feedback and coupled with other sources of feedback obtained through monthly customer satisfaction surveys have enabled KHS to implement several service improvements. These have resulted in an improved focus on meeting customer expectations.
- 6.2 A number of the complaints received during the first quarter of the year concerned potholes – either related to the number of potholes on Kent roads that had not been repaired or linked into the quality of the resurfacing works carried out. In some cases customers complained because they were unaware of the actions that had been undertaken to move this forward. Lessons were learnt from the same situation last year and a new ‘Find and Fix’ repair programme of work was implemented throughout 2010 to enable these issues to be rectified quickly.
- 6.3 As part of the ‘Find and Fix’ campaign, 122,000 square metres of road was repaired and 31,000 potholes filled.
- 6.4 Improved (real time) information on pothole repairs was added to the KCC website to show what was being done and where/when this was taking place. The Contact Centre also received regular updates on the schedules of work which enabled them to provide the most up to date response to customer queries.
- 6.5 The KCC website has also been regularly updated on other current issues such as summer vegetation and street-lighting.
- 6.6 Ongoing complaints about Insurance claims were received so improved information was issued to customers via the Contact Centre and the KCC Website. The online claim form was removed as the process was much better with customers going through the Contact Centre (that way forms were sent out and any faults reported at the same time.)
- 6.7 A number of complaints were about lack of action so in addition to the 2 day call backs already offered to customers requiring further information, KHS introduced 5 day call

backs that staff must make if standard 28 day repairs turned into programmed works or works were not going to be carried out for any reason. That way customers were kept updated and provided with reasons why there may have been delays to fix faults or KHS were unable to do something.

- 6.8 There was a continued focus on communication between the Contact Centre and all KHS teams across the year to ensure the availability of correct information to resolve enquiries at the first point of contact wherever possible. This included giving the Contact Centre improved information for all KHS service areas on a new Intranet system (iWay) which enabled them to provide the most up to date information to answer customer queries and provide more realistic timescales when customers reported issues to KHS.
- 6.9 For every complaint received and logged on the KHS CSM system, the complainant was contacted to enable KHS staff to talk through the complaint and confirm what would happen next. In many cases complaints have been resolved at this stage by providing additional information to the customer.
- 6.10 To improve communication about the KHS winter policy, all customers were advised at first point of contact what the published policy was and then directed to the website to enable them to view this rather than logging the requests as enquiries. KHS staff adopted a very transparent approach with customers letting them know what could and couldn't be implemented under the policy. This led to a significant reduction (around 50%) in the number of enquiries passed to the back office and reduced the situation of customers being given the same message by another member of staff at a later date.

## **7. Customer Service Improvements implemented across E&W following complaints and comments**

- 7.1 The complaints received across E&W throughout 2010/11 have provided valuable customer feedback and have all been reviewed to see what service improvements could be put in place to increase customer satisfaction.
- 7.2 A number of visitors at the Country Parks complained via the comment cards that the queues were too long at the café and prices were too expensive. To help alleviate these issues, the following initiatives have been implemented:
- The menu in the café at Shorne Wood Country Park has been reviewed to ensure prices remain affordable to customers and in doing so a number of the regular suppliers have been changed.
  - To start to address queue times within the café, some of the items that take longest to prepare have been removed from the menu and children's lunch boxes have been added.
  - The café has been refurbished with a self service counter in order to serve customers quicker during peak times.
- 7.3 At Teston Bridge Country Park, there are two wardens who patrol in the morning and at the end of the day to collect litter. They also patrol more frequently on busy days to help reduce the amount of litter left in the park.

- 7.4 A number of the complaints and comments made at the Country Parks related to car parking charges. These charges are carefully considered to offer good value for money with all the money collected being used to help towards the cost of running the parks overall. Discount vouchers have been introduced for loyal customers as well as a season ticket for regular visitors which is then valid for use at all of the country parks.
- 7.5 To help alleviate the problem of dogs fouling at the Country Parks, several notices and posters have been put up around the car park asking dog owners to clear up after their dogs. Increased links have also been made with local district and borough dog wardens to encourage them to patrol more at the country park sites.
- 7.6 In April 2010, E&W successfully passed a Charter Mark health check review of progress which demonstrated their strong customer focus. The review was carried out by an independent external assessor who was very complimentary of the high standards of customer service and progress made by E&W since the last review.
- 7.7 All complaints received by the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) have been monitored and any patterns in complaints addressed directly with the appropriate site managers.
- 7.8 An online customer survey has been implemented on the Kent Website as part of the new electronic performance programme. Customers are also provided with the opportunity to feedback directly on contract performance through customer surveys taken by Waste Services Officers on site.
- 7.9 A brand new Household Waste Recycling Centre opened in New Romney, giving customers the opportunity to recycle more household items throughout the week.
- 7.10 Managing complaints workshops were delivered to front line staff at HWRC's to improve staff awareness of the complaint process overall and to enhance their customer service skills to prevent complaints from occurring in the first place. A guide was also produced for staff to use as a reference for details of complaint timescales and procedures.
- 7.11 In addition to speaking to Waste Management staff face to face and by telephone, customers are able to send in email enquiries to the Kentwaste mailbox. A standard response has been set up which gives the customer a timescale for response and a named person who has ownership of their enquiry. The mailbox response is tailored so that on Bank Holiday weekends customer expectations are managed with an out-of-office type response giving the timescales for a complete response.
- 7.12 Although the twin axle policy was introduced some time ago, it has still generated a number of complaints. To provide further information on the policy, the KCC website has been updated and the days and locations at which the height barriers are raised to enable bigger vehicles carrying domestic waste to enter the sites are clearly outlined.
- 7.13 A number of complaints were received on the policy of removing waste items from the Waste sites. To make this clearer to members of the public, the policy pages on the KCC website have been updated.

## 8. The number of compliments received

- 8.1 Across EHW, we received 1694 compliments from April 2010 to March 2011 compared to the same time period in the previous year when we received 1655 compliments. This represents a 2% increase in the number of compliments received compared to the previous year.
- 8.2 Compliments have provided a valuable source of learning and can be a good indicator of best practice or areas where we are getting things right across the Directorate. An example of this has been compliments received on the availability of trampers at the Country Parks.
- 8.3 597 compliments were received by KHS (25% increase on 2009/10 volumes.) Areas complimented on included the way KHS staff managed the winter service, pothole repairs, the speed of response to requests for service, overall road maintenance and the calibre of staff (hardworking, going the extra mile.)
- 8.4 Of the 1071 compliments received by E&W, the majority came from two main service areas – Country Parks which received 325 compliments and Countryside Access which received 588 compliments. Areas complimented on included the quality/content of the Explore Kent magazine and website, improvements to the café facilities at Shorne Wood Country Park, and the friendliness/helpfulness of staff (particularly at the Household Waste Recycling Centres and Country Parks.)
- 8.5 26 compliments were received by Integrated Strategy & Planning.
- 8.5 Compliments were received across EHW as follows:

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Kent Highway Services	359	479	597
Environment & Waste	576	1163	1071
Integrated Strategy & Planning	6	13	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>1655</b>	<b>1694</b>

- 8.6 Comments from compliment snippets are outlined in Appendix B

## 9. Valuing Diversity

- 9.1 Throughout 2010/11, an Equalities Monitoring Form was issued to every complainant with the acknowledgement letter to ensure that our complaints procedures are open and accessible to everyone.
- 9.2 In 2010/11, only 9 forms were returned and it has therefore not been feasible to set specific objectives from the feedback received.

## 10. Compensation

- 10.1 No compensation was paid to complainants across EHW during 2010/11 under the complaints procedure.

## **11. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints**

- 11.1 In 2010/11 the Local Government Ombudsman handled 194 enquiries and complaints about KCC overall and made decisions on 111 complaints against the Council. There were 47 complaints where the Ombudsman found no or insufficient evidence of fault by KCC, 24 complaints which the Ombudsman chose not to pursue investigations and 9 complaints which were outside of his jurisdiction.
- 11.2 In 2010/11 the Ombudsman agreed 29 local settlements with KCC. (A 'local settlement' is a complaint where, during the course of the investigation, KCC have taken or agreed to take some action that the Ombudsman considers to be a satisfactory response to the complainant.) None of these concerned highways matters.

## **12. Conclusion**

- 12.1 In 2010/11, EHW continued to adopt a robust and effective approach to the ongoing management of complaints. All complaints have been reviewed across the service areas and customer feedback has been used to improve our customer service delivery.
- 12.2 Several customer focused improvements have been implemented across EHW in 2010/11 and these are making a difference to the customer experience when they interact with Environment and Enterprise and KCC overall.

## **13. Recommendations**

- 13.1 Members of the EHW POSC are asked to:
- Note the content of this report.

## **Contact detail**

Contact: Toni Easdown, Customer Standards Officer  
Telephone: 01622 696966  
Email: [toni.easdown@kent.gov.uk](mailto:toni.easdown@kent.gov.uk)

Background documents: Annual letter from the Local Government Ombudsman

## E&E complaint snippets from 2010/11 complaints

*Seats are required round the play area for parents and disabled. (Received by one of the Country Parks)*

*The car parking fee is excessive. (Received by one of the Country Parks)*

*The café menu is being reduced almost on a weekly basis. Some weekends the queue to order food is half an hour. There is not enough outside seating. (Received by one of the Country Parks)*

*Not enough variety of food in the café, requested that we bring back toasted tea cakes and crumpets. (Received by one of the Country Parks)*

*My husband and I, both senior citizens are keen walkers and enjoy visiting the Country Parks in the area, mainly on Sundays. We recently purchased a yearly parking permit and were given a book of vouchers to use in the centres. We were therefore rather annoyed today to be told that we couldn't use the 10% discount on a Sunday. Surely this is the most popular day for walkers. It seems rather mean to be unable to obtain this discount especially as money, for many people, is 'tight', especially for senior citizens. (Received by one of the Country Parks)*

*Customer complained that she was unable to take her disabled vehicle into Sundrige and had to use the Tunbridge Wells site instead. She also said that the staff were not very helpful and they were rude. (Received by one of the HWRCs)*

*Customer went to the Swanley site on 19th April and was not helped when the site staff saw her struggling with her bags. The green waste container was also full and she wanted to know why the site was not like Dartford Heath. (Received by one of the HWRCs)*

*Mr Chandler hired a van to move some stuff and could not get into the HWRC because it was over height. He wanted to complain as this policy was not suitable for people who have hired vehicles to enable them to dispose of their waste. (Received by one of the HWRCs)*

*Pothole has been filled in within the last 3-4 days and it has not been done properly. It is very rough and untidy. It will be out within days so it is a waste of time and money. (Received by KHS)*

*The new Traffic lights at this location are causing a lot of traffic. Lights were installed because motorists were having problems getting out of Cripple Street but they are causing a lot of problem. (Received by KHS)*

*"Where are all the gritting lorries? I live in Springhead Road opposite Sainsbury's. I have not seen a gritting lorry since the snow began on Tuesday. As this road is a major trunk road into Gravesend, I would have expected regular gritting. (Received by KHS)*

*Once again I am contacting you to complain that our road has not been gritted once this year. We are in an extremely dangerous position now as our road is a solid ice pack and we are still experiencing sliding into cars at no speed what so ever. (Received by KHS)*

*Caller is not happy as whenever the grass is cut it is not tidied up it is just blown away. He said there is no footpath to his house just grass. In the winter when it is wet it becomes very muddy and it all gets walked into his house. (Received by KHS)*

*The temporary traffic lights are not working properly and the workmen are messing about and talking - not working and not sorting out the lights to flow traffic properly. (Received by KHS)*

*\*Data collated from copies of monthly complaints received by E&E.*

## E&E compliment snippets from 2010/11 compliments

Being able to go off road and explore the park with a tramper is a priceless joy. (Received by one of the Country Parks)

Kent County Council's team have done an excellent job and made a really smart footpath. Now we see as many people walking down Forge Lane in one day as we used to see in a whole year. (Received by Countryside Access)

Explore Kent Magazine - I found this copy and I can't believe how interesting and helpful this magazine is. I will be looking out for it in the future. My family and I have just got into camping so it is especially helpful. (Received by Countryside Access)

I want to compliment the Hawkinge waste site staff, particularly a young member of staff who rushed to help me. It's really refreshing. (Received by one of the HWRCs)

I want to commend the Tovil waste site staff for being helpful and courteous. They are a credit to the borough. The staff even offered my husband to wash his hands after they became contaminated with pungent grass cuttings. (Mrs Jacobs)

The Tramper was great to be able to take my family on the bunny hunt and where I had to leave my family at the fairy steps, I was able to meet them on the Ancher route. (Received by one of the Country Parks)

Thank you very much for organising and facilitating a superb day at Shorne Woods today. We have all arrived back to school a little sun kissed, a little weary and with a few bites and most importantly with big grins on our faces! The activities were just fantastic.

I wanted to say thanks for doing such a good job in repairing the road. It is easy to complain but when a good job is done it's often not mentioned. (Received by KHS)

"I would just like to say a big thank you and congratulations to all the teams that have been working on the Thanet Way doing the re-surfacing, the way they kept the traffic moving was brilliant. (Received by KHS)

I want to compliment you on how well KHS staff kept the roads clear of snow during the bad weather. (Received by KHS)

I would like to thank the contractors for all the hard work filling the potholes along this road; they have done a really good job. Thank You. (Received by KHS)

I've been meaning to do this for ages.....I just wanted to thank all of the men and women who helped keep our roads gritted and salted during the winter months and who are now up to their eyes in pothole repairs. I know how hard your teams work, often with little thanks. (Received by KHS)

Please would you pass on my compliments to the Highways department. I rang to let them know that a street lamp wasn't working in Effingham Crescent and by 9.30 the next morning the light was replaced. ((Received by KHS)

I have lived on the estate for 30 years. Today I have seen 2 young men working on the road. All day they have worked almost non stop. Not only have they worked extremely hard and "got on with it", the quality of their work is excellent. (Received by KHS)

**To:** Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**From:** Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste  
Mike Austerberry, Corporate Director of Enterprise and Environment

**Date:** 27 September 2011

**Subject:** Connecting with Communities – 2010/11 Annual Report on Consultation, Engagement and Involvement Activity in Environment Highways and Waste.

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to update POSC Members on the activities that took place between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011 to consult, engage and involve all those who are interested in or involved with our services.

**FOR INFORMATION AND COMMENT**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the main aspects of consultation, engagement and involvement within KCC during the financial year 2010/2011. It also informs Members on both existing and future work and highlights the changes the Council intends to make to further embed and extend engagement processes.

1.2 Whenever KCC makes a decision about improving or changing its services, it needs to be confident the decision is properly informed by public opinion. The reduction in budget allocation for public services means that it is likely that all residents will be impacted upon in some shape or form. At this time, more so than any in the recent past, it is important that the public has the opportunity to have a say about the services they receive. Public opinion should be viewed as an important tool for Councillors - the local decision makers - in making difficult decisions about where and how to reduce or redesign services.

## **2 KNOWN INFORMATION**

2.1 It is important that we target our information and use our resources in the most cost efficient way. KCC has used customer insight to ensure that we provide information in a way that suits people best.

2.2 This area of work is driven by the information and data we hold about residents of Kent, including the feedback we get from customer comments and complaints. KCC also makes use of a number of data and information sources including 'MOSAIC' to provide insight into the background and lifestyles of residents across the whole of Kent.

2.3 Getting an insight into how customers are interacting with KCC, what they want and who they are is crucial to improving access to services. This insight can help KCC to predict what people will want and need in future. We can also find out who is or isn't interacting with the Council as well as over/under provision and over/under utilisation.

2.4 The Research and Intelligence Unit has corporate responsibility for all of the research and data areas outlined below:

- Demography
- Deprivation
- Economy and the labour market
- Land use:
  - Commercial
  - Housing
- Retail and town centres
- Customer Insight (MOSAIC).

2.5 The Unit collects, collates, processes, analyses and maps data for a wide range of projects across the whole of Kent County Council and beyond. All of the latest data and publications on these topics can be found on the Research and Intelligence website [www.kent.gov.uk/research](http://www.kent.gov.uk/research)

2.6 This information is used before we go out to consult with the public. The knowledge gained through consultation is then fed back across KCC.

## **3 THE WAYS IN WHICH WE'VE INVOLVED LOCAL PEOPLE IN 2010/11**

3.1 There are a number of different opportunities for residents, service users and other interested groups to influence decision-making and service delivery across all our functions. The main objectives for these consultation and involvement activities are:

- To find out what customers think about the services they have received or want to receive

- To find out what particular groups or audiences think about a given theme
- To find out what interested or affected people think about a particular proposal, policy or plan
- To include groups of interested or affected people in a decision-making or policy-making process
- To include groups of interested or affected people in service design and delivery, in order to improve those services
- To include groups of interested or affected people in the assessment or evaluation of services
- To involve residents in the recommendations of member community grants.

3.2 There is also a variety of methods and tools that are used to meet these objectives, as shown below:-

**Satisfaction Surveys:** As well as measuring satisfaction levels and monitoring them over time, surveys often include other questions which enable the services to act on the information provided to fix problems or take opportunities. The surveys are usually carried out using questionnaires (paper, email or online) or are done over the phone. They target service users and tend to be carried out by units with high levels of frontline customer contact.

**Forums, groups and panels:** The purpose of this sort of activity is to examine issues in greater depth and begin to explore solutions to problems or to identify new opportunities. They are 'qualitative' methods and the forums, groups and panels we run are generally groups which meet regularly to talk about a particular service. They typically involve around 5 to 15 people per group, and may be organised around a particular service, location or issue.

**Participative events and processes:** The main purpose of this sort of activity is to exchange views, opinions and ideas, and often making decisions together.

**Market research:** Main purpose of this sort of activity tends to be to generate actionable information about people, communities and groups who are, or who could be, using a service which we provide. We use it to identify opportunities for developing certain areas of our businesses.

**Participatory Budget events (You Decide):** The main aims have been to engage a wide section of the local community in the grant Decision-making process.

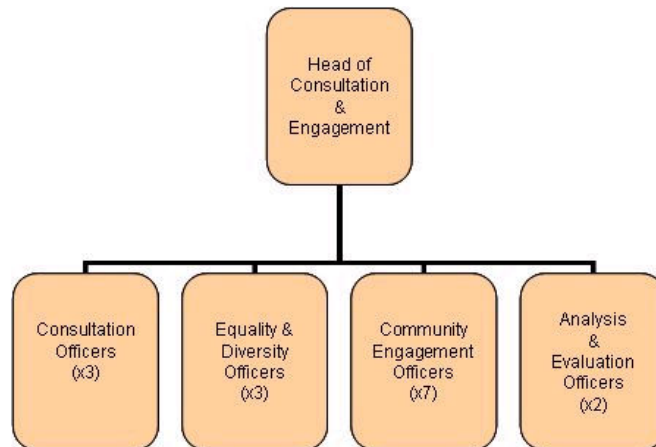
## 4 WHAT WE HAVE DONE

4.1 Detail of the consultation, engagement and involvement work carried out during 2010/2011 by Environment Highways and Waste Directorate is presented in Appendix 1.

## 5 RESTRUCTURE

The current team of Community Engagement Managers transferred into the Customer and Communities directorate in April this year, and as part of KCC's need to make substantial savings over the next three years, the division in which they are a part (Communications and Engagement) has undergone a restructure.

As officers are appointed to new roles within the restructure, the Consultation and Engagement team will be structured as follows:



The new team will have fifteen officers with different specialist areas all working much more seamlessly to support Consultation and Engagement.

5.1 Though good progress has been made there is still scope for further improvement and consistency in consultation and engagement practice across the Council. From September 2011 the consultation and engagement team will ensure:

- KCC does not target the same audience segment by age/interest/geography at the same time with two different consultations
- All questions asked are constructed in an appropriate and unambiguous method to ensure answers that are relevant to the topic and to an agreed accuracy
- A log of all consultations is kept so that there is visibility of the contact being made by KCC with its customers – and its impact.

5.2 The corporate responsibilities are for setting and supporting coherent standards, giving advice, challenging the business need and creating the opportunity for working with partners to share costs and findings.

5.3 We still need to make it even easier for local people to have their say and we also need to use their views and suggestions more effectively and - crucially - ensure we publicise what difference those views made when a final decision was taken. We will continue to explore how digital technologies could

be better deployed to make engagement work cheaper, quicker, more responsive, more relevant and more convenient for residents and businesses.

5.4 Participatory Budgeting (PB) events are a useful tool for engaging with communities where residents see that they can have an impact on the decisions to be made. The grant allocation process was a helpful starting point and PB has shown it has the potential to be a valuable tool across a wider range of discretionary service decisions.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The examples in Appendix 1 indicate the extent to which Environment Highways and Waste Directorate is using information from service users and other interested groups to influence its decision making. This is in keeping with the statutory **duty to involve** (even though the Coalition Government has indicated this is due to be repealed, the same duty will remain but become non-statutory), the Equality Act 2010 and with the culture being fostered across the Authority.

6.2 Twin pressures are influencing our consultation, engagement and involvement work. Firstly there is pressure to improve the quality of the work we do, which arises from problems that other authorities have had when they have been judged to have acted incorrectly or inappropriately. This pressure concerns what we consult about, when we consult and how much detail we use to inform the consultation process and the ultimate decision making.

6.3 The second pressure arises from our budget position and the need to reduce significantly the overall amount of our resource committed to consultation, engagement and involvement.

6.4 Because some consultation work, for instance, must be done and must be done to a particular standard and timescale, the outlook for the future can be summarised as **doing less work overall but doing the work we do better and more efficiently and effectively.**

6.5 This work will continue during 2011-12 and three particular priorities will be:

- Undertaking a rigorous and mandatory assessment of all consultation, engagement and involvement proposals at a very early stage, in order to identify those projects that are not a priority and will not be pursued and also those that are a priority and don't just need to be done but need to be done in a demonstrably exemplary manner.
- Exploring how digital technologies could be better deployed, to make engagement work cheaper, quicker, more responsive, more relevant and more convenient for residents and businesses.
- Using every opportunity to keep down the costs of consultation exercises; minimise duplication and to make best use of the analysis and information that is collected.

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to **NOTE** the contents of this report and **COMMENT** on the priorities identified in section 6 above.

*Director:* Jill Rawlins  
*Title:* Interim Director of Communications and Engagement

*Contact Officer:* Denise Eden-Green  
*(Appendix)*  
*Title:* Project Manager  
*Contact Number:* 01622 221934  
*Email Address:* denise.eden-green@kent.gov.uk

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## Appendix 1

### Environment Highways and Waste Directorate 2010/11

This report summarises the consultation, engagement and involvement activities of the Environment Highways and Waste directorate for the year to March 2011. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, some services were moved to the Customer and Communities Directorate, and other services were brought in to become part of the new Environment and Economy Directorate.

For the purpose of this report, activities by the following services are addressed:

- Kent Highway Services
- Environment and Waste
- Integrated Strategy and Planning

Some of the services are universal, such as the disposal of the county's household waste, and also the maintenance of Kent's network of over 5,000 miles of roads by Kent Highway Services. EHW delivers more specialist services, such as heritage conservation, and until 1<sup>st</sup> April, managed services such as KCC's 12 Country Parks, and the Countryside Access Service.

Kent County Council's Sustainability and Climate Change team operates from within EHW (now Enterprise and Environment), and has a KCC-wide remit.

#### **1.1 Statutory consultation**

Some teams in EHW carry out statutory functions, such as managing the county's 'Definitive Map' and the strategic planning function, working with stakeholders to produce strategies for the county such as the Local Transport Plan and the Minerals and Waste Development Framework. The Planning Applications team are responsible for managing the formal planning approvals process for major developments (such as waste and mineral sites) and KCC's own community developments such as new schools or highway schemes.

Consultations on these issues are communicated to interested stakeholders using a range of different media, and advertised on the council's consultation portal on the main website, ([www.kent.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.kent.gov.uk/consultations)).

- **Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF)** As Kent's Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, KCC is responsible for managing the development of the Minerals and Waste Framework for the county. The stages in the development of the MWDF are outlined in legislation.

The consultation on the first phase to develop the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy took place from 24<sup>th</sup> September to 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

Issues and possible options for consideration were set out, asking for feedback from a wide range of stakeholders.

The consultation on the second phase took place from 31<sup>st</sup> May to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2011. The consultation period was extended by two weeks due to the scale of interest from the public, to ensure everyone had a chance to respond.

- **Local Transport Plan 3 - consultation.** In April 2011, the county council adopted its third Local Transport Plan (LTP), which covers the period from 2011 to 2016. The consultation on the draft LTP took place between 30<sup>th</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010. The Plan will help deliver the regeneration of Kent as outlined in our 20-year transport delivery plan, entitled '*Growth Without Gridlock*'.
- **Planning Applications:** Kent County Council deals with applications relating to the county council's own developments, waste developments and minerals developments. All Planning Applications considered by the Planning Committee are subject to formal public consultation prior to decision.

At intervals, all Planning Authorities are required to update and revise their local validation documents relating to the information needed to accompany planning applications. From 18th October to 13th December 2010, there was a public consultation on KCC's draft new validation documents, and the final version was published on March 31st 2011.

- **Changes to the Definitive Map of Kent's Public Rights of Way (PRoW).** The Definitive Map is the legal record describing the position and status of every public right of way in Kent. KCC is responsible for the statutory process to change Definitive Map. Proposals to add, remove or divert a public right of way must be advertised to allow the public to comment or challenge. When confirmed, the information is supplied to Ordnance Survey, who use it to show public rights of way on their maps.

## ***1.2 Surveys and engagement to improve customer service or manage performance***

Customer feedback is essential to provide information to help us improve our services. This applies not only to directly delivered services such as the Country Parks, but also to services that are provided under procured contracts, such as the management of our Household Waste Recycling Centres.

- **Customer comment cards at Country Parks:** Comments on catering at Shorne Woods have resulted in a review of the café layout and a new system for service is in place. Comments on retail have resulted in a review of retail policy. The Country Parks Annual Report now

includes a section on how information gathered from visitor feedback has been used to improve the service.

- **Household Waste Recycling Centres** – onsite surveys and online feedback survey on [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) These are used to monitor customer satisfaction with the Household Waste Recycling Centres, and are essential to enable the monitoring of contractors' performance.
  
- **The Highways Tracker Survey** During November and December 2010 the annual Kent Highway Services Tracker Survey was carried out amongst a sample of Kent residents, county members, district members, parish and town councils. The survey concerns satisfaction with the condition of roads, pavements and street lighting, issues relating to feelings of safety and perceptions of congestion. The final report is available on the council's website at:  
<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/roads-and-transport/road-policies/KHS%20Tracker%20Survey%202010.pdf>  
Comparative data provided year-on-year by the Tracker survey is extremely helpful in evaluating KHS' performance over time. In order to secure this for the future, more cost effective ways of carrying out this work are actively being sought.
  
- **Contact Centre Call-back survey for Kent Highway Services.** This is a monthly 'temperature-check' to obtain customer feedback on requests for service from the highway-using public. Contact Centre agents call back 100 customers from those who have logged requests for service in proportion to the volume of calls received. Therefore, if 25% of calls relate to street-lighting, 25% of the calls are made to customers who have logged street-lighting requests. The summary is reported in the core monitoring report to Cabinet. It is discussed at the monthly balanced scorecard meeting with the Director and reported each month to Team-leaders. Action is then taken to address any issues.
  
- **Explore Kent engagement activity with walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.** As part of the Countryside Access service, Explore Kent provides information for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders in Kent. Development of the Explore Kent guided walks website is part-funded by the Eastern and Coastal Primary Care Trust, with the objective of delivering improved health outcomes by engaging with target communities in the east of Kent.

Explore Kent promotes a healthy lifestyle with information about walking routes, guided walks, and events such as the annual Walking Festival. Interactive engagement with walkers, cyclists and riders is carried out online, using social media and feedback from events via the online contact form.

### **1.3 Participative groups and events**

Our engagement with user panels and community representative groups demonstrates our commitment to enabling public participation in the development of policy and to obtaining specialist user advice on improving services.

- **The Kent Reference Panel (KRP)** The KRP is a two-way communication between KHS and representatives from key access groups across the county. The panel helps to inform policy development and provide invaluable advice on projects and strategies, and cascades information to local Access Groups in the county. Our engagement with the panel demonstrates our commitment to work with the local community and involve disabled people in improving accessibility to the highways network.
- **The Kent and Medway Gypsy and Traveller Forum.** Meetings are held with Gypsies and Travellers to discuss important issues. Meetings are held four to six monthly at various venues across Kent.
- **Countryside Access Volunteer Warden scheme.** KCC manages Kent's 4,200 miles (6,700km) of public footpaths, bridleways and byways providing free access to the county's countryside and coast. Volunteer Countryside Access Wardens help keep these valuable routes open and easy to use. The volunteers help by cutting back vegetation, fixing path signs and being the 'eyes on the ground' for their community by reporting back any bigger problems. There are over 240 trained wardens in Kent.

### **1.4 Consultations to help us improve our strategies or policies**

Added weight and authority can be given to the development of strategies and policies by consulting with stakeholders and partners to obtain their views and input. By this means, buy-in can be achieved from a broad range of interested parties, strengthening the final document.

- **'Growing the Garden of England: a strategy for environment and economy in Kent for the next 20 years,** was revised through consultation with an extensive set of partners during the summer and autumn of 2010. The strategy was launched in July 2011. It supports the revised Vision for Kent, to deliver social, economic and environmental wellbeing for Kent. It sets out how we will achieve a high-quality Kent environment, low carbon, resilient to climate change and that has a thriving 'green economy' at its heart.
- **Rail Action Plan for Kent** Following extensive public engagement and consultation, the final version of the Rail Action Plan for Kent

informs KCC's submission to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the awarding of the contract for the delivery of the Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF) from 2014 onwards. (See case study at the end of this appendix).

- **Consultation on a Standard Palette of (construction) Materials for use in Public Realm Schemes.** This consultation was carried out with development partners to identify fit-for-purpose materials for use in the public realm that offer opportunities to deliver viable, good quality, safe and readily maintainable schemes that respect local context. It took place in January and February 2011.

## Shaping strategy and policy

### The Rail Action Plan for Kent

**The Rail Action Plan for Kent is a 15-point plan** that was developed after extensive consultation with local rail and commuter groups, MPs and Kent's Parish, District and County Councils. It aims to shape the next Kent rail franchise from 2014.

The plan took shape through two rail summit events involving a wide range of stakeholders. The draft plan was made available for public consultation from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011. The draft plan was revised and presented to the Transport Minister, Theresa Villiers at a meeting in Westminster by Leader of Kent County Council, Paul Carter and KCC Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste, Bryan Sweetland.



The main recommendations are:

- High Speed services all day to Deal & Sandwich
- Reduced journey times along the North Kent line from the East Kent coast via Medway to Victoria & Cannon Street
- New City service all day on Maidstone East line to Blackfriars (Thameslink from 2018), to reinstate City connections from Maidstone and West Mailing
- Retain Cannon Street for Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Tunbridge Wells
- New direct service to Gatwick Airport

Leader of Kent County Council Paul Carter said:

“The Rail Action Plan is about standing up for Kent's rail users and making sure we get the service we want.

“In bringing together the views of rail travellers and local communities across Kent, our Rail Action Plan is a unique and persuasive contribution to the Department for Transport as it begins to shape the next Kent Rail Franchise.”

To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy, Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 27 September 2011

From: Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste

Subject: Winter Service Policy 2011/12

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: The report seeks Member support for approval of the Winter Service Policy (as amended September 2011) and the Winter Service Plan that supports it.

### **1. Introduction**

On 7<sup>th</sup> July 2011 the Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report setting out proposals for revising the Winter Service Policy. By a majority vote, Members of the committee agreed to amend the Policy enabling parish councils to purchase their own salt bins and place these on the highway.

### **2. Financial implications**

The allocated budget for winter service for 2011/12 is £3,159,581

### **3. Forecast and ice prediction service**

As in previous years the weather forecast service will be provided by Meteogroup and the ice prediction service by Vaisala Ltd. The three year contract for the weather forecast service expires next year and arrangements will be made to go out to tender for a new three year contract.

### **4. Winter Service Policy and Plan**

The Winter Service Policy is presented at Appendix A. Members' attention is directed to section 8.2.4 which sets out the arrangements for parish councils to purchase salt bins. The Winter Service Plan has been updated and discussions have been had with our new contractor Enterprise plc to ensure that plans are aligned. The plan is available for Members to view on request from Kent Highways and Transportation. In addition district plans have been developed in conjunction with district councils across the county and these will be used together with the policy and plan to deliver the winter service.

### **5. Equality impact assessment**

As reported in July, an initial screening has been carried out on the winter service policy and work is in progress for a full impact assessment to be made and the results of this will be reported to a future meeting of this committee.

## **6. Conclusion**

The Winter Service Policy and Plan set out Kent Highways and Transportation's arrangements to deliver a winter service across Kent. Both documents have been updated and revised. This includes the provision for parish councils to purchase, manage and maintain salt bins.

## **7. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee accept the Winter Service Policy and Plan as amended September 2011

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Background documents:

None

### **Contact details**

**Contact:** Carol Valentine, Highway Manager (West)

**Telephone:** 08454 242800

**Email:** [carol.valentine@kent.gov.uk](mailto:carol.valentine@kent.gov.uk)

**HIGHWAYS AND  
TRANSPORTATION**

**WINTER SERVICE  
POLICY STATEMENT**

**(As amended September  
2011)**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Winter Service - Statutory Duty**

1.1.1 The legal position relating to the highway authority's responsibility in respect of winter service is set out in an amendment to section 41(1) of the Highways Act 1980 (c.66) (duty of highway authority to maintain highway): -

“(1A) In particular, a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.

1.1.2 The County Council recognises that the winter service is essential in aiding the safe movement of highway users, maintaining communications, reducing delays and enabling everyday life to continue. It is very important to both road safety and the local economy. The winter service that the County Council provides is believed to be sufficient so far as is reasonably practical to discharge the duty imposed by the legislation.

1.1.3 The County Council, as highway authority, takes its winter service responsibilities extremely seriously. However, it is important to recognise that the council has to prioritise its response to deal with winter weather due to the logistics and available resources.

1.1.4 KCC Highways and Transportation provides the winter service through a contractual arrangement between Kent County Council, Enterprise plc, Jacobs Group and Telent.

### **1.2 Winter Service Standards**

1.2.1. In order to respond as quickly and efficiently as possible to its responsibilities KCC Highways and Transportation has adopted policies and standards for each of the winter service activities and these are detailed within this document. The operational details for the winter service activities in Kent are detailed in the Winter Service Plan 2010/11 that complements this Policy Statement.

1.2.2 KCC Highways and Transportation provides a winter service which, as far as reasonably possible will:

- Minimise the loss of life and injury to highway users, including pedestrians, and preventing damage to vehicles and other property
- Keep the highway free from obstruction and thereby avoiding unnecessary hindrance to passage

### 1.3 **County Council Maintained Highways**

1.3.1 KCC Highways and Transportation delivers the winter service on Kent County Council maintained highways.

### 1.4 **Motorways and Trunk Roads**

The Department for Transport (DfT) is the highway authority for motorways and all-purpose trunk roads in Kent and the Highways Agency acts for the DfT in this respect. Responsibility for the operational maintenance of motorways and trunk roads lies with the Highways Agency. KCC Highways and Transportation therefore has no responsibility for winter service activities on these roads. However, close liaison exists between the Highways Agency consultants over action taken during the winter service operational period within respective areas of responsibilities.

## 2. **WINTER SERVICE OBJECTIVES**

### 2.1 **Salting**

#### 2.1.1 Objectives:

- To prevent the formation of ice on carriageways (precautionary salting)
- To facilitate the removal of ice and snow from carriageways and footways (post salting).

#### 2.1.2 Roads to be Included within Primary Precautionary Salting Routes

Routine precautionary salting will be carried out on pre-determined primary precautionary salting routes covering the following roads:

- Class 'A' and 'B' roads
- Other roads included in the top three tiers of the maintenance hierarchy as defined in the Kent Highway Asset Maintenance Plan. These are termed Major Strategic, Other Strategic and Locally Important roads.
- Other roads identified by Highway Managers (based on local knowledge and experience and input from relevant local stakeholders including district and parish councils), that are particularly hazardous in frosty/icy conditions

2.1.3 It would be impractical and financially draining to carry out precautionary salting of footways, pedestrian precincts or cycleways and therefore no provision has been made. However, there will be a certain amount of salt overspill onto footways and cycleways when precautionary salting is being carried out on adjacent carriageways. Post salting of footways and cycleways will be carried out on a priority basis during severe winter weather, as resources permit.

### 2.2 **Snow Clearance**

#### 2.2.1 Objectives:

- To prevent injury or damage caused by snow
- To remove obstructions caused by the accumulation of snow (section 150 of the Highways Act 1980)
- To reduce delays and inconvenience caused by snow

2.2.2 Snow clearance on carriageways will be carried out on a priority basis as detailed in paragraph 6.2.

- 2.2.3 Snow clearance on certain minor route carriageways will be carried out by local farmers and plant operators, who are under agreement to the County Council, using agricultural snow ploughs and snow throwers/blowers. Snow clearance on other minor route carriageways will be carried out as resources permit. Some minor routes and cul-de-sacs will inevitably have to be left to thaw naturally.
- 2.2.4 Snow clearance on footways and cycleways will be carried out on a priority basis as detailed in paragraph 6.3, utilising KCC Highways and Transportation staff and district council staff where agreements exist.
- 2.2.5 Due to current budget constraints snow fencing will only be erected in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the appropriate Highway Manager.

### 2.3 **Roadside Salt Bins**

- 2.3.1 Objective:  
To provide motorists and pedestrians with the means of salting small areas of carriageway or footway, where ice is causing difficulty, on roads not covered by primary precautionary salting routes.

## 3. **WINTER SERVICE GENERAL**

### 3.1 **Winter Service Contracts**

- 3.1.1 Winter service in Kent is included within the Term Maintenance Contract awarded to Enterprise plc. This contract was awarded in 2011 and is currently in place until 2016.

### 3.2 **Winter Service Season**

- 3.2.1 In Kent the weather can be unpredictable and the occurrence and severity of winter conditions varies considerably through the season, and from year to year. Severe winter weather is most likely to be experienced in December, January and February but ice and snow can occur earlier or later. To take account of all possible winter weather the County Council's Operational Winter Service Period runs from mid October to mid April. Exact dates for the coming winter are given in the Winter Service Plan.

### 3.3 **Salt usage and alternatives to Salt**

Pre-wetted salt and dry rock salt is used across the county for precautionary and post salting. In cases of severe snowfall, alternatives to salt will be used including sharp sand and other forms of grit.

- 3.3.1 A number of alternative materials to salt are now available which can be used for the precautionary and post treatment of ice and snow. The cost of these is extremely high and there are also environmental disadvantages associated with most of them. Salt will therefore, for the time being, remain in use throughout Kent for the precautionary and post treatment of snow and ice.

## **4. WEATHER INFORMATION**

### **4.1 Weather Information Systems**

4.1.1 An effective and efficient winter service is only possible with reliable and accurate information about weather conditions, at the appropriate times in the decision making process. KCC Highways and Transportation utilises the best weather forecast information currently available allied to the latest computer technology to ensure that decisions are based on the most accurate data available at the time.

### **4.2 Weather Reports**

4.2.1 During the operational winter service period KCC Highways and Transportation will procure detailed daily weather forecasts and reports specifically dedicated to roads within Kent.

### **4.3 Winter Duty Officers**

4.3.1 Experienced members of staff from KCC Highways and Transportation will act as Winter Duty Officers, throughout the operational winter service period, on a rota basis. The Officer on duty is responsible for the following:

- Receiving forecast information from the forecasting agency
- Monitoring current weather conditions
- Issuing countywide salting instructions for primary and secondary routes
- Issuing the Kent Road Weather Forecast

4.3.2 The Kent Road Weather Forecast will be issued daily containing information about expected weather conditions together with any salting instructions. The Winter Duty Officer will also be responsible for issuing forecast updates and any revised salting instructions when necessary. The Kent Road Weather Forecast will be sent to KCC Highways and Transportation, contractors, neighbouring highway authorities, and other relevant agencies.

## **5. SALTING**

### **5.1 Planning of Precautionary Salting Routes**

5.1.1 Primary precautionary salting routes will be developed from those lengths of highway that qualify for treatment, whenever ice, frost or snowfall is expected. Each primary precautionary salting route will have a vehicle assigned which is capable of having a snowplough fixed to it, when required. In times of severe snowfall and/or extreme ice formation, dedicated vehicles will be assigned to patrol key strategic routes. Secondary precautionary salting routes will also be developed from other important highways for treatment during severe winter weather conditions.

### **5.2 Precautionary Salting**

5.2.1 Precautionary salting will take place on scheduled precautionary salting routes on a pre-planned basis to help prevent formation of ice, frost, and/or the accumulation of snow on carriageway surfaces.

### 5.3 **Post Salting**

5.3.1 Post salting will normally take place on scheduled precautionary salting routes to treat frost, ice and snow that has already formed on carriageway or footway surfaces. Post salting may also be carried out on roads or sections of road beyond the scheduled precautionary salting routes.

### 5.4 **Spot Salting**

5.4.1 Spot salting will normally take place on parts or sections of scheduled precautionary salting routes either to help prevent formation of ice, frost and/or the accumulation of snow or as treatment to ice, frost and the accumulation of snow that has already formed on carriageway or footway surfaces. Spot salting may also be required on roads and footways, or sections thereof, beyond the scheduled precautionary salting routes.

### 5.5 **Instructions for Salting of Primary Routes**

5.5.1 Instructions for precautionary salting of primary routes will be issued if road surface temperatures are expected to fall below freezing unless:

- Road surfaces are expected to be dry and frost is not expected to form on the road surface
- Residual salt on the road surface is expected to provide adequate protection against ice or frost forming

5.5.2 Instructions for precautionary salting of primary routes will also be issued if snowfall is expected.

5.5.3 The Winter Duty Officer will issue routine instructions for precautionary salting of primary routes, for the whole of Kent, by means of the Kent Road Weather Forecast.

5.5.4 The Winter Duty Officer or Highway Manager may issue instructions for post salting and spot salting.

### 5.6 **Instructions for Salting of Secondary Routes**

5.6.1 The Winter Duty Officer will issue instructions for precautionary salting of secondary routes if heavy frost, widespread ice, or snow, is expected.

## 6. **SNOW CLEARANCE**

### 6.1 **Instructions for Snow Clearance**

6.1.1 The Winter Duty Officer and/or the Highway Manager nominated representatives are responsible for issuing snow clearance instructions. Snow clearance will initially take place on scheduled primary precautionary salting routes, based on the priorities given in para. 6.2.1. Subsequently, snow clearance will take place on secondary salting routes and other roads, and footways, on a priority basis.

6.1.2 Snow ploughing shall not take place on carriageways where there are physical restrictions due to traffic calming measures, unless it has been deemed safe to do so following a formal risk assessment and a safe method of operation documented.

### 6.2 **Snow Clearance Priorities on Carriageways**

6.2.1 Snow clearance on carriageways should be based on the priorities given below:

- A229 between M20 and M2, A249 between M20 and M2, A299 and A289;
- Other "A" class roads;
- All other roads included within primary precautionary salting routes;
- One link to other urban centres, villages and hamlets with priority given to bus routes;
- Links to hospitals and police, fire and ambulance stations;
- Links to schools (in term time), stations, medical centres, doctor's surgeries, old people's homes, cemeteries, crematoria and industrial, commercial and shopping centres;
- With the approval of Highway Manager, other routes as resources permit.

### 6.3 **Snow Clearance Priorities on Footways**

6.3.1 Snow clearance on footways should be based on the priorities given below:

- One footway in and around shopping centres, and on routes to schools (in term time), stations, bus stops, hospitals, medical centres, doctor's surgeries, old people's homes, industrial and commercial centres and on steep gradients elsewhere;
- One footway on main arteries in residential areas and the second footway in and around local shopping centres;
- With the approval of Highway Managers, other footways, walking bus routes and cycleways as resources permit;
- District council staff will be commissioned to clear agreed priority footways in their local areas. Arrangements are in place between the KCC Director of Highways and Transportation and district council Chief Executive Officers.

### 6.4 **Agricultural Snowploughs for Snow Clearance**

6.4.1 Agreements will be entered into whereby snowploughs provided and maintained by KCC Highways and Transportation are assigned to local farmers and plant operators for snow clearance operations, generally on the more rural parts of the highway.

### 6.5 **Snow Throwers/Blowers for Snow Clearance**

6.5.1 KCC Highways and Transportation also has a number of snow throwers/blowers, which are allocated to operators on a similar basis to the arrangements for agricultural snowploughs.

## 7. **SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

### 7.1 **Persistent Ice on Minor Roads**

7.1.1 During longer periods of cold weather Highway Managers may instruct salting action to deal with persistent ice on minor roads which are not included within the precautionary salting routes and invoke arrangements with district and parish councils to take action in their local area.

## **7.2 Ice and Snow Emergencies**

- 7.2.1 During prolonged periods of severe and persistent icing, or significant snow fall, delegated officers may declare an ice or snow emergency covering all or part of the County. In this event Highway Managers will establish a “Snow Desk” and implement a course of action to manage the situation in either of these events.

## **7.3 Provision of Roadside Salt Bins**

- 7.3.1 Roadside salt bins can be sited at potentially hazardous locations for use by the public, to treat ice and snow on small areas of the carriageway or footway.
- 7.3.2 Salt bins will be filled using a mixture of sharp sand or other grit material and salt and will be refilled twice during the winter season. In the event of severe weather further refills will be carried out as time and resources permit.
- 7.3.3 Assessment criteria for installing a new salt bin have been devised and are shown at Annex 1. The form will be used by Highway Operations staff to assess requests from parish councils, community groups etc, A sum of money will be allocated from KCC Highways and Transportation to provide these salt bins.

## **7.4 Payment for salt bins**

- 7.4.1 Once a salt bin has been approved by the assessment criteria, the cost of installation, filling and maintenance will be borne by KCC Highways and Transportation.
- 7.4.2 Additionally one tonne bags of a salt/sand mix will be provided to parish councils who request them at the start of the winter season for use in their local area.

## **7.5 Member Highway Fund**

- 7.5.1 Members are able to purchase salt bins using their Member Highway Fund in line with the usual application process. All requests will be subject to the assessment criteria in section 8.1.3

## **7.6 Parish councils**

- 7.6.1 Parish councils are permitted to purchase salt bins and place them on the highway once a suitable location has been approved by a qualified engineer from KCC Highways and Transportation. These salt bins ideally should not be yellow and should be clearly identified by a label as being the property of the parish council. KCC Highways and Transportation will have no obligation to fill or maintain these salt bins. However, the Highways Manager may agree to refill parish-owned salt bins upon request, subject to availability of salt and staff resources and the payment by the parish of an appropriate charge.

## **8. BUDGETS**

### **8.1 Winter Service Budget**

8.1.1 The budget for the annual operational winter service period is based on salting the primary precautionary salting routes on 55 occasions. The main budget is managed by the Head of Highway Operations as a countywide budget.

### **8.2 Ice and Snow Emergencies**

8.2.1 There is no specific budget allocation within KCC Highways and Transportation for ice or snow emergencies. The cost of dealing with periods of icy conditions or significant snowfalls will be met by virement from other planned programmes of work on the highway or from special contingency funds for emergencies.

## **9. PUBLIC AND MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS**

### **9.1 Neighbouring Authorities and other Agencies**

9.1.1 The Kent Road Weather Forecast containing details of the winter service action for Kent will be transmitted daily to neighbouring highway authorities and other agencies so that activities can be co-ordinated regionally.

### **9.2 The Media**

9.2.1 Communicating with communities, businesses and emergency services during winter is essential to delivering an effective service. Local media organisations will be informed when instructions for salting of primary precautionary salting are issued. The Kent County Council Internet site will be updated regularly and the Highway Management Centre will issue road updates.

### **9.3 Pre-Season Publicity**

9.3.1 It is important that the public are aware of and understand the KCC Highways and Transportation approach to winter service. The Kent County Council website will have practical advice and guidance including information on the location of salt bins and self help for communities to encourage local action where appropriate.

### **9.4 Publicity during Ice or Snow Emergencies**

9.4.1 Liaison with the news media, particularly local radio stations, is of the utmost importance and links will be established and maintained particularly during ice or snow emergencies.

## Annex

### SALT BIN ASSESSMENT FORM

Location of Salt Bin	Assessment Date	Assessed by
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	Characteristic	Severity	Standard Score	Actual Score
(i)	Gradient	Greater than 1 in 15 1 in 15 to 1 in 29 Less than 1 in 30	75 40 Nil	
(ii)	Severe Bend	Yes No	60 Nil	
(iii)	Close proximity to and falling towards	Heavy trafficked road Moderately trafficked road Lightly trafficked road	90 75 30	
(iv)	Assessed traffic density at peak times	Moderate (traffic group 5) Light (traffic group 6)	40 Nil	
(v)	* Number of premises for which only access	Over 50 20 - 50 0 - 20	30 20 Nil	
(vi)	Is there a substantial population of either disabled or elderly people	Yes No	20 Nil	
<b>TOTAL</b>				

\* N.B. Any industrial or shop premises for which this is the only access is to be automatically promoted to the next higher category within characteristic (V).

Any site for which the summation of the weighing factors equals or exceeds 120 would warrant the siting of a salt bin.

By: Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager

To: Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
27 September 2011

Subject: **SELECT COMMITTEE - UPDATE**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To update the Committee on the current topic review programme and to invite suggestions for future Select Committee topic reviews.

### Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme

1. (1) There are currently no Select Committee topic reviews in the work programme which fall under the remit of this Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(2) The Select Committee work programme consists of the following:-

- Dementia – Chairman Mrs T Dean – Has completed its evidence gathering and is considering its draft report which will be shared with key stakeholders before being finalised.
- Educational Attainment at Key Stage 2– Chairman Mr C Wells – The Committee is preparing to visit a number of schools in October/November 2011.
- The Student Journey – Chairman Mr Kit Smith, has nearly completed its evidence gathering sessions and has interviewing key stakeholders including representatives from business, education and obtaining evidence from young people. It will continue gathering evidence until October 2011. An indication of its emerging key areas of recommendation have been submitted to the relevant Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Board.

### Suggestions for Select Committee topic reviews

2. (1) At the meeting of the Customer and Communities Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, under its Crime and Disorder remit, on 8 July 2011 it was agreed that a proposal for a Select Committee topic review on Domestic Abuse would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board on 2 November 2011 for their approval.

(2) If Members have any topics that they would like to put forward for consideration for inclusion in the future topic review programme could they contact the Democratic Services Officer for this POSC.

3. **Recommendation** Members are asked to note the Select Committee topic review update and to advise the Democratic Services officer of any items that they would like to suggest for inclusion in the Select Committee topic review programme

Karen Mannering  
Tel No: 01622 694367  
e-mail: [karen.mannering@kent.gov.uk](mailto:karen.mannering@kent.gov.uk)

Background Information: *Nil*

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item 1

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