

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

18 February 2010

**Question by Mr M J Harrison to the
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development**

The 2012 Olympics are becoming known as “the Green Games”. I am reliably informed that there will be a need to supply over 14 million meals for the four to five week duration of the games. The Government has stated that they would wish for as much as possible of the produce etc to be sourced locally and if not, then as much from the United Kingdom as possible.

My question to Mr Lynes is: What, if anything, are we here as KCC doing to cash in on this golden opportunity to supply through perhaps our own “Produce in Kent” company as much as possible from Kentish farmers and producers?

Answer

KCC has been working on a range of initiatives to back Kent’s business sector in securing contracts for London 2012.

Kent staged the regional Olympics event for business last June and specifically held a breakfast meeting with Kent businesses to further explain the associated business opportunities.

KCC has also funded, in partnership with Business Support Kent, an advanced Olympic bid writing seminar for businesses to provide further assistance.

Produced in Kent is also working with the South East Food Group and London Food Links to keep members updated and have recently launched a step by step online guide for local producers entitled 'Feeding the Olympics' which can be found on the Produced in Kent website.

To date, almost 1,900 businesses have registered on the official London 2012 ‘Compete For’ website and we are already receiving news that Kent companies are winning contracts.

We are committed to building upon this success and are planning a further series of workshops one of which will specifically focus on Kent’s food sector.

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**Question by Mr N Collor to the
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste**

The movement of freight vehicles through Kent is so finely balanced that any incident, large or small, can upset the balance causing congestion, more often in the Dover and Folkestone areas when the problem is associated with movements at either the Port of Dover or Eurotunnel.

When the problem is likely to last for some time and result in heavy congestion, there is an apparent lack of urgency from the authorities to take any action.

Does the Cabinet Member agree with me, in the light of the forecast increase in freight traffic and aspirations for Growth without Gridlock, that the County Council organise an investigation at an early date to ensure that in the future local businesses can operate and emergency vehicles are able to get through?

Answer

The problems occurring in the week before Christmas when the port of Calais and Eurotunnel were closed has highlighted the need for a new contingency plan when not only lorries but large numbers of passenger cars are caught up in Operation Stack.

I propose to set up a high-level meeting with the Police, Highways Agency, Dover District Council, Eurotunnel, Dover Harbour Board and the ferry operators to initiate an investigation on how such problems can be ameliorated in the future.

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**Question by Mrs A Allen to the
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste**

Could the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste advise me of how many developments remain unadopted and are in contravention of the original planning/legal agreements?

Answer

A list of development sites in the County for which a Section 38 agreement has been entered into but are not yet adopted will be provided to Mrs Allen by KHS Officers.

Currently there are no clauses within the Agreement that require adoption to take place within a certain timescale other than specifying that the "Works" shall be completed to specified standards before the first occupation of dwellings.

The County Council launched the "Cold Case" project in April 2008 to tackle the backlog of outstanding adoptions inherited from the District Councils when Highways was brought back in house in April 2005. Phase 1 of the project concentrated on outstanding adoption with agreements signed prior to 2002, the project was a great success with over 160 out of 170 cases concluded. Phase 2 is currently underway to deal with agreements signed between 2002 to 2005.

Adoption policies have been reviewed and the Model Agreement has been revised to streamline the adoption process with the introduction of penalty clauses. The new Model Agreement will be used from 1 April 2010.

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**Question by Mr T Prater to the
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste**

Will the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste confirm that Kent Police contacted Kent County Council on Wednesday to get roads treated and would he also agree that the response by Kent Highways to the snowfall on 10th / 11th February was totally inadequate in Folkestone and surrounding areas, leading to main roads being completely impassable, cars being abandoned and a number of road accidents.

Answer

There is always very close liaison between Kent Police and Kent Highway Services during these situations. Kent Police are fully aware of the primary and secondary salting routes, but will contact KHS if they feel additional action is required. I have no record that they did this last Wednesday.

I totally disagree with the statement that the response was inadequate. All primary and secondary routes were treated in accordance with the policy agreed by the County Council and KHS responded to all other requests as resources permitted. A snow emergency was declared and conditions were exceptional. Mr Prater must understand that with the best will in the world treating roads does not prevent significant snowfall or drifting.

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**Question by Mrs T Dean to the
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste**

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste please say which Councils in Kent offered assistance to KCC in clearance of snow and gritting of pavements, and explain why these offers were declined?

Answer

KHS has a detailed plan for dealing with ice, frost and snow events. There are also Local plans for each district which includes priority lists for treatment in each locality. Prior to the winter season, Community Delivery Team Leaders in some districts had already made contact with district colleagues.

We have had 3 snow emergencies since 17th December, and severity of conditions not experienced for 30 years.

In the period prior to Christmas, I am aware that two Councils did make contact towards the end of the emergency period but the offers were not taken up. With hindsight I wish these offers had been accepted.

The situation in January improved with extensive collaboration with districts to help clear local roads and pavements. Kent Commercial Services were also used effectively. All districts responded with offers of assistance which was taken up, with any charges being withdrawn for work carried out during normal office hours. The joint response worked very well and proved to be effective.

Similar positive joint working has operated in the East of Kent during the February heavy snow falls.