

From: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: **Scrutiny Committee – 20 July 2022**

Subject: Short Focused Inquiries - Work Programme

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to receive an update on the Section 106 Inquiry and for the Committee to prioritise suggestions, put forward by Members, for Short Focused Inquiries (SFIs) and agree the work programme. The work programme will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis.

1. Progress on S106 SFI

- a) At its meeting on 7 July 2021, the Scrutiny Committee agreed that the next Inquiry should be into Section 106 contributions in Kent.
- b) The membership of the Inquiry Group consists of the following Members of Kent County Council:
 - i. Mr Tony Hills
 - ii. Mr Neil Baker
 - iii. Mr Alister Brady
 - iv. Mr Nigel Collor
 - v. Mrs Trudy Dean
 - vi. Ms Sarah Hamilton
 - vii. Mr Mark Hood
 - viii. Mr Andrew Kennedy
 - ix. Mr Harry Rainer
 - x. Mr Robert Thomas
- c) The Inquiry's evidence gathering programme has concluded. The Inquiry Group gathered oral evidence from a variety of sources, including: KCC's Cabinet Member for Economic Development and relevant KCC officers; the Chairman of the Kent Chief Planning Officers Group, and the Chairman of the Kent Developers Group. The Group also received written evidence from sources including West Sussex County Council, planning consultants, house builder companies and KCC's Members and Officers.
- d) The Inquiry's report is currently being produced and the draft report will be circulated to the SFI Group shortly for comments. A meeting is planned to take place soon after the summer for the Group to comment on the report and advise any amendments, before the report is submitted to the next Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 September 2022.

2. Introduction

- a) Following the move from Select Committees to Short Focused Inquiries, allowing members to carry out topic reviews using virtual meetings and over a shorter period of time, the following SFIs have taken place:
 - i. [Visitor Economy in Kent](#)
 - ii. [The Farming Economy](#).
 - iii. Home to School Transport (report pending following SEND Transport Audit Review)
 - iv. S106 SFI (in progress)
- b) These Inquiries resulted in recommendations to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member requiring a response within two months of receipt. Responses to both Inquiries have been circulated to the Scrutiny Committee and [published on our website](#).
- c) All Members of the Council were asked if there were topics they would like to put forward for possible inclusion on the SFI work programme and those received are listed below.

3. Next Review Topic

- a) At the December meeting of Scrutiny Committee Members agreed that on conclusion of the S106 SFI an Inquiry into Highways Improvement Plans would begin.
- b) Members are asked to prioritise the other suggestions which have been put forward for SFIs:
 - i. **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Health Inequalities** – Paul Bartlett and Karen Constantine.
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller GRT communities are known to face some of the most severe health inequalities and poor life outcomes amongst the UK even when compared with other groups experiencing exclusion, and with other ethnic minorities. On average, Gypsy and Traveller people have life expectancies 10-25 years shorter than the general population and live around 6 less years in good health before life expectancy is taken into account. For instance GRT are 6 times more likely to die by suicide than the general population. 60% of their Roma beneficiaries had poor physical health including cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, hepatitis B, cardiovascular and respiratory ailments and MS. 3,000 families in the U.K. who are living on the roadside have limited or no access to basic water and sanitation.
 - ii. **Improved delivery of dementia care** – Andrew Kennedy
To investigate ways the Dutch model of dementia care can be rolled out across Kent, based also on the model created in Dover at the Harmonia Dementia Village. This will bring higher quality of life for those living with dementia, respite care for carers, remove stigma and isolation for those with dementia and seek greater value for money in this health market.

- iii. **To better understand the condition of the KCC property portfolio** together with the steps taken to ensure their adherence to the current (at time of writing) legislation and guidelines for energy saving methods and ventilation – Andy Booth
To allow Members and tax payers of Kent to see openness and transparency in the condition of the KCC ageing property portfolio.

4. Next Steps

- a) The proposed process, as previously, is for a background briefing to be produced for Members by the relevant directorate. Officers in Democratic Services will also scope out the issue and agree with the Chair the people from whom the Committee should hear. A limited number of informal briefings will then be arranged for Members of the Inquiry Group. Subsequent to these briefings having taken place, the Inquiry Group will need to informally discuss and agree a draft report featuring key findings and any recommendations it wishes to make. This report will then need to be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for formal consideration. If the report and recommendations are agreed by the Scrutiny Committee, while meeting formally, the report will be submitted to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member(s) for a response within two months.
- b) The work programme will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis.

5. Recommendation:

That the Scrutiny Committee:

- a. note the progress made on the S106 SFI
- b. confirm that the Highways Improvement Plans SFI will commence in late August early September.
- c. agree the future work programme for SFIs and set out the priority order; and
- d. agree to delegate to Officers the arrangement of the next Inquiry as outlined in the report.

6. Author Contact Details

Anna Taylor
Scrutiny Research Officer
03000 416478
anna.taylor@kent.gov.uk

Work Programme – Short Focused Inquiries July 2022

Priority Order

TOPIC	BACKGROUND
S106 Agreements	Currently in progress
Highways Improvement Plans	Agreed by Scrutiny Committee December 2021

Completed.

- a) [The Farming Economy](#). (final report January 2021)
- b) [Visitor Economy in Kent](#) (final report August 2020)
- c) Home to School Transport (report pending following SEND Transport Audit Review)