

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

13 May 2010

Question by Mr M J Harrison to the
Cabinet Member for Finance

Will the Cabinet Member please help with my coming to terms with the Budget Book 2010/11 in particular the sums of money relating to Home to School Transport? I note on page 27 it refers to SEN Transport at a cost of £470,000. Then on page 30 it reads Mainstream Home to School Transport -£417,000 and on page 31 it reads Home to School/ College Transport £36,470,000!

My question to the Cabinet Member is: "Are these sums correct? Are they to be added together and is the sum for SEN Transport correct? And finally I am unable to find a figure for Social Services Special Needs Transport, is there such a budget line?"

Response

The figures on pages 27 and 30 represent **the year on year changes** to the mainstream home to school, SEN and home to college transport budgets. The SEN and home to college transport budgets are both under pressure due to additional demands and we have had to put additional funding into both (£470k into SEN and £280k into home to college). Conversely demand for mainstream home to school transport is declining and we have made a savings of £417k and £270k (also on page 30). The £417k is the full year effect of the roll out of the Freedom Pass in 2009/10 and £270k is due to falling secondary school rolls.

The figure of £36,470k on page 31 is the **total planned expenditure** on mainstream home to school, SEN and home to college transport from the subjective analysis. This is made up of the following amounts (together with the relevant page number in the Budget Book):

- £16,175k on Mainstream Home to School Transport (page 24)
- £18,740k on SEN Transport (page 19)
- £1,787k on Home to College Transport (page 22 on the line headed Awards)

This expenditure is partially offset by income from selling vacant seats to those not eligible for free transport (£484k on mainstream home to school and £367k on home to college). This reduces the **net cost of mainstream home to school, SEN and home to college transport to £35,851k.**

There is not a Social Services Special Needs Transport in quite the same way as SEN home to school transport. We do provide transport assistance to Social Services clients (children, adults and older people) particularly to day care facilities. **The total spend in Children's Social Services is £1,544k (page 31), Adult Social Services is £1,321k (page 43) and Communities £55k (page 63).**

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Question by Mr M J Vye to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

Will the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education outline the measures she is taking to ensure any instances of mishandling of serious cases at the local level are communicated swiftly up to her?

Response

I am at a loss to understand what Mr Vye means when he asks about the 'mishandling' of serious cases. Every child death in Kent is reviewed by the Child Death Overview Panel and, if the case meets the criteria for a serious case review, an independent review is undertaken by Kent Safeguarding Children Board. This is a multi-agency review which is chaired by an independent chairman. The report is written by an independent report writer. As Cabinet member I am notified of these cases immediately by the managing director, and briefed appropriately.

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**Question by Mr G Koowaree to the
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste**

Will the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste advise Members of the Protocol for informing the Local Member of any changes or cancellations to the schedule of Highways works approved by the Joint Transportation Board in their division?

RESPONSE

The formal protocol of informing members of any schemes added or removed from the approved schedules is via the Joint Transportation Boards (JTB). This would be by an update report to the next available JTB. I would suggest that if Mr Koowaree has an issue with a specific scheme he initially speaks with his Community Liaison Officer who can follow up on the matter.

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**Question by Mr P W A Lake to the
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste**

Last month we were told that a small army of small and medium- sized specialist tarmac companies were to start work fixing potholes on the county's minor roads, and it is good to hear that more than 68,000 have been fixed to date. So will the Cabinet Member for Environment Highways and Waste tell me why Ringway has been employed to do this work in Sevenoaks and Swale? Surely this company under its contractual arrangements should be wholly engaged in repairing and relaying our roads in Kent which are in such an appalling state, because, if normal maintenance work is not undertaken, we will end up with still more potholes in the future.

RESPONSE

The award of contracts for road patching and pothole repairs followed EU and KCC procurement procedures. Such procedures must not discriminate against any contractors who submit valid tenders.

To encourage a number of contractors to be involved in this initiative, the tender documents limited contractors to winning a maximum of 2 districts each.

Following the competitive selection process, Ringway won 2 districts, these being Sevenoaks and Swale.

Ringway continue to supply the appropriate crews and resource through the main contract to meet the requirements for normal maintenance work.