

From: Nick Chard, Cabinet Member, Environment, Highways & Waste

To: EHW Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14 September 2010

**Subject: Connecting with Communities – Annual report on EHW engagement activities**

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: The purpose of this report is to update Members with developments regarding consultation, engagement and involvement within Environment Highways and Waste directorate from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31 March 2010.

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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 Environment, Highways and Waste directorate from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010, and highlights how we are further embedding engagement activities within our services.

**1.2** Additional information on EHW engagement activities is summarised below, which draws together the various involvement activities, and how they have been utilised to improve services.

**1.3** The term 'consultation, engagement and involvement' covers a wide range of activities that are undertaken within the directorate to ensure that our services are effective, properly targeted and good value for money. It also covers aspects of our statutory work such as managing the public rights of way network and planning functions. Data and feedback obtained enable us to monitor contracts, to improve services, to understand the impact on communities of developments or changes of use, and to gather input from partners about key strategic work that Kent County Council is responsible for leading.

**1.4** Environment Highways and Waste has provided a number of opportunities during 2009/2010 for residents, service users and other interested groups to influence decision-making and service delivery. The main ones and examples of activities during the year include:

- Formal consultations on strategies or policies (e.g. The Integrated Transport Strategy)
- Surveys and questionnaires (e.g. The Highways Tracker Survey and the Country Parks Visitor survey)
- Workshops and Focus Groups (e.g. The Coastal Action Network workshop event)
- Complaints, Compliments and Comments (e.g. via the quarterly and annual reports on complaints, compliments and comments)
- Engagement activity in carrying out full Customer Impact Assessments
- Feedback cards (e.g. Comment cards available at Country Parks)
- Special interest networks, groups and forums (e.g. The Kent Reference Panel and the Kent Countryside Access Forum)
- The use of online social media (e.g. Explore Kent's use of Twitter and Facebook)
- Stakeholder engagement & events (e.g. KHS Community Liaison teams' engagement activities and events with parishes)
- Consultation with residents or communities on planning and planning policy issues (e.g. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in planning policy)

- Partnership working which involves elements of engagement activity (eg Countryside Access in partnership with East Kent NHS Trust working with a group of East Kent GPs to improve health outcomes in deprived wards by encouraging patients to walk and exercise more)

## **2. Public involvement in Environment Highways and Waste**

**2.1** Most engagement activity in EHW takes place as an integral part of project planning and delivery, as it is an essential part of ensuring effective and responsive services. The annual business planning cycle is used to highlight planned activity, and to provide visibility for other services and directorates to see where it is possible to share information, groups and networks.

**2.2** Existing sources of customer insight such as MOSAIC or reports on calls to the Contact Centre are used in project planning to assist the focus of effort on particular communities or geographical locations. This supports effective evidence-based policy or service development and helps target attention on areas of greatest need. A good example of using customer insight in the Countryside Access Service is a project currently in progress using MOSAIC analysis of local communities to target the recruitment of volunteer Countryside Access Wardens who work to help maintain our 4,200 miles of footpaths, bridleways and byways.

**2.3** To enable them to carry out this work effectively, and to assist with joining up with other KCC services, staff are supported with 'bridging sessions' and briefings at team meetings on KCC's engagement policy and strategy, on the 'Duty to Involve', on good practice in public involvement, and sources and the use of customer insight. Officers are encouraged to use the most cost-effective and appropriate ways to engage with target groups, and to share information where feasible.

**2.4** A significant part of the directorate's engagement activity is governed by statutory functions. These include the maintenance of the Definitive Map of all public rights of way in Kent, the development of county-wide policies and strategies on waste, minerals and transport planning, and the development control processes associated with large-scale planning applications such as those for schools, waste management facilities and quarrying sites.

**2.5** Some involvement activity is carried out by staff attending routine meetings of groups such as Parish Councils, or community groups. Members of the Sustainable Transport team routinely attend meetings to listen to and engage with the issues raised so that services can be improved where budgets allow. For example, timetable changes can be made to ensure better connectivity between modes of transport and improve accessibility. The teams of Community Liaison Officers in KHS play an important role in ensuring good communication with parish councils who have responsibility for raising awareness of local transport issues at county level.

**2.6** It is important to ensure that our services are accessible to all, and in order to do this we take advice from groups with particular service needs. One example of this is the Kent Reference Panel, which is chaired by Cabinet Member Nick Chard. The KRP is set up to focus on accessibility issues and Highways. This group has provided input to help with the prioritisation of drop-kerbs, and has also advised on ways to improve on-street furniture. The group also acts as a critical friend when policies and procedures are updated or can be called on when a Customer Impact Assessment is carried out on a policy, strategy, project or service.

**2.7** With the introduction of the improved consultation directory on the KCC website, engagement and involvement activity will increasingly become more joined up and enable members of the public to be better able to have their say on the way we provide services.

### 3. Work in 2009/2010

A summary of EHW consultation, engagement and involvement activity is provided here.

#### 3.1 Environment and Waste

Teams in Environment and Waste have used engagement and consultation activities in a range of ways to support business improvement.

**3.1.1 The Country Parks service** organised focus group meetings with young people to find out more information about how much young people use country parks, the reasons for non-use and to understand ways of encouraging them to use our country parks more. The exercise cost around nine hours of staff time, and provided invaluable insight to help improve the Country Parks service.

Most of the young people who attended had not heard of the country parks, and could not easily access them because of the lack of good transport links. Improved methods of communication were discussed and also the types of activities that young people might prefer. The information was used to inform the Country Parks' communication Plan and the Parks' Activity programmes. As a result:

- The Country Parks' web pages have been updated and improved
- Social media training has been undertaken by the Country Parks Communication Officer
- Geocaching<sup>1</sup> has been rolled out at all the country parks
- Outdoor theatre productions have been staged at Shorne Woods CP
- Food and ice-cream are now available at Teston Bridge and Manor Park CPs
- Bush-craft activities have been piloted at Parkwood Wildlife Site
- A Halloween event is scheduled at Manor Park CP

The Country Parks Service commissioned a survey of the park users to find out who their customers are, what activities they like to see at the Parks and what their views of the country parks are. Visitors were interviewed to find out their demographic profile, where they lived, what they thought of the service including management, catering, retail offer and events. An external organisation was commissioned to develop a small research project interviewing visitors at three different parks on different days of the week, and analysing and reporting on the results. The cost of the survey, research staff, analysis and reporting was £3,635.

The information has been used to inform the Country Parks Plan and also marketing activities to increase visitor numbers. A review of events is currently under way and a range of options is being costed. 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.

Visitors were asked if they would like to receive feedback, and this has been provided where they agreed. An e-newsletter is being developed to provide news online, with the first edition scheduled for September 2010. The Country Parks Annual Report now includes a section on how information gathered from visitor feedback has been used to improve the service.

**3.1.2 Countryside Access Service** The Countryside Access Improvement Plan includes a series of key objectives to improve the rights of way network, with linked priorities concerned with improved quality of life in Kent.

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<sup>1</sup> **Geocaching** was identified as one of the activities that would encourage young people to visit Country Parks. It is a countryside treasure hunt involving the use of hand-held GPS receivers. There is a global network of 'caches' with coordinates publicised via the internet.

**3.1.3 The Sheppey Cycle Routes** project is highlighted by the Countryside Access Improvement Plan, and is linked to the health and wellbeing of Sheppey residents and also to increased tourism opportunities. A consultation took place in February and March 2010, with the objective of obtaining views on the proposed routes. Responses were returned via a questionnaire on the KCC website, and through meetings in the Gateway at Sheerness and at the parish hall in Leysdown, facilitated with partners. An update of the project and responses to the consultation have been included within local newsletters and made available on the Explore Kent website.

**3.1.4 Explore Kent** undertook a customer survey to obtain feedback from their readers about the magazine. The feedback has provided a better understanding of what distribution methods are effective, what information is useful, and what improvements the readers want to see. Questionnaires were included in issues 17 & 18 of the magazine, and 230 responses were received. Findings are reported back to readers in subsequent editions of the magazine, and information received is used to improve the website. There were no additional costs to undertake this survey, as the questionnaire was printed with the magazine.

**3.1.5 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)** are establishing a mechanism during 2009/2010 for monitoring customer satisfaction of contractor performance in relation to set criteria. Feedback obtained will provide data for Key Performance Indicators in relation to contracts management. The system being established will allow Waste Services Officers to obtain data directly from site users whilst they are undertaking their routine inspections of the sites in relation to other contractual obligations. An online survey on customer satisfaction with Household Waste Recycling Centres is being made available on the KCC website, to give users additional means of telling us how well the HWRCs are serving their needs.

The results of the customer satisfaction surveys feed into an existing contract report detailing overall performance on a site-by-site basis, which is shared with the contractors at high level meetings.

### **3.1.6 Changing Public Attitudes and Behaviours on Waste/Recycling Issues**

In the three years from 2007/08 through to 2009/10 inclusive, it is estimated that KCC has received a £1.2 million benefit in avoiding waste disposal costs owing to the Waste Management Service's public engagement programmes. In 2009/10, the benefit is estimated as £500K of that overall financial benefit. The two principal programmes were around supporting the sale of subsidised compost bins to residents, and delivery of the 'Love Food Hate Waste' (LFHW) programme. In addition to the avoided disposal costs of £1.2million, KCC also benefitted from securing approximately £1.5million of external support from the national Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) over the three years in order to deliver the compost bin and LFHW programmes. Whilst that Government support ceased at the end of 2009/10 owing to the national financial deficit, the benefits of the programmes are continuing as residents go on using compost bins in the home and/or reduce the food waste that is put out for collection/disposal by councils.

In addition to the key programmes above, the Waste Management Service has been proactive in encouraging residents to recycle more items and to do it more often. KCC's work on this issue has been done in partnership with the twelve district councils. It has contributed to the overall Kent recycling/composting rate reaching almost 40% in 2009/10.

**3.1.7 The Kent Coastal Network** was established by KCC in 2004 to improve communication between Kent's coastal stakeholders and raise awareness of the many activities taking place around the coast. A proposal to develop an Integrated Coastal Action Plan (ICAP) was considered by stakeholders through a consultation exercise and workshop with network members during 2009/2010, but a decision was taken not to develop the ICAP at this stage, but to review it at a later date. In the meanwhile, very valuable partnership working has been

established in the form of the Integrated Coastal Action Working Group (see [terms of reference](#)) and the Coastal Project Register developed. This resource will aid integration and is free for everyone to use. The only cost associated with the workshop was for catering for the 50 attendees. Stakeholders are informed and updated through the [Kent Coastal Network website](#).

## **3.2 Kent Highway Services**

**3.2.1 The Highway Tracker Survey** is an annual satisfaction survey to gauge perception of the highway service. Carried out in November and December 2009, it sought views from residents, County Members, Parish/Town Councils and for the second time, District Members.

The survey is conducted by an independent market research company called BMG. A [summary of results](#) is available on KCC's website. This information is being used by the Director and Senior Management Team to identify actions to help improve service delivery.

A total of 1,209 face-to-face interviews were carried out with a representative sample of Kent residents with approximately 100 interviews in each of the twelve districts, reflecting the age, gender and economic status of the county's demographic. This sample size gives a +/- 2.78% accuracy rate at county level and +/- 10% accuracy at district level.

In addition to residents' views, the same survey questions were asked of all County and District Members and Parish/Town Councils. A total of 60 County Members responded (a response rate of 71%), 178 District Members replied (a response rate of 30%) whilst for Parish/Town Councils, a total of 147 completed the survey (a response rate of 48%).

A significant issue highlighted in the 2009 survey has been the reduction in satisfaction of residents with minor roads (rural and residential) and as a result, an additional £6.4 million has been invested in the 'Find and Fix' campaign for minor roads where the extreme winter weather caused a great deal of damage. The Tracker Survey links to the regular key performance monitoring for the average time to repair a pothole. It also confirms the internal reporting mechanisms that demonstrate improved performance on street-lighting issues.

**3.2.2 The Kent Highway Services Call-back survey** 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 caller is asked if they were happy or not with the overall level of service they received and this 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. Customers are also encouraged to provide qualitative feedback on the level of service received.

The information is used to inform month by month service improvements as well as longer-term strategy via the business plan process. This work forms an integral part of the service level agreement between KHS and the Contact Centre, and analysis, review and action are essential elements of KHS management activity.

**3.2.3 Parish Council Liaison:** Kent Highway Services engages systematically with communities via the Parish Council network. The Head of Community Operations meets bi-monthly with representatives of Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), where highways issues of particular interest or concern can be addressed. The Director of Kent Highway Services, John Burr, has been invited to speak to the AGM of KALC in November 2010.

Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) are linked to specific parishes and County Members. Their remit is to build and maintain close working relationships, and be the first point of contact on any highway-related issue. Parishes have a responsibility for reporting routine fault matters

direct either by phone to the Contact Centre single number or via the online fault reporting process.

Community Liaison Officers systematically report to their County Members on a monthly basis, and provide a daily contact facility for parishes. Twice a year (or by agreement with individual parishes) CLOs visit each parish in their area. They also handle correspondence, complaints and compliments, governed by KCC guidelines.

Annual seminars are held for parish representatives, with the county being split east/west. The agenda includes local updates and workshops, and an opportunity to ask questions and network with officers and with other parishes. The events for 2010 are scheduled for late October.

My Kent Highways Online is a dedicated website for parish councils and Members. It has password access to highways information and data. Users are able to report faults, track progress and look at programmes / schedules of work etc. Work is currently under way to upgrade this facility and extend it to District Council members.

The engagement approach is consistently appreciated by parishes, and feedback is typically provided in the form of compliments such as the following from Goudhurst Parish Council:

*“I think Cllrs John Ward and Mrs Nicky Glendinning would want me say on behalf of the Parish Council that we thought the meeting here last Friday went very well. You gave us a lot of your time, and we appreciate that. You gave us some straight answers to most of our outstanding points. We made some good progress with clearing outstanding issues. So thank you to Steven, you and Sue for your support. With good communication we can get so much more done and lower the level of frustration.”*

**3.2.4 Maintenance scheme consultation and after scheme surveys:** Positive engagement with residents is essential to ensure that local maintenance schemes are carried out effectively, and with the minimum impact on local communities. Kent Highway Services notifies affected residents, businesses and also local County Members of the purpose, nature, timing and potential impact of road maintenance schemes that are planned for their locality. This is done via letter, which is delivered two weeks in advance of the start date for the works.

In addition to informing the local community in respect of the project, the letter also seeks to identify residents who may have special requirements in term of access so that arrangements can be made to mitigate the effect of the works. Details of such measures are communicated to those affected.

To assess customer satisfaction with works once completed, a system was set up in 09/10 based on survey cards to stakeholders:

Questions asked were:

- How satisfied were you with the information provided with the scheme?
- How satisfied were you that the roadworks were carried out as quickly as possible?
- How satisfied are you with the completed works?

Questions were graded as either ‘Very Satisfied’, ‘Satisfied’, ‘No Opinion’, ‘Fairly Dissatisfied’ or ‘Very Dissatisfied’. Comments could also be added at the bottom of the card.

A total of 15 schemes received feedback for resurfacing. The average satisfaction rate was high at 89%. Where residents were dissatisfied with an element of scheme it was more often due to the quality of information that was provided, although there were also examples of residents unhappy with the timescales and quality of work.

Scheme comments and major points of feedback both positive and negative, are returned to the engineers in charge and managers were made aware of any issues that arose, or negative comments relating to schemes (e.g. night work).

The value of this feedback was recognised and from April 2010, this data is now captured electronically via 'My Kent Highways Online', and, using the 'Balanced Scorecard', is systematically fed into KHS' monthly reporting process to assess customer satisfaction levels and improve the way things are done.

**3.2.5 Major Scheme consultation:** When major road projects are carried out, an essential part of managing the contract is engagement with local communities. This activity enables project managers to integrate local needs and also equality considerations into project plans, to minimise adverse impact. In 2009-10, the major schemes have included 'East Kent Access', the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, Victoria Way, Ashford and the A2 Slips, Canterbury.

Engineers involve a range of stakeholders in consultation activities connected with the schemes, starting with the local county Member. They also attend regular meetings of parish councils and residents' groups to discuss traffic management and to provide updates on the progress of the scheme. They discuss land-take and mitigation works. In some cases, engineers visit local schools to raise awareness about site-dangers.

Archaeology and community engagement: The East Kent Access scheme is being developed across an area of Kent which is very rich in archaeology, and as part of the works package, the entire length of the site is being excavated at a cost of £6m. This is the largest excavation in Britain in 2010, covering approximately 40 hectares. This package provided great opportunities for community engagement, with community digs and group visits to the site from schools and community groups. Many local volunteers worked on the site under supervision of KCC's Heritage team, and their activities have been fully documented on the site blog. When the scale of volunteering activity was analysed following the community digs, 91 individual volunteers had taken part, many of whom spent two or more days working on the excavations. Eighteen school and community groups made visits, a total of just under 400 people. Comments from the volunteers included the following:

*"Its great when you get the chance to handle and record something that's not been seen or touched for thousands of years"*

*"Learnt so much. Have become very interested in joining local groups and taking experiences back to school to encourage children (teacher-volunteer)"*

*"To be part of a dig team was incredible, not knowing when something will be unearthed. Very exciting experience"*

### **3.2.6 Section 38 – quality of residential developments:**

KHS systematically surveys housing sites following completion and road adoption based on four basic criteria: attractiveness and friendliness, safety and satisfaction with parking. Sites that have been surveyed to date for this Key Performance Indicator were designed as much as 10 years ago. As such, they are a form of benchmark for developments that are currently in the design phase and that are not likely to be surveyed for at least two years. In addition to these KPI sites, which relate to the street adoption process, over 200 other streets or entire sites have been surveyed.

Attractiveness and friendliness achieve high to moderate levels of satisfaction in almost all of the KPI sites. Feedback from customers provides valuable qualitative data for homebuilders, planning authorities and design professionals.

In general, safety is not so well rated, but safety concerns often relate to perceptions of speeding and parking problems. Parking is the only issue of any significant concern, with nearly half of the sites being negatively rated.

The impact of adopted guidance on quality audits and residential parking will be assessed as sites designed from mid 2009 onwards reach substantial completion and are surveyed as part of this KPI or within the wider survey regime.

|                                |                | VISION FOR KENT (V4K) |                     |                   |      |           |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------|-----------|
| DISTRICT<br>Development        | PARKING<br>(P) | SAFETY                | ATTRACT-<br>IVENESS | FRIEND-<br>LINESS | V4K  | V4K<br>+P |
| <b>ASHFORD</b>                 |                |                       |                     |                   |      |           |
| Whitfeld Villas                | +33%           | +56%                  | +89%                | +56%              | +67% | +58%      |
| <b>CANTERBURY</b>              |                |                       |                     |                   |      |           |
| Wye Green                      | -31%           | +54%                  | +46%                | +46%              | +49% | +29%      |
| <b>MAIDSTONE</b>               |                |                       |                     |                   |      |           |
| Baldwin's Place                | -18%           | +55%                  | +100%               | +91%              | +82% | +57%      |
| Hanson Drive                   | -40%           | +20%                  | +30%                | +80%              | +43% | +23%      |
| Orchard Place                  | +50%           | +25%                  | +38%                | +25%              | +29% | +34%      |
| Palmers Yard                   | +50%           | +75%                  | +75%                | +63%              | +71% | +66%      |
| <b>SWALE</b>                   |                |                       |                     |                   |      |           |
| Iwade 5                        | -85%           | +4%                   | +25%                | +40%              | +23% | -4%       |
| Poppy Cres/Charlock Dr         | -48%           | +6%                   | +35%                | +58%              | +33% | +13%      |
| <b>THANET</b>                  |                |                       |                     |                   |      |           |
| St. Christopher's Mews         | +20%           | +60%                  | +90%                | +10%              | +53% | +45%      |
| St. Lawrence Chase             | +70%           | +65%                  | +85%                | +25%              | +58% | +61%      |
| <b>TONBRIDGE &amp; MALLING</b> |                |                       |                     |                   |      |           |
| Catlyn Close extension         | +80%           | +80%                  | +60%                | +80%              | +73% | +75%      |
| Hegarty Court                  | +36%           | +45%                  | +18%                | +64%              | +42% | +41%      |
| Ruby Walk                      | -29%           | +43%                  | +71%                | +71%              | +62% | +39%      |

**Colour Key:**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Less than 0%  |  |
| 0% to +24%    |  |
| +25% to +49%  |  |
| More than 49% |  |

**3.2.7 Kent Reference Panel and Access Group liaison**

The Sustainable Transport Group in KHS routinely attend stakeholder group meetings to listen and take action to adjust scheduling to improve connectivity, where this is possible, and subject to budget availability, For example:

When Chalkwell bus company took over the operation of the commercial London-bound commuter coaches from New Enterprise, they opted to revise the route and timetable. The changes Chalkwell made adversely affected passengers travelling from Maidstone, specifically those from the Loose area where the coach would no longer serve. KHS was able to revise the times of the early morning 89 bus service funded by KCC between Coxheath, Loose and Maidstone, to enable passengers to make connections with London-bound commuter coaches;

The Kent Reference Panel is set up to enable systematic communication between KHS and disabled groups in Kent with the objective of improving accessibility for all to our transport network. Chaired by Nick Chard, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste.

### 3.3 Integrated Strategy and Planning

#### 3.3.1 Integrated Transport Strategy Consultation: 'Growth without Gridlock'.

This consultation was carried out on behalf of the Kent Partnership to find out stakeholders' views of the draft Integrated Transport Strategy and identify any major concerns with the vision, objectives and measures outlined.

Stakeholders were contacted in one of two ways: The draft consultation document with a questionnaire was uploaded to the KCC website, and stakeholders were contacted by email with a link to the consultation page. In addition to this, a series of meetings was held with the 12 district and borough councils, with Medway Council, and also via presentations to various bodies (Kent Economic Board, CPRE, Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC).

150 responses were received and the main comments received were:

- the pursuit of growth is overriding all other considerations
- the focus is still on more road building
- the ITS gives little indication of how measures are to be prioritised

The consultation draft is now being revised and the launch is planned for autumn 2010. In the meantime, more information is available on the KCC website on the '[Growth without Gridlock](#)' page. The cost for this work was officer time only.

**3.3.2 Kent Minerals and Waste Development Framework and Statement of Community Involvement Consultations:** KCC has statutory responsibility for leading the development of the county's Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF), and the associated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This work is carried out in phases over 2009/10 and 2010/11, and the methodology used is guided by legislation.

An initial scoping consultation for the SCI (*Development Planning with Kent County Council: Getting Involved*) took place in June & July 2009, inviting participation from members of the public and key stakeholders from public, private and voluntary sectors, including land-owners, minerals and waste industry operators, local authorities within Kent and neighbouring areas, parish and town councils, transport authorities and environmental and community interest groups.

The [draft Statement of Community Involvement](#) was available for consultation from May to July 2010 via the [planning policy consultation portal](#). A similar wide range of consultees was contacted, along with people who had registered their interest via the consultation portal. The final statement is expected to be launched in autumn 2010. Information about the process is available on KCC's website, with further details on the [planning policy consultation portal](#).

Costs associated with this process included the cost of printing documents (£2,400), plus officer time.

Currently under way is the formal '[call for sites](#)', which is the process for the selection of sites for inclusion in the MWDF Development Plan Document. Site operators have the opportunity to

discuss their proposals for existing and potential sites during this period which runs until 29/10/2010.

The Minerals and Waste Development Framework will be consulting on the Core Strategy 'Issues' (Regulation 25) document in mid Sept 2010 for a period of 8 weeks. A series of meetings with stakeholders about the Core Strategy Issues consultation is being arranged for the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September and 5th October 2010. These meetings will be advertised in newspapers and on the KCC website and all consultees on the portal database will be informed about the commencement of the consultation process.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This report highlights the ways teams and units in EHW are listening to the public and involving them in the development and improvement of services. As a directorate, we are committed to KCC's corporate priority of understanding and engaging more effectively with our public, and ensuring we are involving them fully in policy and service development as part of business as usual. It is important that we continually seek opportunities to improve what we do, whilst ensuring value for money from all our projects and services.

#### **5. Recommendations**

POSC Members are asked to note the content of this report.

Further information regarding engagement and consultation activity in Environment, Highways and Waste can be obtained from the contact officer of this report. Copies of this information will also be on display for Members at the POSC meeting and posted onto the committee section of [kent.gov](http://kent.gov).

#### **Contact Officer**

Name: Denise Eden-Green, Public Involvement & Equalities Manager

Telephone Number: 01622 221934

Email address: [denise.eden-green@kent.gov.uk](mailto:denise.eden-green@kent.gov.uk)