

## Highways Business Plan IMG – Gulley Emptying Schedules (10 December 2008)

Cabinet portfolio: Mr N Chard

Synopsis: The report to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee consisted of the minutes of the Highways Business Plan IMG held on 2 December 2008. During that meeting, it was resolved that gulley emptying schedules would be provided to Members after the County Council elections.

Reason for call-in: The minutes of the Highways Business Plan IMG of 2 December 2008 formed an item on the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee agenda of 10 December 2008. The Chairman asked that the request from the IMG be actioned.

Recommendations and responses:

### **1. Highways Business Plan IMG 02.12.08: That a list of gulley schedules be supplied to all Members after the elections**

*The gulley emptying schedules would be issued to Members in the next few weeks.*

Date of response: 21 July 2010

Date actioned: Not applicable

*Members have received a map showing gulley emptying routes and schedule information would be available in the next few weeks*

Date of response: 15 September 2010

Date actioned: 15 September 2010

*Members will begin to be provided with the gulley emptying schedules from 18 October onwards*

Date of response: 11 October 2010

Date actioned: 19 October 2010

#### Note:

A spreadsheet detailing the number of gullies in each parish and when they had been or were due to be emptied was circulated to Members on 19 October 2010. At the meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 20 October 2010, the Chairman expressed concern that the information requested by the Committee had still not been received. The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen will be meeting with officers to discuss a way forward

Following a meeting between the Chairman and the Director of Highway Services, a briefing note has been provided to the Committee on this issue, and further information is expected to be provided to Members before the meeting of Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 8 December.

20.12.10 - details of 'hotspots' was provided to all Members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, and Mr Burr has requested that if Members have any additional local information Highways would be glad to hear from them. A follow-up report on progress will be provided to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee in the New Year

10.01.11 – A report on the interim approach to the delivery of the highway drainage service was provided to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 10 January.

## Kent Design Guide: Parking Consultation (9 December 2009)

Cabinet portfolio: Mr N Chard

Synopsis: The report to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee consisted of the decision notice which was signed by the Cabinet Members in May 2009; the report which recommended that the Quality Audit and Residential Parking Interim Guidance Notes be approved for adoption by Kent County Council and by Kent's District Councils; the report to the Kent Planning Officers' Group in October 2008 on the consultation responses to the Kent Design Guide Review; and the full list of consultees.

Reason for call-in: The Chairman explained that this call in was as a result of her being approached as Chairman of the Committee and that it was a decision made by two Cabinet Members in May 2009. The meeting was not to discuss the decision relating to the guidance, but to consider whether the consultation process in this instance was satisfactory.

Recommendations and responses:

**3. Ask that the KCC consultation protocol be circulated to all Members, as the Committee was concerned that the protocol might not have been properly applied in this instance and that the Scrutiny Board and/or Corporate POSC be asked to examine whether the Consultation Protocol needed to be amended, in the light of the concerns expressed about this particular consultation, i.e. whether the list of consultees was full and appropriate; whether the method of consultation was appropriate; and whether steps should have been taken to chase up non-respondents.**

*A report was presented to Environment Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this issue at its meeting on 29 July 2010.*

*The following recommendations were agreed:*

- a) Endorse the testing of the robustness of IGN3 described in Section 4 and receive a report on the outcomes when they are available.*
- b) Acknowledge the concerns of the Kent Developers' Group, and the work that is being undertaken to address these concerns, and encourage further dialogue at appropriate levels to understand the actual implications of and opportunities presented by IGN3, and its interpretation at local level.*
- c) Note that public consultation on Ashford Borough Council's draft Residential Parking SPD offers developers and designers an opportunity to make further representations on the implications of 'IGN3 based guidance', having regard for the need to address the problems of some past approaches.*
- d) Acknowledge the widespread concern among residents concerning parking in recent residential developments, and the social and cost implications arising from the problems caused, and welcome collaborative working approaches that are seeking to avoid replication of these problems in future developments.*

Date of response: 29 July 2010

Date actioned: 29 July 2010

Notes:

15.09.10 – The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee are due to discuss this issue with the Director of Environment, Highways and Waste

08.10.10 - The Head of Transport & Development has met with the Chairman and Spokespersons of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee. Concerns have been raised by several development companies and Members and officers of KCC about the discounting of garages and tandem parking from the minimum guidance levels for certain areas. In particular, it has been argued that this will have the 'unintended consequences' of reducing densities of development and degrading the quality of the streets. As a consequence, there has been some pressure for IGN3 to be amended. Because the Kent Planning Officers Group (KPOG) owns IGN3, any review would only be meaningful if it was commissioned by KPOG. After all, IGN3 was endorsed for interpretation at LPA level. A report to address these issues will be taken to KPOG on 29 October, and the Chairman and Spokesmen have been asked to be kept informed of the results of the discussion.

## **Review of SEN Units – Outcome of the Evaluation of the Lead School Pilot (15 September 2010)**

Cabinet portfolio: Mrs S Hohler

Synopsis: The report set the context for the SEN Unit Review, presented the findings of the Lead School Pilot evaluation and made recommendations and proposals for the development of a new SEN Strategy to meet the special educational needs of Kent children and young people.

Reason for call-in: This item was called in to enable Members to ask questions about the outcome of the Lead School Pilot, the consultation process and the future funding of SEN Units.

Recommendations and responses:

**1. Ask the Managing Director, Children, Families and Education to ensure that the CFE (Vulnerable Children and Partnerships) Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee is given a formal opportunity to monitor progress of the SEN review at all appropriate stages.**

*A report will be taken to the CFE (Vulnerable Children and Partnerships) Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.*

Date of response: 30 September 2010

Date actioned: awaiting date

**2. Ask the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education to ensure that during the formal consultation process, consultees are made aware of the budgetary implications associated with the proposals as well as the policy implications, and that all headteachers are engaged in the consultation process.**

*Full consultation on budgetary issues will be undertaken through the Schools Forum*

Date of response: 30 September 2010

Date actioned: Ongoing to be determined by March 2011

**3. Welcome the assurance given by the Managing Director, Children, Families and Education, that KCC will continue to lobby central Government to ensure that, where there are SEN units in mainstream schools, exam results of SEN pupils are disaggregated. This is to avoid these results affecting league table positions and disincentivising mainstream schools admitting SEN pupils.**

A letter will be sent to the new Secretary of State, and this issue will be picked up in our response to the SEN and disability green paper.

Date of response: 30 September 2010

Date actioned: 17 October 2010

Note:

20.12.10 - The Committee is awaiting a copy of the letter that was sent to the Secretary of State

10.01.11 – A copy of the letter that was sent to the Secretary of State has been received and will be circulated to the Committee

**Kent Connexions and Work Related Learning Services Contract 2010-2013:  
Budget Saving Options (20 October 2010)**

Cabinet portfolio: Mrs S Hohler

Synopsis: The original paper outlined the proposed budget saving options for the Kent Connexions and Work Related Learning Services Contract 2010-2013.

Reason for call-in: Members wanted more information on the basis of the decision that was taken under urgency procedures to reduce Connexions funding by £5 million over the final two years of the contract.

Recommendations and responses:

**1. Ask the Cabinet Member, Children Families and Education to ensure that the proposed revisions to the Connexions Budget and services would be brought back to the Cabinet for consideration prior to implementation in April 2011, so that this Committee can consider whether to call-in the proposals for examination.**

*Final decisions on all KCC budgets for implementation in the next financial year, including that of Connexions will be achieved through KCC's budget setting process in the New Year.*

Date of response: 11 November 2010

Date actioned: TBC

**2. Ask the Cabinet Member, Children, Families and Education to ensure that any decision taken about further reductions to the Connexions budget beyond the £5m already identified will also be taken by the Cabinet.**

*No further reductions have been identified beyond the £5m already identified. However, should national or local developments change this funding position, Members will be informed.*

Date of response: 11 November 2010

Date actioned: Not applicable

**3. Ask that the Managing Director, Children Families and Education provide comparative information on the performance of other organisations in helping NEETs into employment.**

*As explained at the Committee, the only comparative information that can be relied upon is that from other Local Authorities in respect of comparison of the percentage of NEETs. This is because "comparative information on the performance of other organisations in helping NEETs into employment" is often held by private sector contractors who would deem this information to be "commercial in confidence" and would not agree therefore to make it publicly available. Consequently there is no consistent comparative national data on this specific topic.*

*However, Kent's favourable position on NEETs is shown on the table below*

**Latest available (2010) Comparison to Statistical Neighbours**

	<i>July</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>Average</i>
<i>Nottinghamshire</i>	5.0%	5.4%	4.5%	4.9%
<b>Kent</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>
<i>Staffordshire</i>	5.5%	5.8%	6.9%	6.1%
<i>Worcestershire</i>	6.3%	6.6%	5.9%	6.2%
<i>Warwickshire</i>	5.8%	6.3%	6.4%	6.2%
<i>West Sussex</i>	5.9%	6.3%	7.2%	6.5%
<i>Swindon</i>	7.7%	8.2%	5.2%	6.8%
<i>East Sussex</i>	7.3%	7.6%	6.8%	7.2%
<i>Essex</i>	7.5%	8.1%	8.6%	8.1%
<i>Northamptonshire</i>	6.9%	7.6%	9.9%	8.3%

Date of response: 11 November 2010

Date actioned: 11 November 2010

Note: 20.12.10 The Chairman is in discussion with officers about the provision of comparative information on the performance of other organisations in helping NEETs into employment.

10.01.11 A confidential Cabinet report on the tendering process has been provided to the Committee.

## Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services (8 December 2010)

Cabinet portfolio: Mrs S Hohler

Synopsis: This report to Cabinet summarised the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services in Kent

Reason for call-in: Members wanted more information on the Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services, including why the risk of the judgement had not been identified earlier.

Recommendations and responses:

**1. Thank Mr Carter, Mrs Hohler, Ms Turner, Mr Wood and Mr Tonks for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions.**

*Noted*

**2. The Committee acknowledges the Leader's acceptance that there are serious concerns about the effectiveness of safeguarding services and that Members and Officers are fully committed to tackling the shortcomings as a matter of urgency.**

*Noted*

**3. Welcome the assurances given by the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and the Managing Director, Children Families and Education that the points made during the discussion at Cabinet Scrutiny Committee will be included as part of the recovery plan. These are as follows:**

- a. that a review of the governance arrangements relating to safeguarding would be carried out, including the future role of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Children's Champion Board.
- b. that the current reward policy for front line social workers be reviewed, to ensure the right staff are recruited and retained within the authority.
- c. that a rota between working within Safeguarding and with Looked After Children be considered, to reduce staff 'burn-out'
- d. that concerns around the caseload and training levels of staff are examined
- e. that the previous culture of silence from social workers is examined to ascertain why it had become ingrained within the organisation, and to avoid this happening again
- f. that the use of the Integrated Children's System is reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose and being used as effectively as possible
- g. that the Council work more closely with the Courts to help reduce the amount of experienced social workers' time depleted through lengthy proceedings
- h. to explore ways in which Members can be involved in Serious Case Reviews, if necessary with bespoke Member training for this purpose
- i. that all Members who serve on the relevant Overview and Scrutiny

**bodies should be strongly encouraged to be more robust and challenging in performing their role to hold decision-makers to account for their actions, including being better prepared with searching questions prior to the meeting, and that opportunities for specific training on scrutiny questioning techniques should be taken up.**

- j. that the need for a 'triage' system be highlighted, in order to effectively prioritise referrals**

*Responses a to j (apart from action i which is an action for the party whips) are being considered for inclusion in the recovery plan. An updated recovery plan will be circulated to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 19th January.*

**4. Ask the Leader of the Council that the outcome of the meeting with the Minister to discuss safeguarding and looked after children services in Kent be reported back to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.**

**5. Ask the Cabinet Member to ensure that the outcomes of the review into the circumstances surrounding the judgement be reported back to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, given the seriousness of the subject.**

**6. Ask the Cabinet Member to provide a report on the actual number of social worker posts and historical data on the number of vacancies within the Children, Families and Education Directorate since April 2009.**

**7. Ask the Cabinet Member to provide a report on the number of safeguarding referrals to the Children, Families and Education Directorate from different agencies since April 2009.**

*A report will be produced for Cabinet Scrutiny on 19th January encompassing responses 4 to 7. The author of this report is Helen Davies/Victoria Widden.*



**Bold Steps for Kent - The Medium Term Plan to 2014 (8 December 2010)**

Cabinet portfolio: Mr P Carter

Synopsis: The report to Cabinet asked Cabinet to endorse of the latest draft of Bold Steps for Kent and make a recommendation to County Council to approve the final version at its meeting on the 16th December 2010.

Reason for call-in: Members wanted more information on Bold Steps for Kent – The Medium Term Plan to 2014.

Recommendations and responses:

**1. Thank Mr Carter, Ms Kerswell, Mr Whittle, Mr Tonks and Mr Shipton for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions.**

*Noted*

**2. Ask the Leader to explore how there can be greater Member involvement and scrutiny of the award of KCC contracts to ensure anti-competitive behaviour does not stifle the opportunity of small businesses in Kent**

*This is a very interesting point and an area where additional member input could provide real value. In the new senior management structure the post of Director of Commercial Operations will be reviewing how the County Council can stimulate more commercial activity both by council services but also by local Kent businesses. It will be important for that post holder to consider this point.*

*There is also work currently being undertaken within the Finance Division by the Procurement Team to review how effectively the council is procuring through contracts and this point can be included in that work stream as well.*

**3. Ask the Leader to ensure that specific and measurable targets and milestones are set against each of the objectives in the Medium Term Plan, and that an appropriate performance management framework is put in place that ensures robust reporting of the performance of the Organisation against those targets and milestones.**

*A commitment was made by the Leader both at the Board and also at Full Council to ensure the involvement of all POSC's in discussing the performance management framework that should oversee the delivery of Bold Steps for Kent. Work will be undertaken by officers prior to those discussions to provide some ideas to members to help stimulate the debate.*

**4. Ask the Leader to ensure that the reporting of risk is embedded into the next steps of the development of the Medium Term Plan.**

*Noted*

**5. Ask the Leader that any data on the increase in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) accessing KCC contracts be made available**

*Noted and this will be programmed in within the work stream referred to above*

**6. Ask that the Leader provide a report on the number of companies in Kent that employ less than 250 people**

*Noted. Report to be provided by the Economic Development team*

**7. Ask the Leader that any acronyms within the document be spelled out in full to ensure that it is understandable to the public.**

*Noted.*

**8. Ask the Leader that ways of engaging members of the public in the Big Society who are not members of Local Strategic Partnerships or other similar bodies be addressed in the Medium Term Plan.**

*Noted. Officers are working on ideas for how the Big Society can really take effect within Kent and how Kent County Council can help that. There are no assumptions in that work stream that only members of LSP's will be engaged in this.*

**9. Welcome the assurance that the Kent School Games would continue with KCC funding, following the recent announcement from the Coalition Government to withdraw funding for school sports activity.**

*Noted.*

(Post Meeting Note: Education Secretary, Michael Gove, has announced that £112m is available to provide continued funding for the School Sports Partnerships (SSPs)).