

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mr A Poole to the  
Cabinet Member for Education and School Improvement**

Would the Cabinet Member for Education tell this Council what he estimates the total cost of the new Kent Success Apprenticeships Scheme will be to Kent County Council in the scheme's first full financial year, and how many apprentices will be secured for KCC itself in the first year of the scheme?

**Answer**

- There are currently 60 young people on the Kent Success Apprenticeship Programme within the County Council
- It is estimated that in the next financial year another 63 young people will join the Programme
- The cost to KCC is £80 per week per Apprentice and if the projected target for 07/08 is met this works out to £262,080 for the year
- In addition to the salary paid by KCC, funding is drawn down by KEY Training from the Learning and Skills Council to pay for the training aspect of the Apprenticeship.
- On average the funding from the LSC for each Apprenticeship qualification is £3300 and so for the next financial year, if targets are met, the total funding from the LSC will be £207,900.

In Summary, the cost on average for each Apprentice to complete their qualification is £7460, KCC pays £4160 to the young person and the LSC pays £3300 to the Training Provider.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mr M J Northey to the  
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services**

Within Canterbury there are a number of private Nursing Homes. Colleagues may have seen the "Panorama" programme on 12 February 2007 in which it was alleged that older people were put at risk in two sub-standard nursing homes in Halifax.

Would the Cabinet Member for Adult Services allay any fears my constituents may have by explaining the processes used in Kent to manage and monitor private nursing homes and the steps which can be taken to report any concerns?

**Answer**

In Kent there are 3300 registered nursing home beds, of which 1250 are purchased by KCC. The remaining placements will be occupied by a combination of placements of self-funders and by other authorities, including NHS funded continuing healthcare.

The regulatory responsibility to ensure that care homes are fit to provide care rests with the Commission for Social Care Inspection. CSCI is responsible for inspecting homes to assess the extent to which they meet the national minimum standards and publish a public report on the outcomes of their inspection.

Kent Adult Social Services has wide-ranging mechanisms through which we monitor the quality and standards of care homes in Kent. KASS, through Contracting Officers ensure the quality of care for nursing and residential homes for KCC placements, building on the work of CSCI. Where concerns are raised about a home KCC takes a lead role in the Protection of Vulnerable Adults and works in partnership with a number of agencies to ensure standards and care are addressed.

The skill and competence of staff are the most significant indicators of quality. Homes are encouraged to continuously develop and train staff, and KCC funds a contract for training which gives providers significantly reduced rates on a full range of standard training for care courses.

The Director of Adult Services now has a wider responsibility for the quality of Social Care which all residents living in Kent experience.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

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

If we were to receive 1% of the Dartford Toll Crossing money and £10 for every foreign lorry and £5 for every foreign car and the charge from the Brit disc, how would the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste spend it?

**Answer**

Given the hypothesis in the question, the County Council would receive some £16m per annum in grant if foreign vehicles were charged on the inbound journey, or £31m if charged both ways.

Key projects which the money could be allocated to would include contributions to trunk road schemes such as junction improvements on the A2 at Bean, Ebbsfleet, Brenley Corner at Faversham, and at Canterbury. Contributions to trunk road widening schemes would include M20 Junctions 3 (Wrotham) to 5 (Maidstone) and A2 Lydden – Dover dualling. A contribution to a Lower Thames Crossing should also be included.

Within Kent Thameside there are also local schemes which need to be completed to support the significant development proposals and include Denton Relief Road, improvements to London Road/St. Clements Way junction, Urban Traffic Management control over the whole area and additional work on Fastrack.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mr M J Harrison to the  
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste**

I once more seek to get an answer to my question to Full Council on the 22 June 2006 with regard to the vandalism/theft of so many road directional signs from both urban and rural areas. I am concerned that this is still very much the case and even more signs are being removed from major junctions etc. I fear that if they have not already happened, then there surely will be some serious accidents very soon.

Therefore, I seek an urgent answer to my question and ask as and when these signs are replaced they be made from some form of recycled material that would then have no residual/resale value and will he also give some details as to how long it is before such items are replaced after theft, road traffic accident or vandalism?

**Answer**

The burden of damaged signs as a result of Road Traffic Crashes (RTC's) and that from vandalism and theft has been a drain on our resources for many years. The occurrence of theft however has been on the increase in recent years. The total 2006/07 expenditure on replacement signs/posts as a result of RTC's, vandalism and theft across KHS was £112,000. This figure is in respect of the work to replace the sign/posts but does not include costs associated with making safe damaged signs etc where this has resulted from RTC's thus inflating the £112,000 considerably.

Our maintenance regimes are changing as a result of the extent of theft and currently there is a policy to replace as and when the need arises all signs in the Swale Borough with a fibre glass material rather than the usual aluminium to eliminate resale value. I am sure this is a policy we will have to consider extending into other areas of Kent.

It is not possible to generalise the timescales for repair of the signage on the highway as there are differing functions and priorities of signs in a variety of locations. Of course our aim is to replace damaged/missing signs as soon as possible and certainly on an urgent basis when the safe function of the highway is compromised. This is most acute on our high speed roads and is why we are targeting planned route maintenance of our high speed dual carriageways in order that all of the needed repairs to these roads can be rectified at the same time.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mr R E King to the  
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste**

Would the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste outline the steps he will be taking to improve the problems with serious crashes that regularly occur at Kempe's Corner on the A28 between Ashford and Canterbury.

Would the Cabinet Member also please confirm that he will do everything in his power to see that a roundabout is built so that local residents, my constituents, will be relieved of the trauma of detailing with ongoing serious "crashes" that occur directly outside their properties.

**Answer**

This question fell due to Mr King being unable to attend the meeting.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mrs E Green to the  
Chairman of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**

Would the Chairman of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee inform the Council of the lessons he learned from the consideration of the proposal for 'free' bus travel for 11 – 16 year olds in certain areas of the County?

**Answer**

The lessons I would take from consideration of this proposal are that:

- 1) one does not call something free when it so clearly isn't, and
- 2) one describes it correctly as *assisted* travel for 11 – 16 year olds, rather than spinning it as the 'Kent Freedom Pass'.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mrs C Angell to the  
Cabinet Member for Education and School Improvement**

Would the Cabinet Member for Education tell this Council what steps have been taken by Kent County Council to implement Section 173 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006?

**Answer**

The SEN Code of Practice operates on the basis that a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will be in post. Section 173 is designed to regularise the position and give a firm legal basis to the expectation voiced in the Code and elsewhere. The provisions came into effect on 8 January 2007 and place a duty on governing bodies of community, foundation or voluntary schools or maintained nursery schools to designate a member of staff at the school as the person responsible for co-ordinating provision for pupils with SEN. In fact SENCOs are already in place in these settings in Kent, as elsewhere.

Ministers have made it clear that they intend that, although a number of people within a school might help with SENCO functions, a teacher should have the lead responsibility for co-ordinating SEN provision. Additionally, that the designated person should have a seat on the school's senior leadership team, reflecting the importance attached to addressing the needs of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

Section 173 gives the Secretary of State power to make associated regulations and, subject to consultation, the DfES envisage that these will cover issues such as:

- Teacher to have lead responsibility
- SENCO to be a member of the senior leadership team
- Knowledge, skills and experience required (informed by work currently being carried out by the Training and Development Agency for Schools)
- All new SENCOs to go on nationally accredited training from a given date

In working towards nationally accredited training for SENCOs, DfES has asked the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to ensure wide consultation with interested parties.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mr M J Fittock to the  
Chairman of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**

Would the Chairman of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee inform the Council of the background to the adjournment of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee of 2 February and what impact he feels that may have had on the Budget scrutiny process?

**Answer**

According to information acquired under a Freedom of Information Act request, I can inform members that a decision was taken at what I understand is known as a 'Cabinet Members' Meeting', held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2006, to schedule a Cabinet / Chief Officer Group away day on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007 in Winchester. The rescheduled date was agreed by the Leader and the Chief Executive. This entailed the cancellation of the CFE Policy Overview Committee programmed for that day. Surprisingly, though the POC was an essential element of the Budget Scrutiny Process, it had originally been scheduled to be held at the Marlowe Academy in Ramsgate. In the late afternoon on 22<sup>nd</sup> December – the last working day before Christmas – email notification was sent to members of the Policy Overview Committee that the meeting date had been changed to Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February. A notification was also included in the Members' Information Bulletin of the same date, under the heading 'Other Information', with the explanation that the change of date had been made *'to enable the Cabinet Members and the Director, who have been called to an away day on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007, to attend POC for the Budget and other items'*. It was therefore quite clear that this CFE POC was intimately linked to the Budget Scrutiny process, and equally clear that this process was being disregarded by both the Cabinet and the Chief Officer Group. At no stage was any consultation carried out with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Group Spokespersons of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

Clearly it is impossible to scrutinise the Budget in a consistent and meaningful way if the largest elements of the Budget – the Children & Family Services and Education & School Improvement portfolios – are not considered with the other elements of the Budget. The rescheduling of the CFE POC made it considerably more difficult for members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to identify connections between the Children & Family Services and Education & School Improvement portfolio budgets and those of other portfolios. Fortunately it was possible to rescue the situation at the last minute by adjourning the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee's discussion of the CFE portfolios' budgets, originally



scheduled for the Committee's meeting on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, until Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February.

I think Members of the Council will note the evident disdain shown by senior members of the Administration and senior officers for the Budget Scrutiny Process, though I would say that the portfolio holder for Finance was extremely co-operative when the potential impact of the rescheduled POC meeting was pointed out to him.

There are a number of lessons which I believe this Council should take from this unfortunate experience: firstly, that though one would wish to see as much of our Scrutiny activity as possible undertaken in different venues around the County, the Budget POCs should take place in County Hall for the convenience of all Members, and secondly, that the Budget POCs should not be rescheduled arbitrarily for the benefit of a select group of Members and senior officers. Thirdly, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Group Spokespersons of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee should be consulted whenever it is proposed to reschedule a POC as this may have an impact on the work of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mr D Smyth to the  
Cabinet Member for Community Services**

Would the Cabinet Member for Community Services inform this Council as to how many requests have been made from District and Borough Council licensing authorities for comment from Kent County Council's Children, Families and Education Directorate on licensing applications, and how many representations have been made from the Children, Families and Education Directorate to District and Borough licensing authorities?

**Answer**

The Licensing Act 2003 made each of the District Councils in Kent a licensing authority, with the power to determine whether a licence is granted to sell alcohol. The 12 licensing authorities are, however, required to provide to KCC as a 'responsible authority' under the Act, a copy of each license application. It was agreed with the then Social Services Directorate that the Trading Standards service would receive and comment, where appropriate, on these licence applications. In addition to new licenses, holders of existing licenses were allowed for a short period to apply to convert their licenses, issued under the Licensing Act 1964, to a licence granted under the new legislation.

All applications received by KCC Trading Standards are checked and any names mentioned in them, both individuals and companies, are compared to the Trading Standards legal database to see if there are any relevant issues relating to Child Protection. Relevant in this case means legal action taken in respect of sales of alcohol to Young People under the age of 18. Details are forwarded to the appropriate District Council, who may take them into account when determining a licence application.

To date Trading Standards has received 2815 copies of applications and commented on 17 of them.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mr T J Birkett to the  
Cabinet Member for Finance**

Would the Cabinet Member for Finance please inform this Council how many light bulbs Kent County Council is responsible for within all of its buildings, and how many of these light bulbs are energy-efficient?

**Answer**

The County Council is responsible for over one thousand two hundred buildings across a largely devolved estate, and it is considered impractical to count the number of light bulbs in thousands of rooms and corridors.

However, the Facilities Management Team within Property Group, which is responsible for the strategic headquarters office estate, will have replaced over 500 bulbs in 2006/07 with energy efficient ones. They also have a programme for the progressive introduction of modern automatic switch-off systems.

In the Highways estate, the County Council proposes to make a significant spend-to-save investment in 2007/08 by replacing all traffic signal heads with low energy, light emitting diode (LED) bulbs.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

17 May 2007

Question by Mr R B Burgess to the  
Cabinet Member for Education and School Improvement

Would the Cabinet Member outline the new responsibilities that the Government has set Kent County Council for standards at nurseries and playgroups.

Answer

The new responsibilities placed on Local Authorities by the DfES for standards in nurseries and pre-school settings are regulations introduced following the Childcare Act 2006 which make provision for two new statutory targets to be negotiated with Local Authorities.

The targets cover two dimensions, improvement and equalities:

- The improvement target is intended to increase proportion of children who reach the expected level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage. The expected development is for pupils to achieve at least 78 points overall in their Foundation Stage Profile score and achieve at least 6 points in both *Communication, Language and Literacy* and *Personal, Social and Emotional* development.
- The equalities target seeks to reduce the gap between the average total score of children in the lowest 20% in the Foundation Stage Profile and the middle of the range for all children

The targets will be based on the outcomes of Foundation Stage Profile data, an end of key stage assessment, undertaken in the summer term of the reception year. The assessment is against the six areas of learning in the curriculum entitlement for children in the Foundation Stage.

Meeting the new targets will be challenging. Kent has in excess of 740 private, voluntary and independent pre-school settings and 1800 childminders. This number of settings and their geographic distribution across the county is constantly evolving. Private providers account for 91.5% of nursery provision in Kent.

In the 2006 HMI annual report, 12% of all Kent pre-school provision is inadequate and 46% is merely satisfactory in comparison with 3% and 36% of the national provision respectively. We have much work to do with the private sector and this is already well underway under the direction of Carol Parsons and her team.

*Continued.....*

In order to rise to these challenges, we will require new ways of supporting and improving their performance and already we have commenced a dialogue with settings that require the most improvement. This will involve considerable time and human resource.

### **Additional information**

Note on Kent Performance in 2006

The Foundation stage Profile data for 2006 when compared to National data identifies that children are entering Key Stage One at a lower level than the nationally in all 6 areas of learning, with significant differences in reading, writing, social, emotional and creative development. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is also higher in Kent compared to national levels.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mr L Christie to the  
Cabinet Member for Policy and Performance**

Would the Cabinet Member for Policy and Performance inform the Council how much this Council has invested in the support and/or promotion of flights between Manston and Virginia and, of the 600 plus flights booked in the UK, can he inform the Council how many seats were sold to members and officers of the Council on official business?

**Answer**

The information that Mr Christie requests has been in the public domain since the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee questioned the Leader, the Chief Executive and Managing Director of Environment and Regeneration and myself. To summarise, from an estimated total investment by all the project partners of £1,081,000, the cost to this Council is £298,560. The County Council exposure was therefore approximately 27% of the total cost.

If Mr Christie is unable to find the information which is published on the KCC website, I am happy to send him a hard copy of the financial summary.

I represented Kent when Her Majesty The Queen visited Virginia on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of May. I was also part of the United Kingdom delegation at the Anniversary Weekend, on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May, together with the Minister for London, Members of Parliament and other significant figures. I was able to carry out a number of business engagements as well and one of these was a meeting with the Norfolk Airport Authority, who have presented a mermaid -symbol of their city- in the form of Pocahontas, which will shortly be shipped to Kent at the Airport Authority's expense. During those discussions (I was accompanied by the Chairman and Chief Executive of Kent Tourism Alliance) we confirmed the continuing commitment in Norfolk to working together to build tourism and other economic opportunities on both sides of the Atlantic.

This means that Kent now has strong links (involving partners in addition to the County Council) to the economic development organisations in Northern, Eastern and Central Virginia. This is a demonstration of the significant residual benefit of the investment made in the Direct Flights project despite its cancellation which the Leader referred to at Cabinet Scrutiny.

As far as the second part of the question is concerned, the answer is 2.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

**Question by Mr K Sansum to the  
Chairman of Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**

Would the Chairman of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee inform the Council whether he has communicated with the Transport Minister, Dr Steven Ladyman MP, regarding Kent County Council's proposals to resolve Operation Stack, which were considered by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 20 February and, if so, what was the outcome of their correspondence?

**Answer**

I met with Dr Ladyman on the evening before the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held on the 20<sup>th</sup> February and discussed, *inter alia*, this Council's proposal for a lorry park as a means of alleviating the misery caused to the people of Kent by the requirement to implement Operation Stack from time to time.

Dr Ladyman was his usual helpful, informed and informative self, and went through the potential costs and technical merits and drawbacks of a lorry park compared to the use of a Quick Moveable Barrier (QMB). Dr Ladyman indicated that the QMB was estimated to cost some £10m – 12m, was capable of dealing with Phase I of Operation Stack, and that this was the same price range as the provision of an access road to a temporary lorry park. Such a lorry park would need to be anything up to a hundred acres in size and would require, in all probability, sub-soil drainage and the provision of underground services to toilet and restaurant facilities on site. The full details of the costings are given in the minutes of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting for 20<sup>th</sup> February. Dr Ladyman went through a number of planning difficulties which a temporary lorry park would present, and as yet these do not appear to have been fully resolved as no proposed solutions have been reported to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

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

Would the Cabinet Member for Highways please say what is being done to address local concerns about lane marking, signage and traffic light phasing connected with the Leybourne – West Malling Bypass/junction 4 scheme, and will he say when residents will be consulted on any necessary modifications to the scheme?

**Answer**

Those concerns of which we have been made aware have either been addressed or are to be dealt with in conjunction with the forthcoming traffic calming and management works in Leybourne. These works, which are to be carried out by Ringway, commence on Monday 21 May 2007 and should take about 16 weeks to complete.

Many of the concerns raised are in fact a consequence of the relatively large flows of traffic that have continued to use Castle Way. It is regrettable that the actual work has taken so long to procure but this has been largely a direct result of safety audits, consultation and the approval process for the numerous traffic regulation orders that are required.

There are no modifications to be made to the A228 Leybourne and West Malling Bypass other than those matters directly related to the traffic calming works. These are mainly interface issues relating to traffic signing and white lining, speed restrictions and fine tuning of traffic signal timings.

The client project manager for the scheme, Geoff Cripps, has already agreed to attend a meeting of the West Malling Parish Council, on 21 May 2007, to discuss local concerns.

Once the traffic calming works are complete they will be monitored, in order to assess their effectiveness, and the outcome together with any recommendations will be reported to the Joint Transportation Board.



**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

**17 May 2007**

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

Will the Cabinet Member for Highways support those users of Junction 10 of the M20 who have signed a petition stating '*rather than returning the roundabout to how it was, the Highways Agency should use this opportunity to review its use of traffic lights – either by changing the sequencing or looking at whether they are needed at all*'?

**Answer**

The Highways Agency has said that it will review the need for traffic lights and at a recent meeting with them, they said it was under consideration.

With the pedestrian bridge through the junction, there will be a need for signals to help pedestrians to cross safely. It is also likely that signs will be needed at the exit slip roads to ensure that queues do not extend on to the motorway. It may be however, that these signals could be peak time only.

The County Council will continue to pursue this with the Highways Agency.