

By: Peter Sass - Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership

To: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 10 December 2008

Subject: Follow up items from Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the items which the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee has raised previously for follow up

Introduction

1. This is a rolling schedule of information requested previously by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.
2. If the information supplied is satisfactory it will be removed following the meeting, but if the Committee should find the information to be unsatisfactory it will remain on the schedule with a request for further information.

Recommendation

3. That the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee notes the responses to the issues raised previously.

Contact: Peter Sass
peter.sass@kent.gov.uk

01622 694002

Background Information: *Nil*

	Issue	Response
22.10.08	<p>Committee would like to see the terms of the contract between KCC and Worcestershire County Council. Our understanding is that it is not a full time secondment, but a job share between KCC and Worcestershire, and it is very difficult to understand how this job for the largest county in the country can be done on a part time basis. (Mrs Dean)</p>	<p>An agreement was drawn up between the two authorities which provided for the part-time secondment to KCC of one of Worcestershire's senior staff in the role of Interim Director of Highways Improvement. The secondment was initially to run till the end of this calendar year, with the option to extend by mutual agreement.</p> <p>The primary role of this senior officer was to advise on, and implement as appropriate, specific initiatives to improve the operational effectiveness of Kent Highways, drawing on his experience of managing the Highways function at Worcestershire. He reported direct to Mr Austerberry, but worked closely with the Interim Director of Highways Caroline Bruce and the Highways Heads of Service.</p> <p>The secondment was developing well, with the officer having provided useful input in a short time. However at the start of this week Peter Gilroy was contacted by the Chief Executive of Worcestershire with the news that he had been taken ill, and was unlikely to be able to work for several weeks, and possibly longer.</p> <p>We have concluded that it would be difficult for Worcestershire's senior officer to be able to pick up the threads when he eventually returns to good health, since by then a number of initiatives will be well underway at Kent Highways. With reluctance we have therefore terminated the agreement with Worcestershire County Council.</p>

<p>22.10.08</p>	<p>Mr Ferrin stated that A & B roads in Kent are above average compared with BVPIs across the country. At County Council in October a question was asked about how long it would take to eliminate the backlog of road repairs, Mr Ferrin declined to answer because effectively we are not tackling the backlog it is getting bigger, we are not investing enough to even begin to tackle the backlog.</p> <p>Is Mr Ferrin saying that everywhere else in country is in exactly same position? – if that is the case our Committee would like to see the information that backs up that statement. Write to Mr Ferrin for clarification. (Mrs Dean)</p>	<p>Awaiting information.</p>															
<p>22.10.08</p>	<p>With regard to recent legislation from the Government which has affected our access to potential lower interest rates on borrowing. According to the legislation we would no longer be able to transfer or reschedule loans to preferential Government lower interest rates. (previously raised at Governance & Audit Committee) – What would this legislation cost the tax payers of Kent? (Mr Chell)</p>	<p>As part of our active management of long term borrowing we have in recent years looked to reschedule borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board to reduce interest payments. This often came down to small anomalies in PWLB or a particular date that gave a significant financial benefit. As reported in our annual reports to Governance and Audit Committee over the last 3 years these have been:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1234 1018 1917 1249"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Loans Rescheduled</th> <th>Annual Saving</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2007-08</td> <td>£174.8m</td> <td>£1m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006-07</td> <td>£124.3m</td> <td>£0.5m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005-06</td> <td>£66.2m</td> <td>£0.3m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2004-05</td> <td>£109.8m</td> <td>£2m</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In November 2007 the PWLB changed the structure of their</p>		Loans Rescheduled	Annual Saving	2007-08	£174.8m	£1m	2006-07	£124.3m	£0.5m	2005-06	£66.2m	£0.3m	2004-05	£109.8m	£2m
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		<p>interest rates to have separate rates for new loans and rescheduling - this meant that the rate anomalies we were able to benefit from no longer exist.</p> <p>We have not done any loan rescheduling since and it is unlikely that there will be any significant opportunities.</p> <p>We cannot say how much this will cost the Council Tax payer, we can only point to the base budget savings the approach has enabled in recent years.</p>
22.10.08	<p>The CSC endorsed the recommendations of the IMG on Managing Motorways and Trunk Roads in Kent (discussion on business plan) which asked that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further advice be requested from Officers and the Cabinet Member when the results of the bidding process were known - Officers and the Cabinet Member report back to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, including information on possible BVPIs, a year after the contract has commenced. 	<p>Document detailing changes to original contract circulated to Members of CSC 13.11.08.</p>
Academy for Sevenoaks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We would ask the Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills (CFE) to report back to our Committee at the appropriate time to clarify the membership of the Academy Trust, particularly in relation to the inclusion of representatives of the two schools that are proposed to be replaced by the academy. 2. The Area Children's Services Officer (Sevenoaks 	<p>In response to 2: The guide circulated to the Committee for the meeting on 22 October is attached as Appendix 1.</p>

	<p>& Tunbridge Wells) be asked to provide a guide to help our Committee's understanding of the academy process; further information for Committee Members on the levels of social deprivation in the Sevenoaks area that justifies the submission of the Expression of Interest for an Academy in that area; and, information relating to the possible increase in travelling time/cost for students attending the Academy and the consequent impact on the environment.</p>																																
<p>Gravesham Neighbourhood Forums</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The final timetable of meetings for the 3 Forums be circulated to Members of our Committee as soon as it is available. 2. Our Committee wishes to receive a full report on the outcome of the various localism pilots taking place across the County in September 2009. 	<p>1st Round meetings</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1236 651 2159 1098"> <thead> <tr> <th>Forum</th> <th>Time/Date</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Subject</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gravesham Rural</td> <td>7.30pm 15 Dec '08</td> <td>The Meadow Room, Cobham</td> <td>Highways</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gravesham East</td> <td>7.00pm 20 Jan '09</td> <td>West Court Primary School</td> <td>Services for Older People</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Northfleet and Gravesend West</td> <td>7.00pm 28 Jan '09</td> <td>Venue to be confirmed</td> <td>Highways & new equitable Access Clinic (Darsi Clinic) in Gravesend</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>2nd Round meetings</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1236 1137 2159 1289"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gravesham Rural</td> <td>31 Mar '09</td> <td colspan="2">Venue and Subject TBC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gravesham East</td> <td colspan="3">date/subject and venue to be confirmed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Northfleet & Gravesend West</td> <td>7.00pm 29 Apr '09</td> <td colspan="2">Subject and venue TBC</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Forum	Time/Date	Location	Subject	Gravesham Rural	7.30pm 15 Dec '08	The Meadow Room, Cobham	Highways	Gravesham East	7.00pm 20 Jan '09	West Court Primary School	Services for Older People	Northfleet and Gravesend West	7.00pm 28 Jan '09	Venue to be confirmed	Highways & new equitable Access Clinic (Darsi Clinic) in Gravesend	Gravesham Rural	31 Mar '09	Venue and Subject TBC		Gravesham East	date/subject and venue to be confirmed			Northfleet & Gravesend West	7.00pm 29 Apr '09	Subject and venue TBC	
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Treasury Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our Committee notes the ongoing preparation of the report by PWC into KCC's treasury management policies and asks that the report is made available for scrutiny by our Committee as soon as it is available. 2. We expect Butlers to attend a meeting of our Committee at an appropriate stage in the future, following the completion of the PWC report. 	Contract between KCC & Butlers circulated to CSC Members 07.11.08
24.09.08	Formula for the Dedicated Schools Grant. KCC had used a FOI enquiry to try to fully understand the government's decisions on KCC's settlements, but it remained difficult to see exactly how certain needs were matched with grant. Ms McMullan stated that she would provide a worked example to demonstrate the difficulties. (Mr Smyth)	Briefing note from Keith Abbot attached at Appendix 2
24.09.08	RE: Number of children receiving assisted SEN and mainstream transport to school. Why had the budget not been adjusted for the higher numbers of children receiving transport to school, some of which were awarded on appeal that perhaps would have been granted in any event had the budget been sufficient? (Mrs Dean)	Briefing note from Keith Abbot attached at Appendix 3
24.09.08	Is the authority, in effect, contributing to the inability of the NHS to deliver assessment and related services in the North West of the County as a result of the "vacancy management necessary to offset the pressure within residential care"? It was suggested that management action was undermining a policy decision in this vital area. (Dr Eddy)	The Directorate aims to produce a balanced budget each year, and this means that sometimes we have to manage vacancies in order to offset budget pressures with direct services. We do however operate a 'Traffic Light' reporting system for all front line staff teams, this ensures that at all times we are operating to appropriate staffing levels. I can assure that you that there is no negative impact on services to clients.

		<p>Because we have a formal partnership arrangement with Kent & Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, this means that staff can be either employed by KCC or the Trust. When vacancies occur, it could mean that the cross charging arrangements are affected, which effectively could reduce our gross expenditure and the income we charge health would reduce accordingly, which is the situation in respect of the posts mentioned in the monitoring report.</p>
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