

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 23 May 2013

Question by Mike Harrison to

David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

One of my last commitments in the last administration was to use the last of my Members Community Fund to pay for a new Bus Shelter in Tower Parade, Whitstable. Even as I was signing it off I could not help but wonder why it was up to me to find these funds.

My question to Mr Brazier is:

Why do we, the tax payers of Kent, pay for all of the various bits of infrastructure for the privately run bus services throughout the county? By this I mean bus pull-ins, raised kerbs at bus stops and even the bus stop signs complete with timetables? We, KCC, are constantly doing remedial repairs to all of these things all for the benefit of privately run companies. Whilst I fully appreciate that we are in partnership with things such as the Quality Bus Partnership in the Canterbury area and that we need a good public bus service but not at any price.

Answer

Thank you for your question and I am sure the public appreciate your contribution to improving public transport infrastructure in Whitstable.

The County Council does have two statutory duties in this area. Firstly, to provide public transport information - which we do at bus stops, through Travelline and the web. We also have a duty under the Equalities Act to undertake works to adapt the highway to enable access for disabled people.

In Kent I am really proud of the fact that our commitment to partnership working and investment has led to a step change in vehicle quality and service, with many bus routes now running twice as frequently as before. In March, 11 new hybrid buses for Maidstone were launched which represented an investment of £2.5m by Arriva. A recent press release from Stagecoach highlighted a 100% increase in patronage over the past 7 years, this compares to 34% growth in London. We have generated almost unparalleled levels of inward investment into Kent compared to that of other County Councils. To my mind this investment is crucial to us in our objectives of freeing up traffic flows and ultimately delivering Growth without Gridlock and I would not want to see it jeopardised. Fundamentally, it helps the public, which is what we are here to do.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 23 May 2013

Question by Sarah Hohler to

David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

Would the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport tell me whether he is aware of the problems caused (across all branches of his portfolio) by HGVs parking overnight in lay-bys and other places throughout Kent? Has he any plans, working with others, to solve this problem? For example, has he considered adapting Park and Ride sites to accommodate HGVs overnight?

Answer

In response to your question through the County Council, I can absolutely assure you that I am fully aware of the detrimental impact that inappropriate HGV parking has on Kent's residents. In the course of my work I am regularly presented with very real examples of the distress and nuisance such HGV parking causes both individuals and communities across Kent.

As you have identified in your question, this is not a matter the County Council can work to solve in isolation. As such we have been liaising with the Highways Agency, the district and borough councils, the Freight Transport Association and Road Haulage Association as well as having discussions with existing lorry park operators on this subject. Currently we are about to commence a piece of work to identify suitable lorry park sites in Kent and to establish the commercial case for those identified sites that would enable delivery. In identifying suitable sites, I expect this work to consider existing land uses as well as undeveloped land.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by Martin Vye to
David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment**

Will the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment give his assurance that in the course of the impending review of traffic management in the City of Canterbury, the County and District Councillors for Canterbury City, and representatives of local residents and businesses will be engaged right from the start in consideration of possible options, and in the drafting of firm proposals?

Answer

The regeneration of the St Dunstan's area of Canterbury is a key area of concern and I certainly support the development of a permanent solution that involves full consultation with all interested parties. I am pleased to confirm that a Steering Group has been set up that will identify all of the key stakeholders including local residents and business so that their views can be canvassed to ensure that consensus is reached on what a permanent solution will look like.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by George Koowaree to
David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment**

Recently I witnessed a site employee at the temporary Ashford Household Waste Recycling facility getting into the metal recycling container to rearrange items to maximise the space for additional metal waste apparently because there was no crusher fitted. Will the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment confirm that the current site expansion and development of the main Ashford Household Waste Recycling Centre includes mechanised crusher systems on all appropriate containers to ensure site staff will not have to enter containers to maximise space; and will he ensure this practice ceases at all KCC recycling centre sites before someone is seriously injured.

Answer

The new Household Waste Recycling Centre for Ashford, which will be opening in July 2013, is designed so that metal and other compactable materials will be handled by machine only once deposited by members of the public.

I have asked my Waste Management team to investigate the incident at the temporary Household Waste Recycling Centre at Ashford detailed by Mr Koowaree. It should be noted that safe methods of work for entering skips have been accepted by the corporate Health & Safety team in limited circumstances, and the Head of Waste Services will ensure that any such activity only takes place in accordance with these approved safe ways of working.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by Michael Northey to
David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment**

Many residents in my Division of Canterbury South East have reported heavy litter along the A2 and in various other local areas. Canterbury City Council and Kent Highways are taking strong action to clear this but the problem persists.

Could the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment consider ways to reduce this pollution of the Garden of England and in particular embark upon a vigorous public education programme to prevent littering in the first place as well as continued enforcement and clearance?

Answer

I am acutely aware that litter is an eyesore and problem in some parts of Kent, where there is a great deal of visible litter on highways and elsewhere; this is unacceptable and gives a poor impression to visitors.

While KCC can and does play a coordinating role, there are several partner agencies responsible for littering and, in the case of highways, statutory responsibility for dealing with it mainly rests with District Councils, and with the Highways Agency in the case of motorways. The A2 in Mr Northey's Division is accordingly the responsibility of Canterbury City Council, and I will be writing to them very shortly on this matter.

In my role as Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, I have already recognised the need to reinvigorate our partnerships with relevant agencies in response to the understandable public concern about litter. KCC has an excellent reputation for effective partnership working and I am committed to drawing on this experience to lead a fresh focus and coordination of activity to make Kent a cleaner county.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by Roger Truelove to
Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development**

Could the Cabinet Member for Economic Development say whether he believes the completion of the Northern Relief Road from East Hall to Bapchild is essential for the economic growth and regeneration of Sittingbourne?

Answer

Sittingbourne's regeneration is reliant on new infrastructure and in particular providing access to the northern sectors of the town. The Northern Relief Road is one part of an overall scheme we have been developing with Swale Council for several years. To continue Sittingbourne's economic growth we need to strike the best balance between supporting development and protecting existing communities.

The successful Eurolink estate has good links to the Town Centre and the west. In order to fully realise the benefits of regeneration to the Town Centre and the Milton Creek area, the Northern Relief Road requires connection to the A2, but without the Southern Relief Road there would be detrimental impacts to the east of Sittingbourne.

Our strategy completes the infrastructure around Sittingbourne but we still need to consider how to proceed with both the Northern and Southern Relief Roads with the best phasing to deliver the best results for Swale.

Considering just one element of a scheme is not in the best interests of the economy or environment for Swale Borough which is why further work on the scheme is necessary.

The Northern Relief Road will allow traffic to bypass the town centre and avoid urban residential areas, give better access to existing employment areas, open up strategic sites for employment and housing and allow the redevelopment of town centre sites. To the east of Sittingbourne however, rural communities could be adversely affected by the scheme, with traffic pressure increasing along the A2 towards Faversham.

This illustrates the balanced view we need to take so we do not unwittingly disadvantage any communities. In summary therefore, the Northern Relief Road project is a key element of the regeneration strategy for Swale but has wider benefits and disbenefits that must be properly considered.

Please rest assured we will continue to work with the Borough Council and others to achieve the best outcome.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 23 May 2013

**Question by Dr Mike Eddy to
Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform**

Given the opposition of all political candidates in May's county council elections to the proposal to close Walmer Science College, which will lead to the loss of £6 million worth of modern state-of-the-art school buildings and their replacement with buildings of lower standard at a cost of £20 million, will the new Cabinet Member for Education outline the process for reconsidering this closure proposal which will leave the Deal and Walmer area with a single secondary school?

Answer

The proposal from the governing bodies of Walmer Science College and Castle Community College, together with Kent County Council to bring the schools together to form one secondary school has been consulted on and fully considered by Education Cabinet Committee prior to the final decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Education Learning and Skills on the 26 March 2013 (decision number 12/01977).

The proposal was brought forward because:

- The numbers of pupils in the locality, taking into account parental preferences, patterns of choice, numbers of young people and planned housing developments does not support two viable schools in Walmer and Deal that would deliver a good quality of education;
- Walmer Science College has a very small and reducing number of pupils on roll. It has been an under-performing school for some time with poor results. It has only recently been removed from special measures by Ofsted. Parental preference has already shown a lack of confidence in the school with numbers declining markedly in the past 3 years. Without action there would be a serious revenue budget deficit in excess of £900,000 by 2014/2015. The internal action required by the school to address this shortfall would leave it unable to employ sufficient staff to deliver the curriculum. Walmer Science College would no longer be viable and the pupils' education would suffer;
- The amalgamation with Castle Community College has been supported by written confirmation from the DfE that the school re-build will provide new accommodation for the combined number of pupils of at least 1300, as part of the Government's Priority Schools Building programme.

As Walmer Science College is a Local Authority school and Castle Community College is an Academy, the only way that the two schools could be brought together is by the closure of Walmer Science College and the expansion of Castle Community College. Castle Community College has received approval from the Secretary of State and the Education Funding Agency to expand in order to take the pupils from Walmer Science College with effect from the 1 September 2013.

The proposal has been considered by Education Cabinet Committee on three occasions:

12 September 2012, when the Committee endorsed the proposal brought forward by the governing bodies of both Walmer Science College and Castle Community College with the support of the Local Authority to go out to consultation.

21 November 2012, when the Committee considered responses received, comments made at the two public meetings and discussed any concerns raised before recommending to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills that a Public Notice regarding the closure of Walmer Science College be issued. The Committee fully supported the proposal being taken forward to the publication of a Public Notice.

19 March 2013, when the Committee considered responses received during the statutory Public Notice period and the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member to close the school in support of the amalgamation. The Committee endorsed the proposed decision.

In addition, the original decision to issue a Public Notice was considered by the KCC **Scrutiny Committee**. The Committee agreed that there was no requirement to reconsider the decision.

No decision has been made about the future use of the Walmer Science College site and buildings once the lease to Castle Community College expires. The County Council has committed to future use of the site for educational and community purposes. All options will be fully considered, and there will, therefore, not be any loss of the Walmer Science College buildings.

There has been extensive consideration of the proposal concerning Walmer Science College and Castle Community College and the decision was taken by the then Cabinet Member for Education Learning and Skills, with the corresponding decision to expand Castle Community College having been taken by the Secretary of State for Education. The facts that led to the original proposal have not changed and therefore there is no reason to reconsider the decision. The proposal was designed to improve the educational opportunities for all the young people of Deal and has the full support of the administration.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by Eileen Rowbotham to
John Simmonds, Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement**

Can the Cabinet Member for Finance inform the Council of the costs of a county-wide referendum and what provision has been made in the council's budget for such expense?

Answer

The cost of a referendum will depend on how any proposed poll would be conducted. If the referendum were an advisory poll under the powers in the Local Government Act 2003, then it would be at the council's discretion as to who should be included in the poll and how it is to be conducted. It therefore follows that the cost will stem from these decisions. If the poll were more formal e.g. in relation to Council Tax referendum or local governance arrangements then we would have to poll all electors. This would be a yes/no poll and thus more straightforward than full council elections, nonetheless we estimate the cost could be between £1m to £1.3m. We have no provision for any referendum in the current budget.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by Penny Cole to
Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health**

Would the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health please indicate how the Adult Social Care Transformation plans will now be developed and specifically how he believes they will benefit the lives of people in my Dartford East division?

Answer

The transformation of Adult Social Care is the largest programme of change underway within the Council. It will improve the social care outcomes for the people of Kent, provide additional support to carers in their vital role, free up staff so that more time can be spent supporting clients, and create new and innovative ways of working with the provider market, including the voluntary and community sector.

Detailed planning of the transformation is underway at the moment. It is focusing on targeted prevention, identifying those who are at risk of falling or of social isolation, and addressing this before issues arise. We are providing additional help to people to remain independent in their own homes for longer. In Dartford and the surrounding area we are increasing the amount of specialist enablement support available by 50%, so more people can develop new skills as their care need change. We are also developing other options for people, such as 40 homes with care support on the Manorbroke site in Dartford East.

To help carers, Dartford has innovative services such as the Dementia Peer Support Group and the Dementia Café and, as across the county, we are investing with local health colleagues, in the new Carers Assessment and Support Service.

I am of course happy to provide more information to Mrs Cole, or to any other member, about the impact of the Transformation of Adult Social Care in individual divisions.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by Brian Clark to
David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment**

Prior to the last Joint Transport Board (JTB) meeting I submitted a large petition objecting to the bus lane proposal along the Sutton and Loose Roads. During the meeting, the Chairman categorically stated that the plan would not go ahead (to confirm this point a letter from Bryan Sweetland, former Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste was read, which only referred to the Loose Road section).

Given that the JTB meeting was held shortly after planning permission was passed for two schools in Boughton Lane, where the developer followed KCC highways guidance and agreed to contribute to the bus lane in order to overcome substantial traffic concerns could the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment please confirm KCC's position on the issue of the whole bus lane scheme?

Answer

The Sutton Road Bus Lane was first proposed in response to the Planning Inspector's recommendations at the Maidstone Local Plan Inquiry in the late-1990s. Langley Park and Land North of Sutton Road are located some distance from Maidstone Town Centre and railway stations. He therefore stated that the Local Plan policies for these sites should include requirements for bus priority measures on the Sutton Road/Loose Road corridor, this was duly carried forward into the final adopted Plan. This policy has been saved by Maidstone Borough Council despite our objection and is to be included in the new Local Plan, which reallocates Langley Park and Land North of Sutton Road for residential development.

The Planning Inspector's previous comments and the saved Local Plan policies are important considerations in developing the Integrated Transport Strategy for Maidstone. Various legislation and guidance directs us to consider this history and to ensure that we cooperate on Local Planning and Highway issues in producing the Local Plan which will satisfy the Planning Inspectorate. It is clear that there are many reservations about the design and impact of a bus lane on Sutton Road and/or Loose Road, it is also clear that the developers of the strategic housing sites to the south east of Maidstone will be required by the Borough Council to provide contributions to bus priority measures on this corridor. Therefore, my officers within KCC Highways and Transportation are obligated to work with their colleagues at Maidstone Borough Council and with developers, to develop a solution that satisfies the Local Plan policy but which also minimises disruption to other road users.

With specific regard to the recent planning applications for new Primary School facilities in Boughton Lane, Maidstone, a Section 106 Agreement is being drafted which will include the provision of off-site financial contributions to bus services and supporting infrastructure on Loose Road. There will be no requirement that these monies be spent on the provision of a bus lane and officers within KCC Highways

and Transportation will work with local Members and other stakeholders to identify an acceptable solution which satisfies the terms of the Agreement.

In summary, therefore, whilst I can say that we have serious concerns about the bus lane and do not support it, the governmental and planning framework within which we operate means that I cannot guarantee that it will not happen.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by Richard Parry to
David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment**

If I recall correctly this year's KCC Highways "Pot Hole Blitz" started at the end of April 2013.

Will Mr Brazier provide an update detailing how many miles of our County's roads have so far been surveyed, how many potholes have been found and how many have been repaired?

Additionally will Mr Brazier assure the Council and especially Kent's residents and road users that the repairs are being made following best practice and especially will endure.

Answer

Highways and Transportation actually started this year's pothole Find & Fix programme at the end of January, following the first spell of heavy snowfall. Activity peaked at the end of March and through April following the second and unusually late heavy snowfall on 11 March. The number of gangs working on the roads in Kent have been increased significantly, mainly from local sub-contractors, with over 30 extra crews dedicated to the Find & Fix programme.

By the end of April we had completed works in 831 roads and identified a further 901 roads for Find and Fix treatment (totalling about 6% of the network). The programme is ongoing and will continue until the worst of the winter damage is repaired.

Every crew has had clear instructions to carry out quality first time repairs. We have a team of dedicated Engineers checking sites on a daily basis to ensure that best practice is followed and quality is maintained.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Thursday 23 May 2013

**Question by Rob Bird to
Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform**

"Of 150 councils whose primary schools are inspected by Ofsted, Kent was ranked tenth from the bottom and for the fourth year in succession 45% of our primary schools were judged to be under-performing. I am sure all members will welcome the recent improvement in the Ofsted ratings of Kent's primary schools and will join me in congratulating all the schools that have received improved Ofsted reports.

Unfortunately, this improvement has not been seen here in the County Town of Maidstone. At the beginning of 2012 48% of our infant and junior schools were rated as either "Outstanding" or "Good"; that figure has now fallen to 44%. No one doubts the hard work and commitment of our teaching staff but clearly there is a deeper problem. This is now urgent and critical.

Will the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform please advise what steps are being taken now to ensure that primary schools in Maidstone give our children the education they need?"

Answer

The performance of Primary Schools overall in the Maidstone area is in line with the Kent average and close to the national average for Key Stage 2 results in 2012. This represents a 6% improvement rate in the last three years, The improvement rate in Maidstone for Mathematics is better than a number of other districts and whilst not as strong, is in line with other districts across Kent in English.

The number of schools below the 60% floor standard for English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 has improved significantly in Maidstone from 10 schools in 2010 to just 2 schools in 2012.

In 2012, 24 of the 37 primary or junior schools in Maidstone increased their Key Stage 2 results from 2011. 26 of the 37 schools increased their 2 levels of progress in English and 24 schools improved their 2 levels of progress in Mathematics.

However the Ofsted inspection results for Maidstone schools have not been improving at the same rate as we are achieving across other parts of Kent, where we are seeing a rising trend of good inspection judgements for schools that were previously rated as satisfactory.

In Maidstone about half of Primary schools are judged to be good or better compared to the average of 64% overall for the county. While many of the schools not yet rated as good schools face challenges, with above average levels of social deprivation, we recognise this situation requires significant improvement.

The figures above reflect the 2011/12 position. We expect to see a significant improvement in Kent's position in the tables in 2012/13.

Out of the 42 Primary schools in Maidstone 19 are good or outstanding (4 are outstanding), 22 are satisfactory and one school is in a category of concern.

Of the 22 satisfactory schools, 13 have been inspected since September 2012 and have been judged to Require Improvement, which is disappointing. One school has been placed in an Ofsted category of concern. Three of the 12 schools were judged to be good for leadership and all were judged to have the capacity for continued improvement.

We are therefore expecting all the schools to achieve a good outcome in their next inspection.

Of the schools recently judged to require improvement the Local Authority is supporting their improvement and monitoring every term to ensure the schools are making rapid progress.

The steps that are being taken to ensure that Primary schools in Maidstone continue to improve include:

- All schools working with the KCC Improvement Adviser to develop relationships with a link school, which is good or outstanding. This provides more opportunities for headteachers and staff to observe and work alongside good and outstanding schools and their teachers.
- All schools are participating in the Every Lesson Counts programme which has a very successful track record of improving teaching to a consistently good quality. This is being fully funded by the Local Authority.
- All the schools requiring improvement due an inspection within the coming year, have been offered the services of an OFSTED inspector to review their work against the Ofsted criteria for good outcomes, to support the presentation of pupil progress data in an OFSTED friendly form and support the development of a robust school self-evaluation.
- The Local Authority has commissioned specific improvement programmes for some schools. Six schools are participating in the ASPIRE programme which is sponsored by the DFE and NAHT, (National Association of Headteachers), and two schools are being given additional support by an improvement initiative led by Lilac Sky Schools. The schools not taking part in these programmes are provided with a bespoke package of support from the Local Authority.
- Headteachers of the schools requiring improvement are working on a leadership development programme led by an experienced consultant and Ofsted Inspector. This support programme aims to develop the skills of leaders to secure good provision in their schools.

- Maidstone schools are now working in collaborative groups of schools. These groups facilitate the sharing of good practice between schools and ensure there is support from local good and outstanding schools. This work is also supported by the local Teaching School that is providing an improvement project for a number of Maidstone schools.

All the 'requires improvement' schools additionally receive Ofsted monitoring visits by HMI. All the Maidstone schools have been judged to be making good progress.

We believe that all Maidstone schools now have stronger leadership capacity. The Local Authority has a rigorous and robust school improvement strategy and where the Local Authority believes that leadership is not sufficient robust action has been taken.

Members should be assured that individual schools across Maidstone continue to demonstrate sustained and substantial improvements and we expect these schools to be able to demonstrate good outcomes well before their next inspection.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by John Davies to
David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment**

My division of Tunbridge Wells West covers a large area of the town and the villages of Bidborough, Rusthall, Speldhurst, Langton Green, Ashurst and Groombridge. The residents, the Borough and Parish Councils are rightly concerned that there is a serious and increasing noise intrusion and indeed pollution from aircraft using London Gatwick Airport disturbing residents throughout the area particularly during the night. The statistical analysis of the charts produced by Gatwick Airport Limited confirms nearly all such arrivals pass over Tunbridge Wells and its neighbouring villages.

We all accept the importance of air traffic to the economy in general but it is essential that with the increasing traffic and types of aircraft used together with the view that possibly Gatwick should have a second runway that West Kent should be properly represented in any discussions and negotiations regarding the effect of aircraft flying over this area. This is currently not the case and my Councils and residents are expecting support from the Kent County Council in their endeavours to obtain better representation on the bodies that are responsible for aircraft noise and pollution.

I am asking the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment to reassure me, the residents and Councils of West Kent that the appointment of the new representative by Kent County Council to sit on GATCOM is confirmed without delay and that representative is made fully aware of the strong opposition to a second runway at Gatwick, the need to reduce noise and pollution, a reduction in night flights which are at present unrestricted in number and to seek for additional representation on GATCOM by the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and other West Kent Councils to ensure that Kent through them has a stronger voice in the same way that those Borough and District Councils in Surrey and Sussex are represented.

Answer

I will ensure that the KCC representative that I appoint to the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) is made aware of the issues of concern to West Kent residents, notably noise, night flights and opposition to a second runway.

I will ask GATCOM about expanding its membership to include West Kent district councils. As you may be aware, membership by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was requested in March by Greg Clark MP, but was refused by the Chairman of GATCOM on the grounds that only local authorities whose area abuts the airport boundary or the M25 spur are represented on the committee. The only exception to this rule are East Sussex and Kent County Councils and this provides the opportunity for representation in these areas to come through the County Council representative. However, I am happy to raise this issue of membership again with the GATCOM chairman.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

23 May 2013

**Question by Trudy Dean to
Paul Carter, Leader of the Council**

Will the Leader of the Council please say whether in view of public concern regarding so-call 'gagging clauses' within severance agreements with staff, he is willing to cease the use of such clauses by Kent County Council?

Answer

It is entirely understandable that there is such concern over "gagging clauses" however there is a massive misunderstanding as to why they are used. The term 'compromise agreements' can mean all things to all people and we must be clear on the definition of this term. I am pleased therefore to have the opportunity to make it clear that KCC does not use compromise agreements in the context described to prevent an employee 'discussing the work and services of the organisation'.

There **is** a confidentiality clause in our standard compromise agreement which is used as a matter of standard, legitimate business practice. This makes the terms of the agreement confidential, but is limited to the terms of that specific agreement and not to any and every element of an employee's work with KCC. It is the nature of the agreement and any contractual or payment details that we seek to protect. I would also like to make it clear that the County Council does not make any specific payment for the confidentiality aspect of an agreement which is of benefit to both the County Council and the employee.

Employers frequently find themselves having to make decisions in a system of employment law that appears heavily stacked against the employer. Compromise Agreements can and do provide relative quick resolutions to situations or disputes which are often in the best interests of the employer and the organisation and deliver value for money. Alternative processes can be protracted, bureaucratic and costly, and in cases of senior executives, who could continue to be paid whilst resolutions are found, can be damaging to services and morale.

It takes courage to do something about it and taking quick action avoids a longer journey which eventually costs more and disrupts the quality of our services.