

- The Tree planting and inspection regime was explained and discussed.

Highway Trees – Asset Management

Tree safety inspections

- We inspect 4000 -5000 roads per year
- Approx. 110,000 trees per year
- We are responsible for over 500,000 trees

Service Provision	Frequency
High Speed Road Tree Inspections	Annually
Strategic Network	Every three years
All other Roads	Every five years
Bus Routes Maintenance	Inspections related & safety critical
Tree Maintenance	Inspections related & safety critical
Basal and Epicormic	Annually
Pollarding	2,3,4-,5-,6- or 7-year cycle dependant on species/age/condition/location
Tree Planting /Aftercare	To meet steady state tree numbers

Tree Funding and Requests

- **Government Grants**
Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) £10k min
Local Authority Treescapes Fund(LATF) -£50k -£300k
- **Tree planting advice - Kent County Council/Email:** Plantree@kent.gov.uk
Offers general planting advice and funding streams
- **Highways - How you can help - Link to website :**
[Trees near roads and pavements - Kent County Council](#)
Tree planting requests online –self funding



KCC BUDGET

The 2023/24 budget of £1.3bn has a forecast deficit of £37.3m as of October 2023 (<3%). This is due to inflation being ahead of budget, increases in numbers of children in care (CIC) by 30% and adult social care (ASC) client numbers increasing by 15%. The 2024/25 budget will provide for expenditure of £1.4bn due to pay settlement and inflation (as well as demographic growth in ASC / CIC). It will require a 5% increase in CT (the maximum allowed in law) but still has a funding gap of £36.5m. Future budget shows the gap getting much smaller due to reducing inflation and increases in council tax base along with savings programme as KCC focuses on statutory services. It assumes KCC will be compensated for changes in business rates rules and adopts the increase in planning fees allowed for in the Autumn Statement. There are credible plans to deliver long term savings with reserves being used in the meantime.

SPECIALIST CHILDREN’S CANCER SERVICES

I attended a meeting on 4th December to discuss changes the NHS are proposing. The current services are split between Marsden and St Georges. There are new National Service Provisions which requires the service that are current provided at the Marsden (Sutton) to be moved to St Georges (Tooting)

because St Georges has a specialist Children’s Intensive Care Unit. Also, St George has a proton beam unit. In essence children’s intensive care can be provided face to face on the cancer ward at St George as specialists are on site; it avoids transport to intensive care specialist if required. There is also an option that St Thomas’ could provide these services rather than St Georges. Conventional radio therapy will move from the Marsden to UCH (central London). Both possible sites have committed to ensure that parents have help with transport to assist them to access the new sites (including ULEZ reimbursement). This will include dedicated parking and drop off.

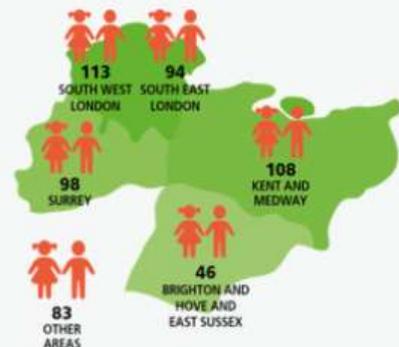
Who the changes would affect

Around 1,400 children, aged one to 15, are under the care of the Principal Treatment Centre. In 2019/20, 35 children were transferred from The Royal Marsden to St George’s because they needed or might need intensive care.

In 2019/20, the Principal Treatment Centre treated 536 children as inpatients. Children also receive some of their care closer to home in local shared care units. More than 60% of the center’s patients are from outside London.

-  **1,373** children were treated by the Principal Treatment Centre in 2019/20
-  **536** had inpatient care (they were admitted to The Royal Marsden or St George’s for day care or a stay of at least one night)
-  **1,367** had outpatient care (they came to The Royal Marsden or St George’s for an appointment)
-  **84** had intensive care (15 came from The Royal Marsden, others were at St George’s or transferred from their local shared care unit)
-  **41** had conventional radiotherapy at The Royal Marsden.

- **113** children from south west London
- **108** children from Kent and Medway
- **98** children from Surrey
- **94** children from south east London
- **46** children from East Sussex and Brighton and Hove
- **83** children from other areas.



The number of children attending for outpatient care followed a similar pattern.

Shared care units operate across the catchment area and provide supportive care working closely with the children’s cancer centre. These are not impacted by this consultation.

TRANSPORT BOARD

The Transport Board met on 5th December; the issues discussed relevant to the ward / division are as follows:

- The proposal to install cantilever posts with direction signs signage on Somerset Rd / North St junction has been abandoned due to utility complications in the ground. Instead KCC have painted lane destination markings on the carriageway.
- No 20mph carriageway roundels just to the south of Rylands Road were proposed by KCC – they did propose them at the entrance to Bybrook Road from Canterbury Road but were unable to fit them in due to the bus stop markings. On the below the blue circles represent upright 20mph repeater signs and the red circles 20mph carriageway roundels. Highways will now see if they can add a roundel or two north-west of Rylands Road now that the carriageway reconditioning has been completed.



- KCC started the ground investigation works on the Maidstone / Ashford Railway Bridge north of the Drivers roundabout in 2023 as planned however they hit an unexpected concrete layer which has prevented KCC from taking the cores samples needed. KCC have commissioned a ground penetrating radar survey to map out the extent of the concrete encountered with a view to taking cores around it, however the crew undertaking this only had availability which clashed with the Christmas embargo in place with Network Rail, therefore KCC have now moved this to January 2024. In addition to the ground investigation works at this site, KCC also have further remedial works to undertake to the soffit of the structure which they are working with Network Rail to gain access to do also in 2024.
- A28 Dualling Update included discussion that a Planning Appeal is likely in 2024. This follows the developer's request that the planning condition to dual should be "substantially amended". The cost of the duelling is now expected to be £30m (previously £25m) due to inflation from the initial start date of 2018. KCC have carried out a transport survey which confirms the scheme must go ahead because traffic flows in peak are the same as to when the scheme was first conceived, evidence suggest that some "peak spreading" has occurred with drivers now using the route earlier or later than the traditional peak.

- The EV charging points at Vicarage Lane Car Park (6 points), Elwick Place (4 points), Victoria Road (4 points) and Adley's Yard (2 points) will be active by end 2023 and the Leisure Centre points during 2024.
- 198 HGVs have been clamped in Sevington Business Park so far in 2023.

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The committee met on 7th December. Key issues discussed included:

- Bowel cancer screening will be extended to those over 50.
- There has been reported issues with mislabelling (in respect of names or dates of birth) for cervical screening.
- A new community birthing facility was due to be opened at WHH on 15th December. It offers an alternative outside the acute hospital setting and home birth. I attended the opening and was impressed by the quality of these new facilities.
- Newly announced industrial action of 6 days by junior doctors before new year day will have a impact on "operational parameters".
- Recruitment issues continue to challenge the NHS with vacancy rates within nursing / midwifery at 11.4%, 9.7% vacancy across the NHS and 14.2% staff turnover. It was agreed the NHS needs to work closer with councils in Kent to tackle some of the underlying reasons including housing and access to childcare / education.
- Tunbridge Wells Hospital has become the exclusive referral pathway for bariatric surgery (surgical intervention for those with severe and complex obesity) instead of UCL.
- A new medical centre in Folkestone High Street will open in 2025, an excellent example of "health on the high street" to deliver a modern healthcare setting and driving town centre footfall.

INTEGRATED CARE PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership met on 7th December. It included a debate on how the NHS / KCC were to tackle the fact that it has "significantly let down" those with Learning Disability and Autism. Initial work was carried out in 2022 but only met with 39 persons who had "lived experience" on how services are provided. The issues include the challenges parents of those with complex needs face navigating the offered services which required "sheer determination" on how to access services; parents need to visit the facilities on offer to see if they suit. It was agreed that further engagement will be carried out in spring 2024 before a new strategy for 2024-27 is adopted.

Priorities were agreed to provide support in accessing services, housing, employment and avoid escalation to a hospital setting. It aims to improve health outcomes as the median age of death is 62 with 49% in the group

meeting an avoidable death; the position is worse in deprived area of the county.

NET ZERO TARGET

A formal net zero target was set as an ambition for KCC's pension fund on 12th December. This requires a decarbonisation curve for equity investments of a 43% reduction by 2030 and 69% by 2040. This requires a 15% target allocation in sustainable assets by 2030 (the current allocation is 5.9%). No target has been set for fixed income (bond) investments where further work is required. The targets are supported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which gives credibility to this ambitious policy.

ABC – PRIORITIES FOR NEXT CORPORATE PLAN

An initial meeting was held on 12th December to discuss the Council's new corporate plan. The plan will be built on the current themes with a consultation in the first quarter of 2024. However, the agenda of the Corporate Plan would be put in place by officers, with a "steer" from Members. We were told the role of Members was to represent residents and feed into the process, but to leave the actual work to officers. This is not good enough as the plan should be resident / member led.

It will have a greater emphasis on ABC's responsibilities to the Planet by embedding climate action in everything ABC does. Important existing projects such as Newtown, Brompton, Ashford College, Town Centre Reset and SAGC will be included in the plan. New homes will be brought forward with a solution to Stodmarsh nutrients issue. I asked that the Forum, county and district members are involved in the Town Centre Reset so that residents and business owners in the town are represented in the deliberations.

WATERBROOK RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

This was discussed (and approved) at the Planning Committee on 13th December. Key issues to note were:

- Outline consent was granted previously under 18/00098/AS for 400 houses. The detailed application (21/01595/AS is for 364 houses)
- The key changes from the reduction in houses number allow for improved public spaces in the centre (the "central wedge") in addition to the linear park surrounding the development (including a 2.4km walking route)
- The proposed southern access road to Cheesemans Green Lane has been removed.
- All homes are two storeys, mostly semi-detached (10% affordable).
- 150m² of retail etc is proposed in the centre of the development.

- The 4.1ha onside wetland is only part of the Stodmarsh mitigation. Other solutions include a credit for the former lorry park and offsite work which is yet to be approved.
- The Government's 10% Biodiversity Gain does not apply to this application because the planning consent was applied for over two years ago and the 24th January new rule date is only for applications submitted after that date.
- The footpath around the site is proposed to be upgraded to a bridleway and this will include going through the wetlands.
- I raised issues about the management of the development including the wetlands. In view of the issues that have arisen on Finberry (higher than expected bills, delayed billing resulting in large sums being due and failure to carry out agreed work), it is important there is no repeat. I requested a clear obligation in the section 106 agreement that governance of the management fees means they are transparent, regularly invoiced and the management company (GSE) reports at least annually to the Parish Council. The agreed condition reads as follows and it was accepted that the approval of the management plan will take into account concerns over Finberry.

Prior to the occupation of any building hereby approved or within a phase or sub-phase of development a landscape management plan covering that building or phase or sub-phase, including long term design objectives, proposed governance arrangements, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscaped areas and open spaces (including play areas), other than small, privately owned, domestic gardens, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscape management plan shall include details of the management of the woodland areas adjacent to Cheeseman's Green Lane. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved unless previously agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- An additional condition covering the ecology following advice from KCC's Ecological Advice Service was agreed. It provided for a habitat creation plan. The barn owl boxes will be maintained and protected.

Prior to any ecological mitigation or habitat clearance works commencing a habitat creation plan must be submitted to the LPA for written approval. The plan must provide the following information:

- *Overview of habitats to be created*
- *Detailed methodology to create habitats*
- *Timings of works*
- *Maps showing the locations*
- *Management requirements to establish the habitats*

- *Interim on-going management plan until the management plan required*
- *Details of monitoring during establishment works.*
- *Details of how the habitats will be protected.*

Here is a copy of my speech to committee:

I am pleased that important changes have been made to this brownfield site application. These include, reducing the number of houses from 400 to 364, improved public spaces, removing access to Cheesemans Green Lane and upgrading the surrounding footpath to bridleway.

My concern is over the governance of the management of landscaped and open spaces. Colleagues may be aware of issues on adjoining Finberry (and also, I understand Bridgefield). These issues include, higher than expected bills, delayed invoicing resulting in large sums becoming due with unreasonable payment terms and finally failure to carry out timely agreed management work to an acceptable standard.

So, my request is that the committee impose conditions that ensures the calculation of management fees is transparent, fees are billed regularly to avoid liabilities accumulating and that the management company prepares annual reports of their activities to the Parish Council to enable scrutiny of activities. The wording of the draft condition requires governance arrangements to be agreed by the LPA, so please can the committee support my requests (calculation of fees, timing of billing and annual reports to the PC) are considered when the LPA agrees the arrangements.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

I asked about progress on Social Prescribing at the last KCC Full Council meeting of 2023 on 14th December. My question was:

The Green Social Prescribing Group was formed by KCC and the NHS to support social prescribing. Social prescribing has been around for 30 years but has been scaled up now it is included as part of NHS plan. Medway and Swale Health and Care Partnership have created a Memorandum of Understanding and Strategic Framework how the voluntary and community sector can secure grants including a community chest for social prescribing, micro-commissioning, and shared investment funds of up to £5k through a Community Project Officer. I welcome these developments and ask the portfolio holder to clarify the Council's role in this and could he comment whether KCC is able to support a roll out across the county?

My follow up question was:

Given KCC's commitment to social prescribing and the obvious benefits to users, what can Members do to support this and increase capacity and take up?

I was greatly encouraged by the responses and the work being done by Imago in Ashford.

Have you heard of Social Prescribing?

Many things can affect your health and wellbeing, such as **stress, money, relationships** or it could be that you are managing different **long-term health conditions**.

Imago Social Prescribers are here to **listen and support** you to feel **healthy and happier**, plan future goals, manage stress and anxiety so you can take those next steps and feel more in control of your life.

We can support with:

- Confidence and self esteem
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Healthy lifestyle choices
- Loneliness and isolation
- Benefit and housing advice
- Joining local activities

To access the service please scan the QR code or visit our website: www.imago.community/social-prescribing

IMAGO Your local charity
Building Resilience,
Facilitating Change
Since 1964
Registered charity number: 1032888 • Registered company number: 5254452

NHS

REPTON HIGHWAYS

Taylor Wimpey have issued a Certificate from KCC showing the adoption of roads on 14/08/2023.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
HIGHWAYS ACT 1980
SECTION 38

CERTIFICATE NO. 3

Repton Park - Primary Infrastructure

I certify that maintenance repairs in accordance with Clause 39 of the Road Agreement dated 23rd December 2016 have been satisfactorily completed at the above development and that the road is now highway maintainable at the public expense.

Dated 20th September 2022

Adoption of Sewers - Section 104 Agreement, Water Industry Act 1991
Footway Construction
Development: Plots 13-18, Repton Park, Northern Strategic Drainage, Off Maidstone Road, Ashford, Kent

Dear Sirs,

I can confirm that the sewers and associated apparatus which serve the above development have passed a satisfactory final inspection. The sewers and associated apparatus were adopted on 14/08/2023. Therefore the bond can be released.

Adoption of Sewers - Section 104 Agreement, Water Industry Act 1991
Site: Plots 13-18, Repton Park, Northern Strategic Drainage, Off Maidstone Road, Ashford Kent
Developer: Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd & Persimmon Homes Ltd
Agreement Date: 20/12/2016
Bondman: 19-49C
Bond Number:
Our File Ref: WWS 6 104-692268

I have reported that the manhole covers on Repton Avenue are loose and causing noise when traffic passes. The two manholes are, one directly outside Repton Connect Community Centre, and one on the junction of Sir Bernard Paget Ave and Repton Avenue, opposite the primary school (ref 765447).



I have also written to the Highways Team about the area immediately outside Waitrose which has been reported many times without meaningful action as these may not count as potholes. Unfortunately, although the Highways Definition Team confirms that Repton Avenue has been adopted as publicly maintainable highway, the location has been inspected and whilst there are some defects to the surface these are not actionable at this time. Highways will continue to monitor the condition.

NORTH STREET / ALBERT ROAD SIGN

KCC have replaced the damaged sign at this junction that was bent around by 180% - a prodigious feat of vandalism! (ref 738662)



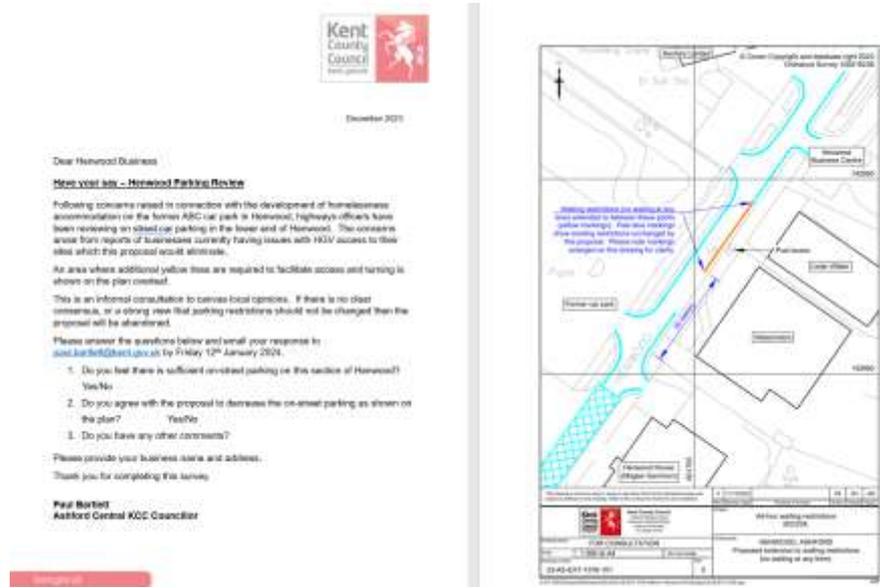
Before



After

HENWOOD PARKING

I have distributed letters to business owners on Henwood asking for support for increased double yellow lines. This will help reduce lorry parking on the estate and lorries traveling down Hythe Road late at night to park.



LAWS LANE

I have reported the poor road quality in laws Lane (ref 765828). Some work has been done but more is needed!



Work done

But more to do!

BEAVER ROAD BUS GATE

The construction works to remove the bollard and replace with a revised layout have been completed on Beaver Road (between Godfrey Walk and South Stour Road). KCC are not in the position to enforce unauthorised traffic now as they are still in the procurement process for the camera supplier and provision of the 'back office' to be able to do so. Subject to this process, KCC aim to have a contract in place in the new year which will permit deployment of the equipment required to commence enforcement. KCC have confirmed that they will inform and publicise in advance of enforcement commencing on site.



CRANBROOK SURGERY

I have been informed that Dr Hindmarsh, the GP who runs Crane Surgery, Cranbrook is retiring from April 2024. This may affect many Ashford Borough residents who live west of Tenterden. The NHS is working with other local providers on a preferred option of another practice taking the Crane Surgery site on as a branch surgery. This would mean services will continue to run and be accessed at the surgery as usual. They will be able to confirm details and next steps to all patients by early February 2024.

Private and confidential

Name
Address line one
Address line two
Address line three
Address line four
Postcode

Date as postmark

Primary Care Contracting Team

Gall House
2nd Floor
Lower Stone Street
Maidstone
ME15 6NB

kmicb.gpcontracting@nhs.net
Phone: 01634 335095 option 6
www.kentandmedwayich.nhs.uk

Dear

NHS Number

Please read: Important information about your GP practice.

This letter applies to all members of your household, including children, who are registered with The Crane Surgery, Cranbrook.

Dr Hindmarsh will be retiring at the end of March 2024. We would like to thank him for the dedicated service he has given to his patients and community over the years.

NHS Kent and Medway is responsible for making sure patients have access to healthcare across Kent and Medway. We have been working hard to find the best way to continue to deliver services to the Crane Surgery patients. We are working on a preferred option of another practice taking the site over as a branch practice. This would mean that you will still be able to access all of the usual GP services from the Crane surgery site, with many of the same staff delivering them.

We will be able to confirm details of the plan in early February 2024 so that all patients know how to access services from 1 April 2024.

In the meantime, please continue to access services as you usually would, the practice is open and there to help.

Please tell us what you think.

To help us plan your local services, we would be very grateful if you could **let us know your views**, so we can better understand what is important to you and to help us shape the future service.

All you need to do is complete this survey in the link below to give us your feedback. <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CraneSurgery/>. Hard copies are available from the practice.

Alternatively, you can contact us at kmicb.gpcontracting@nhs.net and we will send copies out to you.

Please also contact us if you or someone you know needs this information and/or the survey in any other format and we will do our best to help.

The survey is open until **31 January 2024** Please make sure you have completed it by then if you wish to share your thoughts.

Yours faithfully

Sukh Singh
Director of Primary Care
NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board

You can feedback by emailing kmicb.gpcontracting@nhs.net. We are encouraging patients to let the NHS know their views on how they can provide services via <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CraneSurgery/>

FINBERRY SOUTHERN LINK ROAD

The opening up of the southern all direction traffic route between Bridgefield and Finberry will change the way in how vehicles make their journeys. It will be a shorter route for many, changing travelling time. I will ensure that KCC and PC monitor the impact and we can work with Crest (until the roads are adopted) and the Highway Authority (after adoption) to ensure the network remains safe for all users including pedestrians.

KCC are looking at ways to ensure the northern bus route can be policed safely so that it can be opened up to the bus service (assuming Stagecoach are willing to do so).



SIMONE WEIL AVENUE

I have reported a trip hazard on Simone Weil Avenue (ref 766570)



FLY-TIPPING CHEESEMANS GREEN LANE

I have reported a discarded TV on Chesemans Green Lane (near the salt bin) to ABC for collection (ref 19024116).



Paul Bartlett
Mersham, Sevington South and Finberry Ward, ABC
Ashford Central Division, KCC
Grosvenor Hall Ward, Kennington Community Council
Sevington Ward, Sevington with Finberry Parish Council
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paul.bartlett@ashford.gov.uk or paul.bartlett@kent.gov.uk