

Title: New staffing arrangements in Kent Highways and Transportation

Report to: Ashford Joint Transportation Board

Date: 20th September 2011

Reporting officer: Director of Kent Highways and Transportation

Subject: Kent Highways and Transportation Structure 2011

Purpose and summary of report: As a part of the county council's strategy, Bold Steps for Kent and wider national legislation and budget reductions, there have been changes across Kent County Council. This includes the work done in Kent Highway Services now called Kent Highways and Transportation (KH&T). This report sets out recent changes following a restructure of the department and highlights how KH&T will continue to focus on working with communities and ensure proper engagement with Members, Councillors, parishes and local people.

Recommendations: The content of the report be noted

1. Introduction.

1.1 As a part of the county council's strategy, Bold Steps for Kent and wider legislation around community engagement, the way KCC works is changing with an aim to improve all the services provided by the council and to improve the service offered to communities in Kent.

1.2 Kent Highways and Transportation (KH&T) – formerly called Kent Highway Services - will continue to focus on working with communities and are committed to proper engagement with Members, district councils, parishes and local people. In order to strengthen this area, meet the budget savings requirements and bring about efficiencies and effectiveness, changes have been made to the staffing of the department. This follows a two phased restructuring process.

2. New structure

2.1 Prior to the restructure each district had allocated contacts within the Highway Operations teams, namely highway inspectors and community liaison officers. From 1st July the new structure came into force and there are no longer community liaison officers. Instead we now have highway stewards and statutory highway inspectors. The highway stewards have been allocated to a specific area and they will deal with

customer service enquiries, Member, parish and community contact. They will be empowered to carry out small jobs on site as necessary and will be able to raise jobs they find out on their patch directly to our Highway Management Centre (HMC) at Aylesford so that these can be dealt with in a timely manner. They will undertake parish visits as agreed locally and will be working out in the community on a daily basis. As is the case now, defects should be reported via our contact centre to ensure that they are recorded and entered into our system to be fixed.

2.2 Highway inspectors will continue to carry out statutory inspections and will highlight defects as they do now and ensure that these are repaired. Inspectors and stewards will be supported by an efficient HMC which is co-located with our new contractor, Enterprise.

2.3 A list of key staff for this district is attached at the Appendix.

3. Conclusion and recommendation

KH&T is committed to providing a high quality service to the communities in Kent. The recent changes will ensure that despite budget reductions and other challenges KH&T will keep a focus on community engagement. Members of this joint transportation board are asked to note this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

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Appendix

Highway Manager East Kent Toby Howe

District Manager Ashford Lisa Holder

Engineer Lee Goodman

Highway Stewards Ron Swan, Darren Anderson, Jennie Wickenden