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MONEY'S GONE TO ICELAND

- £50 per person in Kent lost in "negligent" investment

Stop throwing our money down the drain - Tim Prater and Tom McNeice



Audit Commission - KCC was negligent

By **Michael Wilson** Economics Editor

Lib Dems Tim Prater and Tom McNeice have accused Kent County Council of being arrogant and two-faced in its response to the Audit Commission report on Icelandic banks.

Kent had invested over £50 million in Icelandic banks before their collapse last year. Experts now believe Kent will lose almost all of the money - around £50 for every person in Kent.

The damning Audit report names Kent as one of seven local authorities who were "negligent" in their handling of deposits in Icelandic banks.

Tim Prater said:

"Kent County Council repeatedly states that it has been rated as an "Excellent" Council. I don't see how losing £50 million is "Excellent".

Lib Dem campaigner Tom McNeice is furious that tax payers' money is being thrown down the drain.

"Last month Price Waterhouse Coopers made exactly the same criticisms as the Audit Commission. How many times do Kent have to be told they got it wrong before they say 'Sorry'?"

Kent Council chiefs are exploring whether they can overturn the findings of the report.

It has also emerged that the Council made an eleventh-hour bid to stop the report being published, demanding it be retracted because of what it claimed were conclusions based on "the flimsiest of evidence."

Tim Prater commented:

"I do hope that the Conservative-run County Council are not going to spend tax payers money on fighting the Audit Commission in Court.

"This is yet another example of the Conservatives wasting our money and having more concern for their public image than of the best interests of the residents of Kent."

News COMMENT

You can't turn on a TV or open a newspaper now without hearing or reading about the recession.

Everyone is being more careful with their money. People are worried about jobs and homes. But it seems the Government is doing little to help ordinary people.

Gordon Brown is out of touch

Gordon Brown's government is out of touch. They simply do not understand what people are going through. They frittered £12.5 billion on a temporary VAT cut which has hardly been noticed on our high streets or our pockets.

Our Conservative controlled County Council hasn't done much better. They ploughed money into the launch of Kent TV, an Internet based TV station, whilst at the same time raising charges for the elderly by the same amount!

Appalling state of roads

Despite yet more Council Tax increases, Kent County Council are reducing money into road safety budgets. KCC has also admitted that at the current rate of spending, each pavement has to last 226 years, and each drain over 300 years before they can be replaced.

Roads have to last indefinitely as KCC is not spending enough to prevent the backlog growing ever larger! We have six times as many pavements in poor repair as Berkshire.

Wasted money

It is just not good enough, particularly when we see how much money our Conservative Council have wasted. These include £17m on moving the Highways department, £6.5m on publicity and the £50m that may be lost in Iceland.

Time for a change?

People are fed up with a Labour Government. They are also disappointed with a Conservative County Council which wastes money and ignores local residents.

Only the Lib Dems offer the real change for local residents. They have a track record of action when it comes to fighting waste and standing up for local people.

It's time for a change

Lib Dems launch 6 step plan to improve County Hall



Lib Dems, Neil Matthews, Gary Fuller, Tim Prater and Tom McNeice launch their "Six to Fix" plan to improve Kent County

6

to fix for a safer, greener Kent

- **Stop the waste of money** - and spend on YOUR Priorities.
- **Fix the roads and pavements** - repair the potholes and broken kerbs in your street.
- **A greener Kent** - better public transport, and improving recycling.
- **Better local services** - Improve children services, better facilities for young people and help for those people who need it the most.
- **Safer streets** - Work with the police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, more community policing.
- **Safer roads** - improve road safety schemes and stop the cuts

Shepway Lib Dems have launched a six step plan to improve Kent County Council and the services it delivers to local residents.

Stop the waste

Cllr Tim Prater said, "These six steps will go a long way to improving Shepway. Local residents need a council which can help residents as much as possible during these difficult times - that's why stopping the waste is our top priority".

The Lib Dems also know how important it is for local councillors to stand up to the Conservative County Council that has been taking residents for granted.

Tim added, "I hope local residents will have a look at our record. We've been fighting to get road repairs, getting street lights fixed and improving our general environment.

Time for a change

Local councillor Tom McNeice added, "The Conservatives have been running County Hall for far too long. In every one of the last four elections, Council tax rises at Kent County Council fell in the year before an election. After the elections in 1997, 2001 and 2005, Council Tax rises went back up again immediately afterwards - sometimes by a huge amount.

"No tax payer should be surprised if Kent's cynical Conservatives do the same thing again next year. There is every reason to believe that Kent's history will repeat itself, and the low tax rise election bribe of this year will be paid for by a bigger tax rise next year. It's really time for a change".

Europe takes the lead on climate change



Sharon Bowles MEP with environment campaigner Catherine Bearder "While the package isn't perfect, we should grab the best deal we can for the good of the planet."



Europe has taken a lead in the global fight against climate change.

In December, Sussex MEP Sharon Bowles and fellow members of the European Parliament voted through a historic climate change and energy package.

The '20-20-20' package will reduce EU greenhouse gases by 20%, increase energy efficiency by 20%, and increase the use of renewable energy by 20%, all by the year 2020.

Biggest ever climate deal

This is the most far-reaching climate change action ever agreed and

sets a challenge for the rest of the world.

Although the package was welcomed, there had been several concessions made from the original proposals which muted the celebrations.

The Lib Dems wanted more ambitious measures, especially in reducing trade allowances of greenhouse emissions.

Setting the global agenda

But the doors for increased targets have been left open. Europe agreed to increase target levels up to 30% if there were a global consensus at an international summit later this year.

Discussing the package, Bowles said "It is right to grab this opportunity for a significant advance against climate change.

"There are so many parts of this deal which represent a huge success.

"The renewables target will bring a radical change to how EU energy is sourced - while Carbon Capture and Storage prevents the escape of CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere."

Lib Dem carbon success

Lib Dem environment spokesman Chris Davies MEP has been responsible for steering the Carbon Capture

Storage Directive through Parliament.

The technology captures CO₂ emissions from industry for permanent underground burial, in rock formations that previously stored oil and natural gas.

Agreements within the '20-20-20' package will redirect money earned from EU emissions trading to fund the development of this important technology.

Sharon Bowles said: "This is even more reason to demand that, if we are going to have new coal-fired power stations like Kingsnorth, they are carbon capture ready."



Rainbow Centre Appeal

Shepway News are launching an emergency appeal to help the Folkestone Rainbow Centre continue its work. Increasing work loads and a recent drop in income have put the centre under severe financial pressure, putting its local work at risk.

The Rainbow Centre offers a range of support for parents, children, the lonely, the isolated and the homeless, as well as a fully professional counselling service. The Folkestone Rainbow Centre 'Drop In' is open Monday to Friday in the heart of Folkestone Town Centre. They offer an immediate response service for people who come in needing support, help or advice.

As well as a friendly ear, the centre provide hot (or cold) drinks, sound advice and practical help. This includes making appointments for housing needs, providing sleeping bags and blankets, helping to find furniture, supplying bags of food, speaking to officials on behalf of someone and writing letters.

The Rainbow Centre relies mainly on donations and receives only limited support from local Councils or other organisations.

Lib Dem Folkestone Councillor Lynne Beaumont said:

"The Rainbow Centre do fantastic work helping so many in Folkestone who

urgently need help. Their motto is 'A sign of hope - a place of help' and they really live up to that. They can't solve all problems, but they can and do give people practical help - and some real hope.

"But the centre desperately needs help from us to keep open. With almost all of its income coming from donations, it's down to local people. Without their support, this vital service for Folkestone will simply not be able to carry on."

If you can help the Rainbow Centre in its work, your support would be massively appreciated. Please complete the form below and return it with a cheque payable to "Folkestone Rainbow Centre".



● Cllr Lynne Beaumont - "Please, if you are able to help, complete the form opposite. They really are a worthwhile charity and need our help"

Learn more or donate online: www.folkestonerainbowcentre.org.uk

Yes, I will help the Folkestone Rainbow Centre Emergency Appeal

Name: _____ Please return to: _____
 Address: _____ Cornerstones, 69 Sandgate Road, Folkestone CT20 2AF
 Postcode: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Email: _____

Thank you!

NEWS IN BRIEF

Credit Crunch Survey

Vince Cable, Lib Dem Shadow Chancellor, and Neil Matthews, Parliamentary Campaigner for Folkestone and Hythe are seeking your views on what small businesses in Shepway need to help keep them afloat in the current recession.

Neil said:

"Small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy and are crucial to bringing Britain through the recession.

"Answering this survey will help us fight for small businesses. Please take just a few minutes to complete it. The details will be held in confidence and only aggregated results published."

www.creditcrunchsurvey.org.uk

Kent County TV

It is reported that the costs of Kent TV are much higher than expected, yet it's hard to find someone who has watched it.

If you have watched it, Shepway Lib Dems would like to know your views. Contact details on page 4.

Call to fix the roads and pavements



Local campaigner Tom McNeice is calling for action to repair roads and pavements across Kent.

Folkestone Councillor Tom is shocked at the state of roads, pavements and street lighting in the area.

Tom said, "What makes it worse is that Conservative controlled Kent County Council spent £17 Million on moving their Highways Department. This is not money being spent on repairing your roads and pavements, but on their offices and depots!

"This is just a small part of the £43.8 Million spent by Conservative controlled KCC on wasted projects.

"Local people deserve better!"

County Council spends £6 million on 'spin'

By Maddy Kirk Kent County Correspondent

The Conservative County Council spent over £6 million on spin and publicity in 2006/2007 and another £5.6 million in 2007/2008.

Local campaigner Tim Prater said, "Despite record Council tax bills yet again this year, the Conservative Council thought it was good value to spend over £12 MILLION of taxpayers money promoting themselves over two years".

Fifth highest spend in the country

Kent were the fifth highest spending authority when it came to publicity. With only Surrey being higher in the South.

Even the Greater London Authority with a population nearly five times the size of Kent spent just a little less than Kent in 2006/2007.

Lib Dem Campaigner Neil Matthews said, "This sort of spending is unacceptable. When services are being cut and we have record Council Tax bills, this does not represent good value for money".

"In fact Kent County Council expenditure on publicity rose a whopping 367.4% over just 10 years, from £1,409,000 to £6,586,000!"

Neil added, "We have to ask ourselves - could we better spend £12 million of our own money? The answer is a resounding yes".



Neil Matthews said, "How about spending the money on fixing the roads?"



Cllr Tim Prater said, "How about giving local residents a break and freezing Council Tax?"



Cllr Lynne Beaumont said, "How about spending the money on youth services?"



Cllr Tom McNeice said, "How about improving public transport?"



Ann Rimmer said, "How about improving recycling, especially garden waste?"



Cllr Gary Fuller said, "If we cut down on the waste we could improve lots of services."

We always give more than we take!
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