

By: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities

To: Kent County Council, 21 July 2011

Subject: Progress on Locality Boards

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report outlines the development of Locality Boards in Kent to date and, in particular, explains the role and contribution of Kent County Council.

Recommendation:

1. Members are asked to note the progress on the development of Locality Boards
-

1. Introduction

(1) This report provides a briefing on the development of Locality Boards, which is a key proposal in the Kent Recommitment designed to develop locally responsive initiatives between the District and the County Councils. Locality Boards are an essential part of the revised partnership architecture that will bring more democratic accountability to local services. It will be through these Boards that new ways of delivering services will be tested.

(2) These changes will bring about different ways of working between the County Council and District Councils and between the family of Local Government and other partners. It will take time for these new ways to develop and there is an understanding that Locality Boards will be shaped according to local need and preference. The Kent Forum agreed the establishment of Locality Boards to ensure that there will be a democratically elected board at a local level with a good understanding of the needs and priorities of the area.

2. Relevant Priority Outcomes

(1) The Locality Boards Programme is aligned with coalition Government plans set out in the Localism Bill; the delivery of the three countywide ambitions and the vision for Locality Boards, endorsed by the Kent Forum in March 2011. It is important that, whilst retaining the individual aims and aspirations of each Locality Board, Kent County Council defines the relationship which it has with the Boards in a way which maximises the benefits of involvement for the local area.

3. Financial Implications

(1) At the present time the resources used to develop Locality Boards are primarily staff time and this is a combination of County and District staff.

(2) The funding available to the Locality Boards, particularly for the first year, needs to be negotiated and agreed with our District and Borough Council partners. The funding will be aimed at the initial work of analysing the needs of localities and the development of commissioning plans.

4. Legal Implications

(1) In the initial development phase Locality Boards will be advisory in nature and unable to take decisions that bind partners. However, over time and building upon experience, it may be that partners may wish to explore alternative models such as becoming joint commissioning organisations using joint committee arrangements.

(2) There are powers under current local government legislation such as Section 18 of the 2000 Act which allows councils to set up Area Committees or Section 20 of the 2000 Act which allows councils to set up Joint Committees under s.101(5) of the 1972 Act which allows authorities to enter into arrangements to discharge functions jointly.

(3) However, these powers are very limited in terms of the geographic area they can cover or the composition of the Committees themselves. Therefore, it will be important to explore and consult fully on the legal implications as the Locality Boards develop.

5. Purpose of Report

(1) Locality Boards are an essential part of the revised partnership architecture that will bring more democratic accountability to local services. These changes will bring about different ways of working between the County Council and District and Borough Councils and between the family of Local Government and other partners. It will take time for these new ways to develop and this will be a learning process with opportunities to adapt approaches to resolve issues as they are raised.

(2) The Kent Forum endorsed development of Locality Boards at its meeting on 28 January 2011 and agreed a very clear principle that there should be no 'one size fits all' approach to Locality Boards. Sharing learning through different approaches to each board across the county will help inform and refine arrangements.

6. Kent County Council's role in Locality Boards

(1) Local Kent County Council Members will sit on the Locality Board and will make contributions based on both their local knowledge and their wider knowledge of Kent-wide issues.

(2) Senior managers at director level will provide support to ensure appropriate briefings to Members on the work across the County Council to deliver the 3 Ambitions. There will be an opportunity to raise Kent issues which have an impact on the local area, and any other wider considerations from the work of the Kent Forum. Kent County Council's commitment to Locality Boards is demonstrated by this use of senior staff to underline the strategic importance of Locality Boards.

(3) Kent County Council is working towards providing a range of data local to the areas to stimulate discussion on local priorities. This will draw on a number of data sources and will be presented in a way that will be useful in agreeing local priorities.

7. The Benefits of Locality Boards

(1) The benefits of Locality Boards will include the opportunity to:

- Audit the delivery of public services in their area
- Develop a locality plan focussing on local priorities and the contribution to the three countywide ambitions
- Provide more effective mechanisms for community consultation
- Enable a joint approach to partnership with the voluntary and community sector
- Contribute towards the Local Development Framework
- Advise on maximising the potential financial gain from the new planning arrangements e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus
- Provide a key local interface with other stakeholders e.g. - Police and the potential to engage with existing key partnerships e.g. Community Safety Partnership and maximise or open new dialogue
- Identify those services that may be better commissioned through joint commissioning and delivery arrangements
- Explore how county and district and other partners can make more efficient use of property assets, can share back office functions and can integrate some of the roles of the local publicly funded workforce
- Ensure Kent continues to be a test-bed for piloting new initiatives including the option of organisational change and new ways of service delivery
- Offer an environment that has an overview of all partnerships operating in the Locality including public and voluntary sectors.

8. Update on current progress on Locality Boards

Two Locality Boards have held their inaugural meetings.

(1) Swale Locality Board

Swale Locality Board met on the 26th May 2011. At that meeting, arrangements for future meetings and the roles of members and supporting officers was discussed. A report on the Community Budgets pilot in Swale was received.

(2) Gravesham Locality Board

Gravesham Locality Board met on the 9th June 2011. Discussion focussed on the arrangements for the board including the roles of members and supporting officers and the involvement of wider partners. Local priorities were considered and the potential of Community Budgets was discussed.

(3) This is an area of rapid development and progress. A snapshot of the position of other Districts in relation to the development of Locality Boards is included in appendix1.

9. Recommendation

(1) Members are asked to note the progress on the development of Locality Boards

Angela Slaven
 Director
 Service Improvement
angela.slaven@kent.gov.uk
 01622 221696

Mary Blanche
 Policy Manager
 Service Improvement
mary.blanche@kent.gov.uk
 01622 696621

This page is intentionally left blank

Other Districts' Positions
Snap-shot position correct at 11 July 2011

Ashford

Ashford LSP has had the last meeting and the Locality Board is due to meet in September.

Canterbury

Meeting with Leader of Canterbury City Council to take place to discuss the opportunities for development

- Informal discussions held with CCC Cabinet Members

Dartford

Meeting with Leader & Chief Executive of Dartford Borough Council to take place to discuss the opportunities for development

Dover

The Cabinet at Dover District Council have agreed a model for their pilot Locality Board

- Preliminary meeting on 28 June attended by KCC Officers reviewed the Terms of Reference for Locality Board and initial governance structures
- First formal meeting of Locality Board early September
- Indication that areas for priority will include Vision for Kent, Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Children's Trust arrangements
- Relationship to Health and Wellbeing Board (early implementer status) and well established neighbourhood forums
- Focus on devolved budgets and developing service redesign to reflect local need

Maidstone

Borough Leader has started some internal discussions with Borough Councillors on the potential development of a Locality Board for Maidstone

- Meeting taken place with KCC Senior Officers and the Deputy Leader of Maidstone Borough Council to consider KCC officer support and contribution to Locality Board
- Likely review of LSP structure to create Locality Board
- Focus on economic development, health and community services

Sevenoaks

Leader has indicated support for a Locality Board

- Meeting between KCC Senior Officers and Sevenoaks Senior Officers to consider required actions to develop the Locality Board
- Opportunity for Locality Board not likely to be achieved prior to the end of 2011
- Focus on youth services and community safety. Significant interest in early devolution of budget

Shepway

Meeting between KCC and Chief Executive and Leader of Shepway District Council reviewed the opportunities and Shepway are working on their proposal.

Thanet

Wish to look at current infrastructure to identify gaps and the appropriate structures.

Tunbridge Wells

Existing LSP structure will continue pending first Locality Board meeting.

- Focus on community safety and on-going work “ families in focus” addressing high cost complex families

Tonbridge and Malling

Current position is to retain the existing LSP and no immediate plans are being made to replace with a Locality Board, though may look at increased membership from KCC.