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Date: 15 September 2011

Dear Member

**CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
THURSDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2011**

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Thursday, 15 September 2011 meeting of the Customer and Communities Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the following additional information that was circulated at the meeting.

Agenda No	Item
B6	<u>Vision for Kent 2011-2021 consultation draft (1 - 6)</u>
B7	<u>Kent Partners' Compact - Refresh (7 - 16)</u>

Yours sincerely

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services

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Customers and Communities POSC: 15 September 2011

Vision for Kent Consultation

1. Some early themes emerging from the consultation

The consultation leaflet gave respondents the opportunity to comment more generally about other actions that they felt needed to happen to achieve the ambitions. Around 250 people (30% of all respondents) took advantage of this making over 900 suggestions. In this early stage of the analysis some key messages are starting to emerge for each ambition and these are shown in the table below.

Ambition	Theme	Theme	Theme
1 – To Grow the Economy	Improve all types of infrastructure including roads, rail, air, and broadband	Reduce unnecessary regulation and increase support for businesses, especially SMEs and entrepreneurs	Raise employment through support, training, education, apprenticeships and opportunities
2 – To Tackle Disadvantage	Encourage self reliance and promote personal resilience	Deploy a range of incentives to get people into training and work	Support realisation of aspirations, particularly young people
3 – To put citizens in control	Give people a real say through effective consultation and engagement	Support people to take control by offering training or advice	Take effective measures to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

2. Raw material relating to Ambition 3 'to put citizen's in control/'

Below is a sample of the raw material from the Vision for Kent consultation that most closely relates to Ambition 3 'to put citizens in control'. This brings out some of the more interesting comments – though it is not necessarily wholly representative of all the views received.

Even from a cursory read readers will see the breadth of comments and ideas received. More work will be undertaken in the next few weeks to extract the key messages from this consultation exercise.

People Making Decisions – (selected from 68 comments)

Stop tokenistic consultations and ask real people what they need in their lives. eg. Ask the unemployed what would help them get back to work. Ask people who cannot afford to stay in their homes due to benefit cuts how best to support them to find work and affordable homes.

Try to overcome the prevailing apathy of most people who feel that they have no say in the decision making process, or that when they do express a view, it is ignored. The community forums seem to have declined as people feel they are just an opportunity for officers and elected representatives to tell us what a splendid job they are doing; concerns and criticisms do not seem to have any outcome. I think there is a case to be made for devolving more power to town and parish council level.

Consult properly - where people are - don't pay lip service. The only people who have time to go to local board meetings are retired. And people go to the website to find something specific not browse so they'll rarely see consultations. Make sure they are covered in all the papers (advertise if they won't include as editorial). And to catch younger audiences make sure you fully using all the social media channels- not just to tweet a link but to have discussion and generate debate. Finally, don't ask for feedback then let people's time and energy go into a black hole. Make sure you feedback, using all the channels, to make sure people know their feedback was heard - and that it affected something -or they'll never give you the time again. People will understand if their particular point isn't included as long as they know it was heard. No info coming pout leads them to become cynical at best and saboteurs at worst.

We don't want more layers of bureaucracy or set up more 'Talk Shops' let the elected people get on with the job in hand. Also there does need to be an ability for using the current resources more effectively and not saying 'this is ours and that is yours'. We are all in this together and need to get on with things. Putting public buildings and resources to better use would be much better than spending more time and money on setting up more talk shops.

Ensure that elected members of the KCC contact and keep in touch with their Electorate on a regular basis. Currently, members of the KCC seem remote and uninterested to many voters

"Putting citizens in control of Kent" sounds a laudable objective but it must not be pursued at the expense of the government and public authorities playing their rightful roles in the provision of public services. Essential services cannot be left to charities, voluntary organisations and volunteers, although all of these do, of course, have a valuable contribution to make.

Be sensible we all have opinions but it doesn't make us right for the job necessarily. Lead from the top and as good managers of people do, consult and recommend based on the input from the public and the expertise of the leadership in local government

I'm a little apprehensive about putting citizens in control in Kent. I would however like to see charities and voluntary organisations do more good work

Councillors and the government are elected to represent the people and make decisions on their behalf. Cant have everyone making decisions it would lead to too much arguing

People Designed Services – (selected from 20 comments)

Ensuring that vulnerable service recipients are able to be fully engaged in identifying their needs and ways in which this can be dealt with.

Ask people for their ideas on all sorts of topics - including saving energy and reducing waste, etc., but also on what sort of shops they'd like to see in the Town Centre; whether we approve of more pubs and nightclubs being granted licences; how many police officers we'd like to see on the streets, and where we'd like buses to run - ask us, in the first instance, and then listen to our replies and act on them.

Lots of people have plenty to say, most of which makes good sense. Listen to them and take note of what they are saying. We can't all be on councils or governments but what we have to say can be just as wise and sometimes even more so. Hold a huge meeting in a huge hall. Divide people into groups appertaining to what ideas they have and what they have to say. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Support People to Take More Control – (selected from 44 comments)

It's not so much putting them in control as having ownership of their communities that create a sense of belonging and responsibility. Encourage community engagement and intergenerational engagement bringing all ages together

Persuade people that they have both the ability and a duty to contribute to the success of their community

Mean it! Give people real opportunities to get involved, take risks and act on what they say and not just pay lip service AGAIN!

Work with local civic groups to provide appropriate help in the locality rather than blanket solutions.

For citizens to really be in control we need to really start working on the ground now, building up from the street, neighbourhood, ward and then district level. This will not happen over night but with patience and real commitment it can happen. There needs to be more effective partnership working between the public and voluntary sector avoiding duplication and sharing the limited resources that will exist.

An important part of empowering people so that they are able to take responsibility for themselves is supporting people to manage the risks to their communities and businesses. This should include empowering communities to manage their relationship with the environment, whether this is building resilience to climate change or managing their own environmental footprint.

It is good to see the aspiration to “Work with faith groups who already have a key role in community leadership to build and support communities” but the Kent Forum should seek to better understand exactly what local churches are doing in support of local communities as much activity is already taking place corresponding to this V4K ambition. Activities such as running youth groups, local ‘litter picks’, providing spaces for community activities and those which benefit vulnerable groups are already achieving some of these V4K priorities and will continue to do so. Churches in Kent have many members who undertake such activities on a voluntary basis within the framework of a formal structure (a church or network of churches). These activities are not only a great example of how local groups can deliver parts of this V4K ambition but churches should be encouraged to further develop such activities to have a greater impact as part of their local communities.

Support VCS – (selected from 17 comments)

Acknowledge and appreciate the importance of charities and voluntary sector orgs and groups because they support and connect with the citizens on a grass roots level.

Child protection rules and CRB checks for work with anyone deemed "vulnerable" are too restricting. It is hard for healthy relationships to develop between different age groups. It's hard to try out different volunteer roles to find the one that fits, when each organisation has a costly, time consuming procedure. It doesn't help much in protecting people: so much abuse is within families; isolating families within themselves means abused people are less likely to have access to healthy supportive outside relationships.

Don't reinvent the wheel - there are lots of great community organisations already but they could do with more support e.g. scouts, cadets, sporting organisations like cricket, football, rugby clubs etc.

support local infrastructure organisations to provide their services e.g. CVS'S and volunteer centres. support for infrastructure, recommendation to support VCO's like Kent supports local businesses

Tackle Crime and Anti-social behaviour – (selected from 23 comments)

Citizens should be able to have agreement on how criminals should be punished, particularly local criminals. Maybe set up some local groups similar to neighbourhood watch where members are responsible for monitoring and reporting back to a committee on issues that affect that area.

In our area there is an Asian shop owner lovely man and very hardworking terrorised by local school girls and racially abused on a daily basis .The school do nothing , the parents don't care and the community police do nothing. Collectively they should all be meeting to tackle this issue and stamp it out it isn't acceptable what ever happened to team work?!

with regard to asbo culture-give the disadvantaged young people things to do and get them involved instead of waiting for their boredom to force them into making nuisances of themselves.

Tackling crime and anti social behaviour should start in the home. parents should take more responsibility for children's behaviour but often do not know how to bring their children up, this is where I feel that children's centres could offer parenting sessions coping with difficult behaviour and teenage problems.

We have a lot of skateboarders in Cheriton. They have nowhere to go so do it on the street or churches property. Maybe the council could give them a plot of land to make a skatepark. But make them do all the work i.e. digging etc. This would keep them off the main street. Maybe get local shopkeepers to put some money into it as they hand around the shops. The nearest skate park is at the harbour in Folkestone so they cant get to it. I do talk to these kids and they respond

New Ways of Working – (17 comments in total)

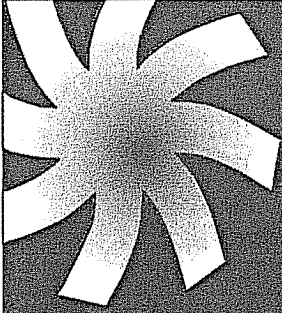
Seek Big Society champions in wards and to work with them to ensure they have the capacity to encourage greater volunteer involvement but keeping revitalised public services

Do not follow the localism route, this will not improve services. It will just put the costs onto smaller local councils etc., and in many cases duplicating the work across the County. The roles carried out by County and District Councils should stay with them, not for instance parish and town councils to do this work, when they do not have the staff or enforcement and insurance would become astronomical for each of these small council.

Other Ambition 3 Comments – (45 comments in total)

DONT do any of the above. Stop trying to control peoples lives and stop giving the expectation to people of doing everything for them

I thought we elected councillors to run Kent + pay officers. Hopefully this is not a cost cutting exercise for volunteers to RUN KENT!!!



Kent Partners' Compact

An agreement for mutual benefit between the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Public Sector in Kent

Kent Partners' Compact Refresh 2011

Foreword

This will be inserted after the consultation period.

Introduction

The Kent Partners' Compact is a partnership agreement between the voluntary & community sector (VCS) and the public sector in Kent. It is a jointly agreed framework that will guide their working relationship, for mutual and positive benefit of the Kent community.

It is an expression of the desire of the VCS and the public sector to work better together. It also provides a framework where shared respect, understanding and fair treatment are the building blocks for real partnership.

The VCS has a vital role to play in society and in the delivery and development of excellent public services to the people of Kent. Thousands of individuals donate their time and skills to voluntary organisations all over Kent. They provide statutory services on behalf of the public sector, recruit volunteers, support people and communities, and provide many other services that contribute enormously to our quality of life.

With central government focussing on issues such as the Big Society Agenda, the Localism Bill and the restructure of many public sector organisations the Compact remains as relevant as it was in 1998 when the government launched the national Compacts. Furthermore, the rationale behind its establishment was to support the local Compact forums and to promote implementation across the public sector and this voluntary sector.

Version 9
07/07/11

1

Kent Partners'
Compact 

In the years following 1998 a number of compacts were developed in Kent at district and local level subsequently in January 2009 a single Kent Partners' Compact was launched which sought to establish consistency in the relationship between the public sector and the voluntary sector. In December 2010, the National Compact was refreshed and this has been recognised and embedded into the refreshed Kent Partners' Compact.

Useful web links

The following link www.kentcan.org will give you access to the national Compact & the Kent Partners' Compact.

The Kent Partners' Compact will:

- **support the development of a strong, diverse and independent voluntary and community sector;**
- **improve outcomes for the people of Kent through effective engagement and communication.;**
- **involve the voluntary sector and service users in the design, development and changes of policies and services;**
- **be of mutual advantage to all partners through meaningful representation and partnership working;**
- **provide a mutually agreed framework on which to base discussions if any partner feels the other has not met their commitments; and**
- **promote a fair and equal society by contributing to a better understanding of minority groups and their distinct and diverse needs. Ensure a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups.**

The Kent Partners' Compact lists a number of agreed commitments by both sectors that reflects good working practice.

The commitments are practical tools which will support joint working and will act as a framework for discussion when there are differences.

Each commitment starts with a general aim, explains which commitments apply to each sector, and finally, lays out shared commitments.

Code of Practice on Funding and Resources

Aim: to promote good practice between the VCS and the public sector in terms of the financial relationship.

VCS commitments

- Ensure eligibility for funding before applying and explain clearly how results will be achieved.
- Ensure robust governance arrangements are in place so organisations can manage the risks associated with service delivery and financing models well, and give funders early notice of significant change in circumstances.
- Provide ways for users to feedback to the public sector how they can improve services.
- Ensure that appropriate systems and standards are in place to meet agreed financial, governance and quality reporting obligations.
- Look ahead and plan to reduce the negative effects on the beneficiaries and the organisation from changes in the levels of funding.
- Plan to reduce the negative effects on the beneficiaries and the organisation if fund ceases altogether.
- Contribute positively to reviews of funding programmes and practice.

Public sector commitments

- Respect the independence of the VCS to deliver their mission and campaign regardless of any financial relationship with the public sector.
- Ensure that the VCS have a greater role and more opportunities in delivering public services.
- Consider a range of ways to fund or resource the VCS, including grants, contracts, loans, use of premises and so on. Work to remove the barriers that stop the VCS accessing public sector funding in order to allow smaller organisations to deliver services where they are the best way to do this.
- Consider a range of ways to support the VCS such as enabling greater access to public sector owned premises and resources and asset transfer.
- Ensure transparency by providing a clear rationale for all funding decisions.

- Ensure well managed and transparent application and tendering processes, which are proportionate to the desired objectives and outcomes of the programme.
- Commit to multi-year funding where appropriate and where it adds value for money. The funding term should reflect the time it will take to deliver the outcome. If multi-year funding is not considered the best way of delivering the objective, explain the reasons for the decision.
- Strive for clarity and consistency across the public sector regarding the commissioning and procurement processes.
- Involve the VCS in the development of commissioning and procurement strategies, policies and protocols.
- Ensure that the VCS have access to relevant and timely information regarding future public sector commissioning plans and funding opportunities.
- Recognise the legitimacy of Full Cost Recovery (appropriate and relevant overheads) when voluntary and community organisations seek to secure grants or contracts.
- Agree in advance of contract or agreement with voluntary and community organisations how outcomes will be monitored, ensuring that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate to the nature and size of the opportunity.
- Agree terms of responsibility for the balance of risk that the VCS and public sector are responsible for and identify processes by which these risks will be managed. Ensure delivery terms and risks are proportionate to the nature and value of the opportunity.
- Make payments to voluntary and community organisations in advance of expenditure, where appropriate and necessary, in order to achieve better value for money.
- In the event that funding or services are proposed to be reduced or withdrawn an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken, giving sufficient time for all relevant parties to inform the consultation and influence decision making.

Joint commitments

- Work to ensure that procedures used are consistent with the principles of accountability for public money.
- Undertake joint work to explore opportunities to share non-financial resources, such as personnel and property, and to work on innovative solutions to shared problems.
- Work to ensure value for money and high quality service.
- When ending or changing a financial relationship a three month period of consultation shall be undertaken, prior to a minimum of three months written notice, together with a clear rationale for the decision.

Useful web link

The following link gives access to the HM Treasury document entitled *Improving financial relationships with the third sector: Guidance to funders and purchasers*.

<http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/4/guidncefunders1505061v1.pdf>

The recommendations within this document are based upon good practice, following two successive Treasury Cross-Cutting Reviews, the Gershon Efficiency Review and a National Audit Office report.

Code of Practice on Communication and Engagement

Aim: to enable communities to influence the development of policies and services delivered by both the public and voluntary and community sectors.

VCS commitments

- When campaigning or advocating, ensure that robust evidence is provided including the source and range of people represented.
- Ensure independence is upheld, focusing on the cause represented regardless of any relationships with the public sector.
- Promote and respond to public sector consultations where appropriate.
- Seek the views of service users, beneficiaries, volunteers and trustees when making representation to public sector organisations, clarify who is being represented and in what capacity that representation is being made.
- When acting as representatives of a group or community, be responsible for collecting views from that group or community and disseminating information to them.
- When putting forward ideas, focus on evidence-based solutions, with clear proposals for positive outcomes.

Public sector commitments

- Ensure greater transparency by making information more accessible, enabling the VCS to challenge existing provision of services and hold the public sector to account.
- Provide details on The Kent & Medway Information Governance Programme Board that oversees and ensures effective implementation

of information sharing governance arrangements between public sector organisations in Kent & Medway.

- Engage with the VCS at the earliest possible stage when developing policies and services, removing barriers that may prevent organisations and individuals from contributing.
- Consider the social impact that may result from policy and service development and how these would enable social action and empower communities.
- Ensure that social, environmental and economic value forms a standard part of the design, development and delivery of policies and services.
- Give early notice of forthcoming consultations allowing sufficient time for the VCS to involve service users, beneficiaries, members and trustees in responding. Conduct 12 week written consultations with clear explanations and rationale for shorter time-frames.
- Prepare consultation documents that are concise, clearly laid out and written in language that will be understood by the intended audience.
- Work with voluntary and community organisation that represent, support or provide services to people protected by legislation and other under-represented groups and understand the needs of these groups by actively seeking the views of service users and beneficiaries.
- Provide feedback on consultation, including information about how respondents have influenced final decisions and where their views have not been acted upon.
- Build engagement and consultation into planning cycles.

Joint commitments

- Make clear the purpose and process of communication and engagement.
- Develop a range of communication and engagements methods that best involve communities, service users, beneficiaries, members and trustees.
- Ensure that communications are clear, accessible and relevant.
- Share information which may have an impact on their working relationship.
- Support each other in disseminating information, whilst avoiding duplication.
- Respect confidentiality in all kinds of engagement activity.

Code of Practice on Volunteering

Aim: to develop best practice between the public sector and VCS in promoting, supporting and improving volunteering opportunities in Kent.

VCS commitments

- Promote and support volunteering to all within Kent, by seeking to reflect the diversity of all communities through positive and robust application of equality of opportunity.
- To ensure that sufficient time and resources are available for the training of volunteers and that training is tailored to needs and abilities.
- Recognise the particular value in trustee volunteering and governance roles as underpinning the VCS and seek to promote and attract volunteers with suitable skills.
- Support the involvement of volunteers in policy and programme development to encourage ownership and responsibility and to recognise volunteers as stakeholders in organisations.

Public sector commitments

- Recognise the physical and mental health benefits of volunteering.
- Recognise the value of an individual's right to volunteer and the value of volunteering within the community.
- Recognise that VCS organisations are independent and have flexibilities and constraints within the powers of their constitution to respond to local need.
- Consider the development and support of employee volunteering, recognising the benefits to the individual volunteer, public sector organisation, VCS organisation and the community.
- To reduce barriers to volunteering and community action through the review of existing policies, procedures and community engagement strategies.
- Establish measurements for the impact of volunteering activity.
- To support the inclusion of costs associated with volunteering to enable greater access to funding.
- Ensure that it is free for volunteers to access Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks.

Joint commitments

Recognise the four principles fundamental to volunteering:

- **Choice:** volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.
- **Diversity:** volunteering opportunities should be open to all, regardless of background, race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.
- **Mutual benefit:** voluntary action should benefit all. Volunteering should benefit in ways other than payment for their contribution and must be personally fulfilling.
- **Recognition:** Kent has a large number of volunteers and has a history of providing volunteering opportunities to and for the people of Kent.

Useful web links

The following link provides useful information on volunteering.

www.kentcove.org.uk

Information from KMIP (Kent & Medway Infrastructure Partnership) about the voluntary sector in Kent offering support for non-profit organisations. Links to local Volunteer Centres with information about opportunities to volunteer & advice for voluntary organisations wishing to involve volunteers. Access to training, news and events.

www.kent.gov.uk/volunteers

Kent County Council promoting volunteering across the County. Information on volunteering and links to opportunities across all sectors. Employee Volunteering scheme. Information to support volunteers, fundraising and development.

www.volunteering.org.uk Volunteering England.

National volunteering development, a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and the wider community. Information about volunteering opportunities, managing volunteers, news reviews and research

Glossary

Big Society – The three strands of the Big Society are:

- a. *Social action - the Government fostering a culture of voluntarism and philanthropy.*
- b. *Public service reform – reducing centralised bureaucracy - as relevant for the council as it is for central government.*
- c. *Community empowerment.*

Compact Voice - Compact Voice is a charity which represents the voice of the voluntary sector on the Compact. Compact Voice has a network of over 2,300 members ranging from community organisations to large national charities, and has Board members from front line groups and umbrella bodies, in turn representing over 20,000 voluntary and community groups.

Champion - To act as a supporter of a cause, person, activity or agreement.

Commitment - An obligation, pledge or promise.

Full Cost Recovery - Under the full cost recovery, organisations and their funders ensure that the price of contracts and grants reflects the full cost of delivery, including the legitimate portion of overhead costs.

Governance arrangements - The management systems, policies, processes and decision rights for a given area of responsibility.

Kent Partners' Compact Champions Group - a small multi-agency group established initially to champion the Kent Partners' Compact and latterly to oversee the Kent Partner's Compact Refresh 2011.

Kent Partners' Compact - A partnership agreement between the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and the public sector in Kent.

National Compact - An agreement for mutual benefit between central government departments and the VCS. Originally produced in 1998 and renewed in 2010. This was published along with an Accountability and Transparency guide.

