

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

Friday, 17th January, 2014

10.00 am

Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone





AGENDA

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

Friday, 17 January 2014, at 10.00 am
Darent Room, Sessions House, County
Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: **Ann Hunter**
Telephone: **01622 694703**

Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the start of the meeting

Membership (14)

- Conservative (8): Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Miss S J Carey, Mr N J D Chard,
Mr J A Davies, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr S C Manion,
Mr L B Ridings, MBE and Mrs P A V Stockell
- UKIP (3) Mr J Elenor, Mr C P D Hoare and Mr R A Latchford, OBE
- Labour (2) Mr D Smyth and Mr N S Thandi
- Liberal Democrat (1): Mrs T Dean

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

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A - Committee Business

Introduction/Webcast announcement

- A1 Apologies
- A2 Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
- A3 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2013 (Pages 7 - 12)
- A4 Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 13 November 2013 (Pages 13 - 16)

B - Key or significant Cabinet Member Decision(s) for recommendation or endorsement

- B1 Budget Consultation and Provisional Local Government Settlement (Pages 17 - 38)

C - Other items for comment/recommendation to the Leader/Cabinet Member/Cabinet or officers

- C1 ICT Service Desk - Customer Service Accreditations (Pages 39 - 40)
- C2 Civil Military Covenant (Pages 41 - 58)
- C3 Welfare Reform and Potential Impacts on Kent (Pages 59 - 116)
- C4 Mid Kent Key Office Hub - Acquisition of Premises - Report of an urgent decision taken (Pages 117 - 120)

Motion to Exclude the Press and Public

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

D - Key of significant Cabinet Member Decision(s) for recommendation or endorsement

- D1 Mid Kent Key Office Hub - Acquisition of Premises (Pages 121 - 138)

E - Committee Business

- E1 Exempt Minutes from the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 13 November 2013 (Pages 139 - 140)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
(01622) 694002

Thursday, 9 January 2014

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 6 December 2013

PRESENT: Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Mr M J Angell, Mr R E Brookbank, Miss S J Carey, Mr J A Davies, Mrs T Dean, Mr J Elenor, Mr M J Harrison, Mr C P D Hoare, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr S C Manion, Mr D Smyth and Mr N S Thandi

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P B Carter, Mr G Cooke, Mr J D Simmonds and Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Support), Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director Human Resources), Mr P Bole (Director of ICT), Mr J Burr (Director of Highways and Transportation and Principal Director of Transformation), Mr S Charman (Head of Consultation and Engagement), Ms D Exall (Strategic Relationship Advisor), Mr R Hallett (Head of Business Intelligence), Ms J Hansen (Finance Business Partner BSS), Mr A McClure (Corporate Lead for Equalities), Mr C Miller (Reward Manager), Mr D Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy), Ms R Spore (Director of Property & Infrastructure Support), Mr D Whittle (Head of Policy and Strategic Relationships), Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law), Mr A Wood (Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**29. Introduction/Webcast announcement**

(Item A1)

30. Apologies

(Item A2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Chard, Mr Long, Mr Ridings and Mrs Stockell. Mr Harrison, Mr Angell and Mr Brookbank attended as substitutes for Mr Chard, Mr Long and Mrs Stockell respectively.

31. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item A3)

Mr Smyth attended declared an interest in the item about High-cost Short Term Credit Providers as he was a Co-operative sponsored councillor.

32. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2013

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2013 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the chairman.

33. Dates of Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee Meetings for 2014

(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the dates of meetings for the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee of 17 January, 23 April, 10 July, 19 September and 12 December 2014 be noted.

34. Business Strategy and Support Mid Year Business Plan Monitoring and Directorate Dashboard

(Item C1)

- (1) Mr Hallett introduced the report which comprised the mid-year business plan monitoring report that provided highlights of achievements to date for the divisions within the Business Strategy and Support Directorate and the Directorate Dashboard that showed progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators. He said the majority of indicators were either ahead of target or at acceptable levels for the year to date. He drew particular attention to three indicators that showed a red rag rating and explained that although red, they were not a cause for major concern.
- (2) In response to a question about compliance with the government's Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency, Mr Wild (Director of Governance and Law) said that total compliance was being actively pursued, Kent was significantly ahead of other authorities and members could be confident that the authority would be fully compliant soon.
- (3) In response to a further question, Mr Wild said work was continuing with Finance and Internal Audit to identify all of the authority's spend on legal advice and all such expenditure was reviewed to determine if legal advice was required or if it could be obtained in a more effective way.
- (4) In response to questions about the Priority Schools Programme, Ms Spore said the Treasury had issued new best practice guidance for PFI projects and areas where savings could be identified. These included the development of PF2 which is being taken forward as part of the Priority Schools Programme. There were some changes but the key one was that "soft" services such as cleaning and waste services were no longer included in PFI agreements. She said discussions with contractors were underway to explore moving to PF2.
- (5) In response to a further question she undertook to confirm how much the review of PFI contracts for Kent schools undertaken by Bryanstone Square Education consultants had cost.
- (6) In response to a question about the internal audit plan being behind target because four members of staff had left, Mr Wood said the feasibility of establishing a career grade for audit staff was being investigated and in the meantime some good agency staff had been recruited.
- (7) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

35. Business Strategy and Support Directorate Financial Monitoring

(Item C2)

- (1) Ms Hansen introduced the report which asked the committee to note the second quarter's full budget monitoring report for 2013/14 that had been reported to Cabinet on 2 December 2013. She said that the second quarter's monitoring was generally a good indicator of the likely out turn for the year. She further said the budget for Business Strategy and Support was broadly on target with an underspend in relation to rolled over funding for a health reform project spanning two years and an underspend against the training budget following approval of all directorates' workforce development plans.
- (2) In response to a question about the Property Enterprise Fund 1 (PEF1), Ms Spore said that the money would be reimbursed and undertook to provide more detailed information outside the meeting.
- (3) Ms Spore also confirmed that there was a comprehensive programme of legionella and asbestos testing in place and an internal audit report was being finalised which would give the programme and practice an "adequate level of assurance".
- (4) RESOLVED that the revenue and capital forecast variances from budget for 2013/14 for the Business Strategy and Support Directorate based on the second quarter's full monitoring to Cabinet be noted.

36. FT Innovative Lawyers 2013

(Item C3)

- (1) Mr Sweetland (Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services) and Mr Wild (Director of Governance and Law) introduced the report which reported that KCC Legal Services had been commended as Legal Industry Pioneers in the FT Innovative Lawyers 2013.
- (2) RESOLVED that the report be noted and staff be congratulated on the success.

37. Annual Equality Report

(Item D1)

- (1) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) and Mr McClure (Corporate Lead for Equality) introduced the report which included the Annual Equality Report for 2012/13. Mr McClure said all authorities had a duty to publish equality objectives and to review progress against those objectives annually.
- (2) In response to questions about the high level of exclusion and low educational attainment levels of Gypsy/Roma children and those who are travellers of Irish heritage, Mr McClure said that these issues were of great concern to the Education, Learning and Skills Directorate and the authority was participating in a pilot scheme to improve the education experience of pupils from this community. It was anticipated that improvements in educational attainment and a reduction in exclusion rates could make a significant difference in terms of employment for these communities and relationships with the wider community.

- (3) Questions were also asked about the potential impact of reducing staff numbers on the delivery of frontline services and the efforts being made to ensure the number of staff from black and minority ethnic communities reflected the population of Kent as a whole.
- (4) RESOLVED that the Annual Equality Report for 2013 be endorsed.

38. Update on Terms and Conditions Review

(Item D2)

- (1) Mr Miller (Reward Manager) introduced the report which provided an update on the implementation of changes to the terms and conditions of employment previously reported to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 27 September 2012. He said that the principal changes related to: weekend and evening enhancements; the reduction of the standard overtime rate from time and half to time plus one-third; the payment of disturbance allowances and loss of earnings compensation.
- (2) Mr Miller answered questions about incentives to staff to work in East Kent where there were shortages of social workers and the savings made in OPPD Provision Modernisation.
- (3) RESOLVED that the outcome of the terms and conditions review be noted.

39. Welfare Reform and Potential Impacts in Kent

(Item D3)

This report was withdrawn from the agenda.

40. High-cost short term credit providers

(Item D4)

- (1) Mr Carter (Leader), Mr Whittle (Head of Policy and Strategic Relationships) and Ms Exall (Policy and Strategic Relationships Advisor) introduced the report which set out the current position around high-cost short-term credit providers, the proposed national changes in regulation, action already underway in Kent and some possible areas for action that the County Council might wish to explore further.
- (2) A number of proposals set out in the paper were discussed including: limiting access to high-cost short-term credit; promoting credit unions as an alternative source of loans; providing information, advice and guidance on money management; working with partners to promote financial inclusion: and encouraging banks to promote easy access to basic bank accounts.
- (3) RESOLVED that
 - (a) Mr Carter (Leader of the Council) be asked to consider formalising the policy banning advertising for high-cost short-term credit providers from all KCC-owned property;

Mr Hill (Cabinet Member for Communities) be asked to consider:

- (b) Banning access to high-cost short-term credit providers' and brokers' websites from public computers provided by KCC;
- (c) Training staff in libraries, children's centres and other frontline services to signpost or provide money management advice and also raise awareness of the Kent Savers Credit Union via leaflets, posters and other publicity;

Mr Dance (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) be asked to consider:

- (d) Encouraging high street banks to promote basic bank accounts;
- (e) Lobbying the Chancellor of the Exchequer to review regulations relating to credit unions in particular to enable applications for loans to be decided faster;

Mr Gough (Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform) be asked to consider:

- (g) Reviewing the Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) curriculum to ensure that financial awareness was being promoted through schools, and young people were receiving relevant education about how to manage money.

41. Transformation Agenda (Verbal Update)

(Item D5)

- (1) Mr Carter (Leader) gave an update on progress on the transformation programme (Facing the Challenge) including the market engagement process and the top tier re-alignment and referred to the report that would be considered by County Council on 12 December 2013. He also said that the establishment of the Transformation Board which included the opposition group leaders was a significant part of the process and members would be kept informed of all key decisions over the next 2-3 years.
- (2) John Burr (Director of Highways and Transportation, and Principal Director of Transformation) said that the three elements of the transformation programme (Facing the Challenge): service review and market engagement; managing change better; and integration and service redesign were on target. As part of the service review and market engagement each service had produced a fact based questionnaire to inform the review team. These had been used to produce scoping documents which had been signed off by the Transformation Advisory Group. Draft proposals for delivering services would be considered by the end of February 2014 and business cases agreed by the end of April 2014 for implementation over the following 12-18 months.
- (3) Mr Burr said the Transformation Team was working with staff to review improvement programmes that were already underway to ensure the anticipated benefits were realised.

- (4) Mr Burr said that a dedicated area on KNET, briefings for directors and managers which were cascaded to staff, floor talks and “talk to the top” and his blogs were the main vehicles for communicating with staff. He also said that the risk register had been completed; none of the risks were rated “red”; and the Challenger group had met to consider and challenge the culture and approach to risk.
- (5) Mrs Beer (Corporate Director for HR) said the new structure set out in the report to be considered by the County Council on 12 December enabled staff to map their team in the new structure and this would be followed up with further information to staff. To ensure the transformation project was successful she said it was essential that staff and managers were engaged in the process, they were equipped with the skills they would need to operate in the ways outlined in Facing the Challenge and they needed to be supported through the change process itself.
- (6) It was suggested that an example of a service that had been subject to the transformation plan be presented at a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee.
- (7) RESOLVED that the verbal update on the transformation programme be noted.

42. Budget 2014-15 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/17 Consultation
(Item D6)

- (1) Mr Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy) gave an update on three matters of interest from the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement. The Chancellor had said that funds would not now be transferred from the New Homes Bonus grant into the Single Local Growth Fund; local government would not face any additional funding cuts in 2014/15 and 2015/16 above those already announced. He also said that it was likely that local government would be compensated for changes proposed to the business rates although the detailed information would not be available until the provisional settlement was received later in December.
- (2) Mr Shipton introduced the report and said the aim of the consultation was to engage with and better inform Kent residents and businesses of the financial challenges for the authority as a result of: reductions in funding from central government; additional demands on spending; and restrictions on the ability to raise council tax.
- (3) Mr Charman (Head of Consultation and Engagement) and Mr Shipton gave a presentation about the consultation on the Budget 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/17.
- (4) Members were generally supportive of the approach.
- (5) RESOLVED that the consultation process be endorsed.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 13 November 2013.

PRESENT: Mr G Cowan, Mrs T Dean, Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr L B Ridings, MBE and Mrs P A V Stockell

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G Cooke

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms R Spore (Director of Property & Infrastructure Support), Mr A Fox (Disposals Surveyor), Ms E Larner (Senior Project Manager - Capital Programme Delivery), Mr A Newton (NWW Programme Manager) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**6. Apologies and Substitutes**

(Item)

There were no apologies or substitutes.

7. Declarations of Interest by Members in Items on the Agenda

(Item)

- (1) Mr Cowan declared an interest in Items B2 and C1 – Kent Academies, Batch 2 Procurement – Dover Christ Church Academy as he was a governor at the academy. He left the meeting during the consideration of these items.
- (2) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) declared an interest in Item C2 - Proposed Sale and Land-swap, New Line Learning Academy (Future Schools Trust), Boughton Lane, Loose Maidstone as he was a governor of the Future Schools Trust.

8. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2013

(Item A3)

In response to a question about minute 5, Ms Spore (Director of Property and Infrastructure Support) confirmed that sufficient land would be retained to enable Cliftonville Primary School to expand and provide playing fields that would meet its needs.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2013 are a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

9. The refurbishment and conversion of Invicta House, Maidstone as part of the New Ways of Working Programme in order to realise revenue savings from the exit of other sites

(Item B1)

- (1) Ms Spore (Director of Property and Infrastructure Support) and Mr Newton (NWW Programme Manager) introduced the report which asked the Property Sub-Committee to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services on the proposed decision that:
 - (a) KCC enters into a contract with a suitably qualified building contractor, procured in accordance with Council procedures, for the purpose of undertaking a design and build project to refurbish Invicta House prior to its being restacked to increase the utilisation of the asset;
 - (b) The Director of Property and Infrastructure Support be authorised to finalise terms and enter into all necessary agreements/contracts to allow the exit from Bishops Terrace, Brenchley House and Cantium House, and for the works to be undertaken at Invicta House to accommodate the staff.
- (2) In response to questions Ms Spore and Mr Newton said that:
 - £1m of the £4.5m allocated for the Invicta House project was required for essential maintenance;
 - One of the aims of the New Ways of Working Programme was to de-clutter and rationalise office space;
 - The current occupancy rate of Invicta House was 50%-60% which was typical of office space in both the public and private sectors;
 - Following the refurbishment each new work station would occupy 8 square metres and 7 desks would be provided for every 10 employees;
 - Teams would be allocated space in a particular area and staff would hot desk within those areas and not the whole building;
 - Some staff especially those operating from district offices already worked agilely and the proposal being discussed was not significantly different;
 - The New Ways of Working programme assumed that the number of car parking spaces would be same as in the current estate. Additional parking would be provided to supplement that at Invicta House if necessary;
 - Some windows in Invicta House can be opened but opening the windows unbalances the ventilation system;
 - The current system is a comfort cooling system and given the deep plan nature of the building and the design, natural ventilation on its own would not be adequate.
- (3) It was also confirmed that the proposed changes to Invicta House would comply with building control regulations.
- (4) RESOLVED that the proposed decision of the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services be endorsed.

10. Kent Academies, Batch 2 Procurement - Dover Christ Church Academy
(Item B2)

- (1) The report was introduced by Ms Spore (Director of Property and Infrastructure Support) and Ms Larner (Senior Project Manager).
- (2) The report asked the Property Sub-Committee to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services, on the proposed decision to:
 - (a) Agree that the Final Business Case for the Dover Christ Church Academy can be submitted to the EFA and the DfE for final departmental approval by EFA, DfE and the Treasury;
 - (b) Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to agree final contractual terms provided that no affordability gap occurs;
 - (c) Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support, in consultation with the Director of Governance and Law, to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council, following approval to final contractual terms as set out in paragraph 6.1.2 of the report in relation to Dover Christ Church Academy and the Future Schools Agreement;
 - (d) Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.
- (3) Questions were asked about the accuracy of asbestos registers in general. Members also sought assurance that the asbestos register at the Dover Academy was up to date and accurate
- (4) The Property Sub-Committee had regard to the detailed information relating to the proposed decision contained in the exempt appendix in reaching their decision.
- (5) RESOLVED:
 - (a) That the Cabinet Member's proposed decision be endorsed;
 - (b) That a presentation about the Asbestos Policy be made to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public *(Item)*

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

12. Kent Academies, Batch 2 Procurement - Dover Christ Church Academy - Appendix B
(Item C1)

- (1) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) and Rebecca Spore (Director of Property and Infrastructure Support) answered questions about the proposed decision.
- (2) The information in the exempt appendix was noted.

13. Proposed Sale and Land-swap, New Line Learning Academy (Future Schools Trust), Boughton Lane, Loose, Maidstone
(Item C2)

- (1) Mr Cooke (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services) said he would not be involved in making any decisions relating to New Line Learning Academy as he was a governor of the Future Schools Trust. Decisions relating to the New Line Learning Academy would therefore be taken by the Leader.
- (2) Ms Spore (Director of Property and Infrastructure Support) and Mr Fox (Disposals Surveyor) introduced the report which set out details of a proposed land-swap and capital receipt transaction at New Line Learning Academy, Boughton Lane, Maidstone.
- (3) The Property Sub-Committee was asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Leader on the proposed decision.
- (4) RESOLVED:
 - (a) That the proposed decision of the Leader to enter into a land-swap agreement and capital receipt transaction on the terms set out in the report be endorsed;
 - (b) That the Leader be asked to assure himself of the future of Five Acre Wood School.

From: John Simmonds, Cabinet Member, Finance & Procurement
 Andy Wood, Corporate Director, Finance & Procurement

To: Communities Cabinet Committee

Date: 15 January 2014

Subject: **Budget Consultation and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the responses to the budget consultation which has been running from 8 November until 13 December 2013. The responses are set out separately from the following activities:

- a) Responses directly to the Council either through the website or via other channels
- b) Responses via BMG consultants either from deliberative workshop sessions or on-line survey of a statistical sample of residents
- c) Responses from staff survey conducted by BMG consultants

This report also includes an update on the impact of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 18 December 2013 on KCC's budget for 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2014/17. The report includes a summary of the main points from these key announcements.

Recommendation(s): The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider the feedback from consultation and make recommendations to the Leader and Cabinet Members for Finance & Procurement and Corporate & Democratic Services on any changes which should be made to the final Draft Budget as presented to Cabinet on 22 January 2014.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The overall objective of the consultation was to inform more people about the financial challenge the Authority faces and to engage with them about how we should respond. Previously we have consulted about the detail of budget proposals but have not been successful in getting a wide engagement. The main consultation this year is based on a campaign "2 minutes 2 questions" where we asked residents to devote a small amount of time to answer two fundamental questions. Those who wished to explore issues in more depth could complete an on-line tool which explored which services are most valued.
- 1.2 We assumed a "digital by default" approach and produced all of the material on-line. This was designed in such a way that information could be accessed in layers. There was high level headline information for those who only wanted to get a feel for the financial challenge. A slightly more detailed picture below the headline level gave readers a flavour of how we propose to meet the challenge

with pull down menus with a detailed narrative of each element of the budget options.

- 1.3 This enhanced consultation and engagement strategy elicited substantially more responses than any budget consultation to date with 3,163 responses to the “2 minutes, 2 questions” and 487 responses to the on-line tool. These responses are analysed in Appendix 1, together with other relevant information.
- 1.4 We also undertook market research via an independent firm, BMG Consultancy. BMG were commissioned to undertake 3 specific pieces of market research:
 - Detailed all day workshops with a small representative sample of residents
 - Face to face survey using the on-line tool with a wider representative sample of Kent residents (1,200)
 - A workshop with KCC staff and an e-mail survey (using the on-line tool) with a sample of staff.

An executive summary of the BMG report is attached as Appendix 2.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Since the consultation was launched there have been some changes to the assumptions about the available funding and additional spending demands. This has impacted on the savings needed in order to balance the budget. We have also had announcements on specific grants (particularly from Health Service which impact on the spending and income assumptions, although do not alter the net budget).
- 2.2 The provisional settlement for 2014/15 was largely as we had anticipated. The Chancellor’s announcement in his Autumn Budget Statement that business rates will only increase by 2% in 2014/15 (instead of the 3.2% from September RPI) has reduced the County Council’s share of the locally retained business rates and the business rate top-up by £2.2m. This will be compensated through an additional un-ring-fenced grant along with the consequences of the other changes in business rates (principally extension of the doubling of small business rate relief and £1,000 discount for all retail and food/drink businesses with rateable value over £50,000).
- 2.3 The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) now includes the 2013/14 Council Tax Freeze grant (it had previously been understood this would continue to be allocated as a separate grant in 2014/15 and rolled into RSG in 2015/16). The Government has confirmed that by transferring previous and future years’ freeze grants into the RSG baseline ensures that funding is protected and not subject to “cliff-edge” as part of future spending reviews. The amount top-sliced from local government to fund the roll-out of increases in New Homes Bonus has reduced by £100m (which has had the effect of increasing the overall RSG by around £2m compared to the estimates in the consultation). The separate grant in relation to extension of free home to school transport has been confirmed as continuing in 2014/15 (we had assumed it would be ceasing in 2014/15) and the New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant is slightly higher than we anticipated for the consultation. Overall the estimated funding for 2014/15 is £4.3m more than we included in the consultation as a result of these changes.

- 2.4 The provisional settlement for 2015/16 includes the impact of the business rate changes and the reduced top-slice for NHB referred to in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3. Furthermore, for the consultation we had assumed a worst case scenario that we would lose all NHB grant in 2015/16 as outlined in a government consultation on the funding of Local Growth Fund (LGF) for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The Autumn Statement confirmed that NHB funds will not be transferred to LGF and thus we can now plan that NHB grant will roll-out as originally intended. This means the provisional settlement for 2015/16 is around £8.5m higher than we estimated for the consultation. We have still assumed a worst case scenario regarding the additional reduction in Education Services Grant announced in the March Budget statement although we are expecting further consultation before this is confirmed.
- 2.5 The final draft budget will include the most up to date information on additional spending demands. These will be based on the October budget monitoring report to Cabinet on 22 January 2014. The final draft budget will also need to include additional spending funded by specific ring-fenced grants. Excluding the impact of this grant funded expenditure it is likely that spending demands will be slightly more than included in the consultation.
- 2.6 The final draft budget will also include any changes to savings proposals since the consultation was launched. In particular this will take into account the latest delivery plans and any changes arising from consultation. The combination of slighter better than anticipated funding and slightly greater forecast spending demands means that the savings for 2014/15 will need to be of a similar magnitude to that identified in the consultation (£81.2m excluding additional specific grant income) although some of the individual details will vary. In particular the consultation included a large amount from “Facing the Challenge” which will now be identified as specific proposals.

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

- 3.1 Putting more power into the hands of Kent residents so that they have the opportunity to shape how services are provided to them and their local communities is a key feature of Bold Steps. The budget consultation is a key component of this and we have successfully engaged with significantly more people than we have achieved in previous consultations.
- 3.2 The annual budget and MTFP is one of the most important decisions the Council takes each year. It determines the overall resources available and delegates the responsibility to deliver the Council’s spending priorities to portfolio holders and corporate directors.

4. Budget Consultation

- 4.1 The budget consultation opened on 8 November 2013 with a press launch. Throughout the five-week period the consultation was backed up with an on-going communications campaign. The aim of this campaign was to inform Kent residents and businesses of the scale of the financial challenge and to get them involved in how the Council responds. The “2 minutes 2 questions” tag was aimed at getting a much higher number of responses than we have previously achieved. The more detailed budget modelling tool provided the opportunity to

explore the Council's budget in more depth and to express views on the spending areas of highest and lowest priority.

- 4.2 The first question of 2 questions sought views on how the Council should go about making savings necessary to close the gap between anticipated funding and current spending forecasts. The question was framed to explore whether the Council should seek to redesign services within the available funding or cut back on existing provision. The responses indicate a strong level of support for the current direction of travel i.e. to transform services with the aim of achieving the same or better outcomes for less money and efficiency savings (achieving the same outcomes for less money) and to protect front-line services. The options to make savings by simply cutting back to a basic level of service or restricting access to services were consistently the least favoured responses throughout the consultation.
- 4.3 The second question was about Council Tax and income from charges. 23% of respondents wanted Council Tax frozen for another year, 71% supported an increase. The number supporting a small increase (under 2%) was consistently higher than those supporting a freeze. The number supporting an increase above 2% was consistently lower than the number supporting a freeze. It was also clear that during the campaign the number supporting a low increase (under 2%) increased during the campaign, while those supporting an above 2% increase declined. Support for increasing charges to service users was consistently low. The overall conclusion is that a small increase in Council Tax would be acceptable in order to prevent further savings, but an increase above the referendum level would be unlikely to be supported.
- 4.4 The findings from the "2 minutes 2 questions" campaign are remarkably similar to the findings from the more in depth BMG research. This leads to the conclusion that the views coming from the consultation can be relied on to represent the views of Kent residents at large.
- 4.5 The Council has engaged a market research firm (BMG Research) to conduct a more in-depth market research to inform the consultation. The Council engaged 3 specific areas of activity:
 - Face to face survey with a representative sample of Kent residents through two all day deliberative workshops
 - The development of an on-line tool to capture views about people's core values for a range of KCC services
 - A staff workshop and survey similar to the public workshops and surveys
- 4.6 The BMG research is an essential control mechanism to enable us to evaluate whether the views expressed in the consultation responses can be relied upon, as well as providing much more in depth research to support budget decisions. We have conducted similar deliberative workshops in previous years and found them to work well. This year was the first time we have used an on-line budgeting tool or conducted similar process with staff to that undertaken with residents. BMG have given assurances that the findings are consistent both between the various strands of work within Kent and with findings through their other research.

4.7 The key general findings from the BMG research are not surprising:

- Few had noticed changes to services over recent years arising from previous savings
- People are less supportive of service reductions if they directly impact on them or their families, particularly where this has an impact on their day-to-day lives and livelihoods
- Some accepted there are opportunities for reductions in current service levels without significant detrimental impact
- More people had the perception that the Council and services can be more efficient
- Few people understand Council Tax or what it pays for

4.8 Other specific points to note from the BMG research include:

- The views of staff and residents are remarkably consistent
- Care services for the most vulnerable were consistently the most valued services while services where users have a degree of choice least valued¹
- The public were significantly more supportive of decisions being made locally than staff, and significantly less supportive of delivering statutory minimum level of service²
- A small Council Tax increase would be acceptable to the majority of residents although a consistent core of around ¼ would prefer a freeze³
- The most favoured options for savings included new opportunities for generating income⁴, encouraging communities to become more self-reliant to deliver services for themselves and sharing services with other Councils

4.9 We will be receiving a full report from BMG in due course which will be available for the County Council budget meeting on 13 February 2014. We are considering whether this should include a brief presentation to the Council meeting.

4.10 We will be suggesting some changes to the savings proposed in draft budget following the consultation. In particular we will look to make further efficiency savings and seek further protection of services for the most vulnerable (whilst also ensuring that we get best value from these services delivering the best possible outcomes within the resources available).

¹ This is not to say that these services were not valued as the evaluation methods forced people to make relative value judgements between services

² The public were less clear what constitutes statutory level of service and it was unclear whether lack of support was due to resistance to requirements being imposed or whether they felt the Council should deliver more than statutory minimum

³ A small proportion supported an increase above 2% although when asked if an increase of over 2% were to be considered views diversified with on the one hand more taking a hard line that if this were the case they would favour a freeze while on the other hand those accepting an increase of over 3% also increased

⁴ Although this did not necessarily include increasing existing charges to service users and to a lesser extent introducing new charges for services which are currently free

5. Autumn Budget Statement and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

- 5.1 The Chancellor of the Exchequer made his Autumn Budget Statement to Parliament on 5 December 2013. The statement allows him to present the latest economic forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). This year (as in the last two years) he has also taken the opportunity to use the statement to make policy changes in relation to taxation and spending. A fuller analysis of the Autumn Statement will be included in the final draft MTFP.
- 5.2 The OBR forecasts show that the economy has grown by more in 2013 than was anticipated in the last Autumn Statement or Budget Statement in March. The latest forecast is that the government will achieve its fiscal targets to eliminate the budget deficit and reduce net debt as proportion of national income (Gross Domestic Product (GDP)) a year earlier than previously forecast. Public spending is forecast to be in a small surplus by 2018/19 and the net debt as proportion of GDP is forecast to peak in 2015/16. This is still later than originally forecast in the 2010 Emergency Budget.
- 5.3 The main announcements affecting the County Council's budget in the Autumn Statement are:
- Funds will not be transferred from NHB grant into Local Growth Fund in 2015/16
 - Local government will be protected from further 1% reductions in other unprotected departmental budgets in 2014/15 and 2015/16
 - Additional discounts and changes in business rates will not impact on the share for local government
- 5.4 The provisional local government settlement was published on 18 December 2013. This included announcements in that week on the business rates/RSG settlement (although details of the separate compensation grant for the impact of changes in business rates were not published), NHB grant and specific grants for schools and from health. The health announcement includes an additional £200m funding in 2014/15 as well as the existing funding to promote greater integration between health and social care.
- 5.5 As outlined in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 there have been some changes to the RSG and baseline funding settlements for 2014/15 and 2015/16 and other grants. The main change is that the amount top-sliced from RSG to fund the roll-out of NHB is £100m less than previously announced. The NHB has not increased as fast as was originally anticipated and excess funds have been paid during the year as a separate adjustment grant. The increase in RSG as result of reducing the top-slice is around £2m (although this means that the income we receive from the top-up grant will be less than it otherwise would have been). We have now brought the remaining top-up grant into the funding calculation.
- 5.6 The provisional finance settlement also included the "reduction in spending power" calculations that have been included in previous settlements. This showed a 1.4% reduction for KCC. We have previously explained how this calculation only partially shows the overall impact for local authorities. Whilst

this includes the overall reduction in the total spending for local authorities through the Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) set by government this is mitigated to some extent by any increase in specific grants also included in the “spending power” calculation. The calculation also does not show that there is additional spending associated with the specific grants or that local authorities have significant other spending demands which have to be financed in addition to meeting the headline reductions in grant. Therefore, the “spending power” calculation is not a true reflection of the reality of the financial challenges local authorities face.

- 5.7 The provisional settlement did not include any formal announcement on the referendum limit for Council Tax increases. A grant (equivalent to a 1% Council Tax increase) is available for those authorities that freeze or reduce Council Tax and at this stage we are still working on the assumption that the Secretary of State will set the referendum limit at 2%.

6. Finalising the Budget and MTFP

- 6.1 The final draft budget and MTFP will be published on 14 January 2014, along with the Cabinet papers for the meeting on 22 January 2014. This is after papers for the Cabinet Committee have to be published. Cabinet will be asked to endorse the final draft budget and MTFP to be agreed by County Council on 13 February 2014.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Overall we have concluded that the budget consultation exercise for 2014/15 has been a success. We have achieved the objectives of informing significantly more residents about the overall financial challenge for the next few years i.e. that we will be facing further year-on-year reductions in funding whilst at the same time spending demands will increase. This means we will have to make further sustainable savings each and every year if we are to rise to this challenge.
- 7.2 By and large responses to the consultation support the approach which the Council has taken to date, and plans to adopt for the future. In particular residents seem support the Council focussing on efficiency and transformation savings which protect (or enhance) the outcomes from front-line services. The consultation responses also support the proposal that we should seek some mitigation of the funding reductions through a small increase in Council Tax but not one which would require a referendum.
- 7.3 The provisional settlement is very much as we anticipated (other than presentational changes) and the Autumn Budget Statement has not resulted in any further reductions for local government in addition to the substantial reductions already announced. We particularly welcome that the expansion of the New Homes Bonus grant will not be curtailed by transferring funds to the Local Growth Fund (and we await further details how this initiative will be funded in 2015/16).
- 7.4 We also welcome the additional funding from health to promote more co-ordinated activity between social care and health. We remain concerned that there has been no decision on funding the fundamental changes to adult social

care included within the Social Care Bill and the potential for additional costs on social care authorities.

8. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s): The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider the feedback from consultation and make recommendations to the Leader and Cabinet Members for Finance & Procurement and Corporate & Democratic Services on any changes which should be made to the final Draft Budget as presented to Cabinet on 22 January 2014.

9. Background Documents

- 9.1 Consultation materials published on KCC website can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/budget
- 9.2 The Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Budget statement can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-statement-2013>
- 9.3 The provisional local government finance settlement can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2014-to-2015>

10. Contact details

Report Author

- Dave Shipton, Head of Financial Strategy
- 01622 694597
- Dave.shipton@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

- Andy Wood, Corporate Director Finance & Procurement
- 01622 694622
- Andy.wood@kent.gov.uk

Responses to KCC on-line Budget Consultation

Headline Statistics

5 – weeks the consultation has been open

800,000 – total audience reach via media coverage

17,500 – web page views

19% – number of page views that were referred from KNet

3,650 – responses in total

487 – responses to BMG online budget tool

3,163 – responses to ‘2 minutes, 2 questions’

829% – % increase in total survey responses from last year’s consultation

Response Analysis

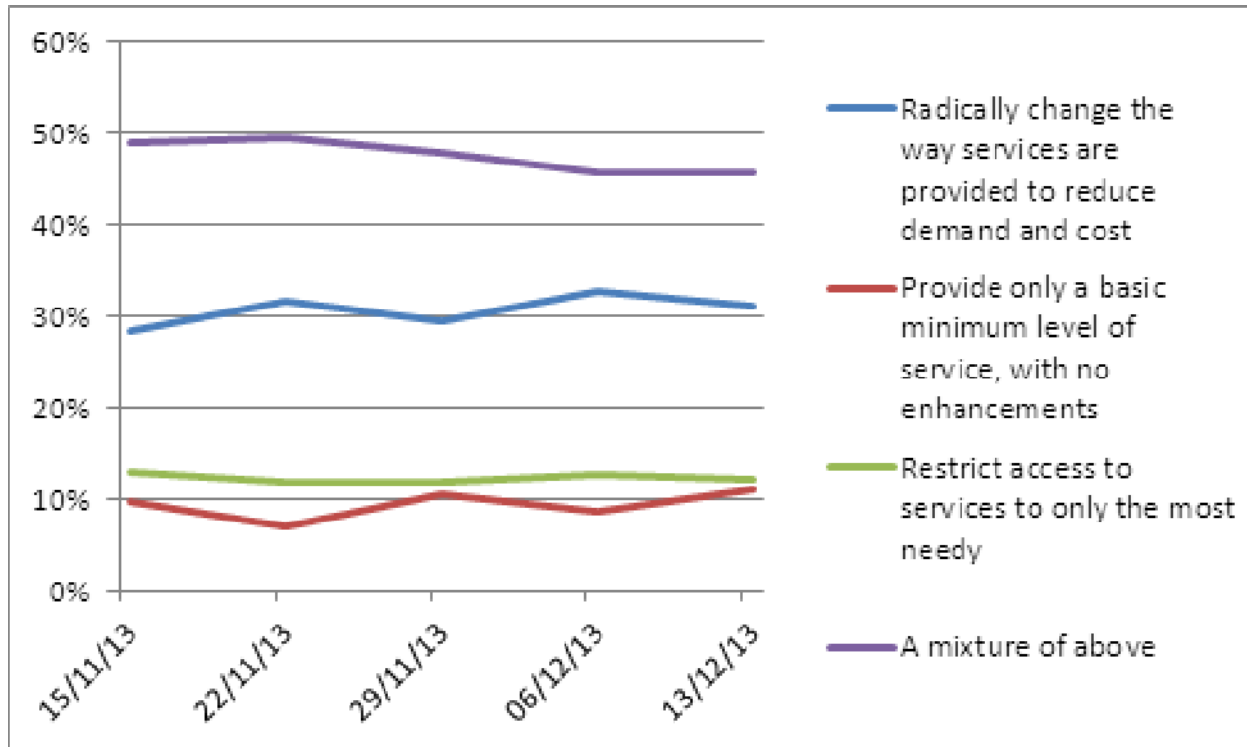
2 minutes, 2 questions: 3,163 responses

- 341 (Version 1), 129 (Version 2) & 2693 (Version 3)

Question 1 – where do you think KCC should look to find the £273m required savings?

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| A. | Radically change the way services are provided to reduce demand and cost | 31% |
| B. | Provide only a basic minimum level of service, with no enhancements | 9% |
| C. | Restrict access to services to only the most needy | 12% |
| D. | A mixture of above | 48% |

Q1 Response Rate Variation

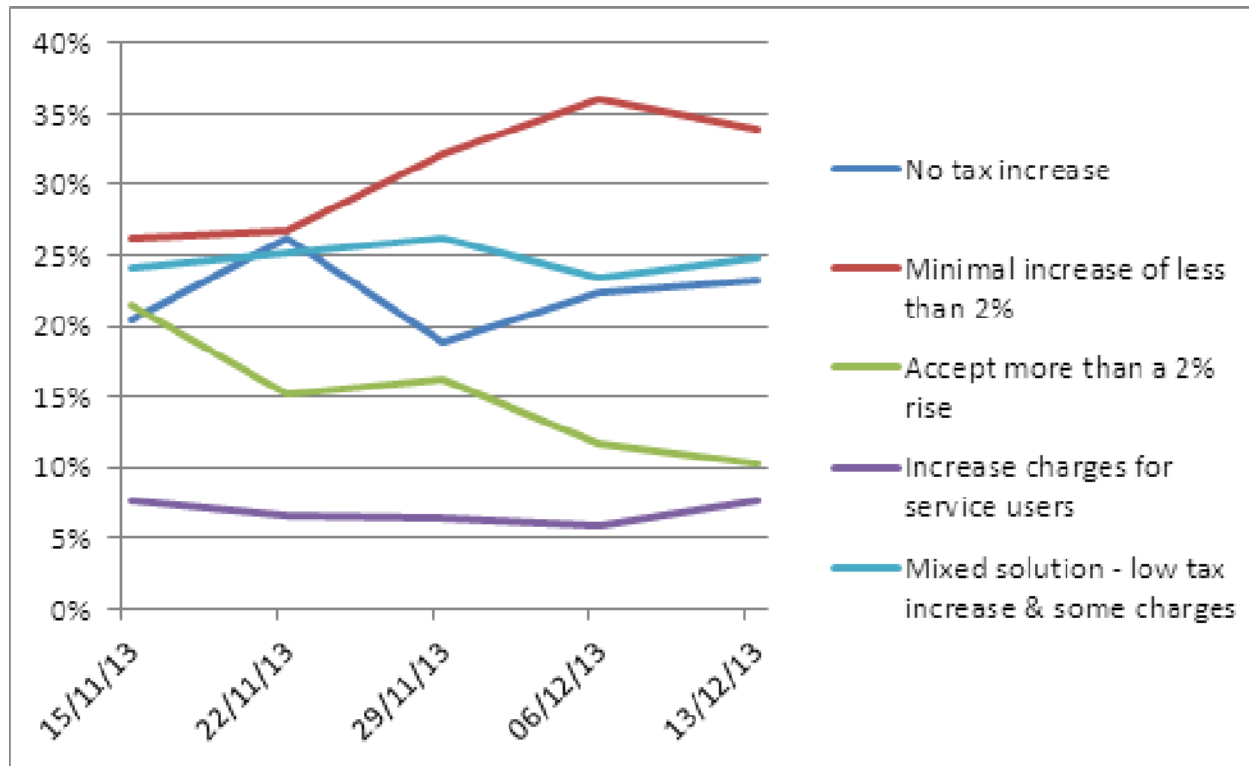


Response Analysis

Question 2 – to preserve some of our most popular services we may need to raise council tax to offset funding cuts. What is your view on this?

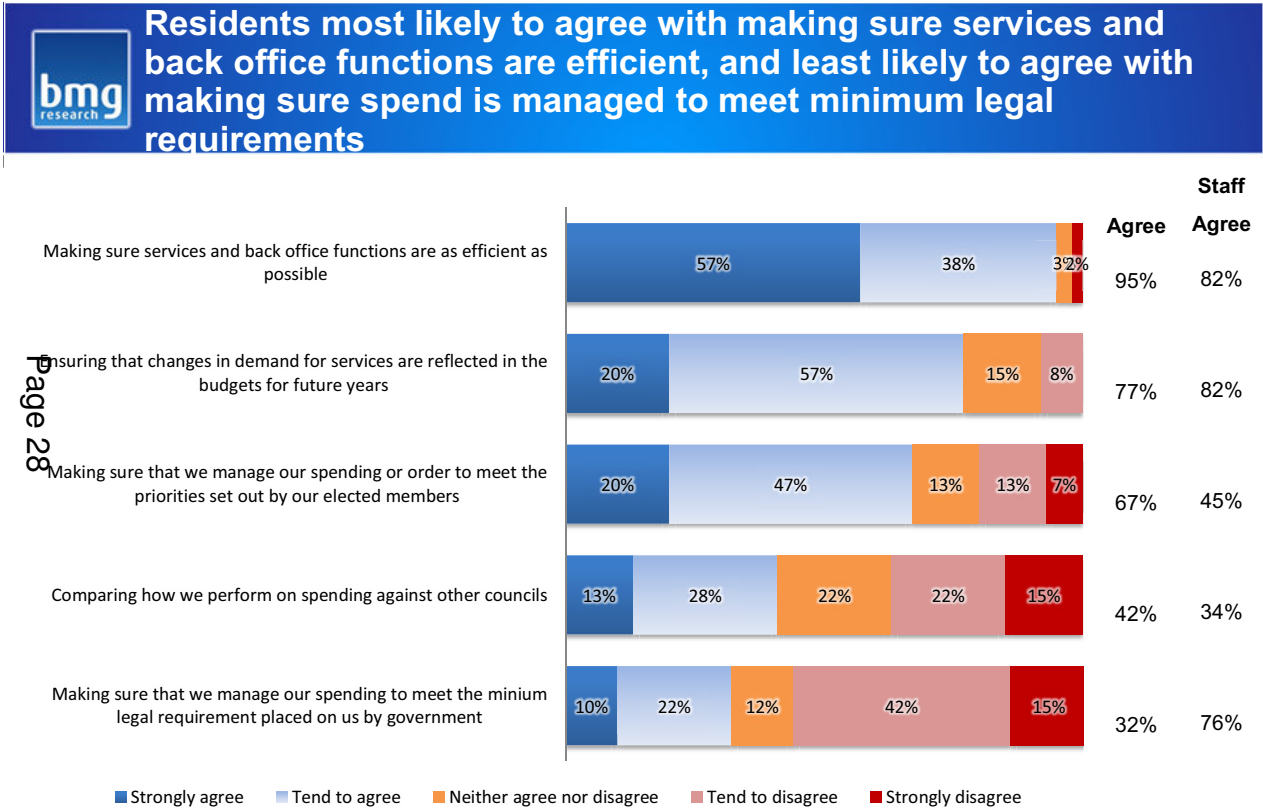
A. No tax increase	23%
B. Minimal increase of less than 2%	30%
C. Accept more than a 2% rise	16%
D. Increase charges for service users	7%
E. Mixed solution - low tax increase & some charges	25%

Q2 Response Rate Variation



Executive Summary of BMG Report

Resident's workshops





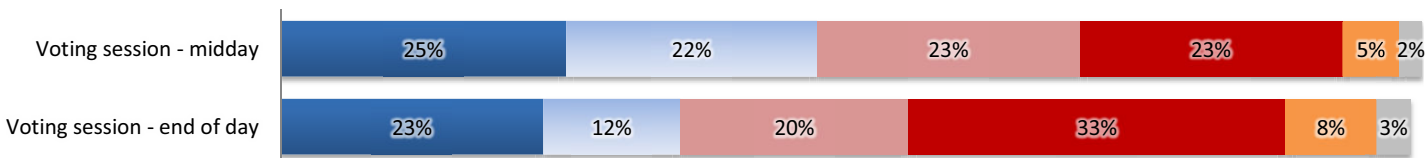
Over three fifths of respondents at the beginning of the day said Council tax is too high, but opinion changed throughout the day

Council tax is ...

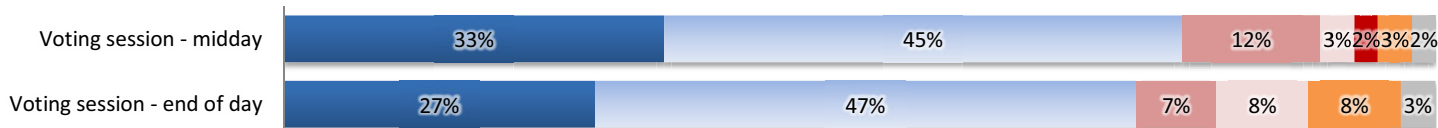


■ Too high ■ About right ■ Too low ■ Not provided

Would support an ANNUAL increase in Council Tax of ...



■ Would not support any increase ■ Up to 1% or up to £9.24
 ■ Up to 1.5% or up to £13.92 ■ Up to 2% or up to £18.56
 ■ More than 2% ■ Not provided



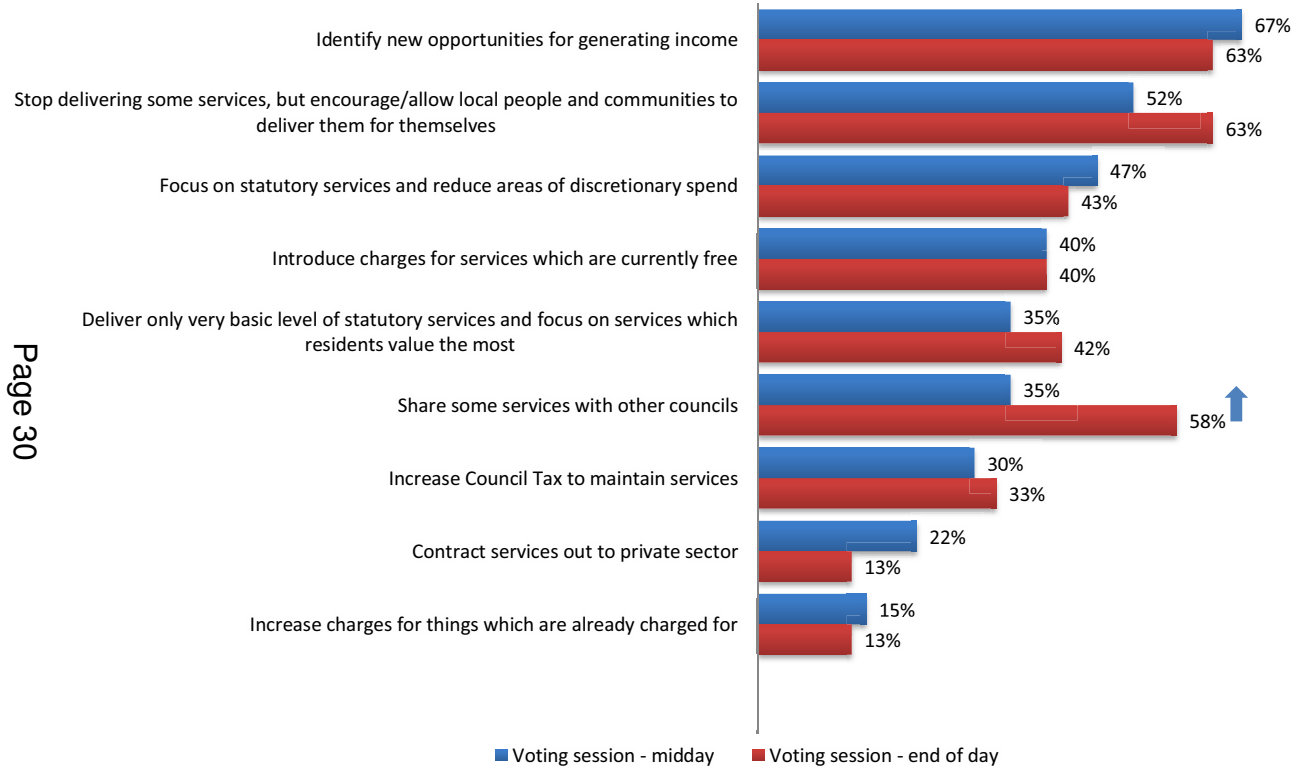
■ Would not support any increase ■ Up to 2% (and avoid a referendum) ■ Up to 3% or £27.92
 ■ Up to 5% or £46.56 ■ Up to 10% or £93.12 ■ More than 10%
 ■ Not provided

Arrival question Q8. Would you say your Council Tax is ...

Voting session 1 and 2 Question. Government funding to KCC is reducing significantly over this and subsequent years. To bridge some of the gap in income this gives rise to, would you support an ANNUAL increase in Council Tax of ...

Voting session 1 and 2 Question. If KCC were to increase Council Tax in excess of 2% it would be required to conduct a public referendum (this in itself would cost the equivalent of approximately £2.50 on the average council tax bill to hold the referendum). How much extra would you be prepared to pay on an annual bill in order to protect services? Base : All workshop residents (60)

Views changed between the voting sessions on how KCC should bridge the budget gap



Voting session 1 and 2 Question. To meet the Council's challenges of reduced grants in principle which of the following would you support?

Base : All workshop residents (60)



Residents response to Budget Tool

	Rank	Average
2 weeks of residential nursing home care for one older person whose needs have been judged as critical and who cannot meet the full costs themselves	1	9.55%
2 ½ weeks of residential care for one older person whose needs are judged substantial or critical and who cannot meet the full costs themselves	2	8.86%
67 hours of home care for an older person whose needs are judged moderate or substantial and who cannot meet the full costs themselves	3	8.73%
One week of foster care for one child who cannot live safely at home and whose needs are greater than those that can be met by a KCC registered foster carer: care is therefore provided by an organisation independent of KCC	4	8.45%
Just over 2 weeks of foster care for a child who cannot live safely at home, provided in house by a KCC registered foster carer	5	8.34%
100 miles of road gritted in bad weather, or 2 miles of road gritted 50 times over the course of the winter	6	7.16%
4 days of residential care for one adult with learning disabilities whose needs cannot be met by family or other carers	7	9.86%
14.5 tonnes of waste recycled, or enough recycling to support 26 average Kent Households	8	6.01%
Approximately four weeks of Learning Disability Direct Payments to someone with learning disabilities to enable them to choose how they live independently	9	5.50%
10 tonnes of waste disposed of, or enough waste disposal to support 17 average Kent Households	10	5.26%

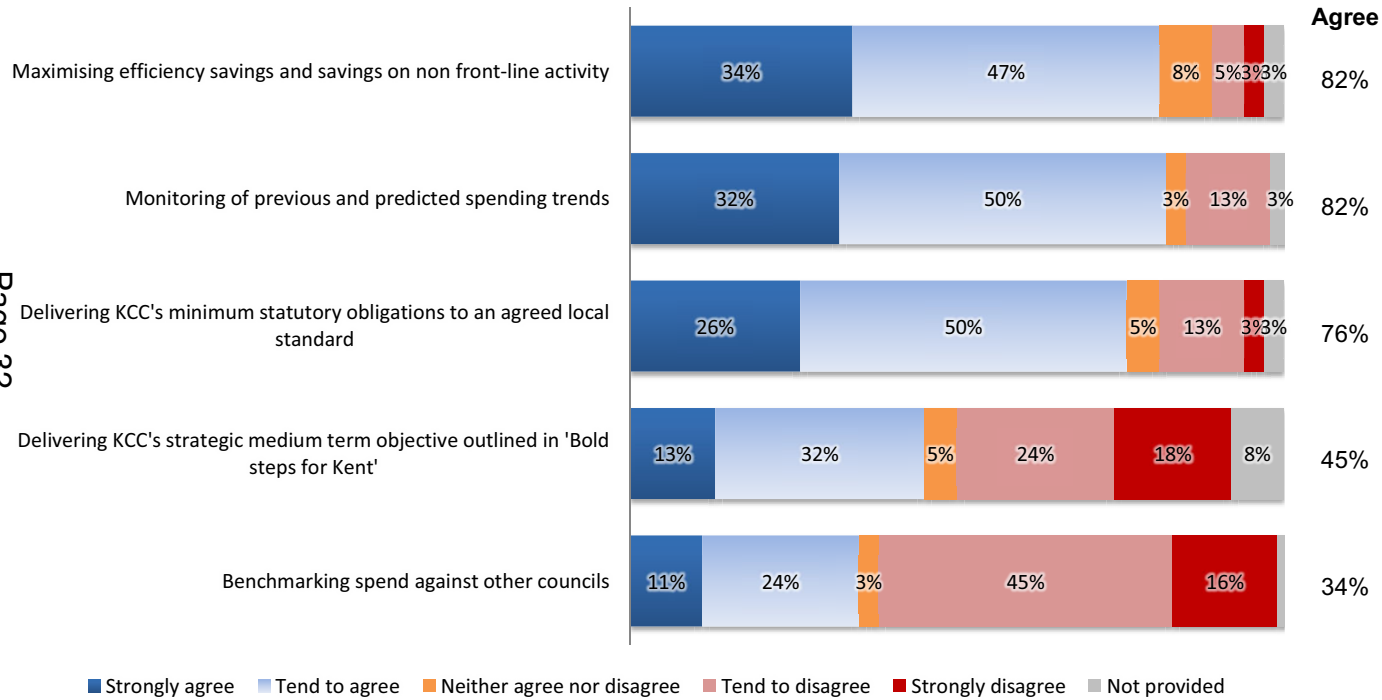
	Rank	Average
25 square metres of potholes repaired	11	5.19%
One child with Special Educational Needs transported by taxi to and from school for 9 weeks.	12	4.00%
4 children given free transport on buses or trains to and from their nearest secondary school for one term, where the school is more than three miles from their home	13	3.04%
425 visits to a household waste recycling centre	14	2.89%
62 attendances by a young person at their local youth centre or interactions with a youth worker in their local community	15	2.73%
25 street lights lit for a full year, OR 22 faulty street lights investigated and repaired	16	2.39%
Two annual bus passes for young people aged 11 - 15 to access educational or recreational activities via unlimited free bus travel across Kent	17	1.83%
Approximately 500 fare paying journeys on subsidised bus routes which are considered "socially necessary but uneconomic routes".	18	1.65%
430 separate library visits or enough visits for 16 regular library users over the course of a year	19	1.06%
280 email or telephone calls to the KCC Contact Centre	20	0.52%

Staff Workshops



Staff were most likely to agree with maximising efficiency savings and monitoring previous spending trends as parameters for making budget decisions

Page 32



Voting Q2. Kent County Council use the following principles to guide their budget decisions across different services. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following principles?

Base : All staff (38)



Staff responses to budget tool

	Rank	Average		Rank	Average
2 weeks of residential nursing home care for one older person whose needs have been judged as critical and who cannot meet the full costs themselves	1	11.45%	14.5 tonnes of waste recycled, or enough recycling to support 26 average Kent Households	11	2.68%
2 ½ weeks of residential care for one older person whose needs are judged substantial or critical and who cannot meet the full costs themselves	2	11.33%	One child with Special Educational Needs transported by taxi to and from school for 9 weeks.	12	2.51%
Just over 2 weeks of foster care for a child who cannot live safely at home, provided in house by a KCC registered foster carer	3	11.23%	62 attendances by a young person at their local youth centre or interactions with a youth worker in their local community	13	1.97%
67 hours of home care for an older person whose needs are judged moderate or substantial and who cannot meet the full costs themselves	4	9.81%	Approximately 500 fare paying journeys on subsidised bus routes which are considered "socially necessary but uneconomic routes".	14	1.83%
One week of foster care for one child who cannot live safely at home and whose needs are greater than those that can be met by a KCC registered foster carer: care is therefore provided by an organisation independent of KCC	5	9.42%	280 email or telephone calls to the KCC Contact Centre	15	1.73%
100 miles of road gritted in bad weather, or 2 miles of road gritted 50 times over the course of the winter	6	8.25%	25 street lights lit for a full year, OR 22 faulty street lights investigated and repaired	16	1.66%
4 days of residential care for one adult with learning disabilities whose needs cannot be met by family or other carers	7	7.56%	425 visits to a household waste recycling centre	17	1.48%
Approximately four weeks of Learning Disability Direct Payments to someone with learning disabilities to enable them to choose how they live independently	8	6.42%	430 separate library visits or enough visits for 16 regular library users over the course of a year	18	1.32%
25 square metres of potholes repaired	9	5.17%	4 children given free transport on buses or trains to and from their nearest secondary school for one term, where the school is more than three miles from their home	19	0.42%
10 tonnes of waste disposed of, or enough waste disposal to support 17 average Kent Households	10	3.44%	Two annual bus passes for young people aged 11 - 15 to access educational or recreational activities via unlimited free bus travel across Kent	20	0.33%

On-line responses to web tool



Web responses to Budget Tool

	Rank	Average
2 weeks of residential nursing home care for one older person whose needs have been judged as critical and who cannot meet the full costs themselves	1	10.27%
2 ½ weeks of residential care for one older person whose needs are judged substantial or critical and who cannot meet the full costs themselves	2	9.68%
67 hours of home care for an older person whose needs are judged moderate or substantial and who cannot meet the full costs themselves	3	9.57%
Just over 2 weeks of foster care for a child who cannot live safely at home, provided in house by a KCC registered foster carer	4	9.51%
One week of foster care for one child who cannot live safely at home and whose needs are greater than those that can be met by a KCC registered foster carer: care is therefore provided by an organisation independent of KCC	5	9.50%
100 miles of road gritted in bad weather, or 2 miles of road gritted 50 times over the course of the winter	6	7.83%
4 days of residential care for one adult with learning disabilities whose needs cannot be met by family or other carers	7	7.46%
Approximately four weeks of Learning Disability Direct Payments to someone with learning disabilities to enable them to choose how they live independently	8	5.37%
25 square metres of potholes repaired	9	4.80%
14.5 tonnes of waste recycled, or enough recycling to support 26 average Kent Households	10	4.28%

	Rank	Average
10 tonnes of waste disposed of, or enough waste disposal to support 17 average Kent Households	11	3.95%
62 attendances by a young person at their local youth centre or interactions with a youth worker in their local community	12	3.30%
One child with Special Educational Needs transported by taxi to and from school for 9 weeks.	13	2.71%
425 visits to a household waste recycling centre	14	2.36%
Approximately 500 fare paying journeys on subsidised bus routes which are considered "socially necessary but uneconomic routes".	15	2.00%
25 street lights lit for a full year, OR 22 faulty street lights investigated and repaired	16	1.98%
430 separate library visits or enough visits for 16 regular library users over the course of a year	17	1.87%
4 children given free transport on buses or trains to and from their nearest secondary school for one term, where the school is more than three miles from their home	18	1.82%
Two annual bus passes for young people aged 11 - 15 to access educational or recreational activities via unlimited free bus travel across Kent	19	1.05%
280 email or telephone calls to the KCC Contact Centre	20	0.71%



Most important/valued services was consistent across all 3 surveys

Level/amount of service that can be delivered for £1,000	Staff	Resident	Web
67 hours of home care for an older person	4	3	3
2 ½ weeks of residential care for one older person	2	2	2
2 weeks of residential nursing home care for one older person	1	1	1
24 days of residential care for one adult with learning disabilities	7	7	7
Approximately four weeks of Learning Disability Direct Payments	8	9	8
Just over 2 weeks of foster care for a child, provided in house by KCC	3	5	4
One week of foster care for one child provided by an organisation independent of KCC	5	4	5





Least important/valued services are more varied, although still high levels of agreement

Level/amount of service that can be delivered for £1,000	Staff	Resident	Web
430 separate library visits or enough visits for 16 regular library users over a year	18	19	17
62 attendances at their local youth centre or interactions with a youth worker	13	15	12
280 email or telephone calls to the KCC Contact Centre	15	20	20
25 square metres of potholes repaired	9	11	9
25 street lights lit for a full year, OR 22 faulty street lights investigated and repaired	16	16	16
100 miles of road gritted in bad weather, or 2 miles of road gritted 50 times	6	6	6
Two annual bus passes for young people aged 11 - 15	20	17	19
4 children given free transport to and from their nearest secondary school for one term	19	13	18
One child with Special Educational Needs transported by taxi to and from school for 9 weeks.	12	12	13
Approximately 500 fare paying journeys on subsidised bus routes	14	18	15
425 visits to a household waste recycling centre	17	14	14
14.5 tonnes of waste recycled, or enough to support 26 average Kent Households	11	8	10
10 tonnes of waste disposed of, or enough to support 17 average Kent Households	10	10	11

From: **Gary Cooke, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services**
David Cockburn, Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Support

To: **Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee**
17th January 2014

Subject: **Information and Communications Technology Service Desk - Customer Service Accreditations**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: Report on the success of the ICT service desk in retaining the Customer Service Excellence accreditation and four star certification from the cross industry Service Desk Institute.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 From 2006/7 the council's information services have maintained a sustained programme of continuous improvement to transform customer perception of the service provided – moving from a culture which prided itself on being 'no worse than the competition' to one which was 'obsessed with looking after customers.'
- 1.2 Strong customer focused activity was recognised with the service winning the Computer Weekly's public sector category for 'one of the best places to work in IT' 2007. This was followed up by seeking Charter Mark accreditation, now known as Customer Service Excellence (CSE). The Government wants services for all that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering – with the citizen always and everywhere at the heart of service provision. With this in mind CSE was developed to offer services a practical tool for driving customer-focused change within their organisation.
- 1.3 In 2008, ISG was awarded the CSE standard – areas of good practice highlighted included our staff 'displaying a strong sense of customer focus.'
- 1.4 Also in 2008, ISG was shortlisted for 3 awards in the Computing Awards for Excellence.
- 1.5 In 2009, the Service Desk Second Line Support Team were one of three finalists in the SDi (Service Desk Institute) IT Service and Support Awards. These annual awards recognise, promote and acclaim excellence, professionalism and innovation in the industry, and celebrate the outstanding achievements of individuals and teams for the contribution they make.
- 1.6 Following on from the success of reaching the final in the SDi Awards, and to reinforce commitment to achieving excellence, the Service Desk took part in an initial

assessment for the SDi Service Desk Certification programme. This is the only industry, standards based, accreditation programme specifically designed to certify service desk quality. The Service Desk Certification Standards provide a clear and measurable set of benchmarks for service desk operation, many of which are not included in other industry best practice standards.

- 1.7 Effectiveness and maturity of a Service Desk is measured against globally recognised standards which contain nine key certification concepts: Leadership, Policy and Strategy, People and Management, Partnerships and Resources, Processes and Procedures, Managing People Satisfaction, Managing Customer Satisfaction, Performance Results, and Social Responsibility.

2. Recommendation(s)

<p>Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the report.</p>
--

3. Contact details

Report Author

Paula Davies, ICT Support Services Manager
03000 410147
paula.davies@kent.gov.uk

From: Leyland Ridings, KCC's Armed Forces Champion
David Cockburn, Corporate Director of Business Strategy & Support

To: Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee 17 January 2014

Subject: Civilian Military Covenant

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report outlines the role of the Kent & Medway Civilian Military Partnership Board in overseeing the Covenant that KCC has signed with the armed forces. It sets out the implications for Kent of the Government's strategic changes to the armed forces and provides examples of initiatives undertaken to date.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee is asked to provide its views on priorities for future activity.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant (see Annex 1), which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.
- 1.2 Kent County Council was one of the first authorities to sign a Community Covenant, back in September 2011. The purpose of the Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Kent and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community. For KCC, this presents an opportunity to bring its knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. For the Armed Forces Community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and for Service personnel to help their local community.
- 1.3 KCC established a Board (see Annex 2) to oversee the implementation of the Covenant, and this has evolved over time. Recent changes have been made to the membership of the Board, and it now meets twice a year, with work being undertaken by sub-groups across the key Covenant themes of:
 - Health and wellbeing

- Integration (this includes support for service children, and promoting stronger, safer communities)
 - Housing
 - Employment, Economy and skills, and
 - Recognise and Remember
- 1.4 The Government is making major changes to the armed forces nationally which have significant implications that we need to plan for in Kent, such as ensuring that redundant service personnel are supported in getting employment and housing, and identifying the implications for businesses, families and communities of having greater numbers of reservists in the working population.
- 1.5 This report sets out the context in which the Covenant operates, including the government's plans to re-base the armed forces, and then takes each of the Covenant themes in turn, outlining some of the successes achieved to date and the priorities for the future.

2. National changes, and the implications for Kent

- 2.1 In October 2010, the Government published its *Strategic Defence and Security Review* setting out plans for a reduction of 7,000 personnel in the Army, the redeployment of British forces personnel from Germany to the UK and a reconfiguration of the Army into regionally-based, multi-role Brigades.
- 2.2 *Transforming the British Army*, published in July 2012, expanded upon this, shaping a vision for 'Army 2020' – a transformed Army equipped to deal with the challenges of the 2020s and beyond. It laid plans for a new reconfiguration around the creation of 'Reaction Forces' and 'Adaptable Forces', supported by Force Troop Brigades. It placed an increased emphasis on reserve forces, reversing the trend of the previous decade, targeting an increase of 50% in reservists, and better integration within the military as part of one seamless force, foreseeing reserves not only being used sporadically for national emergencies, but to be used more frequently and predictably. This would require significant and ambitious recruitment, training and public relations work, placing a greater stress on individuals, their families and their employers.
- 2.3 The *Regular Army Basing Plan*, released in March 2013, added more detail. The Army would be consolidated around seven main centres around the UK with the closure of a number of bases, a speedier withdrawal from Germany and the end to the culture of routine rotation in the UK. A further basing plan for the Reserves was published in July 2013. The Government committed £1.8bn to the Basing Plan; £1bn for new accommodation and the remaining £800k for technical infrastructure.

- 2.4 Within the greater South-East region, 145 (South) Brigade (based at Aldershot and covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight) and 2 (South-East) Brigade (based at Shorncliffe and covering Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Brunei) are to be merged to form 11 Infantry Brigade, based in Aldershot. From 1 September 2014, the newly formed 11 Infantry Brigade will come into fruition, the rest of the calendar year becoming a transition period, before it officially takes over operations on 1 January 2015.
- 2.5 The 5 Scots Regiment will become a ceremonial company based in Scotland and the Howe Barracks in Canterbury will close.
- 2.6 Outcomes of the review into Reserve Units locations have left most units largely unchanged in Kent, with a slight reduction in personnel in Tunbridge Wells but a significant increase in Canterbury.

3. Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group

- 3.1 A group that focussed on the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families was established in 2011 in response to:
- The Murrison report (that looked at the mental health of veterans, prosthetic limbs, and the rehabilitation back into the community of seriously injured veterans).
 - David Cameron's initiative to prioritise veteran health – if there are two people with the same level of risk, the veteran should have priority.
 - An excellent health needs assessment in Kent and Medway for veterans and serving personnel which was completed in 2010
- 3.2 The South East Coastal Armed Forces Group, as it was initially known, joined the Kent Civilian Military Partnership Board at its meeting in November 2012 for a discussion about how to promote wellbeing and good mental health amongst veterans and their families and it was agreed that the group would become the formal "Health and Wellbeing" Sub-Group for the Kent Civilian Military Partnership Board.
- 3.3 The Sub-Group is chaired by Steve Howe, who is non-executive Director of the Kent Community Health Trust, and includes a number of representatives from the NHS, KCC, Medway UA, the Army and the voluntary sector (including RBLI and British Legion). Jess Mookherjee, a KCC Public Health Consultant, is the link between the Board and the Sub-Group.
- 3.4 Major successes achieved in the last year include the launch in April 2013 of the Armed Forces Network (see the website at <http://armedforcesnetwork.co.uk>) which provides information about free mental health services for ex-military personnel across Kent and Medway. The network brings together volunteers

and professions to ensure ex-military personnel who are suffering from anxiety and depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder can access and receive appropriate help. It was set up as a direct result of the veterans' needs assessment referred to earlier.

- 3.5 We have also successfully secured funding from the MoD's LIBOR fund to set up three 'Men's Sheds' in Kent aimed at veterans. 'Men's Sheds' is an established movement with a national network (see www.menssheds.org.uk) but is new to Kent and has not been applied specifically to veterans. In Kent, a Men's Shed is a place where men (and women if they are interested) can go to socialise, be creative, share ideas, share skills and spend time with other men while working on practical projects. Research has shown that men, particularly from a veteran background, prefer to be supported 'shoulder to shoulder' with other men, rather than more formal learning sessions in adult education environments or face to face with a therapist. Through the Kent Sheds programme, participants will be trained to use a 'community toolkit' of physical tools to create community nature or crafts projects and an 'inner toolkit' of resilience and leadership. Public Health money has also been found to roll out a larger number of 'Sheds' aimed at a wider population, but some of which will also have veterans participating. Sheds thus increase the mental and physical health and wellbeing of participants, and will also benefit the local community in a number of ways. The Thanet Shed, which is being provided by Futures for Heroes and is focused on veterans, is already up and running. We are aiming to open veterans sheds in Dartford and Shepway in February.

4. Employment, Economy and Skills Sub-Group

- 4.1 The main priority for this sub-group has been to identify what needs to be done to tackle the peak of the June 2013 redundancies on top of the steady state transitions from the armed forces into civilian life. Amongst other things, the Sub-group is organising transition events and engagement groups as well as working with local businesses.
- 4.2 Working with the Centre for Micro-Business (CMB), we have successfully secured almost £66k of funding from the Community Covenant Grant Scheme, to assist those in the military and broader communities seeking to start their own business with a tailored programme of individual business support. CMB will first establish a dedicated training programme for mentors drawn from business, education and the military to deliver comprehensive, appropriate and pragmatic support on a 'one to one' and 'one to many' basis, face to face and online, to those who would not otherwise benefit from this high level of individual coaching. CMB will work with 2 and 145 Brigades to especially target those who suffer from a lack of self-esteem, mobility issues, English as a second language (ESOL), transport difficulties, or financial

constraints, working with Canterbury College to create a business “hub” model, using suitable students to create a self-help group combining students and entrepreneurs, providing IT/web, creative solutions for business issues. This will provide experiential learning opportunities for both students and learners.

- 4.3 Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) have been awarded £250k from the LIBOR Fund to enable personnel families to find and secure sustainable employment. The funding will be utilised to expand RBLI’s successful piloting of ‘LifeWorks’ courses to spouses and partners of armed forces personnel to target 500 spouses in 2 years, trialling a mixture of methods to help them overcome the difficulties posed when their partners are (often frequently and at short notice) redeployed or relocated. The MOD were so enthused about the bid that they encouraged RBLI to bid for further funding to cover childcare costs.

5. Integration Sub-Group

- 5.1 The purpose of this sub group is:

- *Develop and promote a comprehensive understanding of the needs of Service children and the means to address those needs so as to overcome the disadvantages they face*
- *Promote common understanding and closer integration between military and civilian communities, with a particular focus on achieving strong and safe communities*

- 5.2 It has only recently been established, so is meeting for the first time later in January. Examples of possible areas of focus include:

- Support agencies in their dealings with the Armed Forces, seeking to make best use of ever-diminishing resources, and achieve common outcomes and goals.
- Develop and promote community projects that further the “integration” aims of the Covenant, seeking funding from the Community Covenant Grant scheme as appropriate.
- Develop youth opportunities across Kent & Medway, supporting the Army Cadet Force and the Combined Cadet Forces, and using Service Personnel as role models and mentors for young people who could most benefit from this
- Ensure schools understand and address the specific needs of Service children. As part of this, share good practice (from within and outside Kent).
- Enable strategic planning of schools places through timely information-sharing, but also ensure those Service children moved into Kent do get school places quickly.

- Maximise the value of the Pupil Premium by encouraging registration of Service children and promoting best practice in utilisation of funding.
- Promote opportunities so that Service children (0-5 Years) are 'school ready'

5.3 Likely activities include

- 1) Gurkha Settlement Fund, delivery of the core projects will help aid settlement and community integration.
- 2) Forces training programme for frontline public sector staff, to raise awareness of issues relating to settlement and referral pathways into support networks
- 3) Social and Economic impacts of armed forces and reserve forces settlement (research is about to be conducted on this)
- 4) Community engagement events – could link to cadets but looking at the wider community to demonstrate positive outcomes.

5.4 In addition, the Group is likely to raise awareness of the case studies available on the Department for Education's website on how some schools across the country have used the pupil premium in relation to service families. We have already written to all the schools in Kent with service children to highlight HMS Heroes – a specific initiative of the Royal British Legion to support schools with service children. Generally speaking the academic achievement of service children is the same as their peers (unlike the economically disadvantaged students receiving pupil premium) but schools generally have to deal with changes in the students emotions and behaviour when a parent is sent on deployment or they are being moved around schools. Schools can seek support (as they can for all students) for students' emotional wellbeing and behaviour management from the authority's specialist advice and support services (such as Education Psychology, Attendance and Behaviour Service) available through EduKent.

6. Housing Sub-Group

6.1 The Joint Policy & Planning Board for Housing (JPPB) has established a Service Personnel Housing Sub-Group, to lead on implementing the priorities relating to serving and ex-serving military personnel identified for response in the Kent & Medway Housing Strategy. The Sub-Group has representatives from a wide range of organisations including public, private and third sector that support the ambition to level the playing field on housing issues for serving and ex-serving military personnel. In effect, this Sub-Group has been commissioned to be a direct Sub-Group of the Board.

6.2 The Kent and Medway Housing Strategy has three recommendations relating specifically to housing issues experienced by current and former service personnel:

Identify a pathway for the resettlement of ex-service personnel who have offended

Explore how to increase knowledge of housing options amongst members of the armed forces and their families

Explore options to assist vulnerable ex-service personnel who have become or are at risk of becoming homeless

- 6.3 A number of housing-based events have now been held across Kent to help service personnel understand their housing options once they have left the service and raising awareness of housing issues with local military barracks. Work and discussions have also taken place around preventing homelessness amongst ex-service personnel, including the possibility of providing some transitional housing in Kent. The Kent Homechoice website now has useful links and direct sign posting for service personnel. Moat (a Kent-based housing association) have developed partnerships with the MoD and have worked with the joint service housing office to raise awareness of the affordable products available to those serving personnel leaving the service imminently, and those looking to leave in the near future. This has obviously been a high priority given the service redundancies that have already happened, and those that will take place in 2014 and 2015. Housing options are a key aspect of the transition fairs that have been organised, with further such fairs planned in 2014.

7. Recognise & Remember Sub-Group

- 7.1 The purpose of this Sub-Group, which is chaired by Leyland Ridings, is to have an overview of the many ways in which people in Kent recognise the work of the armed forces and commemorate significant events, and to drive and co-ordinate activity. Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Sunday are annual events, but in 2014 and 2015 there are many very significant anniversaries, notably to do with World War 1 and World War 2. Annex 3 gives some notable examples of planned activity that KCC is aware of, but there will be many more. In addition, there is a small co-ordinating group within KCC, also chaired by Leyland Ridings, to develop a communications plan for KCC activity and provide a point of reference for bodies outside KCC wishing to engage with us.

8. Community Covenant Workshop

- 8.1 On 22 January the Board is holding a workshop for all armed forces champions and officers involved in developing and promoting community covenants across the district councils. The purpose is to celebrate the successes so far, share good practice, and identify the priorities for action

over the next year. Any Members wishing to attend this event would be very welcome.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 9.1 This report has provided an overview of how the Kent & Medway Civilian Military Board is implementing the Community Covenant, putting this into the context of the significant changes to how the armed forces will operate in Kent and nationally. Priorities for the future will need to include an emphasis on ensuring smooth transition to civilian life for those leaving the armed forces, and taking action to support the increase in reservists (and commensurate increase in families and employers of reservists). The Committee is asked to NOTE the range of activity underway, and to COMMENT on what the priorities for future activity should be.

Background Papers: None

Report Authors:

Debra Exall
Policy & Strategic Relationships Adviser
01622 221984
Debra.Exall@kent.gov.uk

Tim Woolmer
Policy Officer
01622 696038
Tim.Woolmer@kent.gov.uk

Annexes:

1. The National Community Covenant
2. Membership of the Civilian Military Partnership Board
3. Key events/activities in 2014 to commemorate the First World War.

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

An Enduring Covenant Between
The People of the United Kingdom
Her Majesty's Government

– and –
–

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of
The Crown
And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty.

Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families.

They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most, such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

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Kent & Medway Civilian Military Partnership Board

The overall purpose of the Board is to implement the Kent & Medway Community Covenant. It will do this through overseeing the work of five sub-groups which each focus on particular themes within the Covenant. The Board will meet bi-annually to receive reports and progress updates from each of the sub-groups, thus having a strategic overview of all activity and the ability to steer the implementation of sub-group work.

The terms of reference are as follows:

- **To address countywide issues relating to the Kent Community Covenant.**
- **To review the Kent Community Covenant annually and propose amendments where necessary.**
- **To filter and endorse applications of strategic significance for the Ministry of Defence Community Covenant Grant Scheme.**
- **To oversee, and take responsibility for, administering such Community Covenant Grant Scheme grants.**
- **To ensure that evidence is collected for audit purposes.**
- **To provide a forum for the exchange of information between the civilian and military authorities**
- **To widen understanding of military and veteran issues, including those relating to families of current or ex-service men and women.**

The members of the Kent & Medway Civilian Military Partnership Board are:

Leyland Ridings CO-CHAIR (Armed Forces Champion for KCC)

Brigadier Chris Claydon CO-CHAIR (2 SE Brigade)

Mike O'Brien (Armed Forces Champion for Medway)

David Bowen (SSO 1 REME Regiment)

Stephen Oxlade (South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association)

Sandra Fruish (Royal British Legion)

Steve Sherry (Royal British Legion Industries)

Jo Gunnell (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association)

Alison Broom (Invicta Chamber of Commerce / Maidstone Borough Council)

Tony Finch/Tracy Evans (2 Brigade South-East)

Debra Exall/Tim Woolmer (Kent County Council)

The five Sub-Groups are:

- **Recognise and Remember Sub-Group**
- **Integration Sub-Group** (*covering children and young people, and stronger, safer communities*)
- **Joint Policy & Planning Board for Housing Service Personnel Sub-Group**
- **Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group**
- **Employment, Economy and Skills Sub-Group**

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World War Commemoration events/activities

The Memorial Arch, Step Short, Folkestone

The Memorial Arch in Folkestone, with a landscaped garden and visitor centre, will be the dominant feature of the planned Road of Remembrance restoration on the Leas. It is to be created as a fitting tribute to the 10 million men and women who marched along this famous thoroughfare to or from the Western Front between 1914 and 1918. It will also bring to life the part that Folkestone played in the Great War.

Each one of the millions of fighting men who marched through the town and down to the waiting boats on the harbour would have gone down "The Slope", as it was then known. At the top of the hill they would have heard the order "Step Short", an instruction to shorten their stride in order to negotiate the gradient safely.

The Memorial Arch itself will consist of a stainless Steel Centenary Arch 14m high and 12m wide across the base. The Arch will be illuminated internally and externally and includes the provision for audio visual presentations. A specially commissioned statue of a soldier cast in resin leans against the inside of the Arch, looking over the sea to the French Coast 21 miles away.

The Arch will stand in a landscape developed with the help of education and historical experts and will complement projects to make available on line the historic visitors' books from the former Harbour Canteen with over 50,000 names and to establish a Great War Visitors' Centre. A national curriculum lesson plan will also be created for schools visiting the site.

A major Step Short event will take place on the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, on 4 August.

National War Memorial, Dover

The National War Memorial to be constructed on Dover's White Cliffs at Western Heights seeks to commemorate the 1.7 million servicemen and women, merchant navy personnel and civilians who died in the service of this country in World War 1 and World War 2. The goal of the project is to have the Memorial in place for an opening on the 4th August.

The proposed site for the Memorial is the area surrounding Drop Redoubt. Designed by Craft:Pegg architects, it will take the form of 12 white granite walls stepping down the slope between Drop Redoubt and the Grand Shaft.

The Wing, Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, Capel-le-Ferne

The Wing is the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust's planned new building at the Capel-le-Ferne site of the National Memorial to the Few. It will take its place by the existing Christopher Foxley-Norris Memorial Wall which lists the names of all those who took part in the Battle of Britain, while a replica Spitfire and Hurricane stand nearby as a reminder of the iconic machines they flew to victory. The project will be completed by Autumn 2014 ready for an official opening in July 2015, the Battle of Britain's 75th anniversary year.

Flying Memorial to the Few

Actions Stations!, a growing local business offering helicopter flights with a spitfire and hurricane, run by Steve Burt and operating from Pent Farm near Hythe, is working on a campaign to purchase a spitfire and other World War 2 planes for the county as a Flying Memorial to the Few.

Currently using planes from Duxford's Historic Aircraft Collection, Action Stations! would maintain and rent these planes, using them both for fly-bys at county events and for the Action Stations! business with flight times over key World War 2 sites published to enhance the experience of heritage visitors to the county. Longer term, the intention would be to employ mechanics and apprentices to maintain the planes which would operate from an area replicating the original Hawkinge Airport, perhaps at Folkestone Racecourse.

At present, Action Stations! is raising money for The Wing by making a donation per flight.

Heritage Hangar, Manston and Biggin Hill

The Heritage Hangar at Biggin Hill run by Peter Monk is the home to five flying spitfires, a hurricane and other World War 2 planes, plus others under restoration. These planes are privately owned but available for flypasts and events, including the County Show and to mark several forthcoming anniversaries. Around 8 people are employed on site, including apprentices.

The Heritage Hangar would like to expand into East Kent and is in negotiations with Manston Airport and the Spitfire & Hurricane Museum to have a working base, open to the public, to show the planes and workshop with access to Manston Airport for take-off and landing. They also plan to position their planes at other Kent airfields for educational purposes during school terms, with dates for flights coordinated with all the relevant museums and memorials, then scheduled accordingly. Two education days in advance of the Manston Air Show on 22nd June were highly successful.

There is also the potential for Spitfire flights to commemorate Remembrance Sunday and other major events.

War & Peace Revival

The War and Peace Revival (previously the War & Peace Show) has a new venue in 2013 at Folkestone Racecourse, previously RAF Westenhanger.

It is the world's largest military vehicle and militaria collectors fare, hosting more than 3,500 military vehicles. The annual 5 day festival offers education and entertainment, including a special schools day programme.

KCC has helped to develop opportunities for schools and education through the event which took place in July and again proved to be a huge visitor attraction, and will continue to do so.

Royal British Legion Memorial Garden

KCC works closely with the Royal British Legion and with Royal British Legion Industries which was established in 1919 to provide support for disabled ex-servicemen returning from the first World War. Its core values and objectives today remain unchanged and RBLI has evolved, now providing employment support to those with a disability or health condition, regardless of service connection.

The Royal British Legion Memorial Garden is set in the heart of the Royal British Legion Village in Aylesford and is in need of refurbishment to extend its use beyond the service on Remembrance Sunday.

The Legion's plans will keep some of the original features, including the memorial and remembrance plaques but the space will be opened up to provide for full disabled access, a bandstand, fixed seating, a small parade ground and areas of relaxation.

The project has the support of the Chairman of Kent County Royal British Legion who has suggested the new Garden would be a venue for the Royal British Legion's County Parade and their other ceremonial events. It's believed that a refurbished garden as a place of remembrance and reflection is a suitable project for the RBLI to mark the World War 1 Centenary.

Royal British Legion Industries and The Royal British Legion both came into existence to look after the wounded of the First World War and their work has continued through all conflicts to the present day.

Schools

As would be expected, KCC's Education, Learning and Skills is already closely involved in school and community preparations for the commemorations, particularly related to World War 1.

As well as being actively involved in the Frontline Kent Steering Group to ensure that opportunities are made available to schools to enrich their curriculum on this

important subject, the directorate has also been successful in securing funding for a small European funded project through the Comenius programme. This is bringing together three Kent Schools with three in Flanders aimed at developing the research skills of the pupils as they track individual servicemen who fought on the Western Front. Following an approach by the Regional Government of Flanders, an Interreg funding bid has also been developed on this collaboration. Various other avenues are being explored by the ELS directorate to raise awareness of opportunities for young people and their families to engage in learning activities about the Great War together, possibly utilising Kent Children's University Passport to Learning scheme. This support has also been offered to other local groups and organisations including the Step Short project.

Members may be interested to know that on 19 December five pupils and their teachers from the Pent Valley Technology College in Folkestone visited a number of sites around Ypres as part of KCC's EU-funded education project on the First World War. They engaged with their Flemish counterparts, and met the Prime Minister in the Tyne Cot cemetery.

Communities

Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA) will use the opportunity to showcase Kent's rich historic collections relating to 1914-18. The service is part of a national libraries partnership with the Imperial War Museum which will encourage the public to engage with the online *Lives of the First World War* project which aims to record the stories of people who lived, worked and fought during the war. It is also supporting major projects across the county including Step Short, the Defence of Swale and Thanet Remembers and other local community-led initiatives.

The Kent History and Library Centre is actively involved with Football and Peace , this project will use the iconic 1914 Christmas Day truce as a vehicle to explore the relationship between sport and the First World War. The National Children's Football Alliance, (based at Kings Hill) has been awarded Heritage Lottery funding of £32,500 and will involve pupils from three schools researching the impact of the War in a partnership with LRA, Maidstone United Football Club and Maidstone Museum. The project will culminate in an exhibition at the Gallagher Stadium in April 2014.

Volunteers are being recruited to support a range of activities in libraries including activities focussed on the literature of the First World War and a major exhibition at the History and Library Centre. Staff and volunteers have developed a Kent First World War Timeline for the Frontline Kent partnership. LRA is also keen to research the role and contribution of KCC 1914-19 which could culminate in an exhibition at Sessions House

Frontline Kent/Spitfire Coast and the Frontline Kent Group

Visit Kent's major initiative to support the commemorations will be the "Frontline Kent" visitor campaign. Still under development, the campaign will run in 2015, the anniversary of the ending of World War 2.

The Frontline Kent Group which met after the Kent Tourism Conference now encapsulates initial ideas around the Spitfire Coast aimed at bringing together Kent's World War sites and initiatives to heighten the county's offer to attract the heritage tourist and add value to the time they spend in the county.

This Group has met several times and includes representatives from KCC Education, Communities, Regeneration, the Lord Lieutenancy, press and key World War 1 and World War 2 initiatives. As a result of the last meeting, it was agreed that it should be part of the wider Kent and Medway Museums Partnership initiative chaired by Professor Mark Connolly from the University of Kent which is currently collating all information across Kent to build a diary of activity.

Working within this wider group, Visit Kent will be looking at areas of product development, developing a marketing campaign around anniversary led tourism, exploring feasibility of HLF funding and other sources of funding from the private and public sector, developing partnerships with key carriers, media partners who have access to a wide variety of content, stories and add value to campaign development.

"Co-ordinating Centre to Commemorate the Centenary of the First World War"

Historians from the University of Kent, University of Greenwich, Canterbury Christ Church University, University of Sussex, University of Brighton and the University of Southampton were successful in bidding as a consortium to establish a Coordinating Centre at the University of Kent, led by Professor Mark Connelly. This will be one of 5-7 regional hubs which will manage, in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund, community projects connected with the First World War centenary. The primary aims of the project are to build a dialogue between academic and public historical research, and to assist communities in exploring their heritage.

The Co-ordinating Centres will be expected to act as beacons for community outreach, engagement and collaboration at a local/regional and a UK-wide scale between research organisations and researchers and community groups, including young people, who are interested in researching and commemorating the First World War, the broader historical and cultural context of the War and its legacy and impact. Over the longer term, these Centres are intended to lay the foundation for the creation of sustainable relationships and practices that systematically build dialogue between academic and public historical research.

The Centres will operate in co-operation with other major project partners in the heritage sector such as museums and archives. This will be done by a range of activities including:

- A website to coordinate and inform the Centre's network;

- Open lectures, seminars and conferences on war-related subjects;
- Family history workshops;
- Tours of archives and relevant collections;
- Information events and open days;
- Self-tour guides to the battlefields and significant war-related locations;
- Visits to schools, colleges and community centres; and
- Providing advice on further bids to the Heritage Lottery fund

Second World War sites in Kent

In addition to the above, due to its frontline position, Kent has many Battle of Britain sites including the Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge, Manston and Lydd airports, Lashenden, Brenzett, Shoreham and Rochester Airport, together with St Georges Chapel at Biggin Hill, Dover Castle and the City of Canterbury which suffered heavy bombing.

Currently, joint working between the sites appears limited, offering a major opportunity to package Kent's offer to visitors to the county for the forthcoming commemorations.

From: Paul Carter, Leader of the Council
David Cockburn, Corporate Director of Business Strategy & Support

To: Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee, 17 January 2014

Subject: Welfare Reform Monitoring Report

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides an update on a range of indicators that may be affected by recent and ongoing welfare reforms following the comprehensive research report presented to the Committee in June 2013. The monitoring report has been reviewed and updated following its withdrawal from the Committee's agenda in December 2013 and this covering report sets out the changes made to the report and the reasons why. It also sets out the baseline indicators suggested for future welfare reform monitoring reports.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- (a) Note the changes made to the original December update report on welfare reform as set out in sections 2, 3 and 4.
- (b) Note the revised welfare reform update report attached at Annex 1.
- (c) Consider and make recommendations for any additional indicators to be used for future updates on welfare reform changes.

1. Introduction

1.1 In June 2014 the Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee considered a comprehensive research report from Business Strategy on the changes to the welfare system and the possible implications that this could have for Kent's people, places and public services. The Committee asked for regular monitoring reports to be brought back.

1.2 The first monitoring report was due to be reported to the Committee at its meeting in December 2013, but because of an administrative error, it was not sent to the Leader for comments and approval prior to publication. The Leader subsequently expressed concern regarding some statements and conclusions in the report which required clarification, and asked the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee to withdraw the report to allow it to be reviewed and redrafted as required. The Chairman of the Committee agreed to this request.

1.3 The revised and updated monitoring report is attached at Annex 1. Whilst much of the original wording, tone and conclusions of December version remain, we have taken the opportunity to tighten up the language and reduce duplication as well as update it with additional information not available in time for the publication deadline for the December Committee. As such, the report is shorter and more focussed on the changes in evidence/data that have occurred since the June research report.

1.4 Given the political and media attention in the monitoring report following its withdrawal from the Committee's agenda in December, and to aid Member understanding of exactly what changes have been made between versions, Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this covering paper set out in detail the exact changes that have been made and the rationale for making them.

1.5 It is important to note (and as was made clear in both the June research report and the December monitoring report) that it is very difficult to know whether particular trends against some indicators are caused by changes to the welfare system or other factors related to the economy, such as increases in the cost of living. Moreover and again as noted in the June research report, it is important to recognise that welfare reform, including the trend towards increased assessment, conditionality and enforcement, has been a priority that has spanned both the Coalition and previous Labour Governments.

2. Changes made to the report due to insufficient evidence or additional data now being available

2.1 A number of changes have been made to the December monitoring report on the grounds that the evidence used was too limited or anecdotal to infer some of the conclusions or statements which were being made; or that new evidence or data is now available which should be reported to provide additional context and a more balanced understanding of what the evidence or data is suggesting about the impact of welfare reform in Kent.

2.2 Additional information in particular has been provided on those affected by some of the specific reforms (including the Benefit Cap, Housing Benefit size-related criteria, Council Tax Support, reforms to incapacity-based benefits and the new sanctions regime for JSA and ESA), the latest data on unemployment, homelessness, information and advice and the impact on people with disabilities/ill health.

2.3 In view of the above, the Introduction has therefore been expanded and the Key Findings section re-written to reflect the revised report including the additional evidence provided.

The Key Findings section has been re-written to reflect the content of the revised report and the additional data which is now presented:

Original text	Replacement text
<p><i>Welfare benefits recipients need additional advice and guidance to deal with welfare changes in Kent. This is causing greater pressure on organisations, such as Gateways and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), that provide these services.</i></p> <p><i>Increasing debt and debt management is a concerning issue. The introduction of welfare reforms has meant that more claimants require support to manage their finances and are increasingly getting into debt.</i></p> <p><i>Literature suggests that housing benefit cuts are leading to a national increase in the number of households in rent arrears. It is claimed that nearly one in three council housing tenants who were affected by the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy have fallen behind on their rent since its introduction earlier this year.</i></p> <p><i>There are increasing delays in the processing of claimants' appeals against decisions finding claimants fit for work when they are re-assessed from Incapacity Benefit to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). There are also delays in the payment of the basic rate ESA that claimants are entitled to whilst their appeal is considered.</i></p> <p><i>Many people receiving benefits or applying for them have difficulty with a digital, "self-service" approach because they have limited access to the Internet at home, may not be IT literate and may have low levels of literacy.</i></p> <p><i>A number of applicants to the Kent Support and Assistance Service (KSAS) scheme are unable to complete an application unassisted. While some local services (such as Gateways and libraries) can provide access to computers, there is still an additional demand on staff or</i></p>	<p>3. Key Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall impact: it is too early to say with any certainty what the impacts of welfare reform will be, particularly as the main reform (Universal Credit) has yet to be implemented in Kent. It is also difficult at this stage to separate the effects of welfare reform from other factors including the state of the economy, cost of living and housing issues. Clearly unemployment is reducing, and specifically in relation to welfare reform it appears significant numbers (according to national DWP figures) of people subject to the benefit cap have secured employment. However, there is also evidence of increased levels of homelessness, use of food banks, debt and the need for advice from frontline services. • Numbers affected by the reforms in Kent: significant numbers of people of working age have seen their benefits reduced by either one or several of the reforms. Reforms that have had a significant impact so far include the size-related restrictions to Housing Benefit (affecting 7,044 people with an average reduction in benefit of £14 per week), the reforms to Council Tax Benefit (affecting 73,794 people with an average reduction in benefit of £1.50 per week), the reforms to incapacity-based benefits and the new sanctions regime affecting JSA claimants (affecting about 15,000 so far). With regard to the Benefit Cap this has affected fewer people (about 500) than originally predicted (890) but those affected have seen a significant reduction (on average about £67 per week). The lower numbers are probably due to significant numbers of

volunteer time to support individuals with their applications – whether for KSAS or other applications. Customers who seek support from these services, because they are unable to fill in an on-line KSAS application form by themselves, are increasingly directed towards making an application via telephone.

Other longer term issues that may be related to, or exacerbated by, welfare reforms, and that are included because of their significance are as follows.

Homelessness in Kent has increased. Between January and March 2013 local authorities in the KCC area made 810 decisions on applications (by eligible households) for housing assistance under the homelessness legislation of the Housing Act 1996. This is **25% higher** than the corresponding quarter in 2012, when 650 households were accepted.

The number of people placed in **temporary bed and breakfast accommodation** in Kent is of concern. The Government believes that bed and breakfast hotels represent the least suitable form of accommodation for most households - particularly those with children - and should be used only as a last resort, preferably for only up to six weeks while applications are processed. In Kent (KCC area) 163 households were in bed and breakfast accommodation at the end of March 2013, a **rise of 22%** compared to one year ago and **more than double** the number three years ago.

The **number of people using food banks has increased sharply in Kent**. Partial figures from this year already show a substantial increase from the last financial year in the number of people accessing food banks managed by the Trussell Trust in the Kent administrative area. The number of adults using these food banks in 2012-2013 was 980, while the number from April 2013 to only September 2013 was already 1,838. The number of children

people finding work, or being found to be exempt for other reasons.

- **Migration:** there is no robust evidence yet to show an increase in migration to Kent (note that there has been a trend for some time for people to move to Kent from London – net migration to Kent was 7,900 in 2011 before the main welfare reforms took place). However, of concern (although not necessarily related to welfare reform) is that the number of families with a child subject to a Child Protection plan who moved to Kent in the last six months is already higher (at 83) than the total number for the previous year (70). It is also reported by London Councils that significant numbers of people in London (4,600) are unable to pay their rent due to the Benefit cap and therefore may be potentially looking to move to cheaper areas in the near future.

- **Homelessness and housing:** the numbers presenting themselves as homeless has increased by about 12% (comparing January-October 2012 with January-October 2013). Related to this is the evidence that reforms to Housing Benefit are leading to an increase in the number of people in rent arrears, including in social housing (due to the size-related restrictions). However the numbers accepted as homeless and in priority need has not increased over the same period. This fact needs to be analysed further but appears to be related to the homeless prevention work carried out by the district councils in Kent.

- **Unemployment and work incentives:** the main reform expected to influence work incentives has not yet been introduced in Kent and so it is not possible at this stage to assess the impact on employment. The latest figures available on the numbers

using them in 2012-13 was 705, while from April 2013 to September 2013 it was 1,357. The total number of users from April to September 2013 (3,195) was already nearly twice as many as in 2012-13 (1,685). The figures from the Trussell Trust are only an indication of a much wider problem, as they do not include the parallel growth in independent food banks and other informal emergency food aid interventions provided by hundreds of churches, charities, housing associations and community groups.

claiming JSA do show a continuous reduction since February 2013 but it is not clear what role, if any, welfare reform played in this. A more direct link may be observed in the figures released by the DWP on those people affected by the Benefit cap who have subsequently found work and become exempt from the cap even if still claiming benefits (nationally it appears about 40%).

- **Food Bank usage:** the number of people using food banks in Kent has increased very significantly in Kent. The figures released by the Trussell Trust (showing a doubling in usage comparing the whole of 2012/13 to just the first half of 2013/14) need to be considered alongside the parallel growth in independent food banks. However, it cannot be said with certainty whether the increases are mainly due to welfare reform (as opposed to cost of living increases and the state of the economy) and whether the need previously existed but was not being met.

- **Impact on people with disabilities and ill-health:** it appears that the reforms (including those begun under the previous Government) so far are having a significant impact on some people with disabilities or health problems. Over 60% of those affected by the size-related restrictions have a disability/health problem (according to the DWP's own initial Equality Impact Assessment) and yet many are not being successful in claiming additional help via the Discretionary Housing Payment system. In addition, about 30% of those on one of the old incapacity-based benefits are failing to qualify for the new Employment Support Allowance (when reassessed) and it is reported that people challenging such decisions are currently experiencing long delays in

	<p>the processing of appeals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of increased debt, money management and demand for front line services: nationally there is some evidence to suggest that benefit reforms are resulting in an increased number of people falling into rent arrears and other kinds of debt but more evidence is needed to be confident about the impact locally. There is some anecdotal evidence from local front line services such as Gateways and Citizen Advice to suggest there has been an increase in demand for advice services, and increasing complexity of presenting problems, but this is not the case across the board. Agencies also report that more proactive work is being carried out on welfare reform with those clients known to be affected, thus reducing the numbers who would otherwise present at Gateways and elsewhere seeking assistance.
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2.4 Other changes made due to insufficient evidence, or additional information becoming available, are set out in the table below.

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
<p>In addition, although data matching has not yet been completed on the Troubled Families cohort, and therefore comprehensive evidence is not yet available, it is pointed out that it is very likely that people in this group will be particularly affected by welfare reforms. Restrictions to benefits may add considerable financial pressures on these households, making it harder</p>	<p>No replacement text.</p>	<p>There is no data yet available to support this statement and so it has been removed until further evidence is available.</p>

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
for them to cope and in some cases forcing them to move. ¹		
<p><i>The most recent information on homelessness in Kent shows that it has increased. Between January and March 2013 local authorities in the KCC area made 810 decisions on applications (by eligible households) for housing assistance under the homelessness legislation of the Housing Act 1996. This is 25% higher than the corresponding quarter in 2012, when 650 households were accepted. “Acceptance” means that the local authority is satisfied that the applicant is unintentionally homeless and therefore is eligible for assistance. Since 2009 there has been a general upward trend in the number of decisions not only in Kent but also in England (Table 5, and Figures 5 and 6).</i></p>	<p>Trends in homelessness may be a possible indicator of the impact of welfare reform but the increasing cost of housing and shortage of social housing are other factors which need to be taken into account. Caution needs therefore to be exercised in interpreting the figures. The most recent information on homelessness in Kent shows that it is generally increasing. Between January and the end of September 2013 local authorities in the KCC area made 2,255 decisions on applications (by eligible households) for housing assistance under the homelessness legislation of the Housing Act 1996 (Table 3). This is an increase of about 12% on the corresponding period in 2012 when 2,019 decisions were made. It is also clear from the figures that since 2009 there has been a general upward trend in the number of decisions in both Kent and nationally (Table 5, and Figures 8).</p>	<p>The data used in the original report only included the first quarter of 2013 and therefore it was not possible to track trend. Data for quarter 1, 2 and 3 is now available which has allowed a trend to be tracked and the data is therefore more reliable. This shows that although decisions on homelessness have increased the rate at which this has happened is less than originally thought; a 12% increase on the corresponding period.</p>
<p><i>Of the 810 decisions, 273 households were accepted as homeless and in “priority need” - an increase of 29% compared to one year ago (a “priority need” is given to households with dependent children, pregnant women,</i></p>	<p>The increased number of decisions on homelessness is evidence that more people are presenting themselves to the district councils as “homeless”. However, as Table 4 shows, the number of households</p>	<p>The data used in the original report compared quarter 1 figures for 2013 with quarter 1 in 2012. This did not provide enough data to track the trend with</p>

¹ Kent County Council (2013) Welfare Reform Research, Executive Summary, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
<p><i>elderly people, people with a physical disability or mental illness, young persons and victims of domestic violence). This represents 0.47 households in every 1,000 (that is, about 5 households for every 10,000 in the KCC area), and is based on 2012 household estimates. It is lower than the England figure of 0.58 households for every 1,000 (Table 6 below).</i></p>	<p>accepted as homeless and in priority need has remained broadly the same if the same two periods are compared (I.E. Jan-Oct 2012 and Jan-Oct 2013). A household is defined as in “priority need” when it contains dependent children, pregnant women, vulnerable because of old age, mental illness, physical disability, leaving armed forces or prison or other reason, young persons and victims of domestic violence, and those homeless as a result of an emergency such as flood or fire. At the end of September 2013 Kent (KCC area) had a homelessness rate of 0.41 households in priority need per 1,000. This is lower than the national average of 0.59 (Table 4 below).^[2]</p> <p>Table 4 seems to suggest that (although the numbers presenting themselves as homeless has increased overall since 2007), the numbers accepted as homeless and in priority need is actually lower than in 2007. However this interpretation would be misleading. The numbers do <u>not</u> take into account the fact that Housing Departments in councils have increasingly taken a much more proactive approach to tackling homelessness through early prevention (for example via</p>	<p>sufficient confidence. However when trend is tracked over a longer period the number of household’s accepted as homeless and in priority need have remained broadly the same across the corresponding quarters of 12 and 13. Therefore the data has been updated to provide a more robust and reliable picture of homelessness in Kent. Additional information has also been added to give context to these figures; Housing departments have been taking a more proactive approach to homelessness since 2008 and this has had an impact on keeping numbers in ‘priority need’ down.</p>

^[2] Ibid.

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
	Rent Deposits, Discretionary Housing Payments etc), thus helping to keep the number of households having to make a homeless application down. The total figures also mask wide variation between districts with acceptances increasing in some districts and decreasing in others.	
<p><i>Of the 810 decisions made during the first quarter of 2013:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>34% were accepted as homeless and in priority need</i> • <i>37% were eligible but found not to be homeless</i> • <i>20% were found to be eligible and homeless but not in priority need</i> • <i>9% were eligible and in priority need but found to be intentionally homeless.</i> <p><i>At the end of the March 2013 quarter, 536 households in Kent (KCC area) were living in temporary accommodation. This is 0.4% less (two properties) than one year ago. 104 (19%) of these households were in the Ashford district. Compared to 2007 the numbers in temporary accommodation have actually decreased significantly.</i></p> <p><i>Temporary accommodation includes a wide range of property. Of the 536 households in such accommodation at the end of March:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>172 (32%) were accommodated in Local Authority or Registered Social</i> 	<p>At the end of the 3rd quarter 2013 there were 550 households in Kent (KCC area) living in all types of temporary accommodation. This is three households more (0.5%) than the same period one year ago when there were 547. In the same period the number of households in temporary accommodation nationally increased by 4,390 (+8.28%).</p> <p>Temporary accommodation includes a wide range of property. Of the Kent households in all types of temporary accommodation at the end of September, approximately 37% were accommodated in Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord (RSL) dwellings. 18% were accommodated in leased private sector dwellings, 29% in Bed and Breakfast accommodation, 9% in hostels with a further 8% of households in other types of accommodation such as private landlords.</p>	<p>Further data is now available on temporary accommodation and therefore a trend can be tracked over the first 3 quarters of 2013 and compared to 2012. This has allowed a more up to date picture of temporary accommodation in Kent to be presented in the report and has shown an increased number when compared to the analysis in the original report.</p>

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
<p><i>Landlord (RSL) dwellings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>124 (23%) were accommodated in leased private sector dwellings</i> • <i>163 (30%) in bed and breakfast accommodation</i> • <i>40 (7%) in hostels with the other 37 (7%) in other types of accommodation such as private landlords.</i> 		
<p><i>In Kent (KCC area) 163 households were in bed and breakfast accommodation at the end of March 2013, a rise of 22% compared to one year ago and more than double the number three years ago (Table 7).</i></p>	<p>In Kent (KCC area) 158 households were in bed and breakfast accommodation at the end of September, a rise of 26% compared to one year ago. The increase in Bed and Breakfast usage is most likely to be due to the decreasing availability of other forms of temporary accommodation (lack of “move on” accommodation).</p>	<p>The information in the original report has been updated to reflect the most recent figures on bed and breakfast accommodation in Kent. Additional context has been added to this section to help to explain possible reasons behind the rise in B&B accommodation.</p>
<p><i>The Department for Communities and Local Government has recently started to publish numbers of families with children who are in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks (excluding those pending a review by the local authority). There are 14 families in this category in Kent and Medway (Ashford 1, Canterbury 1, Shepway 2, Swale 1 and Medway 9).</i></p>	<p>The Department for Communities and Local Government has recently started to publish numbers of families with children that are in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks (excluding those pending a review by the local authority. In Kent at the end of September there were 22 families in this category, the same as the previous quarter but up from the end of March when there were 5.</p>	<p>The numbers in the original report included Medway and were only showing data for quarter 1. More up to date data has now been used showing quarter 2 and 3 which shows that although numbers have increased from Q1 to Q2 they are now static.</p>
<p><i>Table 3 Households affected by the Cap, Kent and Medway Group, 2013 and supporting text:</i></p>	<p>Section B on ‘what are the impacts on people in Kent’ has been updated to include a range of up to date</p>	<p>The analysis of households affected is based on very small numbers when</p>

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
<p><i>Other general evidence, before discussing more local impacts, indicates that family size is a key determinant of the impact of Welfare Reform. For instance, the LGA reports that the impacts of the Benefit Cap will be particularly felt by single parents and by couples with more than four children.</i></p> <p><i>Local evidence seems to support the assertion that families will be disproportionately impacted (Table 3 below).</i></p> <p><i>A recent analysis by Business Intelligence shows that four population groups account for nearly 70% of the households affected by the Cap in Kent. These four groups are as follows:</i></p> <p><i>Group G: young professionals with children, living in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods</i></p> <p><i>Group J: middle-aged parents receiving benefits living in social housing in areas of high unemployment</i></p> <p><i>Group K: singles and lone parents on low incomes renting terraces in town centres</i></p> <p><i>Group L: lone parents with young children living in high crime areas on large council estates.</i></p>	<p>information regarding the number of people affected by specific reforms. Particularly relating to population groups it states:</p> <p>Of data extracted in October 1 2013, of those affected by the Cap nationally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59% of households had between 1 and 4 children • 37% had 5 or more children • 61% of households constituted a single parent with child dependants • 75% of households were capped by £100 or less 	<p>broken down across the different categories, which gives some counter-intuitive results. Up to date figures are also now available showing the actual number affected by the Benefit Cap as at October 13 and are included in the report. This is substantially lower than the numbers used for the Mosaic analysis, down from 950 to 488. This is reported in section B in the revised report where there is also information on the national findings of people affected by the cap. This whole section has therefore been taken out as a precaution whilst further work is undertaken to establish if it is appropriate to use Mosaic in this way.</p>
<p><i>There is also some local evidence that the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy is having a negative impact on disabled occupants in Kent. KCC's Benefits Team reports that, since its introduction, it</i></p>	<p>Section 12 of the report headed "The impact on people with disabilities and ill health".</p>	<p>The data provided does not enable a trend to be established; it is based on 1 decision out of 15 which was from a disabled</p>

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
<i>has had to deal with about 15 appeals against decisions to refuse an extra bedroom, where one was required because of the needs of a disabled occupant.</i>		occupant and has therefore been removed as it is unreliable in establishing a pattern or trend. However additional information is presented on national research into the impact on people with disabilities and ill health in section 12 of the report.
<i>Canterbury was the district with the highest number of accepted decisions (308).</i>	No replacement text	This information is inaccurate as it refers to the number of total decisions and not accepted decisions as stated.
<i>Table 8 Number of people using Trussell Trust Food banks</i>	No replacement table but data on Food Bank usage in Kent is preserved in the text.	This table has been removed as the dataset was incomplete as the figures for Folkestone and Dover were not included. Also the data column for 11/12 was included but returned a 0 count. This is presumably because there were no food banks at this time (except in Medway); the inclusion of this column therefore suggests a stark rise in demand in 2012/13 when in fact demand may have been present previously but not met.
<i>At present there is little robust evidence available on this issue but it is hoped that further information about changes in community safety and crime levels may be</i>	At present there is little, if any, robust evidence available on this issue. For future reports, Business Intelligence will consider whether it is possible to	This section has been removed as it was based upon a limited amount of data. The methodology is felt to

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
<p><i>provided in the future through intelligence from Kent Police. There is some initial evidence from the Margate Task Force, which is working in two of the most deprived wards in Kent - Margate Central and Cliftonville West – that shows that some crime types have increased significantly since the introduction of welfare reforms. Data on levels of crime between April and August 2013 shows that some crime types are considerably above the predicted level (based on historical patterns for the previous five years). Violent crime has increased by 208 cases - with an increase of 161 cases for violence against a person. Theft and handling have also increased, by 104 cases. The evidence offered suggests that the change is related to the Welfare Reforms, as no alternative explanatory factor is yet apparent.</i></p>	<p>create a methodology for analysing whether there is any correlation between specific types of crime and welfare reform, both generally and in specific localities.</p>	<p>be flawed as it focused narrowly on one specific area of Kent and could not identify if additional factors could be impacting on rates of crime. Therefore conclusions about the impact of welfare reform on crime cannot be made with any degree of certainty. Further work will be undertaken to develop a robust methodology for analysing whether there is any correlation between specific types of crime and welfare reform, both generally and in specific localities.</p>
<p><i>Analysis of data from KCC's Kent Support and Assistance Service (KSAS) can also help to establish whether welfare reforms are having an impact in Kent and to determine whether extreme poverty is growing in the county.</i></p>	<p>Whilst evidence from KSAS can be useful in analysing the extent of poverty, caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of their data. The scheme only started in April 2013 and whilst there has been an increase in help given via the scheme (since the scheme started in April 2013) it is too early to say whether that is due to increasing knowledge of the scheme (amongst the public and professionals) or to</p>	<p>This information has been updated as more statistics are available. Some additional caveats have been added to this data as this is a new scheme which has only been in place since April 2013 and it is therefore difficult to establish with any degree of certainty the reasons for the increase in help given</p>

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
	increasing need. Of particular interest will be the demand once Universal Credit is implemented in Kent (date not yet known) and people have to manage monthly payments.	via the scheme.
<i>But perhaps the best indicator of whether poverty is growing is the data provided by food banks.</i>	No replacement text	Whilst growth in demand for foodbanks is one indicator of rising poverty, it is not a robust indicator given the rapid change in availability of foodbanks (ie to what extent was there an unmet need prior to foodbanks opening?) and there are other good indicators of poverty such as debt levels, homelessness, and enquiries to CAB.
<i>But perhaps the most compelling evidence of the impact of welfare reforms on individuals and families is the sharp increase in the number of people using food banks. “Food poverty” means that an individual or household is not able to buy healthy, nutritious food and that they have to eat whatever they can afford. According to Oxfam and Church Action on Poverty, “perhaps the most extreme manifestation of food poverty is the rising number of people who depend on emergency food aid”.</i>	It cannot be said with certainty at this stage whether the increases in Food Bank usage is mainly due to welfare reform as opposed to cost of living increases and the state of the economy.	There is not sufficient evidence at this time to link the welfare reforms with the rise in food banks. Whilst it may be a contributing factor, unemployment, low and falling income and rising food and fuel prices are also likely factors, as the report states.
<i>The majority (81%) of respondents reported that requests were made face to face.</i>	No replacement text	This has been removed as the majority of respondents were

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
		from Libraries and therefore it is expected that these would be requests made face to face.
<p><i>The data shows the initial impact of the recession on total employment numbers, during the period 2009 to 2010. Despite the spike in numbers towards the end of 2010, total employment has fallen steadily in the KCC administrative area from the peak of 558,900 during the 12 months from June 2008 to July 2009, to 536,400 in the latest period April 2012 to March 2013. This is a fall of 22,400 (4.0%). In addition:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>▪ during this period, the proportion of self-employment has remained fairly stable, averaging around 10.6% of total employment. Recently, though, the number of people wishing to set up their own business has increased slightly in response to job losses and redundancies</i> <i>▪ the proportion of those working full-time has started to stabilise in the last few years, after a period of decline which started even before the recession impacted on the labour market</i> <p><i>conversely, the proportion of part-time workers had shown rapid increases both</i></p>	No replacement text	The data in the original report was not the most up to date and therefore it has been removed as it gave an inaccurate picture. Additional information has now been added which shows that employment is in fact beginning to rise as shown in the graphs in the revised document.

Original text	Replacement text if appropriate	Rationale
<i>before and during the recession - and it is only since the middle of 2010 that it has started to fall</i>		
<i>Evidence about the number of Child Protection plans transferred to KCC from other local authorities was also received, and shows a significant increase. The number of transfers during the period April 2012 to March 2013 was 70, while the number of transfers from only April to September 2013 was already 66. This means that the number of families with a child subject to a Child Protection plan who moved to Kent in the last six months is almost the same as the total number for the previous year.</i>	Evidence about the number of Child Protection plans transferred to KCC from other local authorities was also received, and shows a significant increase . The number of transfers during the period April 2012 to March 2013 was 70, while the number of transfers from only April to November 2013 is already 83. This means that the number of families with a child subject to a Child Protection plan who moved to Kent in the last six months is almost the same as the total number for the previous year.	These figures have been updated as November figures are now available and provide a more up to date picture.
<p><i>KCC's Section 17 level of spending was also investigated. Under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) it is the general duty of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to promote their upbringing by their families. The services provided by a local authority under this section may include providing accommodation and giving assistance in kind or in cash to families experiencing particular hardships.</i></p> <p><i>The cumulative monthly Section 17 expenditure by KCC, between April and September 2012, was £443,223. Between April and September 2013, it decreased to £279,742.</i></p>		This information has been removed as the expenditure is fluctuating considerably and it is thought best to wait until the full year's data is available to make a more meaningful comparison with the data for 2012/13.

3. Changes made to the report due to repetition of the same/similar points throughout the December report

3.1 A number of changes have been made to the December report because it was repeating the same or similar points multiple times throughout. As such, where points/issues are repeated unnecessarily this has been removed, although the core point being made has been left in the appropriate section of the report. Changes made for this reason are set out below:

Original text	Rationale
<i>The analysis of moves made by pupils to schools in Kent, as pointed out earlier, shows that there has been a general, slight increase in the number of pupils who moved from London to Kent. At the same time there has been a drop in the number of pupils moving to Kent schools from outside London.</i>	This is repetition of an earlier point in the report that states: <i>Figures show that, although there is a slight increase in the number of pupils moving from London, overall there does not appear to have been a significant change in the total numbers of pupils moving into Kent over the past two years.</i>
<i>Although it is too early to determine whether the demand for housing-related support services has increased as a consequence of the Welfare Reform, there is evidence to suggest that these services are likely to experience a rise in demand in the future. The evidence, which has already been discussed in more detail earlier, is as follows.</i>	This information is already included in the section on housing and rent arrears and therefore has been removed as duplication.
<i>The number of people using food banks in Kent has increased sharply. The most common reasons for people using food banks appear to be the changes to the benefit system, including changes to crisis loan eligibility rules, delays in payments, Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions and sickness benefit reassessments. The demands are likely to be medium to long term.</i>	This has been deleted as it is repetition of points already made in the report under the section on 'Evidence of Food Bank usage'
<i>Although it is too early to know whether the demand for housing-related support services in Kent has increased as a consequence of the Welfare Reform, there is evidence to suggest that these services are likely to experience a</i>	This has been deleted as it is repetition of points already made under the sections on debt, money management and Homelessness and does not provide any additional evidence.

Original text	Rationale
<p><i>rise in demand in the future. Three issues seem of particular concern: the increase in the number of households in rent arrears; the increase of homelessness; and the rising number of families in bed and breakfast temporary accommodation. The demands are likely to be medium to long term.</i></p>	
<p><i>There is also evidence to suggest that “front desk” service demand for Kent libraries, Gateways and Children’s Centres has increased, and that much of this increase can be attributed to recent welfare reforms. Dedicated staff training and further support to these services may be necessary to deal with the additional pressure. The demands are likely to be immediate to short term.</i></p>	<p>These points are already made in section 13 on ‘Information, Advice and Guidance – Front Desk Services’ and have been removed as duplication.</p>
<p><i>Given the mismatch between a digital channel of ‘self-service’ and the inability of some in the target group to use it, the implications are that more direct support is needed for this approach to be successful. This could involve better access to IT and better support to use it (this could include support in completing on-line applications for benefits and for KSAS, particularly for those who are workless, with a low income, not likely to use computers and with lower levels of literacy). The demands are likely to be short to medium term.</i></p>	<p>This information is already captured in section 13 ‘Information, Advice and Guidance – Front Desk Services’ and has been removed as duplication.</p>

4. Changes made to the report due to repetition of the same/similar points previously reported within the June report

4.1 As noted earlier, the December report was an update on the welfare reform research report considered by the Committee in June. However, in a number of areas the December report simply repeated points made in the June research paper, without any new evidence or data that would require it to be included in an update report such as this. The changes made for this reason are set out below:

Original text	Rationale
<p><i>It is a concern, however, that moves to cheaper accommodation can result in a concentration of vulnerable families and households with low incomes and a dependency on benefits in already deprived areas of Kent. As the recent Welfare Reform Research report (2013) points out, this could have implications for school admissions, health and social services, and transport</i></p>	<p>Page 5 June report: Greater concentration of low income and vulnerable families in areas that are already deprived as people who have lost benefits move to cheaper accommodation (particularly in the private rented sector). Such localised population shifts could have implications for school admissions, health and social services and transport.</p>
<p><i>According to the DWP, the introduction of the Universal Credit will improve work incentives and will lead, within 2-3 years from its introduction, to a national reduction of unemployment by 300,000. The LGA, on the other hand, argues that there is a high degree of uncertainty about the impact of the Universal Credit on employment. It points out that, depending on the fiscal method adopted, the impact may range between a very slight negative effect on employment to a modest, positive increase</i></p>	<p>Page 24 June report stated: Whether or not the incentives to work will lead to a fall in unemployment in Kent is difficult to predict given the interrelationship of the benefit system with the state of the economy and the skills set of claimants. The Government has estimated that within 2-3 years of Universal Credit being introduced, unemployment will reduce nationally by 300,000, although not all the new jobs will be full-time.</p>
<p><i>As previously suggested, problems associated with poverty and potential in-migration to Kent (and away from existing support networks) are likely to increase. These problems include rising debt and family stresses, which can lead to issues such as domestic violence and child neglect.</i></p>	<p>Page 4 of the June report stated: Problems associated with poverty and potential moves away from support networks are likely to increase including increased debt, more use of “loan sharks”, family stresses, resulting in less resilience and the potential for more issues such as domestic violence and child neglect.</p>
<p><i>The term ‘extreme poverty’ means that basic needs, such as food, warmth and shelter are not being met. Data about the incidence of extreme poverty in Kent is unavailable; the only robust, local, obtainable data relates to people whose income is 60% or more below the median. Nonetheless, although the evidence below suggests that poverty may grow, there does not appear to be any evidence to suggest that long-term, embedded extreme poverty is rising. Although the rationale behind welfare reforms is to make work pay</i></p>	<p>Page 31 of the June report stated: Beyond 2016-17 relative and absolute poverty is projected to increase for children and working age claimants as the poverty-reducing effect of Universal Credit is outweighed by the impact of other benefit reforms.</p> <p>In 2020-21 child poverty is projected to be 23.5% (relative) and 27.2% (absolute), compared to targets of 10% and 5% - but see the NB below</p>

Original text	Rationale
<p><i>and to reduce welfare dependency, particular groups of people in Kent may be disproportionately impacted by the changes and may experience poverty.</i></p> <p><i>National research suggests that families will be disproportionately affected; it is estimated that beyond 2016-17 relative and absolute poverty for children and working-age claimants in the country will increase because the poverty-reducing effect of Universal Credit is outweighed by the impact of other welfare reforms. By 2020-21 child poverty is projected to reach 23.5% (relative poverty) and 27.2% (absolute poverty), against targets of 10% and 5% respectively</i></p>	
<p><i>The rationale behind this investigation is that welfare changes such as the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy and the housing's benefit cap may have an impact on the cost of living for households living in expensive parts of the country. As a result, these households may be forced to move to cheaper areas, including areas in Kent. In-migration to Kent could be observed through an increase in the number of pupils taking up places in schools in the county.</i></p>	<p>Page 39 of the June report stated: Substantial impact is likely to come through changes to Housing Benefit (including the capping of maximum LHA rates in April 2011) and the overall benefit cap introduced in July 2013. Combined, these will impact on areas where rents are high (particularly in London) with the potential to cause displacement of families (particularly larger families, occupying larger accommodation), to other areas in the country where rents are more affordable.</p> <p>And page 41: Kent County Council and its partners are establishing means to monitor and assess any implications of in-migration into areas within Kent.</p>
<p><i>There has recently been a great deal of national media attention on the impact of welfare reforms on housing. The LGA estimated that 1.71 million households in the country – or one in ten of all working-age households – will be impacted by these reforms, with an average loss of £1,215 per year or £23 per week.</i></p>	<p>The June report provided a range of comprehensive information on the projected loss of income on households as a result of the various welfare reforms.</p>
<p><i>Data on Housing Benefit claimants in Kent shows that Thanet District (with 15,638 claimants) and Swale District</i></p>	<p>This does not provide new evidence of the impact of welfare reform and the Sheffield Hallam report is covered in</p>

Original text	Rationale
<p><i>(with 11,117 claimants) have the highest numbers, accounting, between them, for just over a quarter of all such claimants in the county (25.5% or 26,755 claimants) (see Figure 4 below and Appendix 2). Moves to these areas could add economic and social pressures; as a report from Sheffield Hallam University put it "...the more deprived the local authority, the greater the financial hit".</i></p>	<p>detail in the June report.</p>
<p><i>As the recent June 2013 report by Business Strategy (2013) points out, welfare reforms will affect a large proportion of the population, but to differing degrees. Although most people will experience relatively little change, for some the changes will be very significant. For those who are already vulnerable even small changes could have a major impact.</i></p>	<p>As stated this is within the June report.</p>
<p><i>The information on the Universal credit pilots in the section entitled 'what are the impacts on people in Kent' has been removed. However a reference to the pilots remains in the section on Information, advice and guidance (page30).</i></p>	<p>Universal Credit was discussed within the June report, has not yet been rolled out in Kent and so this section has been removed from the update report.</p>
<p><i>The report also warns that further benefit cuts and the introduction of Universal Credit (which will require Internet access and payments being made less frequently) will lead to even larger numbers being forced to turn to food banks, which may not have the capacity to cope with the increased level of demand.</i></p>	<p>Universal Credit has yet to be rolled out nationally and at present has not been introduced in Kent and therefore this information has been deleted as it does not provide any further evidence of the impact of welfare reform.</p>

5. Future welfare reform updates

5.1 It is absolutely right that the Policy & Resources Committee should be in a position to track, as far as it is possible, the impact of welfare reform in Kent. As has been noted already, however, it is difficult to prove that changes to any particular indicator are caused by welfare reform as opposed to other factors. It is therefore important that the Committee monitors a broad range of indicators, but also receives more subjective information from front line practitioners within Kent public services and the voluntary and community sectors about those who are presenting as

needing support and advice, and the reasons they give for need for seeking such support. This will enable different types of evidence to be triangulated so as to infer reasonable conclusions, and could lead the Committee to request deep dive analysis of particular indicators.

5.2 To this end, the list of indicators that will form the basis of future updates on welfare reform to the Committee (alongside the more subjective evidence outlined above) is set out below:

General benefit claim levels:

- Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance and legacy incapacity-based benefits
- Income Support (excluding Incapacity Benefit)
- Disability Living Allowance 16-64
- Personal Independence Payments
- Carers Allowance

Indicators of poverty:

- Demand for Kent Support and Assistance Service (KSAS) – i.e number of applications.
- Details of approved applications for KSAS i.e. total numbers and breakdown of awards into categories - e.g. food, energy, furniture, household items, clothing etc .
- Number of social housing tenants in rent arrears in Kent
- Council Tax arrears
- Number of households in Kent presenting as homeless
- Number of households in Kent accepted as homeless and in priority need
- Number of households in Kent living in temporary accommodation
- Number of households in temporary accommodation living in B&B
- Discretionary Housing Payment applications
- Number of people subject to benefit cap
- Households on Housing Benefit subject to under-occupation payments.

Employment:

- Number of people subject to the Benefit Cap who subsequently found employment (hence became exempt).
- Total employment and unemployment rates (16-64)
- Number of individuals in Troubled Families moving from unemployment into employment.

Migration into Kent (NB for each of the indicators below provide figures from London in addition to total figures):

- Net migration into Kent
- New Housing Benefit and Council Tax Subsidy claims where previous address was from outside Kent
- In year school moves to Kent (where the home address has also transferred)
- Number of Child Protection cases transferred into Kent.

Demand for information, advice and guidance:

- Citizen's Advice Bureaux (CAB) - Total numbers of clients seen.
- CAB – number of benefit queries
- CAB – number of debt queries
- CAB – number of rent arrears queries
- Information from Gateways etc on demand relating to benefits/debt/ money management

6. RECOMENDATIONS

6.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to:

(a) Note the changes made to the original December update report on welfare reform as set out in sections 2, 3 and 4.

(b) Note the revised welfare reform update report attached at Annex 1.

(c) Consider and make recommendations for any additional indicators to be used for future updates on welfare reform changes.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Welfare Reform: Update on the Evidence of the Impact on Kent

Background Papers:

None other than those referenced in the report

Report Authors:

David Whittle

Head of Policy and Strategic Relationships, Business Strategy
Kent County Council
Tel: 7000 6345

Chris Grosskopf

Policy Manager
Policy and Strategic Relationships, Business Strategy
Kent County Council
Tel: 7000 6611

Gaetano Romagnuolo

Research Officer, Business Intelligence Unit, Business Strategy
Kent County Council
Tel: 7000 4292

8 January 2014

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Welfare Reform

Update on the Evidence of the Impact in Kent

January 2014



CONTENTS	Page
1. Introduction	83
2. Key Research Questions	84
3. Key Findings	85
4. In-migration	87
5. Number of people affected by specific reforms	92
6. Impact on Unemployment and Work Incentives	96
7. Homelessness	98
8. Rent arrears and evictions	103
9. Debt and money management issues	104
10. Food Bank usage	105
11. Kent Support and Assistance Service	106
12. Impact on people with disabilities and ill health	107
13. Information, Advice and Guidance – Front Desk Services	109
14. Children’s Services	112
15. Community Safety/Crime	113
16. Concentration of deprivation	113

1. Introduction

In June 2013 KCC's Business Strategy division completed a detailed report into the various welfare reforms and their potential implications. This was presented to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 20 June 2013. The main report can be found at:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s40944/Item%20D3%20-%20FINAL%20Welfare%20Report%202.pdf>

The Executive Summary of the June report can be found at:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s40943/Item%20D3%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

Most of the welfare reforms are relatively recent and the major reform (Universal Credit) has not yet been implemented in Kent and only to a limited degree in the rest of the country. It is therefore too early to make a full assessment of their impact. In addition some of the existing evidence is still in the process of being gathered. Nevertheless this report will present the evidence so far available to KCC on those indicators that may be affected by welfare reform.

It is important to stress that it is not always possible to isolate the specific impact of welfare reform on some of the indicators dealt with in this report. Other factors such as the state of the economy, the cost of living and the housing market may play an equal or sometimes more important role in the impacts observed.

The Committee agreed that KCC's Business Intelligence division should produce reports every six months to help monitor and update on the potential impacts. This is the first of such reports.

The methodology used in these reports is based on three main objectives.

- a) Identify which local populations and places are most affected by welfare reforms through loss of benefits as well as in-migration.
- b) Evidence and understand these impacts, to inform appropriate service response and use in regional and national networks or lobbying.
- c) Inform risk management, and understand the effects on finances and delivering outcomes on existing strategies.

2. Key Research Questions

In what follows the report will attempt to answer the following questions based on the evidence available to date:

(A) Are we seeing significant in-migration?

- If so, how much is from London? How much is 'incentivised' or results from homelessness placements?
- Are certain areas in Kent affected more than others?

(B) What are the impacts on people in Kent?

- Which population groups are most affected?
- Is there increasing homelessness?
- Is there evidence that extreme poverty is rising?
- Can we evidence the kinds of impacts this has on individuals / families in their day-to-day lives, and how they are coping?
- Are people finding employment?

(C) Is there more demand for KCC & District services?

- Children's services?
- Services for disabled people?
- Services for housing-related support?
- Other (higher-tier) services?
- Information/advice services?
- More pressure on our 'front desk' (all channels)?
- Are there 'new burdens'? What are they and what are the cost estimates?
- Are these demands likely to be short, medium, or longer term?

(D) What are the impacts on places?

- Is deprivation becoming more concentrated / are 'poorer communities getting poorer' / is housing in communities becoming less mixed and diverse?
- Are there changes in community safety/crime?

This report draws on a range of evidence sources to offer answers to these questions in an effort to assess and monitor the impact of the Welfare Reform on Kent's people, places and services. As far as possible the evidence presented relates to Kent specifically but on occasion national data is presented either to supplement the Kent data or because more local information is not currently available.

3. Key Findings

- **Overall impact:** it is too early to say with any certainty what the impacts of welfare reform will be, particularly as the main reform (Universal Credit) has yet to be implemented in Kent. It is also difficult at this stage to separate the effects of welfare reform from other factors including the state of the economy, cost of living and housing issues. Clearly unemployment is reducing, and specifically in relation to welfare reform it appears significant numbers (according to national DWP figures) of people subject to the benefit cap have secured employment. However, there is also evidence of increased levels of homelessness, use of food banks, debt and the need for advice from frontline services.
- **Numbers affected by the reforms in Kent:** significant numbers of people of working age have seen their benefits reduced by either one or several of the reforms. Reforms that have had a significant impact so far include the size-related restrictions to Housing Benefit (affecting 7,044 people with an average reduction in benefit of £14 per week), the reforms to Council Tax Benefit (affecting 73,794 people with an average reduction in benefit of £1.50 per week), the reforms to incapacity-based benefits and the new sanctions regime affecting JSA claimants (affecting about 15,000 so far). With regard to the Benefit Cap this has affected fewer people (about 500) than originally predicted (890) but those affected have seen a significant reduction (on average about £67 per week). The lower numbers are probably due to significant numbers of people finding work, or being found to be exempt for other reasons.
- **Migration:** there is no robust evidence yet to show an increase in migration to Kent (note that there has been a trend for some time for people to move to Kent from London – net migration to Kent was 7,900 in 2011 before the main welfare reforms took place). However, of concern (although not necessarily related to welfare reform) is that the number of families with a child subject to a Child Protection plan who moved to Kent in the last six months is already higher (at 83) than the total number for the previous year (70). It is also reported by London Councils that significant numbers of people in London (4,600) are unable to pay their rent due to the Benefit cap and therefore may be potentially looking to move to cheaper areas in the near future.
- **Homelessness and housing:** the numbers presenting themselves as homeless has increased by about 12% (comparing January-October 2012 with January-October 2013). Related to this is the evidence that reforms to Housing Benefit are leading to an increase in the number of people in rent arrears, including in social housing (due to the size-related restrictions). However the numbers accepted as homeless and in priority need has not increased over the same period. This fact needs to be analysed further but appears to be related to the homeless prevention work carried out by the district councils in Kent.

- **Unemployment and work incentives:** the main reform expected to influence work incentives has not yet been introduced in Kent and so it is not possible at this stage to assess the impact on employment. The latest figures available on the numbers claiming JSA do show a continuous reduction since February 2013 but it is not clear what role, if any, welfare reform played in this. A more direct link may be observed in the figures released by the DWP on those people affected by the Benefit cap who have subsequently found work and become exempt from the cap even if still claiming benefits (nationally it appears about 40%).
- **Food Bank usage:** the number of people using food banks in Kent has increased very significantly in Kent. The figures released by the Trussell Trust (showing a doubling in usage comparing the whole of 2012/13 to just the first half of 2013/14) need to be considered alongside the parallel growth in independent food banks. However, it cannot be said with certainty whether the increases are mainly due to welfare reform (as opposed to cost of living increases and the state of the economy) and whether the need previously existed but was not being met.
- **Impact on people with disabilities and ill-health:** it appears that the reforms (including those begun under the previous Government) so far are having a significant impact on some people with disabilities or health problems. Over 60% of those affected by the size-related restrictions have a disability/health problem (according to the DWP's own initial Equality Impact Assessment) and yet many are not being successful in claiming additional help via the Discretionary Housing Payment system. In addition, about 30% of those on one of the old incapacity-based benefits are failing to qualify for the new Employment Support Allowance (when reassessed) and people challenging such decisions are currently experiencing long delays in the processing of appeals.
- **Evidence of increased debt, money management and demand for front line services:** nationally there is some evidence to suggest that benefit reforms are resulting in an increased number of people falling into rent arrears and other kinds of debt but more evidence is needed to be confident about the impact locally. There is some anecdotal evidence from local front line services such as Gateways and Citizen Advice to suggest there has been an increase in demand for advice services, and increasing complexity of presenting problems, but this is not the case across the board. Agencies also report that more proactive work is being carried out on welfare reform with those clients known to be affected, thus reducing the numbers who would otherwise present at Gateways and elsewhere seeking assistance.

(A) ARE WE SEEING SIGNIFICANT IN-MIGRATION?

4. In-migration

If it occurs, migration to Kent as a result of welfare reform is likely to stem from a combination of factors. For instance, recent reforms to Housing Benefit together with the overall Benefit Cap, could potentially lead to the displacement of households, particularly in areas where rents are high, such as London.¹

A recent report from London Councils, “Tracking Welfare Reform; Meeting the Financial Challenge” (September 2013), warns that 4,600 households in private accommodation in London will be unable to pay their rent due to the Benefit Cap which, on average, is cutting their benefits by £105 per week.²

Business Intelligence will shortly be able to carry out a more thorough analysis of the movement of benefit recipients that will aid our understanding of migration patterns in Kent. The analysis will help establish whether in-migration to the county is increasing, and will help to identify the local authorities (where data exists) from which migration originated. The evidence available so far is outlined below:

4.1 The number of pupils taking up places in schools in the county

It should first be stated that caution needs to be exercised in interpreting data on this issue as some of the school moves are due to pupils changing school without the family moving address. This is particularly the case in West and North West Kent. Bearing this in mind, the figures show that, although there is a slight increase in the number of pupils moving school from London, overall there does not appear to have been a significant change in the total numbers of pupils moving into Kent over the past two years. In the academic year 2011-12, the total number of pupils moving to Kent schools was 548; in 2012-13 it was 523³ (a slight decline overall).

According to this source, then, there is no clear evidence to date that the changes brought about by welfare reforms are currently having a significant impact on families moving to Kent.

¹ Kent County Council (2013) Welfare Reform Research, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

² London Councils (2013) Tracking Welfare Reform; Meeting the Financial Challenge, London, London Councils.

³ Kent County Council (2013) Welfare Reform In Year School Moves, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

Figure 1: Pupils moving to Kent, 2011 to 2013



Districts that experienced an increase in the number of pupils moving from London were Dover, Gravesham, Maidstone and Swale, while decreases were seen in Canterbury, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling (Tables 1 and 2).⁴

Table 1: Pupils Moving to Kent Schools, 2011-12

Moved to:	Moved from London	Moved from outside London	Moved from Medway	Total
Ashford	11	23	0	34
Canterbury	26	26	0	52
Dartford	38	10	0	48
Dover	0	13	0	13
Gravesham	14	7	8	29
Maidstone	10	33	7	50
Sevenoaks	16	19	0	35
Shepway	11	22	0	33
Swale	18	24	6	48
Tonbridge and Malling	21	33	67	121
Thanet	12	23	3	38
Tunbridge Wells	15	31	1	47
Grand Total	192	264	92	548

⁴ Kent County Council (2013) Welfare Reform In Year School Moves, Maidstone, Kent County Council

Table 2: Pupils Moving to Kent Schools, 2012-13

Moved to:	Moved From London	Moved from outside London	Moved from Medway	Total
Ashford	9	24	0	33
Canterbury	11	10	0	21
Dartford	38	6	0	44
Dover	11	24	0	35
Gravesham	25	14	10	49
Maidstone	29	21	17	67
Sevenoaks	22	11	3	36
Shepway	5	25	2	32
Swale	24	34	13	71
Tonbridge and Malling	19	9	43	71
Thanet	13	24	2	39
Tunbridge Wells	7	17	0	24
Not known	0	0	1	1
Grand Total	213	219	91	523

The London boroughs with the greatest number of pupils moving to Kent schools are Bexley and Bromley; the probable explanation is that these boroughs are adjacent to Kent, and that, as mentioned above, some of the moves are due to pupils changing school without the family moving address (see Figures 2 and 3 below).

Figure 2: Moves to Kent from London Boroughs, 2011-12

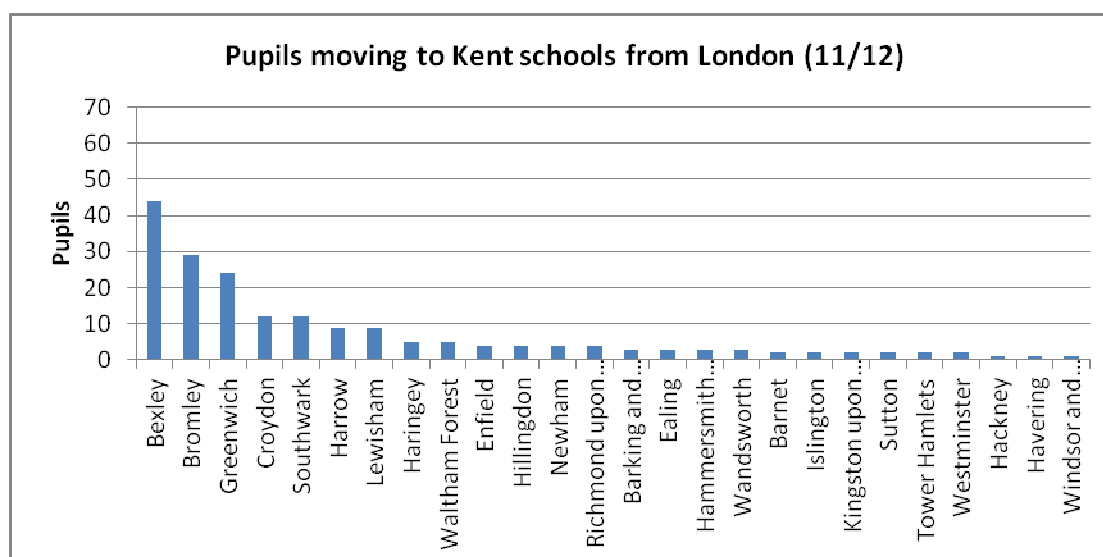
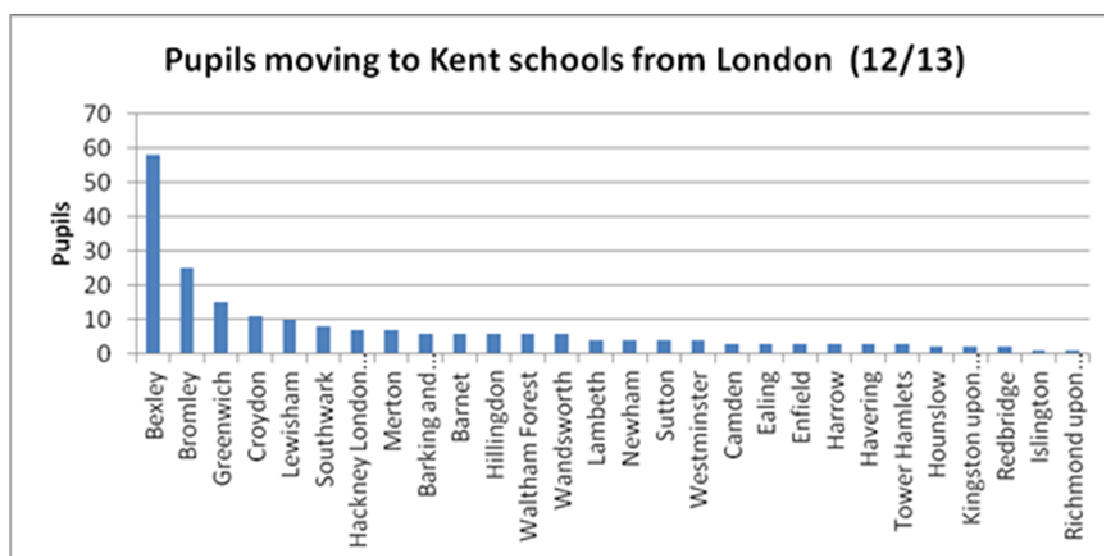


Figure 3: Moves to Kent from London Boroughs, 2012-13



4.2 Child protection Plans transferred to Kent

Evidence about the number of Child Protection plans transferred to KCC from other local authorities was also received, and shows a significant increase. The number of transfers during the period April 2012 to March 2013 was 70, while the number of transfers from only April to November 2013 is already 83.⁵ Thus the number of families with a child subject to a Child Protection plan who moved to Kent in the last seven months is already higher than the total number for the previous year.

4.3 Evidence from new benefit claims in Kent

Business Intelligence is working with the district councils and the DWP to see if it will be possible to make use of existing information about movement in to or out of Kent. It is not possible to present any findings from these sources at present.

4.4 General migration indicators

The latest general migration indicators for Kent are not recent (from 2009-10) but show that, even before the major welfare reforms were implemented, the number of people moving into Kent was greater than the number moving out, and that 40% of all in-migrants came from London (19,300 people out of 48,400). Similarly, of all those leaving Kent, 11,400 (27%) moved to London – the second most popular destination after elsewhere in the South East region. The result is a net gain of 7,900 migrants from London.⁶ This can be used as a baseline from which to monitor future patterns.

⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Evidence submitted on 30 September 2013 and on 22 October 2013.

⁶ Kent County Council (2011) Migration Indicators for Kent, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

4.5 With regard to establishing whether and how much of this in-migration is “incentivised” through London boroughs’ programmes to avoid *statutory* homelessness, the answer is still unknown. In lieu of other more formal arrangements, guidelines or protocol with London Councils, Freedom of Information requests may be made to some London boroughs.

(B) WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS ON PEOPLE IN KENT?

5. Number of people affected by specific reforms

5.1 The overall Benefit Cap

District	Numbers affected by Benefit Cap as at October 2013	Average weekly reduction*
Ashford	41	£77.77
Canterbury	48 (50 as at December 2013)*	£53.85
Dartford	22 (20 as at January 2014)*	£61.38
Dover	34 (35 as at December 2013)*	£44.21
Gravesham	43	£71.40
Maidstone	43	£65.42
Sevenoaks	18 (20 as at January 2014)*	£63.22
Shepway	63	£110.49
Swale	62 (57 as at January 2014)*	£63.89
Thanet	68 (60 as at December 2013)*	£66.46
Tonbridge and Malling	19	£64.94
Tunbridge Wells	27	£62.11
TOTAL	488 (as at October 2013)	

Source for numbers: Department of Work and Pensions Dec 2013

* = later figures if different and average weekly reductions provided by the district councils

According to data provided by the DWP, in Great Britain as a whole 28,482 households have had their benefits capped. 47% of these live in London. Of the top 20 Local Authorities with the highest number of households affected by the benefit cap, only 2 were not in London. These were Birmingham and Manchester.

Of data extracted in October 2013, of those affected by the Cap nationally:

59% of households had between 1 and 4 children

37% had 5 or more children

61% of households constituted a single parent with child dependants

75% of households were capped by £100 or less

It is clear from the table and information above that, whilst the numbers affected in Kent are relatively small, the average weekly reduction will have a significant impact, particularly as nearly all the families affected contain children. This fact may also impact on the parents' ability to secure employment which is one way of becoming exempt from the Cap even whilst remaining on benefits.

5.2 Size-related restrictions to Housing Benefit in Social Housing

District	Nos affected by the size criteria as at December 2013	Average weekly reduction in benefit
Ashford	683	£14.95
Canterbury	530	£15.96
Dartford	355	*
Dover	586	£13.92
Gravesham	625	£15.69
Maidstone	650	£15.78
Sevenoaks	434	*
Shepway	526	*
Swale	967	£14.00
Thanet	619	£14.66
Tonbridge and Malling	562	£18.88
Tunbridge Wells	507	£14.79
TOTAL	7,044	

Source: district councils in Kent * = figure not available in time for publication

The DWP has recently released a report⁷ into the use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs), funding made available to councils administering Housing Benefit to top-up any shortfall in specific cases. This shows that approximately two thirds of DHPs have been made in relation to the size related restrictions in social housing. See also Section 12 below for further information on DHPs and disabled people.

5.3 Reforms to the Council Tax Benefit system

<i>District</i>	Numbers affected by the reforms to Council Tax Benefit	Average weekly reduction in benefit
Ashford	4,867	£1.47
Canterbury	5,794	£0.74
Dartford	6,688	£1.33
Dover	6,222	£0.92
Gravesham	5,260	£1.51
Maidstone	6,024	£1.93
Sevenoaks	6,607	£1.52
Shepway	5,965	*
Swale	7,681	£1.51
Thanet	10,910	£0.79
Tonbridge and Malling	4,018	£1.44
Tunbridge Wells	3,758	£1.84
TOTAL	73,794	

Source: district councils in Kent * = figure not available in time for publication

⁷ "Use of Discretionary Housing Payments", DWP, 20 December 2013

5.4 Introduction of the Personal Independence Payment to replace Disability Living Allowance

Personal Independence Payment was only introduced for new claims in Kent in July 2013. In addition most existing claimants of DLA have not yet begun the process of reassessment to determine if they qualify for PIP. It is too early to say, therefore, what the impact of this reform has been in Kent.

5.5 Reassessment of people claiming the old incapacity benefits to determine eligibility for Employment Support Allowance

Employment Support Allowance (ESA) was introduced in October 2008 and from October 2010 an ongoing wholesale reassessment of those on the old legacy incapacity benefits has been undertaken. The results of this process as at July 2013 are presented in the table below.

District	% found fit for work (so not eligible for ESA)	% eligible for ESA WRA Group	% eligible for ESA Support Group
Ashford	26	44	30
Canterbury	29	41	31
Dartford	32	37	31
Dover	31	38	31
Gravesham	34	42	24
Maidstone	29	40	31
Sevenoaks	29	37	34
Shepway	29	40	31
Swale	30	46	24
Thanet	30	41	29
Tonbridge & Malling	26	39	35
Tunbridge Wells	20	40	39

WRA = Work Related Activity Group – people in this group are accepted as unable to work but they must engage in activities to prepare for an eventual return to work.

Support Group = this group are not expected to ever be capable of work and are not expected to engage in any work related activities.

The figures shown in the above table include the results following appeals over the reassessment process. Information on appeals shows that in the South East 47% of initial decisions declaring a person “Fit for Work” were overturned. The figures shown in the above table are those applying after the appeals process has been exhausted. We do not have information at present on the percentages applying to the initial DWP decision only.

5.6 People subject to DWP sanctions

DWP statistics released on 6 November 2013⁸ provide the following information on the numbers affected by the enhanced sanctions regime for Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA):

Jobseeker’s Allowance

Between 22 October 2012 (when the new regime was introduced) and 30 June 2013 14,430 people were subject to a JSA sanction in Kent and Medway. An additional 5,270 were initially sanctioned but this was subsequently cancelled.

Under the new regime 36% of adverse decisions were made because of a failure to actively seek employment, 30% because of a failure to participate in the Work Programme (and other training schemes) and 20% because of a failure to attend an advisory interview.

Employment Support Allowance

Between 3 December 2012 (when the new regime was introduced) and 30 June 2013 100 people were subject to an ESA sanction in Kent and Medway. An additional 510 were initially sanctioned but this was subsequently cancelled.

Under the new regime 71% of adverse decisions were made because of a failure to participate in work related activity (this includes failure to participate in the Work Programme), with the remaining due to a failure to attend a mandatory interview.

8

6. Unemployment and work incentives

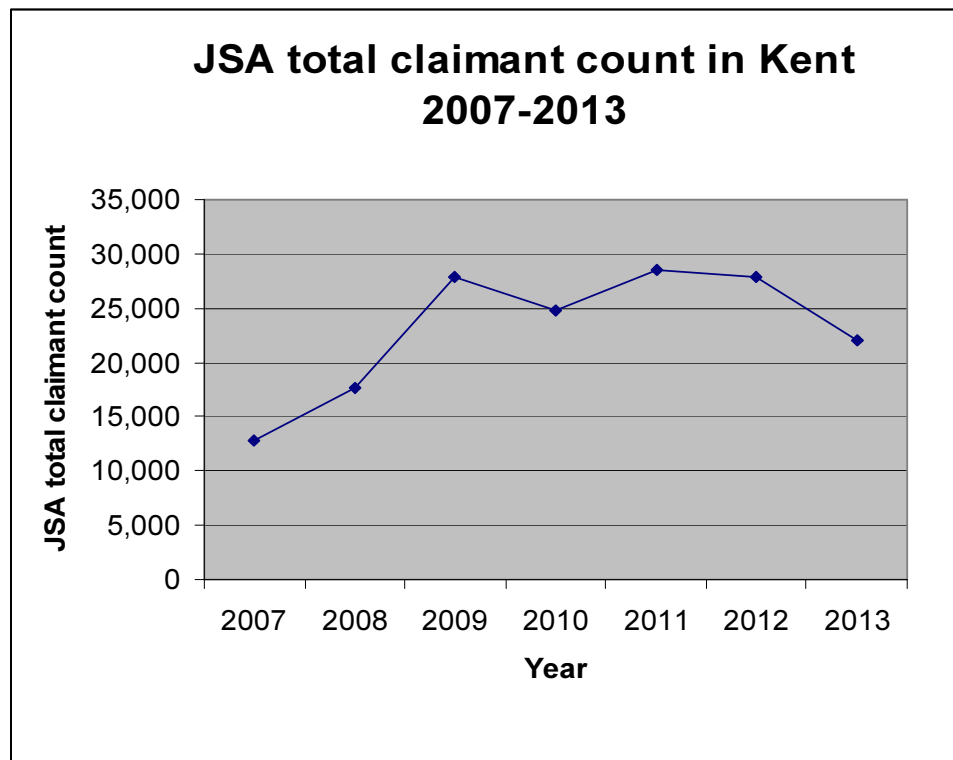
6.1 The trends in unemployment (based on JSA count) for Kent are shown in figures 4 and 5 below. These provide a useful baseline from which we can begin to assess the impact of welfare reform. However, as previously stated, it will be difficult to determine how much of the changing pattern of employment is due to the wider economy and how much is a consequence of welfare reform. For details of unemployment trends down to district level please follow the link below:

<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/facts-and-figures/Unemployment/district-unemployment-bulletin.pdf>

6.2 It is clear that the number claiming JSA has been on the decrease since early 2013. However, it must be stressed that the headline figures do not reveal the nature of the employment gained or its sustainability. Information on the nature of employment generally in Kent can be obtained from the KCC Labour Force Bulletins published quarterly by Business Intelligence. The latest is dated November 2013 and can be found at the following link:

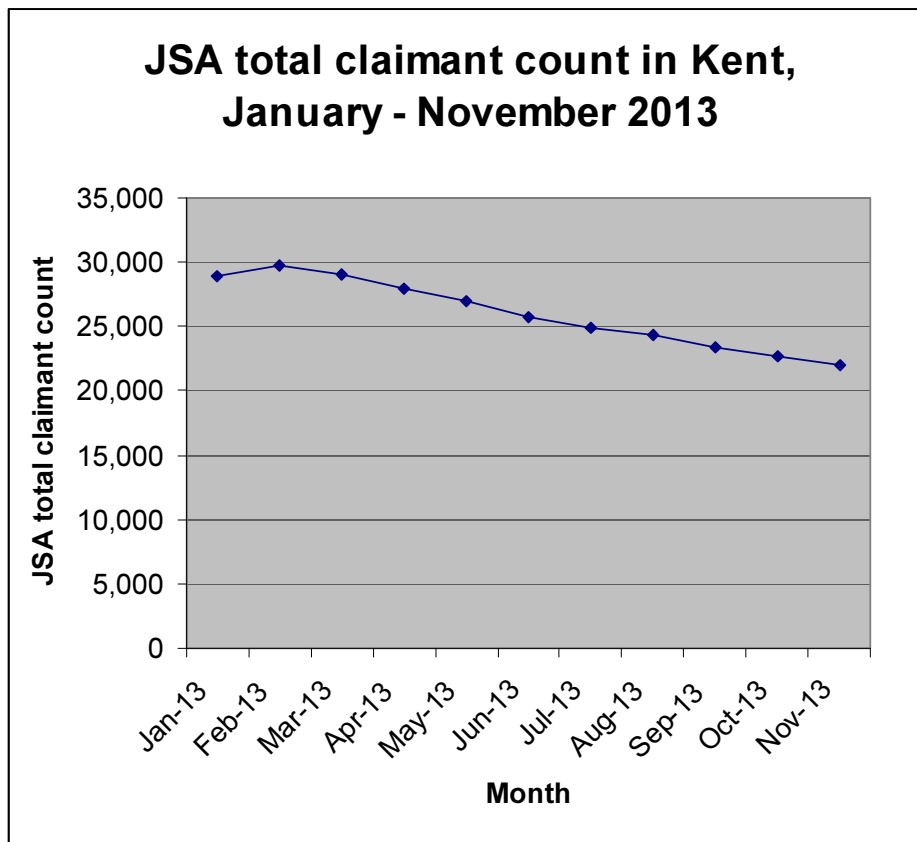
<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/facts-and-figures/Economy/labour-force-profile-november-2013.pdf>

Figure 4: JSA total claimant count in Kent 2007-2013



Note: the latest available figures are from November 2013; these have been compared with the corresponding November figures of previous years.

Figure 5: JSA total claimant count in Kent, January-November 2013



6.3 Impact of specific reforms on work incentives

Whilst it is difficult at this stage to establish the impact of welfare reform on employment (particularly as Universal Credit has not yet been fully implemented and not at all in Kent), information is available on the impact so far of the Benefit Cap introduced in Kent in July 2013.

According to the latest DWP figures Jobcentre Plus nationally has helped around 19,000 claimants identified as living in potentially capped households into work, therefore exempting them from the Cap. As at October 2013 there were 28,482 in Great Britain subject to the Benefit Cap (it is believed that this is net of the 19,000 helped into work).

From February 2014 DWP will be publishing more detailed Official Statistics showing benefit cap off flows by reason (i.e. people who become exempt from the Cap). It is hoped that this information will also be available at Kent level.

7. Homelessness

7.1 Trends in homelessness may be a possible indicator of the impact of welfare reform but the generally weak economy, increasing cost of housing and shortage of social housing are other factors which need to be taken into account. Caution needs therefore to be exercised in interpreting the figures.

7.2 The most recent information on homelessness in Kent shows that it is generally increasing. Between January and the end of September 2013 local authorities in the KCC area made 2,255 decisions on applications (by eligible households*) for housing assistance under the homelessness legislation of the Housing Act 1996 (Table 3). This is an increase of about 12% on the corresponding period in 2012 when 2,019 decisions were made. It is also clear from the figures that since 2009 there has been a general upward trend in the number of decisions in both Kent and nationally (Table 3 and Figure 8).⁹

**The vast majority of households are 'eligible'. The only exclusions are identified in the Housing Act 1996 as follows: A person subject to immigration control within the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 prior to application, or a person determined unsuitable by housing authority due to previous seriously unacceptable behaviour*

7.3 The increased number of decisions on homelessness is evidence that more people are presenting themselves to the district councils as "homeless". However, as Table 4 shows, the number of households accepted as homeless and in priority need has remained broadly the same if the same two periods are compared (I.E. Jan-Oct 2012 and Jan-Oct 2013). A household is defined as in "priority need" when it contains dependent children, pregnant women, is vulnerable because of old age, mental illness, physical disability, leaving armed forces or prison or other reason, young persons and victims of domestic violence, and those homeless as a result of an emergency such as flood or fire. At the end of September 2013 Kent (KCC area) had a homelessness rate of 0.41 households in priority need per 1,000. This is lower than the national average of 0.59 (Table 4 below).¹²

7.4 Table 4 seems to suggest that (although the numbers presenting themselves as homeless has increased overall since 2007), the numbers accepted as homeless and in priority need is actually lower than in 2007. However this interpretation would be misleading. The numbers do not take into account the fact that Housing Departments in councils have increasingly taken a much more proactive approach to tackling homelessness through early prevention (for example via Rent Deposits, Discretionary Housing Payments etc), thus helping to keep the number of households having to make a homeless application down. The total figures also mask wide variation between districts with acceptances increasing in some districts and decreasing in others.

⁹ Kent County Council (2013) Kent Homelessness Information, Maidstone.

¹² Ibid.

Table 3: Homelessness total decisions, 2007-2013

Homelessness total decisions

Decisions made on applications from eligible households (Including accepted and in priority need)

Source: DCLG P1E returns

Number of Households

	Ashford	Canterbury**	Dartford	Dover	Gravesham	Maidstone	Sevenoaks	Shepway	Swale	Thanet	T & Malling	Tunbridge Wells	KCC	Medway	SE Region	England
2007 q1	52	43	67	29	79	26	35	31	17	49	61	45	534	77	2,860	37,300
q2	57	56	89	26	56	30	38	47	8	48	72	38	565	82	2,820	34,040
q3	45	83	84	32	62	16	27	41	14	44	59	45	552	na	3,000	35,200
q4	37	50	67	46	82	9	32	37	32	37	40	46	515	116	2,560	31,150
2008 q1	41	54	83	48	45	35	34	49	20	37	53	33	532	83	2,570	30,450
q2	48	64	64	28	55	30	33	43	22	42	22	32	483	121	2,770	30,440
q3	30	64	47	19	49	27	34	39	22	36	14	35	416	162	2,720	30,040
q4	45	42	52	26	43	20	27	37	18	47	13	27	397	123	2,480	26,530
2009 q1	51	37	52	23	40	49	28	54	31	47	18	36	466	79	2,480	25,890
q2	77	30	43	30	30	10	27	42	15	34	19	17	374	56	2,160	23,560
q3	62	54	29	24	35	10	20	40	30	30	28	25	387	58	2,070	22,950
q4	57	61	39	34	37	29	16	39	22	27	19	22	402	98	2,090	21,200
2010 q1	51	83	37	33	38	8	10	46	26	41	30	20	423	54	2,070	21,410
q2	40	96	28	24	33	24	15	22	42	28	46	13	411	69	2,120	22,850
q3	92	229	31	36	26	13	17	41	20	27	33	18	583	89	2,490	26,890
q4	59	179	37	27	39	20	11	32	33	35	23	13	508	85	2,390	26,060
2011 q1	82	234	46	30	22	22	6	40	34	33	11	10	570	62	2,350	26,400
q2	68	238	46	27	22	38	11	41	31	39	14	13	588	59	2,510	25,980
q3	78	203	33	47	18	68	22	53	13	66	21	17	639	124	2,900	27,390
q4	66	216	19	38	31	89	33	45	10	76	14	8	645	114	2,960	27,470
2012 q1	62	216	34	37	21	76	12	36	27	103	12	14	650	107	2,920	27,880
q2	79	156	25	39	32	75	18	39	49	67	6	21	606	133	2,770	26,800
q3	80	242	50	67	28	83	5	57	23	86	21	21	763	132	na	29,130
q4	64	252	42	50	32	58	11	46	34	89	16	26	720	144	na	29,060
2013 q1	69	308	44	47	25	71	8	48	56	87	19	28	810	131	na	28,270
q2	50	254	31	32	22	89	5	48	51	84	13	29	708	159	na	28,240
q3	84	252	26	43	23	72	5	39	59	96	13	25	737	194	na	28,380

** Methodology review during 2010

Figure 8: Total homelessness decisions made during each quarter, KCC area, 2007-2013

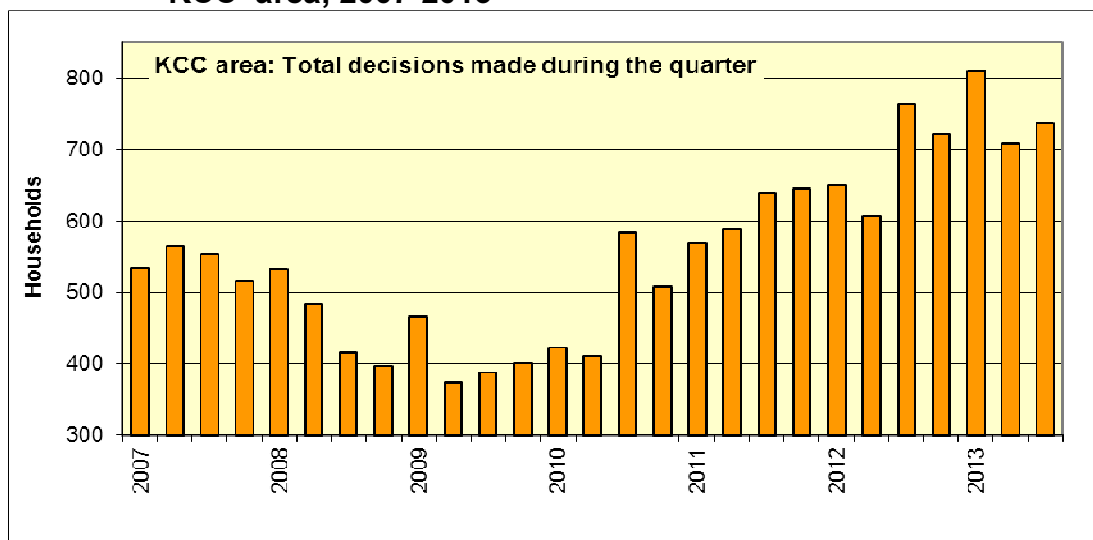


Table 4: Households accepted as homeless and in priority need

Households accepted as homeless and in priority need*

Decisions made during the quarter on applications from eligible households

Source: DCLG P1E returns

Number of Households

	Ashford	Canterbury**	Dartford	Dover	Gravesham	Maidstone	Sevenoaks	Shepway	Swale	Thanet	T & Malling	Tunbridge Wells	KCC	Medway	SE Region	England
2007 q1	31	11	35	22	60	12	33	14	14	30	44	22	328	48	1,480	17,230
q2	27	14	57	19	32	10	32	22	3	29	57	16	318	41	1,470	15,960
q3	34	18	59	15	40	9	21	19	6	31	49	27	328	na	1,370	16,540
q4	24	9	41	26	57	4	24	14	23	26	25	22	295	70	1,310	15,240
2008 q1	32	16	51	23	28	18	25	26	12	26	42	20	319	28	1,360	15,430
q2	35	12	40	18	34	10	27	22	13	31	12	15	269	41	1,420	15,680
q3	24	14	37	12	30	11	28	13	15	19	8	25	236	62	1,220	14,340
q4	30	11	40	16	22	6	24	19	11	25	7	17	228	43	1,050	12,070
2009 q1	36	5	36	15	19	10	21	34	22	21	5	16	240	40	1,030	11,350
q2	53	12	28	22	17	3	21	20	10	13	7	7	213	22	990	10,650
q3	46	13	21	13	18	2	13	22	19	17	6	19	209	26	940	10,360
q4	42	12	26	14	17	1	12	17	14	15	6	10	186	53	980	9,430
2010 q1	37	10	25	13	21	1	4	21	16	18	13	8	187	28	960	9,590
q2	30	24	19	11	21	1	13	12	26	15	20	10	202	37	1,040	10,100
q3	72	128	15	10	12	3	15	12	13	16	16	10	322	45	1,220	11,840
q4	38	66	26	11	28	8	7	12	24	14	10	11	255	38	1,130	10,870
2011 q1	54	41	26	17	16	15	5	6	19	17	6	5	227	26	1,130	11,350
q2	46	40	27	10	8	28	4	15	14	25	10	2	229	28	1,220	11,820
q3	47	12	26	21	13	56	11	17	9	40	18	10	280	57	1,400	12,510
q4	36	11	9	17	17	56	24	16	4	41	10	3	244	40	1,400	12,830
2012 q1	32	16	15	17	15	49	3	7	10	39	3	6	212	43	1,300	13,130
q2	47	17	18	17	15	41	13	12	34	39	2	8	263	69	1,380	12,860
q3	60	17	27	27	17	58	5	17	8	36	10	10	292	71	na	13,890
q4	41	20	21	17	18	44	10	12	16	31	8	10	248	64	na	13,570
2013 q1	51	28	25	17	13	55	5	16	15	24	13	11	273	53	na	13,230
q2	39	18	20	12	12	62	5	18	18	16	4	20	244	70	na	13,460
q3	49	15	20	14	17	30	4	17	21	36	5	10	238	80	na	13,330
per 1000 h/h ***																
2011 q1	1.20	0.70	0.70	0.40	0.40	0.20	0.10	0.10	0.40	0.30	0.10	0.10	0.39	0.20	0.30	0.52
q2	1.00	0.66	0.69	0.22	0.20	0.46	0.09	0.34	0.26	0.43	0.21	0.04	0.39	0.27	0.35	0.54
q3	1.02	0.20	0.67	0.46	0.33	0.92	0.24	0.39	0.17	0.69	0.38	0.22	0.48	0.55	0.40	0.58
q4	0.78	0.18	0.23	0.37	0.43	0.92	0.52	0.36	0.08	0.71	0.21	0.07	0.42	0.38	0.40	0.59
2012 q1	0.70	0.26	0.38	0.37	0.38	0.80	0.07	0.16	0.19	0.67	0.06	0.13	0.36	0.41	0.37	0.60
q2	0.96	0.27	0.44	0.35	0.36	0.64	0.27	0.26	0.61	0.65	0.04	0.17	0.45	0.64	0.38	0.59
q3	1.22	0.27	0.66	0.56	0.40	0.91	0.10	0.37	0.14	0.60	0.20	0.21	0.50	0.66		0.64
q4	0.84	0.31	0.51	0.35	0.43	0.69	0.21	0.26	0.29	0.52	0.16	0.21	0.42	0.60		0.60
2013 q1	1.04	0.44	0.61	0.35	0.31	0.86	0.10	0.35	0.27	0.40	0.27	0.23	0.47	0.50		0.58
q2	0.78	0.29	0.49	0.24	0.29	0.94	0.10	0.38	0.31	0.26	0.08	0.42	0.42	0.64		0.60
q3	0.98	0.24	0.49	0.29	0.41	0.45	0.08	0.35	0.36	0.59	0.10	0.21	0.41	0.73		0.59
2008 h/h	46	61	39	46	40	61	46	44	53	58	47	45	586	104	690	21,731

* Priority need : with dependent children, pregnant, old age, physical disability, mental illness, young persons & domestic violence.

** Methodology review during 2010

*** Number of households (2008 base - projections for 2012) (000s)

7.5 At the end of the 3rd quarter 2013 there were 550 households in Kent (KCC area) living in all types of temporary accommodation. This is three households more (0.5%) than the same period one year ago when there were 547. In the same period the number of households in temporary accommodation nationally increased by 4,390 (+8.28%).¹⁰

7.6 Temporary accommodation includes a wide range of property. Of the Kent households in all types of temporary accommodation at the end of September, approximately 37% were accommodated in Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord (RSL) dwellings, 18% were accommodated in leased private sector dwellings, 29% in Bed and Breakfast accommodation, 9% in hostels with a further 8% of households in other types of accommodation such as private landlords.¹¹

7.7 Whilst it appears that the number of people placed in temporary accommodation has remained relatively static for the last 2-3 years, the number of people placed in temporary bed and breakfast accommodation has increased in both absolute terms and as a percentage of the total. The Government believes that bed and breakfast hotels represent the least suitable form of accommodation for most households - particularly those with children - and should be used only as a last resort, preferably for only six weeks while applications are processed.

7.8 In Kent (KCC area) 158 households were in bed and breakfast accommodation at the end of September, a rise of 26% compared to one year ago. The increase in Bed and Breakfast usage is most likely to be due to the decreasing availability of other forms of temporary accommodation (lack of "move on" accommodation).

7.9 The Department for Communities and Local Government has recently started to publish the numbers of families with children that are in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks (excluding those pending a review by the local authority. In Kent at the end of September there were 22 families in this category, the same as the previous quarter but up from the end of March when there were 5.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

Table 5: Households in temporary bed & breakfast accommodation on last day of the quarter, Kent districts, 2008-2013.

Source: DCLG P1E survey

		Ashford	Canterbury	Dartford	Dover	Gravesham	Maidstone	Sevenoaks	Shepway	Swale	Thanet	Tonbridge & Malling	Tunbridge Wells	Kent (KCC area)	Medway UA	Kent & Medway	South East	England
Bed & Breakfast (Inc shared annex)																		
2008	q1	9	0	9	20	0	12	2	2	3	4	4	0	65	10	75	400	3,840
	q2	15	2	5	20	0	2	1	10	4	15	2	3	79	12	91	390	3,440
	q3	17	0	17	19	0	2	0	5	5	7	0	6	78	12	90	400	3,230
	q4	16	1	16	17	0	4	2	11	7	5	2	10	91	10	101	350	2,560
2009	q1	26	1	16	21	0	3	0	9	1	9	2	8	96	12	108	320	2,450
	q2	19	1	11	19	0	6	0	6	3	4	3	5	77	7	84	270	2,150
	q3	26	1	4	24	0	6	0	4	2	8	4	1	80	11	91	290	2,050
	q4	23	0	5	19	0	6	1	2	3	4	2	1	66	15	81	260	1,880
2010	q1	17	2	6	14	0	6	0	3	3	3	4	0	58	18	76	270	2,050
	q2	19	7	5	22	0	8	1	2	5	3	1	3	76	3	79	320	2,410
	q3	20	6	4	14	0	6	3	2	2	4	5	2	68	10	78	350	2,660
	q4	21	3	5	18	0	10	1	10	1	5	0	5	79	5	84	360	2,310
2011	q1	17	4	2	22	0	9	1	1	12	9	0	0	77	4	81	400	2,750
	q2	26	4	1	18	0	8	3	13	6	7	3	1	90	13	103	500	3,120
	q3	22	5	4	22	0	20	7	14	5	17	2	1	119	24	143	620	3,370
	q4	19	4	5	15	0	15	7	6	5	23	4	3	106	9	115	520	3,170
2012	q1	20	1	6	17	0	23	5	13	13	31	0	5	134	19	153	690	3,960
	q2	20	5	7	24	0	15	7	22	30	19	0	2	151	26	177	740	4,270
	q3	28	3	6	21	0	7	1	27	16	13	0	3	125	20	145	na	4,350
	q4	24	8	8	19	0	17	0	10	22	16	5	9	138	17	155	na	4,000
2013	q1	26	10	3	21	0	24	0	19	27	16	12	5	163	43	206	na	4,500
	q2	28	4	5	28	0	21	0	25	24	6	0	8	149	49	198	na	4,320
	q3	34	5	4	16	2	23	1	26	25	13	7	2	158	78	236		4,600

8. Rent arrears and evictions

8.1 In addition to the issue of homelessness, literature suggests that housing benefit cuts are leading to an increase in the number of households in rent arrears. A report from the TUC claims that nearly one in three council housing tenants who were affected by the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy have fallen behind on their rent since its introduction earlier this year. Information provided by 114 local authorities across Britain shows that over 50,000 council housing tenants (31% of all tenants affected by the tax in these areas) have fallen into arrears.¹³

¹³ TUC (2013) "Bedroom Tax has pushed one in three council tenants into arrears", website, <http://www.tuc.org.uk/social-issues/bedroom-tax-has-pushed-one-three-council-tenants-arrears>.

8.2 The National Housing Federation carried out a survey to quantify the number of tenants in arrears. It found that a quarter of households affected have fallen behind in their rent for the first time ever. Data provided by 38 housing associations in England showed 11,000 of 44,000 households were in arrears.¹⁴ One of the explanations for the arrears is that there are not enough one or two bedroom homes. The National Housing Federation estimated that although 180,000 households were under-occupying two bedroom social homes, only 85,000 one-bed social homes were available in 2011-12.¹⁵

8.3 Some local evidence seems to reflect the findings of the TUC and the National Housing Federation. Evidence from a Gateway and partner organisations indicates that around a third of tenants are in rent arrears and are not able, or in a few cases willing, to reduce those arrears.¹⁶

8.4 This evidence also reports the lack of suitable accommodation, particularly one-bedroom properties (and warns that private tenants falling into rent arrears are more at risk, as private landlords tend to move towards eviction more quickly than social landlords).¹⁷

8.5 Evidence from the Citizens Advice nationally indicates a 13% increase in social housing rent arrears since the reforms in this area in April 2013.¹⁸

9. Debt and money management issues

9.1 According to some evidence, it appears that benefit reforms are resulting - both nationally and locally - in an increasing number of people falling into **rent arrears** and other kinds of **debt**.^{19 20 21}

9.2 National data from Citizens Advice on debt is difficult to interpret due to the fact that they are in the process of introducing a new system of recording and their capacity has been reduced, mainly by the ending of legal aid contracts. The latest advice trends for the period July – September 2013 can be found at the following link:

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/aboutus/publications/advice_trends.htm

¹⁴ BBC News (2013) "One in three behind on rent since housing benefit changes", 19 September 2013.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Evidence received on 24 September 2013.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Citizens Advice: Advice Trends July - September 2013

¹⁹ London Councils (2013) Tracking Welfare Reform; Meeting the Financial Challenge, London, London Councils.

²⁰ TUC (2013) "Bedroom Tax has pushed one in three council tenants into arrears", website, <http://www.tuc.org.uk/social-issues/bedroom-tax-has-pushed-one-three-council-tenants-arrears>.

²¹ Evidence from Gravesham, Tunbridge, Thanet, Dover and Ashford Gateways, as well as local Housing Benefits departments, Job Centre Plus and CAB, September 2013

Nationally debt accounts for 28% of all issues dealt with by the CAB service. The number of debt issues dealt with has actually decreased compared to the same quarter in 2012 but the service believes this gives a false impression of need for the reasons outlined above. Future reports based on the new recording system will identify ongoing trends.

9.3 Anecdotal evidence from local CABs, Kent Gateways, Housing Benefit departments and Jobcentre Plus branches suggests that debt and debt management are emerging as more prominent and concerning issues.²²

9.4 The significant increase in the use of high cost, short term credit (including “pay day loans”) is related to the above, although will also be influenced by the state of the economy and cost of living increases. A recent report on this issue to the Policy and Resources Committee can be found at the link below:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s43922/Item%20D4%20-high%20cost%20short%20term%20credit%20providers.pdf>

10. Food Bank usage

10.1 A recent report – Walking the Breadline (May 2013) - revealed that in the last two years there has been a large increase in the number of people using food banks in the UK. The Trussell Trust (the largest provider of food banks in the UK) has reported that more than 350,000 people used their food banks in 2012–13; this is almost three times the number who received food aid in the previous year, and 100,000 more than anticipated. As a result, the Trussell Trust launched almost 150 new food banks last year – including a number in Kent – and is currently approving nationally three new food banks a week.²³

10.2 Evidence suggests that the number of people using food banks has also increased sharply in Kent. Partial figures from this year already show a substantial increase from the last financial year in the number of people accessing food banks managed by the Trussell Trust in the Kent administrative area. The number of adults using these food banks in 2012-2013 was 980 (with 705 children) , while the number from April 2013 to only September 2013 was already 1,838 (with 1,357 children) . The total number of beneficiaries from April to September 2013 (3,195) was already nearly twice as many as in 2012-13 (1,685).

²² Evidence from Gravesham, Tunbridge, Thanet, Dover and Ashford Gateways, as well as local Housing Benefits departments, Job Centre Plus and CAB, September 2013

²³ Cooper, N. and Dumbleton, S. (2013) Walking the Breadline: The Scandal of Food Poverty in 21st Century Britain, Manchester, Church Action on Poverty and Oxfam.

10.3 The figures from the Trussell Trust are only an indication of a much wider problem, as they do not include the parallel growth in independent food banks and other informal emergency food aid interventions provided by hundreds of churches, charities, housing associations and community groups. Taking these into account, it is estimated that the actual number of people currently reliant on food aid is in excess of half a million nationally, and this number may grow as further changes to the benefits system take effect.²⁴

10.4 It cannot be said with certainty at this stage whether the increases in Food Bank usage is mainly due to welfare reform as opposed to cost of living increases and the state of the economy. Also whilst it is clear that there is an increase in the use of food banks, it is not known if these needs previously existed but were not met. Some organisations believe there is a clear link between food banks and welfare reform. For example, the report by the Trussell Trust explains that, while some of the increase in the number of people using food banks is caused by factors such as unemployment, increasing levels of under-employment, low and falling incomes, and rising food and fuel prices, up to half of users do so as a direct result of having benefit payments delayed, reduced, or withdrawn altogether. They believe that changes to the benefit system are the most common reasons for people using food banks; these include changes to crisis loan eligibility rules, delays in payments, Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions and sickness benefit re-assessments.²⁵

11. Kent Support and Assistance Service

11.1 The Kent Support and Assistance Service (KSAS) became operational in April 2013 in response to the ending of the DWP's Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans and the transfer of part of the funding to local authorities.²⁶ The role of KSAS is to support people in exceptionally difficult circumstances, by providing:

- goods and services for those in emergencies
- support to help people leaving care/institutional settings to set up their own accommodation in the community or to continue to live independently in the community
- signposting to other sources of help.²⁷

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Kent County Council (2013) Welfare Reform Research, Executive Summary, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

²⁷ Ibid.

11.2 Whilst evidence from KSAS can be useful in analysing the extent of poverty, caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of their data. The scheme only started in April 2013 and whilst there has been an increase in help given via the scheme (since the scheme started in April 2013) it is too early to say whether that is due to increasing knowledge of the scheme (amongst the public and professionals) or to increasing need. Of particular interest will be the demand once Universal Credit is implemented in Kent (date not yet known) and people have to manage monthly payments.

11.3 With the above caveats, data on KSAS applications and awards for the first nine months (April to December) shows the following:

	Applications	Unique Awards	Total Awards
April	673	243	368
May	705	329	520
June	654	303	494
July	818	491	828
August	704	514	869
September	766	525	939
October	783	548	1025
November	861	530	1015
December	738	545	1054

Applications: An actual request for assistance made online or by phone

Unique Awards: The number of individual applicants that receive an award

Total Awards: The total number of awards which may include more than one award per person

Analysing the number and type of enquiries to KSAS can help in monitoring the levels of poverty in Kent, although this may not be possible on a long-term basis because its funding is uncertain after 2014-15.²⁸

12. Impact on people with disabilities and ill health

12.1 Sections 5.4 and 5.5 above on disability and incapacity-based benefits provide some information on the impact. Further analysis will be carried out in time for the next report.

12.2 With regard to the impact of the Housing Benefit under-occupancy reforms in social housing, robust evidence still needs to be collated at the Kent level. However, nationally some evidence exists that this is having a significant impact on some people with disabilities and long-term health

²⁸ Kent County Council (2013) Welfare Reform Research, Executive Summary, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

conditions. The DWP's own Equality Impact Assessment²⁹ of this measure stated that 63% of those affected had a disability. Research carried out by the National Housing Federation (NHF),³⁰ Carers UK³¹ and the Papworth Trust³² has shown that many disabled people affected by the reform are not being successful in claiming additional help via the Discretionary Housing Payment system (administered by the district councils in two tier areas). The NHF and the Papworth Trust's figures show that about one third of disabled people applying have been turned down for a Discretionary Housing Payment. Data on DHPs released by the DWP shows that most help is only given on a short-term basis and only 5% of awards were for on-going rent for a disabled person in adapted accommodation. Further work will be carried out to understand the situation in Kent.

12.3 The June Welfare Reform Research report predicted that the reforms to incapacity and disability benefits were likely to impact on people who do not currently meet KCC's eligibility criteria and who manage without support from KCC. Loss of benefits may cause some to seek assistance from KCC services because they, and their carers, are left with insufficient income and because the re-assessment process has contributed to deterioration in their condition. While this could affect people with any condition, there are particular concerns over people with mental health and fluctuating conditions. It is too early to say if this is indeed happening. The number of referrals for disabled adults to KCC's Families and Social Care has increased slightly 5,541 (in 2011-12) to 5,643 (in 2012-13). The figure projected for 2013-14 is 5,800. Given that referrals had been increasing before the introduction of welfare reforms, the rises cannot easily be attributed directly to them.³³

12.4 KCC's Benefits Team assists FSC service users with challenges to the transfer of their Incapacity Benefits to Employment and Support Allowance. They have reported that people are currently experiencing long delays in the processing of appeals and that this is leading to delays in the payment of basic rate ESA that claimants can receive whilst challenging a decision.³⁴

²⁹ Housing Benefit: Size criteria for people renting in the social rented sector, DWP, June 2012

³⁰

³¹ Carers and Housing Benefit size criteria changes, Carers UK, 2013

³² Making Discretionary Housing Payments work for disabled people, Papworth Trust, July 2013

³³ Kent County Council (2013) Evidence received on 9 October 2013.

³⁴ Kent County Council (2013) Evidence from the Benefits Team, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

(C) IS THERE MORE DEMAND FOR KCC & DISTRICT SERVICES?

13. Information, advice and guidance – Front desk services

13.1 As part of the exercise to help determine whether Welfare Reform is having an impact on Kent residents and local services, an online survey was developed and was distributed to a number of individuals within KCC services. 80 completed questionnaires were received from individuals. About 90% of the responses were from local information and “front desk” services, the majority of which came from Libraries and the remainder from Gateways and Children’s Centres.

The key findings from this survey are as follows:

- more than half (61%) of respondents indicated that demand for their service had increased since April 2013
- the areas with the greatest increase in demand were: requests for information (with 70% of respondent stating that they had increased); help in applying for benefits (56%) and help with job applications (56%)
- when asked which client groups they felt had experienced the greatest impact since April 2013, the most common response (21%) was customers already on benefits, although the next most common response (17%) was “everyone”.
- Most respondents said that the impact was due to both the economy and welfare reforms (64%). 18% of respondents said that it was exclusively due to welfare reforms.
- The majority of respondents indicated an increase in signposting to CAB (56% stated that it had increased, with 31% stating it had stayed the same, 10% stating that it was too early to say and 3% not relevant), food banks (49% increased, 24% the same, 23% too early and 14% not relevant) and district councils (41% increased, 32% the same, 19% too early, 8% not relevant).³⁵

13.2 The evidence from Gateways is mixed. If the period April 2012 – November 2012 is compared with the same period in 2013 the number of frontline enquiries has not increased significantly in some Gateways, whereas in others it has. However, even in those not showing a particular increase, it is reported that each enquiry is taking much longer due to multiple questions on housing and debt related issues. Also more proactive work is being

³⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Impact of Welfare Reform Survey, October 2013, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

carried out on welfare reform with those clients known to be affected, thus reducing the numbers who would otherwise present at gateways seeking assistance.³⁶ Some Gateways have reported that the Council Tax changes have particularly affected those customers who are now required to pay some Council Tax for the first time; some ignored the first bills they were sent in March 2013 and are now having to deal with bailiff and debt recovery.³⁷ Anecdotal evidence from local Gateways and CABs seems to corroborate the survey's findings of increased signposting and increased service demand.

13.3 Citizens Advice evidence

The Citizens Advice service is in the process of introducing a new system of recording and this has caused some discontinuity in the recording and analysis of statistics. In addition CAB capacity has been reduced, mainly by the ending of legal aid contracts.³⁸ All CAB in Kent have now moved over to the new system so work will now take place to establish a baseline in relevant categories of advice so trends can be measured going forward.

The latest information on CAB advice trends nationally (for the period July to September) can be found at the following link:

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/aboutus/publications/advice_trends.htm.

Looking at the above report and taking into account some local CAB evidence, the following can be highlighted:

- Benefits continues to be the biggest single category of advice. In Kent for the period between July and September 2013 out of a total of 11,847 clients seeking advice, just under a third (3,823) needed advice about the benefits system.
- Nationally there has been a 45% increase in advice concerning JSA sanctions compared to the 12 months before the enhanced regime was introduced in October 2012.
- Until quarter 2 of 2013 (July-September) which saw a drop in help with ESA appeals, there had been a 15% increase in requests for help over the previous 12 months. The CAB believe the recent drop is due to their reduced capacity to handle appeal work following the ending of legal aid contracts.
- Nationally there has been a 13% increase in requests for advice about rent arrears in the social housing sector. It is believed this is due to the introduction of size restrictions in April. There has also been an

³⁶ Evidence from Gateway Managers, December 2013

³⁷ Kent County Council (2013) Impact of Welfare Reform Survey, October 2013, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

³⁸ Quarterly client statistics of the Citizens Advice service (July – September 2013)

increase in requests for advice on actual or threatened homelessness in the social housing sector.

- A gradual increase in enquiries about the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP). This has been rolled out since the summer for new claimants but the reassessment of people on DLA has not yet begun for the majority of people. As at September 2013 there had been 240 such enquiries in Kent (6.4% of all benefit enquiries). 58% of people with PIP enquiries needed advice regarding form filling/checking and the claiming process.
- More than a doubling of the numbers requesting advice about Discretionary Housing payments (DHPs), which are the only recourse in the benefit system for people who have lost benefit due to the various reforms. 60% of those advised were disabled or had long-term health problems.
- It is reported that CABs in Kent are currently experiencing a rise in queries concerning debt and debt management as a result of the introduction of Council Tax changes, housing “size” criteria and the Benefit Cap.³⁹

13.4 There is some evidence to show that many people receiving benefits or applying for them have difficulty with a digital and “self-service” approach. The evidence is as follows.

- Service user insight suggests that these population groups are less likely to self-serve or use digital channels and are likely to have low levels of literacy.⁴⁰
- The national Universal Credit pilot revealed significant issues with IT. The report “Local Authority Led Pilots: A Summary of Early Learning from the Pilots” (2013) found that not all customer groups had access to the Internet. The report also indicated that there were large groups of people who had limited access to the Internet at home and who were not IT literate.⁴¹
- Qualitative evidence in the formative evaluation of the Kent Support and Assistance Service (KSAS) indicates that a proportion of applicants to the scheme are unable to complete an application unassisted. While some local services (such as Gateways and libraries) can provide access to computers, there is still an additional

³⁹ Evidence from Gravesham, Tunbridge, Thanet, Dover and Ashford Gateways, as well as local Housing Benefits departments, Job Centre Plus and CAB, September 2013

⁴⁰ Kent County Council (2013) Welfare Reform: Analysis of Households in Kent Affected by the Benefit Cap, Draft, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

⁴¹ DWP (2013) Local Authority Led Pilots: A Summary of Early Learning from the Pilots, London, DWP and Government Social Research.

demand on staff or volunteer time to support individuals with their applications – whether for KSAS or other applications. Customers who seek support from these services, because they are unable to fill in an on-line KSAS application form by themselves, are increasingly directed towards making an application via telephone.⁴²

14. Children's services

14.1 The pressures resulting from welfare changes could potentially push more families into crisis and lead to additional demands on local services that deal with children. The initial, limited evidence, which was gathered from a variety of children's services, shows a general increase in demand.

14.2 A survey was developed to help assess and monitor the impacts of welfare reforms on services in Kent. Amongst all the survey's responses, a small number (15) was provided by colleagues working in Children's Centres, and KCC's Children's Social Services and Early Intervention Delivery teams. When asked whether demand for their services had increased since April 2013, 13 replied that it had increased, 1 replied that it was "too early to say" and 1 that it "stayed the same".⁴³

14.3 Evidence about the number of Child Protection plans transferred to KCC from other local authorities was also received, and shows a significant increase. The number of transfers during the period April 2012 to March 2013 was 70, while the number of transfers from only April to November 2013 is already 83.⁴⁴ Thus the number of families with a child subject to a Child Protection plan who moved to Kent in the last six months is already higher than the total number for the previous year.

14.4 An analysis of the percentage of children with special educational need (SEN) statements shows a slight rise. In the autumn of 2012 the rate of SEN statements in Kent was 2.6%, while in both the spring and summer of 2013 it was 2.7%. There was also a slight increase in the percentage of children learning English as an additional language (EAL). In autumn 2012 the rate was 8.1%, while in the spring of 2013 it was 8.3% and in the summer of 2013 it was 8.4%.⁴⁵ These increases suggest little change and no meaningful impact.

⁴² Kent County Council (2013) Evidence submitted on 20 September 2013.

⁴³ Kent County Council (2013) Impact of Welfare Reform Survey, October 2013, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

⁴⁴ Kent County Council (2013) Evidence submitted on 30 September 2013 and on 22 October 2013.

⁴⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Evidence submitted on 30 September 2013.

(D) WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS ON PLACES?

15. Community safety/crime

15.1 At present there is little, if any, robust evidence available on this issue. For future reports, Business Intelligence will consider whether it is possible to create a methodology for analysing whether there is any correlation between specific types of crime and welfare reform both generally and in specific localities.

16. Concentration of deprivation

16.1 Any significant housing and deprivation impacts on local communities will take some time to assess (if they occur as a consequence of welfare reforms). Future analysis of population migration into localised 'hot spots', together with local qualitative intelligence, will aid understanding.

16.2 The national "Indices of Deprivation" will also be utilised. This is published by the Government to help local authorities identify their most disadvantaged areas and to ensure that resources and funding are allocated appropriately. Although the latest index does not provide sufficiently recent intelligence, as it was published in March 2011, it is possible that an updated version will be published in 2014, as it is normally revised every three years.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Kent County Council (2013) website, www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/kent_facts_and_figures/deprivation.

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From: **Gary Cooke - Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services**
Rebecca Spore – Director of Property & Infrastructure Support

To: **Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee – 17th January 2014**

Subject: **Mid Kent Key Office Hub – Acquisition of Premises: Report of an urgent decision taken**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Summary: The attached urgent decision was taken between meetings as it could not reasonably be deferred to the next programmed meeting of the Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee for the reason(s) set out below.

(1) In accordance with the new governance arrangements, all significant or Key Decisions must be listed in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and should be submitted to the relevant Cabinet Committee for endorsement or recommendation prior to the decision being taken by the Cabinet Member or Cabinet.

(2) For the reason(s) set out below it has not been possible for this decision to be discussed by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee prior to it being taken by the Cabinet Member or Cabinet. Therefore, in accordance with process set out in Appendix 4 Part 7 paragraph 7.18 of the Constitution, the Chairman and Group Spokespersons for this Cabinet Committee and the Chairman and Spokesmen for the Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the decision being taken and their views were recorded on the Record of Decision. After the decision was taken, it was published to all Members of this Cabinet Committee and the Scrutiny Committee.

(3) The detailed report considered by the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services is exempt from publication in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act. For completeness it is set out at Agenda Item D1.

Recommended: That Decision no 13/00060 - Mid Kent Key Office Hub - Proposal to Acquire Premises - taken in accordance with the process in Appendix 4 Part 7 paragraph 7.18 of the Council's Constitution attached at Appendix A be noted.

Background documents:

Mid Kent Hub – Proposal to Acquire Premises unrestricted report attached

Mid Kent Hub – Proposal to Acquire Premises exempt report attached

Mid Kent Hub – Record of Decision

Contact details:

Report Author

- Mark Cheverton – Head of Estate Management
- 01622 696977
- Mark.cheverton@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

- Rebecca Spore – Director of Property & Infrastructure Support
- Telephone number
- Rebecca.spore@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY

Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services

DECISION NO.

13/00060

For publication

Subject:

Mid Kent Key Office Hub - Acquisition of Premises

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services, I agree to:

1. the freehold purchase of a property in Ashford, as named in the exempt report, and in line with the financial expectations also set out therein
2. the additional costs of purchase including agents' fees and stamp duty and works as set out in the exempt report
3. the refurbishment and modernisation costs required to make the space fit for purpose under the New Ways of Working Programme, in line with the financial expectations set out in the exempt report

Governance

The Executive Scheme of Delegation for Officers set out in Appendix 2 Part 4 of the Constitution (and the directorate schemes of sub-delegation made thereunder) provides the governance pathway for the implementation of this decision by officers. In this instance, the Director of Property, Infrastructure and Support (on behalf of the Corporate Director Business Strategy & Support) will take all such steps as are necessary to implement the decision

Reason(s) for decision

The New Ways of Working Programme of which the Mid Kent Key Office Hub forms part is a foundation stone to the Council's Doing Things Differently initiative which in turn is key to KCC's future in Facing the Challenge. The acquisition of the property identified in the report will enable a base for the Mid Kent Hub to be established and the consolidation of office estate; consequently the hub will enable an environment for a more modern and agile workforce and revenue costs to the office estate will significantly reduce.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The decision cannot reasonably be deferred until the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee as to do so would put at risk the best interests of the Council and therefore it will be reported retrospectively in January 2014. Local procedures for such circumstances will be applied. All statutory requirements will be fulfilled

Any alternatives considered:

Alternatives considered are outlined in the option appraisal and appendix 1 of the exempt report

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None

Signed

Date

6/1/2014

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item D1

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Agenda Item E1

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