

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, 20th January, 2022**

**2.00 pm**

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County  
Hall, Maidstone**







## AGENDA

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Thursday, 20th January, 2022, at 2.00 pm**  
**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County**  
**Hall, Maidstone**

Ask for: **Anna Taylor**  
Telephone: **03000 416478**

#### **Membership**

Conservative (10): Mr A Booth (Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr N J Collor, Mr G Cooke, Mrs S Hudson, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr H Rayner and Mr O Richardson

Labour (1) Dr L Sullivan

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr A J Hook

Green and  
Independent (1): Mr P Stepto

Church  
Representatives (3): Mr J Constanti, Mr M Reidy and Mr Q Roper

Parent Governor (2): Vacancies

*County Councillors who are not Members of the Committee but who wish to ask questions at the meeting are asked to notify the Chairman of their questions in advance.*

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

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

**A - Committee Business**

- A1 Introduction/Webcast Announcement
- A2 Apologies and Substitutes
- A3 Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- A4 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2021 (Pages 1 - 4)
- A5 Review of Select Committee on Loneliness and Social Isolation Recommendations (Pages 5 - 20)
- A6 Draft Ten Year Capital Programme, Revenue Budget 2022-23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022-25 (Pages 21 - 22)

**B - Any items called-in**

**C - Any items placed on the agenda by any Member of the Council for discussion**

**EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Benjamin Watts  
General Counsel  
03000 416814

**Wednesday, 12 January 2022**

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 15 December 2021.

PRESENT: Mr A Booth (Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr N J Collor, Mr G Cooke, Mrs S Hudson, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr H Rayner and Mr O Richardson

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs S Chandler (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Adams (Reconnect Programme Director), Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer)

IN VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE: Mr A Hook and Dr L Sullivan

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**21. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting**  
(Item A4)

No declarations were made.

**22. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021**  
(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

**23. Short Focused Inquiries Work Programme**  
(Item A6)

1. The Chairman proposed that Section 106 Developer Contributions be the subject of the next Short Focused Inquiry, to be followed by an inquiry into Highways Improvement Plans.

RESOLVED that that the work programme for Short Focused Inquiries was agreed and that Section 106 Developer Contributions be the next inquiry undertaken, followed by an inquiry into Highways Improvement Plans, delegating to Officers the arrangement of the next inquiry as outlined in the report.

**24. Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme**  
(Item C1)

*Mrs S Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services and Mr D Adams, Reconnect Programme Director were in attendance for this item.*

1. The Chairman introduced the item and invited Mrs Chandler to provide an overview of the Reconnect Programme's outcomes to date.
2. Mrs Chandler outlined the progress made by the Programme over Summer 2021 and highlighted the key outcomes detailed in the report. She noted that it was difficult to quantify the impact on young people at this stage, though the response from communities had been significant. She emphasised the Programme's continued commitment to its priorities of improving young people's health, happiness, lifestyle and education.
3. Members raised concerns at the continued impact of the pandemic on children and young people, given the rapid spread of the Omicron variant and possibility that schools could be closed to tackle outbreaks. They asked Mrs Chandler for reassurance that the Programme would use all the financial resources at its disposal to mitigate the impact, wherever possible. Mrs Chandler reassured the Committee that all funding assigned to the Programme would be used to deliver against its five core objectives. Mr Adams confirmed that of the £10m budget, £1.2m had yet to be assigned, though it was noted that this sum was reserved for future events and sub programmes.
4. A Member asked for clarification on the difference between LGBTQ+ swimming sessions and the standard swimming session offer, as outlined in the report. Mr Adams confirmed that the sessions were delivered by a provider as part of a broader element within the Programme and that this was included as it had been determined that the group had suffered considerably during the pandemic, requiring a specialist response.
5. Mrs Chandler was asked by a Member, whether education had formed a significant enough part of the Programme. She noted that Reconnect was not the primary means for tackling missed education and that the national Catch-up premium, which included the National Tutoring Programme, was designed to fulfil this purpose. Mr Adams confirmed that as part of the Programme, the Invicta National Academy had delivered 33,000 learning opportunities for children in Kent. He added that work was ongoing with the Academy and involved a home study pilot which aimed to give children access to a teacher outside of school hours.
6. When asked by a Member what more would be done to engage hard to reach groups, including whether greater social media promotion would be considered, Mrs Chandler acknowledged that engagement and take up had been varied across Kent. She outlined the different channels used, including corporate, partner agency, local stakeholder and school communications. She noted that partners had provided feedback on the most effective campaigns. Mr Adams recognised that communication through other organisations led in some instances to minor delays, though stated that this was outweighed by the benefits, which included greater participation rates. He explained that young people were more likely to engage with familiar local organisations than a corporate KCC campaign.

7. A Member asked for breakdown of summer bus pass distribution. Mr Adams confirmed that the summer bus passes had been a universal offer and were distributed through schools and further education colleges.
8. The importance of maintaining a strong communications network, including delegating communications to district councils and local partners, where appropriate, was emphasised by a Member.
9. A Member highlighted the Programme's added value and the that they had witnessed first-hand the positive effects its funded physical events had on children.
10. The Chairman commended the Programme's outcomes and recognised that young people had been positively impacted. He added that understanding children's lived experiences and the pandemic's impact on their lives was important for shaping services. Mrs Chandler responded that whilst the Programme was intended to address the impact of the pandemic on children's lives, it had become apparent that the impact would be longer term than originally predicted. She confirmed that work had been undertaken to consider how elements of the Programme could be continued beyond its finish date. She noted that the Programme had made voluntary and community sector organisations more reliant and effective.
11. Mrs Chandler thanked the Committee for their comments and continued scrutiny.
12. The Chairman thanked Mrs Chandler and Mr Adams for their attendance and shared his intention for the Reconnect Programme to return to the Committee in late 2022, in order to give Members the opportunity to analyse final outcomes following the Programme's conclusion.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

## **25. Work Programme**

*(Item D1)*

1. Mrs Taylor confirmed that evaluation of the Reconnect Programme had been added to the work programme and would be scheduled following the publication of the Programme's own final evaluation report in October 2022.
2. Mr Barrington-King updated the Committee on the progress of the Home to School Transport Short Focused Inquiry. He confirmed that a draft of the Inquiry's report had been shared with Members.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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From: Clair Bell- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health  
Richard Smith – Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health  
David Whittle- Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance

To: **Scrutiny Committee- 20 January 2022**

Subject: **Review of Select Committee on Loneliness and Social Isolation Recommendations**

**Summary:**

Following a discussion at Scrutiny Committee in October 2021, this report is intended to review and revise the recommendations of KCC's Select Committee on Loneliness and Social Isolation (2019) and refresh the approach to tackling loneliness and social isolation. This reflects the impact of Covid 19, the positive partnerships that have developed and the opportunities this has enabled in terms of tackling loneliness and social isolation in the longer term.

**Recommendation(s):****Scrutiny Committee are asked to:**

1) Comment on the proposed approach to tackling social isolation and loneliness set out in the report and the closed action plan (Appendix 1).

**1. Background**

- 1.1 In 2019 KCC's Select Committee on Loneliness and Social Isolation made several recommendations aimed at tackling loneliness and social isolation in Kent. A subsequent action plan was developed and presented to Scrutiny Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019. In March 2020, the Select Committee was reconvened to receive an update on the progress made against each of its recommendations. This meeting was cancelled due to the lockdown measures implemented by Government in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.2 A subsequent report was then taken to Scrutiny on the 13 October 2021 setting out progress against each of the recommendations. It was observed at that meeting that the pandemic had an undeniable impact on the authority's ability to respond to the action plan, but it was also agreed that this remained an important agenda and indeed had been heightened by the pandemic. The committee recommended a reset on the recommendations, referred the matter back to the Executive to review and to report back to Scrutiny Committee in 6 months' time.
- 1.3 Officers have reviewed the action plan and it is apparent that the recommendations agreed in 2019 are no longer fit for purpose. Many of the existing recommendations have been delivered, however the context has significantly shifted, and the recommendations now fall short in both reflecting

the fundamental impact of social isolation but also the work we have seen over the pandemic to support people within their communities. We have therefore revised the existing recommendations and set out the new proposals in full in Appendix 1, with the intention of closing the existing action plan.

## **2. Proposed approach**

- 2.1 The recommendations from 2019 included a proposal to develop a social isolation and loneliness strategy however, it was agreed at the time that a standalone strategy would not be delivered and instead that **relevant** elements of this recommendation would be discharged through the development of a Civil Society Strategy (CSS). The CSS was however never intended to be a 'loneliness' strategy; the primary objective of the CSS was to set out the important role that civil society plays in supporting people and communities, the economic contribution of the social sector, underpin KCC's strategic relationship with the social sector and KCC's commitment to supporting both civil society and the social sector to flourish and be sustainable. As the [National Loneliness Strategy](#) established, civil society and the social sector are only one pillar to tackling this agenda it is not the sole solution and many aspects of that agenda sit outside of a strategy focused on civil society. However, the CSS does set out the important role of resilient and connected communities in tackling social isolation and the need to support the social infrastructure that underpins this- set out in Chapter 2.
- 2.2 The Interim Strategic Plan, agreed by County Council in December 2020, committed to reviewing and refreshing *the Social Isolation Select Committee action plan in light of the impact of COVID-19, including considering digital options that work to keep people connected with others*. The agenda is therefore hardwired into the Council's plans in a way that it was not in 2019. It is therefore proposed that we do not have a standalone KCC strategy but that tackling social isolation and loneliness becomes embedded as a priority within the new Five-Year Plan when developed.
- 2.3 Additionally, to tackle social isolation requires a partnership approach; it is not an agenda for KCC to tackle alone and the partnership work we have seen during Covid to support people who were particularly isolated is testament to that. It is therefore proposed by the Executive to work with partners to tackle social isolation and loneliness and to embed this work in the forthcoming social prescribing Strategy that will be developed by health, KCC (in particular public health) and VCSE partners across Kent and Medway. It is therefore proposed that the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care remains the Senior Responsible Officer for this work alongside the Director of Public Health.
- 2.4 **A Social Prescribing Strategy for Kent and Medway**
- 2.4.1 The Select Committee in 2019 fully endorsed the social prescribing model and recognised the need for a system wide approach to tackling social isolation. Since then, considerable work has been undertaken to develop a variety of social prescribing models across the County and across health and social care systems. Through the partnership work that has been undertaken to develop a single online source of information to facilitate social prescribing, there have been preliminary discussions with health colleagues about the potential to develop a Social Prescribing Strategy for Kent and Medway to address some of the issues, risks and enablers identified through that work.

Whilst this agenda focuses on other factors such as long-term conditions and mental health, social isolation is recognised as one of the key agendas within the social prescribing model. As a result, many activities and themes that would be included in any social isolation action plan or strategy would also fall within the wider remit of a social prescribing strategy, they are undoubtedly interconnected.

2.4.2 Whilst conversations regarding a Kent and Medway Strategy are still in the early stages of development, there is a risk of duplication if KCC were to create a separate document or strategy focused solely on social isolation. It is also not possible to create such a document nor discharge the relevant actions without engaging with partners, NHS, district councils and the voluntary sector. KCC officers will therefore work with NHS colleagues (as the lead) to define and develop a social prescribing strategy to ensure that it effectively addresses the wider wellbeing and social isolation agenda. The strategy will be developed between April and May with a final version hoped to be in place by June. An action plan will also be developed underneath the strategy and would offer a way of discharging responsibilities across wider partners.

## 2.5 Closing the existing action plan and recommendations

2.5.1 The recommendations from the Select Committee have been reviewed and most are proposed to be closed as set out in 2.5.3 and in more detail in Appendix 1.

2.5.2 There are two actions which could either be transferred to a new Social Prescribing Strategy or could be subsumed into business as usual by KCC if not appropriate within the context a partnership strategy, they are as follows:

- Explore the viability of a single point of contact, which will now consider if there are any opportunities to expand the remit of Kent Together now established.
- To look at the viability of the ONS measure being used by KCC alongside partners and providers.

2.5.3 The following actions from the existing recommendations will however be closed and we propose to close the existing action plan itself, *(full details in Appendix 1)*.

Closed recommendations	Rationale
High profile strategy launch	A strategy will not be delivered so this action will be closed and any launch of a social prescribing strategy, which will be discussed as appropriate.
Connected communities' pilot	In place and delivering
Endorsing social prescribing	Social prescribing continues to be a key priority within health and adult social care and KCC is part of the partnership that is delivering the social prescribing platform.

Single online source of information	Delivered
KCC's Public Transport team should investigate the feasibility of expanding the Kent Karrier service and should continue to offer financial support and information to those who wish to introduce or expand a community transport service.	Subsumed into the Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan- business as usual
KCC's Public Transport team should encourage organisations in Kent's transport sector to develop ways of connecting people such as the Talking Bus service – so that transport networks play the greatest role possible in tackling loneliness and social isolation.	Subsumed into the Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan- business as usual
KCC should sign up to the Government's pledge to support its employees by addressing loneliness and building social connections. KCC should also encourage local employers across all sectors to adopt the pledge to support their own employees' social wellbeing and health.	This action will be discharged through the ongoing approach to support staff in post Covid environment e.g., within the context of flexible working practice.
KCC should work with the Government to develop a Kent-focused campaign to raise awareness of the issues and loneliness and social wellbeing.	Engagement and communication will be refocused as part of the development of the partnership action plan including campaigns.
KCC should set up a panel – which should include KCC members – to monitor the effectiveness of interventions, promote best practice, and review progress against the objectives of the Loneliness and Social Isolation Strategy.	The ongoing work set out in the new partnership action plan to address social isolation and loneliness in Kent will be subsumed into business as usual to ensure it is effective and sustainable. Reporting will be through the usual governance routes.

### 3. Next Steps

3.1 The relevant KCC officers will work with NHS colleagues to shape and define the strategy. The delivery of the Social Prescribing Strategy will then be taken through the relevant Cabinet Committee as business as usual.

### 4. Recommendations:

<p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p><b>Scrutiny Committee are asked to:</b></p> <p>1) Comment on the proposed approach to tackling social isolation and loneliness set out in the report and the closed action plan (Appendix 1).</p>
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## **5. Background documents:**

- Appendix 1: Revised action plan on Select Committee recommendations

### **Author contact details:**

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## Appendix: 1

### Update on recommendations of Select Committee on Loneliness and Social Isolation and proposed actions- December 2021

Recommendation	Proposed action
<p>1. The committee recognises that loneliness and social isolation are not issues that affect older people exclusively. The Committee recommends that the Adult Social Care and Health Directorate leads further investigations into the prevention or reduction of loneliness and social isolation amongst specific groups of people who are also likely to be impacted, such as young people, disabled people and carers.</p>	<p>Due to Covid much of the planned engagement activity was put on hold as attention was diverted. Adult social care did undertake an on-line survey that ran for five weeks from 22 June 2020 to 24 July 2020 to understand people's experience of social isolation and loneliness both pre- and as a result of lockdown measures introduced during the pandemic. The response was limited to 261 people although the results were insightful.</p> <p>Since that time significant work has been undertaken within Adult Social Care to embed engagement into our everyday approach to working with people. Creating opportunities for ongoing dialogue, engagement and co-production rather than one off interactions.</p> <p>The Cross Directorate Resilient Communities group is mapping engagement with communities across all directorates and is an opportunity to join up in terms of understanding what is important to people of all ages across Kent.</p> <p>In addition, partnership working has developed significantly over the last 18 months as a response to Covid-19 pandemic. There are structures and good working relationships in place between the Council, Integrated Care Partnerships, district, borough and parish councils and the Voluntary Charity and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector that can be built on and embedded to provide insight and understanding into how people experience social isolation and how communities can respond to that need, with the support of statutory organisations.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p>

Recommendation	Proposed action
	That this action be closed, and a social prescribing strategy will be developed.
<p><b>2.</b> KCC should produce a corporate strategy aimed at tackling loneliness and social isolation in Kent. The strategy should set out clear objectives, as well as roles and responsibilities, and should strengthen coordination and collaboration between KCC services</p>	<p>It was previously agreed that the Civil Society Strategy (once adopted) would discharge the relevant elements of the recommendations from the Committee rather than having a standalone strategy. However, as outlined in the National Loneliness Strategy, civil society and the social sector, whilst is a key pillar in reducing social isolation and loneliness, it is only one part of the solution. The Kent Civil Society Strategy (CSS) recognises the key role that the social sector plays as well as the role of volunteers in providing informal support to isolated people and creating social connections.</p> <p>However, the Kent Civil Society Strategy (CSS) was never intended to be a Social Isolation strategy, it is also a KCC document. Any plan to tackle Loneliness and Social isolation must recognise the multitude of partners that help to create connected communities, the Council is just one partner.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Interim Strategic Plan, agreed by County Council in December 2020, committed to reviewing and refreshing <i>the Social Isolation Select Committee action plan in light of the impact of COVID-19, including considering digital options that work to keep people connected with others</i>. The agenda is therefore hardwired into the Council's plans in a way that it was not in 2019 and will be embedded as a priority within the new Five-Year Plan when developed.</p> <p>A new Social Prescribing Strategy for Kent and Medway will set out the approach to social isolation and relevant actions with partners.</p>
<p><b>3</b> KCC should organise a high-profile event to launch its strategy.</p>	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>A strategy will not be delivered so this action will be closed and any launch of a social</p>



<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Proposed action</b>
<p>This should involve partner organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. A key objective of this event should be to promote closer collaboration in order to prevent or reduce loneliness and social isolation in Kent.</p>	<p>prescribing strategy, will be discussed as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>4</b> KCC should work with the Government, local partner agencies and the voluntary sector to enable Kent residents to access, from both a single online source and a single contact number, information on services, activities and support that could help to reduce their risk of feeling lonely.</p> <p>KCC should also consider the opportunity of volunteering in the Government's pilots to explore how better use of data can help make it easier for people to find local activities, services and support</p>	<p><u>Single online source of information</u></p> <p>A single online source of information has been developed by a partnership of health, social care and social sector partners.</p> <p>This is indicative of greater partnership working over the last 18 months to work collaboratively, share resources and recognise opportunities for closer collaboration.</p> <p>The new directory will combine four existing databases of community-based activities, resources and support into one Kent and Medway platform. The platform will be publicly facing and accessible to both residents and professional sign posters, such as Community Navigators, Community Wardens and Primary Care Network Social Prescribers. It will be searchable by geographic area and activity type and will be maintained by Voluntary Sector organisations who are embedded within local communities.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree that this element of the original recommendation is complete and closed.</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Proposed action
	<p data-bbox="728 236 1055 268"><u>Single contact number</u></p> <p data-bbox="728 304 1989 507">The original action agreed in response to the recommendation that a single contact number would be developed by the contract holders of the Adult Social Care Universal wellbeing contracts has not been achieved. This is in part due to the different timeframes involved in the commissioning process and in part due to logistics of multiple organisations sharing a single phone number as a point of contact.</p> <p data-bbox="728 544 1951 746">Kent Together was developed during the pandemic as a single point of contact for people requiring support from community hubs in relation to medication, food, support, advice and guidance. This signposted people to local community hubs for assistance, connecting people not only to support that met their immediate need but also a wider range of community based services.</p> <p data-bbox="728 783 1003 815"><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p data-bbox="728 852 1563 884">As part of the development of a social prescribing strategy:</p> <ul data-bbox="779 920 1989 1182" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="779 920 1989 1102">• Undertake a scoping exercise to determine the viability of Kent Together as a single phone contact for people experiencing social isolation and loneliness. The scoping exercise will determine whether other options exist or could be developed to meet this outcome utilising the partnership approach that was highly effective in mobilising the community response during the Covid pandemic.</li> <li data-bbox="779 1107 1989 1182">• Options identified should also consider the quantitative and qualitative benefits of a single phone number as well as an assessment of costs.</li> </ul>
<p data-bbox="185 1225 215 1257"><b>5</b></p> <p data-bbox="185 1294 674 1370">The Committee fully endorses the social prescribing model, which</p>	<p data-bbox="728 1225 1283 1257"><u>Endorsing the social prescribing model</u></p> <p data-bbox="728 1294 1951 1370">Social prescribing continues to be a key priority within health and adult social care and KCC is part of the partnership that is delivering the social prescribing platform.</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Proposed action</b>
<p>enables organisations to refer people – including those who suffer from loneliness – to a range of services that offer support for social, emotional or practical needs.</p> <p>The Committee also endorses the pilot to assess the effectiveness of Kent Community Wardens acting as ‘community connectors’ and playing a central role in the identification, referral and support of people who suffer from social isolation and loneliness. The Committee recommends that, if necessary, funding should be found to ensure that this project is completed. If the pilot is successful, an understanding will be needed of how the role of Community Wardens would fit alongside social prescribing structures in the County.</p>	<p>Increasingly, there is recognition that the provision of social prescribing has expanded and diversified across the county (for example, Community Navigators, Primary Care Network Social Prescribers and Connected Communities) with a variety of models being implemented but a lack of strategic coordination or structure.</p> <p><u>Connected Communities Pilot</u></p> <p>The Interreg funded, Connected Communities pilot to develop social prescribing plus model within the Community Warden service is now fully active.</p> <p>This pilot sees Community Connectors provides home visits to isolated and vulnerable older residents aged 65 and over, who live independently in their own homes with the aim of linking them with social groups and regular activities in their communities.</p> <p>The pilot is running in wards within Folkestone, Maidstone, Ramsgate and Sheerness.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That this action is complete and closed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>KCC’s Public Transport team should investigate the feasibility of expanding the Kent Karrier service,</p>	<p>Kent Karrier is a wholly discretionary public transport service and forms part of the supported bus budget.</p>

Recommendation	Proposed action
<p>and should continue to offer financial support and information to those who wish to introduce or expand a community transport service</p>	<p>The Public Transport team have developed a Bus Service Improvement Plan for Kent in response to the National Bus Strategy. This plan includes the development of Enhanced Partnerships.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That this action is closed and subsumed into business as usual as it is being considered as part of the Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7</b></p> <p>KCC's Public Transport team should encourage organisations in Kent's transport sector to develop ways of connecting people – such as the Talking Bus service – so that transport networks play the greatest role possible in tackling loneliness and social isolation.</p>	<p>During 2018, Kent County Council undertook a countywide public consultation regarding the future of rural transport in Kent. It was called 'The Big Conversation'. The purpose was to help KCC understand how to get the best value from the subsidy the Council provides for rural transport and the degree to which bus users were open to using different forms of transport. The Council also wanted to find out whether there are better more sustainable ways of providing transport to rural communities not currently served by commercial operators. As part of the process, the Council allocated funding to a number of pilot routes for a 12 month period. Because the use of public transport reduced significantly during Covid pandemic, the pilots have been extended to undertake an thorough evaluation.</p> <p>As noted above, the Public Transport team have developed a Bus Service Improvement Plan for Kent in response to the National Bus Strategy. This plan includes the development of Enhanced Partnerships.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That this action is closed and subsumed into business as usual as it is being considered as part of the Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan.</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Proposed action
<p><b>8</b></p> <p>KCC should work with the Government to develop a Kent-focused campaign to raise awareness of the issues and loneliness and social wellbeing. The campaign should provide information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consequences of loneliness and social isolation</li> <li>• The support that is available and how to access it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>To avoid duplication, the Council agreed to support and endorse the Kent Community Foundation winter campaign during 2020 rather than running its own campaign to raise awareness of social isolation and loneliness.</p> <p>Since that time, there has been significant development of partnerships, especially between statutory and social sector organisations in relation to raising awareness of isolation and the support that is available. The development of the online directory also provides a single online source of community-based resources and activities.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That this action is closed and subsumed into the new social prescribing strategy and will be considered as part of engagement with wider partners and opportunities to raise awareness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9</b></p> <p>KCC should sign up to the Government's pledge to support its employees by addressing loneliness and building social connections. KCC should also encourage local employers across all sectors to adopt the pledge to support their own employees' social wellbeing and health.</p>	<p>KCC Human Resources (HR) department has made contact with Campaign to End Loneliness who worked with the government on both the strategy and the employers pledge. KCC remains engaged with this group which has recently restarted after being suspended due to Covid.</p> <p>The change within the Council to an increasingly flexible way of working means that employees are likely to spend more time working in isolation from colleagues. Throughout the pandemic, KCC HR developed a range of materials, support and virtual resources that can support employees isolated through home working and which are available on an ongoing basis.</p>

Recommendation	Proposed action
	<p data-bbox="728 236 987 268"><u>Recommendation</u></p> <ul data-bbox="779 300 1973 408" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That this action be closed and discharged through the ongoing approach to support staff in post Covid environment e.g., within the context of flexible working practice.</li> </ul>
<p data-bbox="185 416 230 448"><b>10</b></p> <p data-bbox="185 483 705 858">KCC should adopt the Government’s standard approach to measuring loneliness, which is based on the UCLA Loneliness Scale, and should encourage partner organisations and service providers in Kent to do the same in order to ensure consistency across the county.</p>	<p data-bbox="728 483 1861 560">Officers recognise the importance of building an evidence base for services and interventions funded through public money.</p> <p data-bbox="728 595 1973 715">The ONS tool is based on the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) 3-item loneliness scale which asks people indirectly about emotions associated with loneliness and a fourth direct question: How often do you feel lonely?</p> <p data-bbox="728 750 1973 930">Within the procurement process there is scope for KCC to work with successful contract providers to build ONS Social Isolation and Loneliness Measure into the evaluation methodology for the services they provide. However, it would seem unreasonable to expect providers to do this unless KCC was to adopt this measure also for its own staff and services.</p> <p data-bbox="728 965 987 997"><u>Recommendation</u></p> <ul data-bbox="779 1029 1951 1168" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the viability of this action in terms of KCC using this measure alongside partners and providers is considered as part of the new social prescribing strategy. If not viable within a partnership strategy, this will be considered under KCC business as usual.</li> </ul>
<p data-bbox="185 1177 230 1209"><b>11</b></p> <p data-bbox="185 1244 705 1364">KCC should set up a panel – which should include KCC members – to monitor the effectiveness of</p>	<p data-bbox="728 1244 987 1276"><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p data-bbox="728 1311 1951 1388">That this action is closed as ongoing work to address social isolation and loneliness in Kent will be subsumed into business as usual to ensure it is effective and sustainable.</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Proposed action</b>
interventions, promote best practice, and review progress against the objectives of the Loneliness and Social Isolation Strategy.	Reporting will therefore be through the usual governance routes.

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From: Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate & Traded Services

To: Scrutiny Committee – 20 January 2022

Subject: Draft Ten Year Capital Programme, Revenue Budget 2022-23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022-25

Classification: Unrestricted

**Summary:**

The budget report published on 5 January 2022 sets out the background to and draft budget proposals for the capital programme, revenue budget for the forthcoming year and medium term financial plan. The report is a standard report for the whole council focussing on the key strategic considerations underpinning the decisions necessary for County Council to agree the budget at the Budget Meeting in February

**Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to:

- a) NOTE the draft capital and revenue budgets including responses to consultation
- b) SUGGEST any changes which should be made before the draft is presented to Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and full County Council on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022

**Contact details**

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