

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 13th October, 2021**

**2.00 pm**

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







## **AGENDA**

### **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 13th October, 2021, 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 R C Love, OBE, Mr O Richardson, Mr A M Ridgers and Mr J Wright
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 7 July 2021 (Pages 1 - 6)

#### **B - Any items called-in**

None for this meeting.

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

- C1 Update on Progress of the Loneliness and Social Isolation Select Committee Recommendations (Pages 7 - 30)
- C2 Short Focused Inquiry - Home to School Transport - Update (Pages 31 - 32)

#### **D - For Information**

- D1 Work Programme (Pages 33 - 36)

### **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

**Tuesday, 5 October 2021**

## 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, 7 July 2021.

PRESENT: Mr A Booth (Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr N J Collor, Mr G Cooke, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr O Richardson, Mr A M Ridgers, Mr J Wright, Dr L Sullivan, Mr A J Hook and Mr P Stepto

ALSO PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Leader of the Council), Mrs S Chandler (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services) and Mrs S Prendergast (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Dunkley CBE (Corporate Director of Children Young People and Education), Mr D Adams (Reconnect Programme Director), Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer)

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

#### **5. Introduction**

*(Item A1)*

The Chairman introduced the meeting and informed Members that Item B1 (Call-in of Decision 21/00044 - Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme) would be considered as an urgent item, as the call-in had been approved following publication of the agenda.

#### **6. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting**

*(Item A3)*

No declarations were made.

#### **7. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2021**

*(Item A4)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2021 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

#### **8. Short Focused Inquiries - Work Programme**

*(Item A5)*

1. The Chairman introduced the item and invited Members from across the Council to get involved with future Short Focused Inquiries.
2. Mrs Taylor explained that the Committee were asked to agree the work programme and set out a priority order for the Short Focused Inquiries, as detailed in the report.

3. Following a question from a Member, the Chairman confirmed that whilst there was no strict timescale for each inquiry, completing inquiries within a compact timeframe was encouraged.
4. The Committee agreed to add an inquiry into Home to School Transport to the work programme and recognised the importance of analysing service provision, given the significant costs associated and context of KCC's financial pressures.
5. A Member asked that Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Home to School Transport be included the inquiry.
6. A Member raised the environmental impact of school journeys as an area for consideration by the inquiry.
7. The Committee agreed to add an inquiry into Section 106 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) contributions to the work programme.
8. Speed camera policy, including the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership's criteria for new cameras; analysis of KCC's estate, including maintenance; and highway infrastructure, including drainage and utility policies were raised by Members as possible future areas for inquiry.
9. The Committee agreed that an inquiry into Home to School Transport be considered first.
10. Mrs Taylor clarified that whilst any Member of the Council could be involved in Short Focused Inquiries, the Scrutiny Committee retained the decision on final reports and the work programme.

RESOLVED that that the work programme for Short Focused Inquiries was agreed and that Home to School Transport be the first inquiry to be undertaken, delegating to Officers the arrangement of the first inquiry as outlined in the report.

## **9. Call-in of Decision 21/00044 - Reconnect: Kent Children and Young People Programme** (Item B1)

*Mr R Gough, Leader of the Council; Mrs S Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services; Mrs S Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills; Mr M Dunkley, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education and Mr D Adams, Reconnect Programme Director were in attendance for this item.*

1. The Chairman introduced the item and invited the proposer of the call-in, Dr Sullivan, to provide an overview of the reasons for her call-in. Mr Hook and Mr Stepto as seconders were also invited to speak.
2. Dr Sullivan presented the reasons for her call-in. A need to scrutinise the Programme's key objectives, allocation of funding and proposed methods was cited. She raised concerns over the involvement of children and young people in the early stages of the project and sought assurances that sufficient engagement

had taken place. She sought further guarantees that children and young people would be able to reconnect as a result of the decision. Mr Stepto agreed with the reasons set out by Dr Sullivan.

3. Mr Hook questioned whether the Programme budget of £10m would be sufficient to deliver a 16 month project across Kent; how the Programme targeted those most in need; and whether Officer provision had been appropriately allocated.
4. The Chairman invited Mrs Chandler to outline the justification for the decision. Mrs Chandler provided context and reminded Members that the Reconnect Programme constituted a Covid-19 response programme. She recognised that children and young people had been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and that there was a resulting need to address vulnerabilities. She confirmed that the Programme would be open to all children and young people in Kent. It was noted that many other authorities and organisations in Kent had indicated their interest to support the initiative. Reassurance was given that the Programme comprised additional fixed term provisions and did not involve a remodelling of existing permanent services.
5. Mr Gough welcomed consideration of the decision by Scrutiny. He reminded the Committee that children in Kent were the collective responsibility of Members. He confirmed that all opposition Group Leaders were invited to Cabinet when the decision was originally considered. In relation to engagement, he highlighted the role of the Young Persons Steering Group, as detailed in 4.4 of the decision report, as a conduit for the receiving the views of young people. The Programme's objectives were addressed, he recognised the challenge of measuring the effectiveness of delivery, when the scale and variety of contributing factors which influenced the lives of young people were considered. He provided an example of the challenge, that if the attainment gap had not returned to pre-pandemic levels, this did not necessarily mean that the Programme had failed. In relation to local and Member involvement, Mr Gough welcomed the participation of Local Children's Partnership Groups (LCPGs) and recognised that Member evaluation at committees would be vital for judging overall effectiveness.
6. Mr Dunkley provided further details and reassurance. He set out the differences between the Reconnect Programme and other fixed term programmes previously delivered by KCC. He noted that data collected by KCC had demonstrated that children and young people in Kent had been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Members were reminded that the £10m project cost was covered by £7.5m from the Covid-19 reserve and £2.5m from the Containing Outbreaks Management Fund (COMF). He added that it was anticipated that further funding streams would be made available by Government, which would support with the successful achievement of Reconnect's objectives. Reassurance was given that existing networks would be used to engage with partners and children, with their feedback influencing the five project objectives. It was noted that Reconnect had been named by young people.
7. Mr Adams added that in excess of 2000 consultation responses had been received, which included more than 200 from parents and children. He verified that district council Chief Executives, Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue

Service had been engaged. It was confirmed that the Young Persons Steering Group would operate throughout the Programme's lifecycle and that the Reconnect Partnership Board would consider the role it played in funding decisions. He shared additional operational details and aspirations, which included maintaining a small programme team whilst using other services of the Council, such as commissioners, education staff and sports officers. It was emphasised that the approach taken sought to avoid duplication and encouraged greater service integration.

8. When asked what had been done to address travel barriers, Mrs Chandler remarked that the Programme would build partnerships with local organisations to ensure local people were identified and positively impacted. Mr Adams added that free travel formed a key part of the Programme and that following agreement with bus companies, 120,000 free tickets would be issued to children aged 10-18 for summer 2021, together with 40,000 family tickets. It was further noted that leisure passes had been secured, costing £25 for a six-week summer period, reduced to £10 for those children eligible for free school meals.
9. Mrs Chandler was asked how the quality of the services delivered as part of the programme would be assessed. She confirmed that the evaluation process relied heavily on feedback directly from children and young people, it was noted that long-term numerical evaluation would not adequately judge programme effectiveness.
10. A Member noted from their own observations that many grants provided through LCPGs as part of the Reconnect Programme had funded existing projects or services. Mrs Chandler was asked how it could be ensured that grants went towards additional services. She agreed to investigate the issue and meet with the Member outside the meeting.
11. Members stressed the need to draw a distinction between output and outcome when evaluating the effectiveness of Reconnect. Mr Gough replied that whilst many other services delivered by KCC in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic focused on short-term impact, Reconnect would have a longer-term legacy. He reassured the Committee that delivery would be analysed to sustain successes and learn lessons where required.
12. Direct operational oversight was raised by a Member, who noted that no Members sat on the Reconnect Partnership Board. They asked that the relationship between the Board and LCPGs be explained further. Mr Adams confirmed that a quarter of Programme funding would be managed through LCPGs, that each LCPG had decision making autonomy and that the role of the Delivery Board in relation to these decisions was to ensure there was no service duplication.
13. The need to benchmark Reconnect's performance against similar programmes in other counties of similar demographics was emphasised by a Member. It was asked that metrics including the rates of children's mental health referrals, school attendance and exclusions be compared. Mrs Chandler recognised the need for further preventative work on mental health and confirmed that as part of the Programme funding had been provided to HeadStart Kent, to expand their



services which build young people's resilience and mental wellbeing in schools. Mr Adams added that Headstart Kent had operated for two years and that the expansion of their services, which included a mentoring offer, had been made possible through a contract variation which extended to July 2022.

14. A Member asked how Reconnect engaged with 12-14 year olds who were not members of youth groups. Mrs Chandler acknowledged the need to provide an attractive offer for young people and cited Challenger Troop CIC as an example of an organisation which would attract and benefit the age group.
15. Members recommended that young people be given the opportunity to have a say on the funding of local schemes at the earliest possible stage.
16. In response to a question from a Member, Mrs Chandler confirmed that contract monitoring would be carried out by the Reconnect Partnership Board and LCPGs.
17. Mrs Chandler stressed that Reconnect was not wholly a summer holiday programme, though Members were reminded that it would encompass the 2021 and 2022 summer holidays. She confirmed that LCPG Chairmen, local providers and Youth Advisory Group (YAGs) would be engaged throughout the Programme's lifecycle. Members were encouraged to engage with these stakeholders.
18. Mrs Chandler thanked the Committee for their interest in the Reconnect Programme and confirmed that their comments would be considered during the rollout of the Programme.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee expressed comments but did not require reconsideration of the decision.

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**From:** Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

**To:** Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2021

**Topic:** **Update on Progress of the Loneliness and Social Isolation Select Committee Recommendations**

**Summary:** This report presents an update on the progress made against each of the recommendations to the Loneliness and Social Isolation Select Committee and an overview of Kent's position in relation to national developments.

**Recommendations:** Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to **NOTE** the progress of the Loneliness and Social Isolation Select Committee recommendations

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Select Committee on Loneliness and Social Isolation was convened formally. Having undertaken site visits, and considering both written and verbal testimonials, the committee approved its report and accompanying recommendations at a formal meeting on 18 February 2019.
- 1.2 The Select Committee duly submitted its report to Cabinet for comment and on 21 March 2019, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, presented the report to County Council for its endorsement.
- 1.3 On 26 July 2019, officers attended Scrutiny Committee to set out how they proposed to take the recommendations of the report forward.
- 1.4 In March 2020, the Select Committee was reconvened to receive an update on the progress made against each of the recommendations. This meeting was cancelled due to the lockdown measures implemented by Government in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.5 This report presents a summary of progress made against each recommendation. It should be noted that all projects have been impacted to some degree by the pandemic, either because this has halted activity or because a change in approach has been necessary.

## 2. Main report

- 2.1 The impact of loneliness and social isolation on both physical and mental health is well documented, with evidence showing loneliness can be as bad for health as obesity or smoking. Loneliness is also linked to increased risk of heart disease and stroke, depression, Alzheimer's and cognitive decline.
- 2.2 In response to this evidence and the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, the Government published its first strategy on loneliness and social isolation in October 2018. The first annual review of the 60 commitments made within that strategy was published in January 2020.

- 2.3 Key messages from the review are that civil society is key to reducing loneliness and that a whole society approach is essential. In addition, Government recognised that no one department holds the responsibility or the levers to tackle loneliness and that a cross government approach is needed.
- 2.4 The same ethos is reflected in Local Government Association (LGA) and National Association of Local Councils (NALC) "Reaching out: Guide to helping principal and local councils tackle loneliness" (published September 2019) which emphasises the need to take "a whole place, whole system view of 'community' ".
- 2.5 The LGA guide also recognises that loneliness needs to be tackled at a local level "through enabling people to make connections, increasing the number of relationships or quality of relationships that people have, linking people through technology and transport and creating the right environment through volunteering and developing community-based assets."
- 2.6 The recommendations of the Council's Select Committee reflect the importance of these types of approach. For example, the Kent County Council Civil Society Strategy outlines the role that individual residents as well as voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations play in building a connected society. A connected society enables the reduction of social isolation and loneliness by creating the right environment to increase the number and quality of social interactions that people have.
- 2.7 Cross directorate approaches to reducing social isolation and loneliness can be seen both through projects taking place within individual directorates, such as:
- recognition of the Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) offer to residents within the Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) Universal Wellbeing contract
  - the social prescribing plus pilot within the Community Warden Service which is supporting vulnerable residents to stay connected within their local communities and develop community assets.
- 2.8 The resilient communities' element of the Making a Difference Everyday Programme, in adult social care recognises the valuable contribution that communities make to the lives of residents and vice versa. It also recognises the role that adult social care can play in facilitating and enabling the development of communities that are supportive and inclusive of all residents.
- 2.9 The Government's annual review also provides updates in relation to social prescribing link workers for GP surgeries, the Let's Talk Loneliness Campaign and Office of National Statistics package of information on measuring loneliness.
- 2.10 In Kent, officers continue to work collaboratively with health colleagues in relation to social prescribing, most notably with the development of a single directory of community-based services for Kent and Medway that will provide

an invaluable tool for social prescribers to use when connecting people to community resources.

- 2.11 The government also announced that it would be investing an additional £2m in grant funding into their Building Connections fund which provides funding to community projects that connect people.
- 2.12 Recognising the role of the VCSE or 'civil' society in connecting people and communities, the KCC Civil Society Strategy, which is due to be published in December 2021, outlines a commitment to the Council's ongoing support for this sector. The types of support identified as part of the consultation include:
- access grants to small organisations for their core mission
  - opportunities to network
  - access to digital training and use of digital tools
  - access to expertise and
  - support to develop organisations.
- 2.13 The dementia friendly communities project has been in place in Kent since 2013. Its primary focus is on raising awareness of dementia within local communities and creating a supportive community environment in which people living with dementia can continue to live the life they want. This has included the development across the county of dementia cafes, many of which have been set up and run by the local community. Officers are building on the lessons learnt from this project, and as we move towards 'friendly' communities. For example, by developing the existing Dementia Friendly Business Recognition Symbol to reflect inclusion for people with invisible disabilities.
- 2.14 The inclusion of access to digital training and use of digital tools, for example, the Kara project, reflects the increasing importance of digital technology not only to help organisations develop and build their capacity, but also to create and sustain social connections. This is reflected in the LGA guidance and is being explored further in Kent through projects such as Empower Care. This is a three-year Interreg funded project which aims to combine three areas of activity: empowerment, technology strategies and workforce development to create resilience communities and reduce social isolation. It builds on the ESTHER (what matters to you?) model of care which places a person at the centre of decision making about the care they receive.
- 2.15 Further detailed updates on the individual recommendations can be found in Appendix 1.

### **3. Summary**

- 3.1 The select committee on social isolation and loneliness identified 11 recommendations on how to address this issue within Kent. However, subsequent conversations with the panel convened as part of those recommendations has illustrated the need to embed an awareness and commitment to addressing social isolation and loneliness across the Council as a core part of our work.

- 3.2 The recommendations of the select committee reflect the findings, recommendations and key points from the Government's initial and one year on report on social isolation and loneliness and recommendations from the LGA guide.
- 3.3 It is also clear that directorates within the Council are working collaboratively not only to implement and embed the recommendations of the select committee but to address social isolation and loneliness more broadly through other projects and initiatives illustrating a commitment to address this issue and improve wellbeing for residents.

#### **4. Recommendation**

4.1 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to <b>NOTE</b> the progress of the Loneliness and Social Isolation Select Committee recommendations
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#### **5. Background Documents**

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport/Office for Civil Society –  
Loneliness Annual Report: the first year  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/loneliness-annual-report-the-first-year>

Local Government Association – Reaching Out Guide  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/reaching-out>

## Appendix 1

### Progress Update: Loneliness and Social Isolation Select Committee Recommendations

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
<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>A work plan had been developed in relation to this recommendation that included setting up and attending existing focus groups and forums to develop an approach, undertaking field work with representative groups, such as the People's Panel and looking for additional opportunities to engage with people, such as public libraries.</p> <p>Due to the Coronavirus pandemic much of this activity was not able to happen.</p> <p><b>Loneliness and Social Isolation e-survey</b></p> <p>The Adult Social Care Engagement Team undertook an online 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 before and as a result of lockdown measures introduced during the pandemic.</p> <p>The survey was sent electronically to approximately 2,000 individuals, voluntary organisations, Parish and District councils, religious organisations and other groups across Kent. Some of the organisations/groups then posted/shared the survey wider across their own websites or social media platforms, e.g. Teston Parish Council shared the survey on their Facebook page, Deal Town Council forwarded it onto all their staff and council members and the Kent Association of Local Councils included a news article to promote the survey in the KCC section of KALC News, their monthly newsletter. 261 people responded to the survey overall, although not</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>everyone responded to every question. Within the survey, people were asked how often they had felt lonely in the last six weeks. 97 people (37%) said they had felt lonely all of the time or often and 81 people (31%) said they had felt lonely some of the time. 135 people (52%) said this wasn't usual for them and 153 people (59%) thought this was in response to lockdown.</p> <p>The survey also asked about people's awareness of the support that was available to them in their communities and about gaps in community resources.</p> <p><b>Other engagement activity</b> Members of the Innovation Delivery Team have visited Kent's libraries over the past three months as part of the Your Voice roadshow to gather insight into people's awareness, understanding and experience of adult social care. This is part of an ongoing focus within the adult social care Making a Difference Everyday Programme, of ensuring that the person's voice is heard and listened to across all our services. Officers spoke to 126 people across the county, asking them a range of questions about their understanding of what adult social care does, their experience of adult social care and what is important to them. In response to the last question, the majority of responses (10.37%) was "support to remain independent".</p> <p><b>Ongoing Engagement</b> The Adult social care strategy consultation is currently open and closes on 24 October 2021. The strategy is the beginning of the public conversation and there will be some key projects</p>	



Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>to get involved with over the next few months.            People are also being invited to join the Your Voice network – an opportunity to engage more with adult social care and make sure that the opinions of people are represented and heard.            People can engage at four levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register for updates</li> <li>• Join our discussions</li> <li>• Be part of our projects</li> <li>• Shape social care</li> </ul>	
<p>2. 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>At the meeting held on 26 July 2019, Scrutiny Committee agreed that relevant elements of this recommendation would be discharged through the development of a Civil Society Strategy. After a Covid-related delay, The Kent County Council Civil Society Strategy went out to public consultation on 6 September 2021 for a 4-week period. The consultation closed on 3 October 2021.</p> <p>The <i>KCC Civil Society strategy replaces the 2015 VCS Policy</i> and is also a key strategy in delivering against the outcomes of the Council's <a href="#">Interim Strategic plan</a>.</p> <p>The Aims and objectives of the strategy are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a recognition of the contribution of civil society in Kent and the VCSE (the 'social sector') as a core part of that</li> <li>2. a commitment to supporting civil society to flourish</li> <li>3. a commitment to a strategic relationship with the social sector that recognises its diversity and goes beyond those that have a financial relationship with the Council</li> <li>4. a commitment to build on the partnership working we have seen over the last year between both public sector</li> </ol>	<p>In progress            Completion            November 2021</p>

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>partners and the VCSE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. a commitment to support the social sector to be sustainable</li> <li>6. a commitment to safeguarding the independence of VCSE organisations.</li> </ol> <p>It will be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to shape our relationship with civil society in the future and the social sector as a core part of that</li> <li>• to provide a framework to guide the approach to the Council's engagement with the social sector</li> <li>• to provide consistency in our approach to grant funding to the social sector</li> <li>• to shape our commitment to an offer of support to the social sector and the principles which underpin it, including fair funding.</li> </ul> <p>It has been developed through ongoing engagement with the sector and sector representative bodies.</p> <p>In its first annual report on the loneliness strategy, HM Government recognises that "Civil society is key to reducing loneliness". Therefore, by recognising and supporting a civil society in Kent, we will be able to actively address the issue of social isolation and loneliness.</p> <p>Following the period of formal public consultation, the revised draft is scheduled to be discussed at Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 9 November 2021 and the final draft will go to Cabinet for endorsement on 9 December 2021.</p>	

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
<p>3. KCC should organise a high-profile event to launch its strategy. 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>Prior to the Covid pandemic a launch of the strategy had been planned to take place in Sessions House, Maidstone. Given the current climate, the new strategy is likely to be launched digitally through KCC communications and social media.</p> <p>Please see recommendation 8 for more information of the campaign.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>4. 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><b><u>Single online source of information</u></b></p> <p>Officers have been working with colleagues from Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (Integrated Care Commissioning Team) and local voluntary sector organisations to implement a Kent and Medway Directory of Services (DOS) for community-based activities, resources and support.</p> <p>DOS provide information about activities, groups and organisations that are operating in local areas and are an essential tool for residents, social prescribers and other signposting professionals seeking to link people to activities that can support them.</p> <p>The new platform will bring together four existing public facing online DOS into one Kent and Medway directory.</p> <p>The current directories are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect Well East Kent: covering East Kent (Folkestone, Hythe, Ashford, Canterbury, Herne Bay, Whitstable and Faversham). Owned and operated by Social Enterprise Kent</li> <li>• Connect Well Kent: covering Canterbury, Faversham, Whitstable, Herne Bay, Sandwich and Ash: owned and</li> </ul>	<p>In progress. Completion November 2021</p>

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>operated by Red Zebra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect Well West Kent: covering West Kent. Owned and operated by Involve Kent</li> <li>• Simply Connect: Covering Medway. Owned and operated by Imago Medway</li> </ul> <p>By bringing all of these together into one platform we will reduce duplication of information and quality assurance of community assets, reduce confusion for residents about which platform to use, especially for those living on or near area boundaries, ensure longer term sustainability of the information and fill gaps where DOS do not currently exist.</p> <p>The Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector organisations that own and administer the existing directories, have agreed to play a key role in the ongoing maintenance and quality assurance of the content of the directories – providing a positive, local solution to the ongoing resource and commitment issue that frequently accompanies such large directories of information.</p> <p>Officers from Kent County Council are involved and actively supporting the project as a direct result of the recommendation of the Select Committee.</p> <p>The Kent and Medway platform is being developed by Simply Connect and is expected to go live in November 2021.</p>	

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p><b><u>Single telephone contact number</u></b></p> <p>Officers recognise there are many numbers already available for people who are socially isolated to contact for advice and support. For example, community navigation contracted providers, KCC contact point, providers (such as Age UK).</p> <p>Whilst community navigation providers are well placed to signpost people and deliver social prescribing services, publicising these numbers widely holds an inherent risk to the capacity of the contracted organisations to meet additional demand, without additional funding.</p> <p>In addition, the new community-based wellbeing contracts are being let in a phased approach as part of the process of moving historic adult social care grants onto contracts. These contracts will provide services that people can access directly, but also will provide an element of signposting.</p> <p>Contracts are already in place (Started 1 April 2021) for West Kent, East Kent Coast (Thanet, Dover, Folkestone &amp; Hythe) Contracts currently in procurement for a planned contract start date of 1 April 2022 are North Kent (DGS) and East Kent (Ashford, Canterbury, Swale).</p> <p>While there is still the aspiration for a single brand and number, a single phone number may not be achievable, although it will be explored.</p>	
5. The Committee fully endorses the social prescribing model, which enables organisations to refer people – including those	Interreg funding was secured by partners in France and England to deliver the Connected Communities project. Through this initiative, a new Social Prescribing Plus (SP+)	Complete

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
<p>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>service is being tested in several pilot areas in Kent by the Public Protection Group which has significant experience working on the front line with residents, with vulnerable residents, and within communities, for example tackling anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The project offers the Community Warden service (within the Public Protection Group) the opportunity to formally recognise this aspect of their role by developing a Social Prescribing Plus (SP+) model that is being tested during the project and evaluated by University of Essex.</p> <p>The new role of Community Connector provides home visits to isolated and vulnerable older residents aged 65 and over, who live independently in their own homes. The Community Connectors take traditional office-based services out into the community. They ask what interests and hobbies the individual has and then connect them with relevant events and groups nearby. The aim is to link isolated, vulnerable older people, who might otherwise repeatedly visit their GP through loneliness rather than medical need, with social groups and regular activities in their communities.</p> <p>The increased social activity should help older and isolated individuals feel more connected and involved with their community, local activities and regular social groups so they are able to make friends and build their resilience.</p> <p>Eight part time community connectors recruited from within the existing warden service work in four pilot areas. Pilot areas generally comprise two to three wards within each of the following districts. Pilot areas were identified using data</p>	

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>analysed by the Kent Public Health Observatory (KPHO) along with supporting datasets such as the Age UK Loneliness heat maps and local knowledge. In the Summer of 2021, low case numbers prompted a review of the original pilot area selection. As a result the footprint for Folkestone and Sheerness have been expanded, to enable the service to be available to more residents. The Thanet pilot wards were switched in recognition that other existing SP providers were covering this area, and therefore other areas with similar need within Thanet were identified; Westgate-on-sea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Folkestone</li> <li>• Maidstone</li> <li>• Thanet</li> <li>• Sheerness</li> </ul> <p>The 8 part-time community connectors have been operational since March 2021. Case numbers have been slow to pick-up initially, and this has been a similar experience for some other partners, and expected to be linked to the pandemic. However, a number of cases have and are progressing with success stories and case studies being collected.</p> <p>The project aims to build strong support networks in the pilot areas so local people such as shop workers, local business owners, neighbour and volunteer groups are more aware of older and isolated people in their community. The aim is that they will identify these individuals and signpost the Community Connector to them and maybe even provide some support or</p>	

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>companionship, possibly by organising local events and activities themselves.</p> <p>This will be achieved through campaigns and training to educate organisations, local groups and individuals to support older people in the pilot areas, so they are better informed and more resilient to potential threats to their independence such as scams, doorstep crime, loneliness and isolation. The aim is that through the support network, vulnerable, older residents get the help they need and are protected against scams, doorstep criminals and fraudsters.</p> <p>There will also be a focus on working alongside and creating referral pathways between other social prescribing and community navigation schemes that operate in the pilot areas, including the Dementia Friendly Communities team.</p> <p>The Connected Communities initiative involves local authority and academic partners from England and France. Through cross border collaboration Kent will also share knowledge with and learn from other partners.</p> <p>An internal Connected Communities Project Board is established to provide robust Project Management governance arrangements for KCC. The senior responsible officer (Legal Person) in KCC for the Connected Communities project and Chair of the Project Board is Head of Public Protection.</p> <p>As noted in the officer response to the select committee recommendations, Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) offers a suite of services in addition to the community warden</p>	



Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>service and community assets that can receive social prescriptions. Many of these, such as libraries, are listed in the Simply Connect social prescribing directory of service. This offer is also referenced directly in the service specification for the new Universal Wellbeing Service. The key elements include:</p> <p>a) The Provider is expected to work in partnership with other community services in Kent to ensure effective partnerships are developed and the best use of resources are achieved. The type of services should include, but are not limited to those shown below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live Well Kent</li> <li>• Community Navigators</li> <li>• Kent Advocacy Services</li> <li>• Home Improvement Agencies</li> <li>• Carers Services;</li> <li>• Home Care Services;</li> <li>• Arts, cultural and heritage providers; and</li> <li>• Sports and physical activity providers</li> </ul> <p>b) Providers will be expected to consider asset-based approaches in coordination with other KCC and community services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trading Standards (Victim Support)</li> <li>• Community Wardens</li> <li>• Libraries (events &amp; schemes)</li> <li>• Kent Country Parks (e.g., easy access walks)</li> <li>• Countryside Management Partnerships (including mental health and conservation volunteering programmes)</li> <li>• Explore Kent (promotion of green spaces); and</li> </ul>	

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KCC Kent Sport (information at <a href="http://www.kentsport.org">www.kentsport.org</a>)</li> </ul> <p>These requirements are also reflected in the tender evaluation questions.</p> <p>ASCH and GET are also actively seeking ways to work more closely together in future for the benefit of residents. Representatives from GET recently attended a workshop with the Adult Social Care Practice Test and Build team to talk about the services that they provide. The recording of this meeting is being shared throughout adult social care as part of a regular newsletter and follow up workshops will take place.</p> <p>A key feature of the resilient community's element of the adult social care Making a Difference Everyday programme is to define and establish closer, collaborative ways of working between adult social care teams, local communities and organisations delivering services in local areas – engaging more effectively with GET colleagues is a key strand in this process.</p>	
<p>6. 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</p>	<p>Kent Karrier is a wholly discretionary public transport service and forms part of the supported bus budget. It is accessible to residents over the age of 85, residents who have a medical condition that makes travelling on public transport difficult and residents who live in a rural area more than 500 meters from a bus route or railway station.</p> <p>The service provides a door-to-door service from resident's homes to a nearby supermarket using minibuses. There is a £5 membership fee to residents using the service and a fare of</p>	<p>In progress Completion October 2021</p>

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>between £2.00 (from urban areas) to £3.50 (from rural areas). The service is delivered through contracted providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanet Community Transport Association (Thanet, Folkestone, Hythe, Canterbury and Dover)</li> <li>• Compaid (rest of the county)</li> </ul> <p>The service is monitored to understand demand on existing routes.</p> <p>The Public Transport team also provide information and advice and grants to community transport groups and is currently engaged in developing a Bus Service Improvement Plan for Kent in response to the National Bus Strategy. This plan includes the development of Enhanced Partnerships.</p> <p>The Improvement Plan which needs to be in place by 31 October 2021 includes proposed initiatives addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network development</li> <li>• Alternative delivery methods, including an initiative to continue Kent's positive work with respect to community transport, continuing to refine a toolkit to support the growth of the sector and to run grant schemes to provide capital funding to key projects.</li> <li>• Fares and ticketing</li> <li>• Infrastructure and priority</li> <li>• Environment and Air quality</li> <li>• Innovation and digital accessibility</li> <li>• Public transport information</li> <li>• Highways and network management</li> </ul>	

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
<p>7. 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' and 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.</p> <p>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 provide a number of pilot routes for a 12 month period. This Rural Transport Initiative (RTI) pilots new or amended bus routes, including taxi bus, hopper service and feeder service, and uses smaller vehicles where numbers on existing routes are low making routes commercially unviable.</p> <p>Three of the pilots began in July 2019 and were scheduled to end in June 2020, with the Maidstone pilots commencing in February 2020 and ending in February 2021. The pilots operate off peak, Monday to Friday, meaning that the Council can make better use of some vehicles that are used for other purposes such as school transport.</p> <p>Three pilots include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenterden Hopper:</li> <li>• Sandwich Connect</li> <li>• Sevenoaks Taxi Bus</li> <li>• Service 58:</li> <li>• Services 13 &amp; 59</li> </ul>	<p>In progress</p> <p>Completion October 2021</p>

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	All of the above pilot schemes were being monitored using passenger usage information but were on hold due to the pandemic.	
<p>8. 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>	<p>A small working group of officers has been working to design and plan the campaign. The focus of the campaign was to be twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making people who are experiencing loneliness aware of the support that is available to them</li> <li>• Encouraging people to engage in informal volunteering / neighbourliness through small acts of kindness to support vulnerable people within their community</li> </ul> <p>However, it came to the attention of this group that Kent Community Foundation (KCF) are running a 'knock and check' campaign through the winter.</p> <p>The focus of this campaign was on promoting acts of neighbourliness, such as those seen at the beginning of the Covid -19 pandemic, where people would knock on their neighbours door to make sure that they were OK and ask whether they needed anything. The idea being that this would be essential in supporting vulnerable people in the community through the winter months.</p> <p>Rather than risk duplicating or risking the impact of a campaign that was more fully developed, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health agreed to endorse and promote the KCF campaign which was subsequently launched on 26 October 2020.</p>	Complete

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>This approach not only prevented duplication but gave the KCF campaign wider reach and built on the partnership working we have undertaken with KCF and others during Covid as part of the recovery work.</p> <p>The campaign had over 50 separate pieces of media coverage and the booklet they produced had over 1000 views.</p>	
<p>9. 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 made contact with Campaign to End Loneliness who worked with the government on both the strategy and the employer's pledge. During these conversations, it became clear that there is no pledge per se for employers to sign up to. However, there is a Loneliness Employers Leadership Group that "aims to support the take up and impact of the "Employer Loneliness pledge" as a first step in increasing the knowledge of "what works" and the quality and quantity of action to tackle loneliness and connectedness across the economy."</p> <p>KCC signed up to this group and was the only public sector organisation represented. The group intended to publish a good practice guide in spring 2020 and an officer from the Council's Human Resources team attended a meeting of the group on 24 March 2020.</p> <p>Due to covid work on this has been suspended. It is unclear if or when it will begin again.</p> <p>In KCC work has focused on developing a range of materials, support and virtual resources that can support employees isolated through home working as a result of the pandemic.</p>	Complete

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
<p>10. 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>Officers recognise the importance of building an evidence base for services and interventions funded through public money. When designing impact measures, it is important to consider what we want to measure, how we want to measure it, who will be involved and what we want to understand from the information collected.</p> <p>In relation to social isolation and loneliness, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published an outcomes measurement tool, package of information and methodological guidance for using it. This tool is being included in government surveys, as well as the Public Health Outcomes Framework and is endorsed by Community Fund and What Works Wellbeing in "A brief guide to measuring loneliness for the charities and social enterprises".</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often do you feel you lack companionship?</li> <li>• How often do you feel left out?</li> <li>• How often do you feel isolation from others?</li> </ul> <p>And a fourth direct question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often do you feel lonely?</li> </ul> <p>In light of this and after conversations with voluntary sector providers delivering social prescribing and community-based services, officers have reviewed their initial response to this recommendation and determined that while the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) currently being used by the Public Health Division is an appropriate measure of</p>	<p>Complete</p>

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>wellbeing, it does not measure social isolation and loneliness directly.</p> <p>Officers have therefore concluded that the preferred method to measure social isolation and loneliness is the ONS tool. The specification for Universal Wellbeing Services is outcomes focused. This means that KCC as commissioner has specified the outcomes that the services provided should achieve but has left scope for the bidding providers to identify how they will achieve the outcomes. Personal outcomes were identified through a co-design and consultation process. The specification also includes system and outcomes, however because the contract does not specify what services should be delivered in order to meet the outcomes, it cannot really specify how impact should be measured. Therefore, bidding providers are also asked as part of the evaluation process to identify how they will measure and evidence that outcomes are being achieved.</p> <p>This leaves scope for KCC to work with successful providers to build ONS Social Isolation and Loneliness Measure into the evaluation methodology for the services they provide.</p>	
<p>11. 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.</p>	<p>A panel was established in response to this recommendation. The panel was set up by Cllr Ken Pugh, who also chairs it, and consisted of elected members who were also members of the Select Committee.</p> <p>There was one meeting of the panel on 22 January 2020 when officers attended to provide an update regarding progress towards the select committee recommendations. This was a positive and supportive meeting and illustrated member interest</p>	Complete



Recommendation	Progress to date	Status
	<p>in the issue of social isolation and loneliness across the whole organisation. There was a recognition that the issues of social isolation and loneliness extend beyond the recommendations of the committee and there was a positive conversation about how to embed awareness of the issue across the Council so that we can see a system wide approach being implemented.</p> <p>Moving forward, work around social isolation and loneliness is referenced in the 2020-23 Strategic Delivery Plan, under Theme 5 Stronger and Safer Communities. Specifically, Item 20 is about promoting a strong civil society and tackling social isolation and loneliness through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering the Civil Society Strategy, including developing infrastructure support to Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE)</li> <li>• Delivering the Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan</li> </ul> <p>Within the relevant directorates, work will broaden beyond implementing the recommendations of the Select Committee to include ongoing cross directorate projects such as Universal Wellbeing Support. Consideration will be given to how social care practise needs to consider and respond to social isolation and loneliness alongside wider discussions about how and what we commission.</p> <p>As such, this work will become integrated into business as usual for directorates. Oversight and monitoring of the work will be undertaken through established governance processes within individual directorates and the Council.</p>	



From: Gaetano Romagnuolo, Research Officer - Overview & Scrutiny

To: **Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2021**

Subject: Short Focused Inquiry – Home to School Transport

Classification: **Unrestricted**

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## 1. Introduction

- a) At its meeting of 7 July 2021, the Scrutiny Committee agreed that the work programme for Short Focused Inquiries (SFIs) should include an inquiry into home to school transport in Kent.
- b) When considering whether to assist with home to school transport, local authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. Kent County Council is the largest local authority in England, and the demands placed on its educational transport reflect its size, population and closeness to London.
- c) As a requirement of the SFI process, an initial briefing - that offers some background information and figures in relation to home to school transport in Kent - was recently provided by the relevant KCC Directorates (CYPE and GET).
- d) The briefing and information will aid the scoping meeting between representatives of the Scrutiny Committee, which is being arranged, where the inquiry's remit will be discussed and agreed.
- e) Following the scoping meeting, a limited number of evidence gathering briefings will be organised. This oral evidence will be complemented with the collection of written evidence from a variety of sources.
- f) Following the evidence gathering process, the Committee will reconvene to discuss its key findings and any recommendations it wishes to make. The key findings and recommendations will be included in a draft report which will be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for formal consideration. If the report and its recommendations are formally agreed by the Scrutiny Committee, the report will be submitted to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member(s) for a response within two months.

## 2. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to **note** the update on the Short-Focused Inquiry on Home to School Transport

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By: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Scrutiny Committee, 13 October 2021

Subject: Work Programme 2021

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Summary: This report gives details of the proposed work programme for the Scrutiny Committee.

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## **1. Introduction**

- a) Any Member of the Council is entitled to give notice that they wish an item relevant to the functions of the Committee (which is not an excluded matter) to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting.
- b) The definition of an excluded matter referenced above is:
  - a. Any matter relating to a planning or licensing decision,
  - b. Any matter relating to a person in respect of which that person has a right of recourse to a review of right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment,
  - c. Any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included in the agenda or discussion at a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
- c) The Scrutiny Committee has the ability to 'call-in' decisions made by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members. Any two Members from more than one Political Group may give notice within five clear working days from the publication of a decision taken of their wish to call-in the decision.

## **2. Recommendation**

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and note the report.

## **Background Documents**

None

## **Contact Details**

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## Work Programme - Scrutiny Committee 13 October 2021

### 1. Items identified for upcoming meetings

24 November 2021 – 2.30pm start	
Item	Item background
Management and Effectiveness of the Covid Support Grant ( <i>Leader and Director of Finance</i> )	To receive an update on the general use of the Covid Grant and detailed update and progress report.  Requested by the Leader of the Opposition and agreed by Chairman and spokespeople that this will be considered at November meeting.
Potential Draft SFI Final Report on Home to School Transport	SFI review in progress

15 December 2021 – 2.30pm start	
Item	Item background
Reconnect Programme	Update post summer following call-in of Reconnect Decision by Scrutiny Committee in July 2021.
Potential – Property Portfolio of KCC – management and maintenance	Maintenance of KCC's property portfolio – item requested by the Scrutiny Chairman

January 2022	
Item	Item background
Draft 2022/2023 Budget and Medium Term Plan	

March 2022	
Item	Item background
Asylum/Migration Update	Following request made at the All-Member Briefing in September 2021. 6-month update.

### 2. Items yet to be scheduled

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