

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

Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, 13 July 2021

Subject: Kent Public Service Network Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – early 2022

Electoral Division: All

Summary: The Kent Public Sector Network Partnership provides a Wide Area Service Network across the County. Hosted by KCC, the service ensures that those who access the service across the public sector, have access to secure, resilient networks, which achieve Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance. The network has evolved from 14 Local Government Partners across 900 sites, to 28 multi-agency Partners across 1500 sites including Schools, Blue Light Services, Universities and NHS. This report updates Members on Partnership activity and next steps.

Recommendation(s):

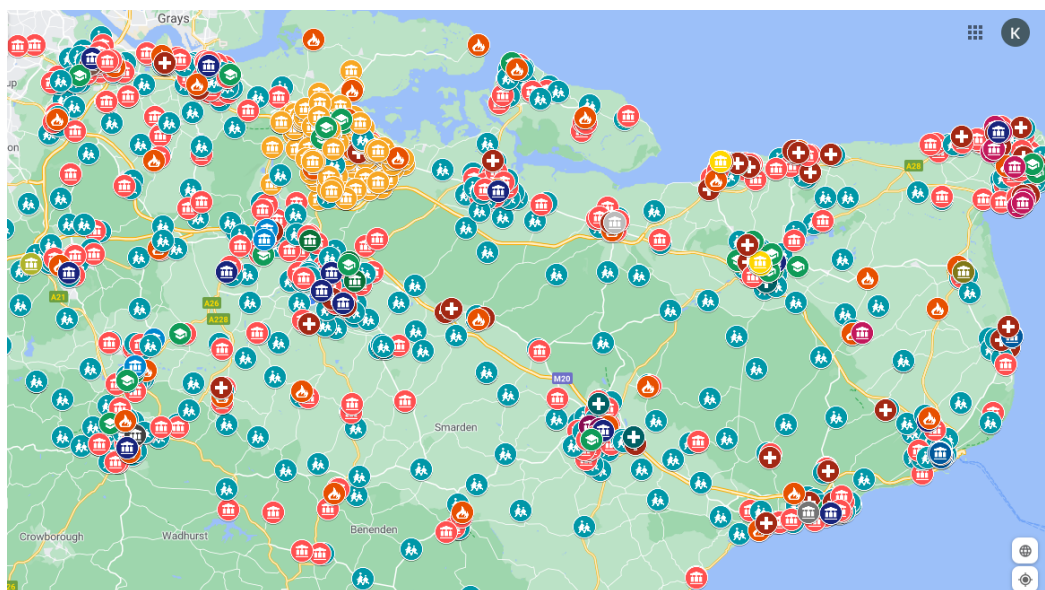
The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee are asked to note the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Kent Public Service network was first established in 2009 to provide a Wide Area Network across the County. It provides a secure, resilient network which is compliant with the Public Sector Network (PSN) requirements, as set out by central government. The network is hosted by KCC and has evolved from 14 Local Government Partners across 900 sites, to 28 multi-agency Partners across 1500 sites including Schools, Blue Light Services, Universities and NHS.
- 1.2 KPSN provides Internet access, web filtering, mail filtering, remote access services and cyber security protection.
- 1.3 The Kent Public Service Network is a not-for-profit Partnership and represents a net nil budget to the Council. Being a partnership, KPSN is not a legal entity and consequently the Council is the contract owner. The financial liability of the Council is protected by a legally binding Partnership Service Agreement, which all Partners must sign before services are delivered.

1.4 The KPSN Partnership is constituted through a broad range of mostly public sector organisations which are set out in the table below:

Kent County Council	North East London CSU	Dover DC
Cantium Business Services	Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust	Gravesham BC
Medway Unitary Council	Medway Community Health	Folkestone & Hythe DC
University of Kent	East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust	Maidstone BC
Canterbury Christchurch University	Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells Trust	Sevenoaks DC
University of Greenwich	Janet UK (Jisc)	Swale DC
University of the Creative Arts	Ashford BC	Thanet DC
Kent Fire & Rescue	Canterbury CC	Tonbridge & Malling BC
Kent Police	Dartford DC	Tunbridge Wells BC
University of the Creative Arts (UCA)		



KPSN network sites

1.5 Through its broad range of Partners, KPSN is well-placed to support many of the partnership initiatives which are underway in Kent, as well as enabling mutual support between Partner organisations. The KPSN network has played a major role in preparing the region for potential Brexit disruptions, with features such as Gov Roam allowing partners to access home systems from any site using KPSN. The resilient stable telecommunications service has underpinned the response to COVID-19 and lockdown induced homeworking.

1.6 KPSN is the perfect vehicle for emerging initiatives such as Internet of Things (IoT) to support the delivery of services across the partnership. For KCC this includes the application of IOT technology to support, care, highways, estate and environment uses, amongst others.

2. Current Contract

2.1 The KPSN Partnership is managed by a small team within Kent County Council, who although employed by the Council, are funded through Partnership subscriptions.

2.2 The Partnership is governed via an Executive Board (strategic), Management Board (tactical), and Technical Group (operational).

2.3 The KPSN contract was awarded to Daisy Udata Communications Ltd on 8th August 2014 for a maximum 10-year term until 2024. The Partners agreed to run to the full term to provide Partners with a period of stability following the Pandemic and to establish a 'new normal'. The paradigm shift in working arrangements for the majority staff for all KPSN Partners has caused significant disruption to corporate and technology strategies. Organisations need to be given the time and space to work these new requirements into their technology strategies in order for KPSN meet these obligations.

2.4 As we move towards 2024, KCC is preparing with its partners, to move forward with a re-procurement programme. To inform this, the KPSN Team will shortly publish a Prior Information Notice (PIN) to supplement the market research undertaken to date and commence the development of a new specification.

2.5 The information gathered from the PIN will be combined with further Partner engagement to ensure that the resulting Specification fully meets the requirements of all our Partners. The project team are working to complete this by the end of 2021 (FY) and an indicative procurement timetable is set out below along with key decision dates.

2.6 The KPSN team entered into exploratory talks with Essex County Council with a view to a joint procurement exercise, which offered the possibility of reducing procurement and operating costs. However, differences in strategic goals and procurement timescales meant that this was not a practical proposition.

Task	Date
KPSN/Partner/Essex CC Discussions	Jan – Feb 2020
Pre-Market Research and Partner Engagement	Mar – June 2020
Stakeholder Engagement Workshop #1	Aug 2020
Pre-Market Research review (KPSN & ECC)	Sept 2020
Options Appraisals Meetings (KPSN & ECC)	Sept – Nov 2020
Stakeholder Engagement Workshop #2	Nov 2020
Project Development	Nov 2020 – May 2021
Stakeholder Engagement Workshop #3	TBD

KPSN & KCC Approvals Process re ECC	Withdrawn (Collaboration not proceeding)
Procurement Activity (PIN Activity)	Sept 2021 – Mar 2022
KPSN & KCC Business Case	Mar 2022 – July 2022
Procurement Activity (Tender)	Aug 2022 – July 2023
Onboarding and Implementation	Aug 2023 onwards

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The KPSN contract value is £75m over the life of the contract, of which all costs incurred are recharged to Partners. KCC pay for the services it receives from its technology budgets. An important feature of the network is that it is self-sustaining financially. The means to ensure that the network remains resilient and fit-for-purpose is provided through a renewals reserve and the eventual re-procurement will be funded through a procurement reserve. Each partner makes a contribution to the reserves, as part of their re-charges, to enable the replacement of end-of-life hardware and software. It also funds the programmed upgrades of circuits which go above 50% average utilisation, to maintain the required capacity as Partners' requirements flex and additional sites join the network.
- 3.2 The cost of the KPSN core infrastructure is fairly static, consequently the addition of new partners and/or sites, results in a decrease in the cost to existing Partners. Conversely, the loss of partners/sites potentially increases the cost.
- 3.3 This has been evidenced during 2020/21, particularly in the schools' sector. The schools' market has become significantly more competitive over recent years, and schools can be tempted by a cost reduction for what may appear to be an equivalent service. Recent well publicised ransomware attacks on schools demonstrate that this can be a costly policy.
- 3.4 There are also opportunities for growth, however, such as the potential addition of 700 private care homes to the network as part of the Digital Inclusion Programme, or Kent Highways utilising KPSN for street furniture or Traffic Management.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 KPSN is not a legal entity, and as such cannot procure, consequently Kent County Council is the Contract Owner. Partners are required to sign a legally binding Partnership Service Agreement before taking KPSN services.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 A full impact assessment will be conducted as part of the tender activity.

6. Other corporate implications

- 6.1 None.

7. Governance

7.1 As the contract is held by KCC, any re-procurement of the contract will require a key decision in accordance with KCC's constitution by the Cabinet Member in due course.

8. Conclusions

8.1 The KPSN contract has been a successful partnership arrangement which has facilitated connectivity across the public sector in Kent. This has proved invaluable to its partners. The current contract is due to expire in 2024. It is recognised the services currently provided by KPSN and its model will need to evolve to align to the partners forward strategy and advances in technology. The next stage of market engagement will explore this further as we approach the contract expiry. A further update will be prepared for the committee early in 2022.

9. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee are asked to note the report.

10. Background Documents

None.

11. Contact Details

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