Appendix: 1

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

Recommendation	Proposed action
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.	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. 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. 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. 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. Recommendation

Recommendation	Proposed action
	That this action be closed, and a social prescribing strategy will be developed.
2. KCC should produce a corporate strategy aimed at tacking 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	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 the role of volunteers in providing informal support to isolated people and creating social connections. 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. Recommendation 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 and will be embedded as a priority within the new Five-Year Plan when developed. A new Social Prescribing Strategy for Kent and Medway will set out the approach to social isolation and relevant actions with partners.
3 KCC should organise a high-profile event to launch its strategy.	Recommendation A strategy will not be delivered so this action will be closed and any launch of a social

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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.	prescribing strategy, will be discussed as appropriate.
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. 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	Single online source of information A single online source of information has been developed by a partnership of health, social care and social sector partners. This is indicative of greater partnership working over the last 18 months to work collaboratively, share resources and recognise opportunities for closer collaboration. 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. **Recommendation** • Agree that this element of the original recommendation is complete and closed.

Recommendation	Proposed action
	<u>Single contact number</u> 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. 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. **Recommendation** As part of the development of a social prescribing strategy: • 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. • Options identified should also consider the quantitative and qualitative benefits of a single phone number as well as an assessment of costs.
5 The Committee fully endorses the social prescribing model, which	<u>Endorsing the social prescribing model</u> 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.

Recommendation	Proposed action
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. 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.	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. <u>Connected Communities Pilot</u> The Interreg funded, Connected Communities pilot to develop social prescribing plus model within the Community Warden service is now fully active. 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. The pilot is running in wards within Folkestone, Maidstone, Ramsgate and Sheerness. **Recommendation** That this action is complete and closed.
6 KCC's Public Transport team should investigate the feasibility of expanding the Kent Karrier service,	Kent Karrier is a wholly discretionary public transport service and forms part of the supported bus budget.

Recommendation	Proposed action
and should continue to offer financial support and information to those who wish to introduce or expand a community transport service	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. Recommendation • 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.
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 tacking loneliness and social isolation.	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. 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. Recommendation • 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.

Recommendation	Proposed action
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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: • The consequences of loneliness and social isolation • The support that is available and how to access it	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. 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. Recommendation • 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.
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.	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. 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.

Recommendation	Proposed action
	Recommendation • 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.
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.	Officers recognise the importance of building an evidence base for services and interventions funded through public money. 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? 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. Recommendation • 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.
11 KCC should set up a panel – which should include KCC members – to monitor the effectiveness of	Recommendation 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.

Recommendation	Proposed action
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.