

WHAT THE COUNCIL ASKED LOCAL PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON AND HOW THESE VIEWS MADE A DIFFERENCE

1. Influencing strategy and policy development

1(1) 2010/11 Budget and Medium Term Plan (MTP) Consultation Process

The annual budget process provides formally for consultation with the public, Trade Unions, the business community, opposition Members and professional organisations.

A workshop was held on 10 October 2009 organised by Ipsos MORI. This is the fifth year that such a workshop has taken place in order to seek views from a representative sample of Kent residents about spending priorities and levels of Council Tax. The priorities and Council Tax levels identified by the representative groups closely match those in the draft Budget proposals.

A similar workshop session was undertaken with representatives from the Kent Youth County Council (KYCC) on 27 October 2009. As with the public event KYCC members were given the opportunity to express what their spending priorities would be and suggest an appropriate level of Council Tax.

A forum was held with Kent business leaders on 26 January 2010. This forum focussed on the proposed 2010/11 Budget and MTP 2010/13 with a particular emphasis on the benefits and implications for businesses in Kent.

Full details for each of the consultations are available at:

<http://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=9734>

1(2) Participatory budgeting events

The Community Liaison Managers Team supported four very successful Participatory budgeting events; nearly £70,000 of community funding has been allocated through a bidding process scored by members of the public. In addition to the public allocation of funding the participatory budgeting events have allowed individuals and organisations within a community to network and explore with each other ways in which they can work together more effectively for the benefit of the community.

1(3) Revised Complaints and Have Your Say Leaflet

Consultation on the new complaints booklet was carried out with ex complainants and members of the KASS participation group in East Kent. The feedback led to a revised combined complaints and 'Have your say' leaflet.

2. Influencing delivery and planning of "universal" services

2(1) Libraries and Archives

Libraries and Archives carried out its annual public satisfaction survey across 11 libraries - Ashford, Birchington, Hadlow, Marling Cross, Ramsgate, Sevenoaks, Sheerness, Swanley, Teynham, Tenterden and Tonbridge. The questionnaire asked customers (split into two groups – adults and children/young people) about overall service, the quality and condition of the

books, information services, access to the library and the condition of the libraries both externally and internally.

Each of the district teams has used this information in a localised action plan where improvements and changes to service points are being carried out or that have now been completed. These include changes to the layout and counter in Libraries, book exchanges at various libraries and improvements to ICT facilities.

All of the information has been fed back to customers using "*you said....we did...*" posters which are displayed in the libraries, some of this information is also posted onto the Kent Libraries Service's kent.gov.uk web pages.

The "Ask a Kent Librarian" survey evaluates user satisfaction with the service. A 25% random sample of the customers who used the service was surveyed. Looking at results over several years, general satisfaction with the service is fairly stable and at a consistently high level. A slow but steady decrease in satisfaction with the timeliness of responses (though still high at around 90%) was identified. The service's customer base was much smaller five years ago and enquiries could be dealt with much faster. The drop reflects the fact that the team is now dealing with enquiries coming in from two service points (A Kent Librarian and The Information Point) and with a higher level of demand, especially for information services for businesses since it has been provided for free to local companies. To address this trend, staffing patterns have been adapted to better meet demand.

2(2) Library open access and postal loan customer surveys:

Customer satisfaction and general feedback was sought through surveys to help with planning stock purchases and to help define the direction of the service. A percentage of the customers were surveyed over the phone and sometimes spoken with in person if staff were visiting them for any reason. Results were fed back to the Libraries and Archives business support team and to the senior management team. Where recommendations arose for a particular team, such as our transport team, then that was fed back to them directly. Information about stock choices is also given direct to publishers of audio books and large print books to help inform them as to future choices of published materials. Each year a targeted customer newsletter is produced and this includes information about what the service did in response to the information gathered through the surveys. The next newsletter is due in autumn 2010.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/libraries/using_the_library/customer_surveys.aspx

2(3) Registrations and ceremonies

Registrations and ceremonies regularly collect satisfaction survey data from customers about the services they receive. Results are routinely shared with their senior management team. The results of the surveys have influenced several aspects of the units operations, as well as confirming a consistently high level of customer satisfaction. Posters showing quarterly results are displayed in waiting areas.

Surveys were posted to a selection of customers who married or had a civil partnership with the Registration Service in 2009. Overall the results of this survey were very encouraging and a full report was submitted to the Strategic and Operational Leadership Teams. Various decisions have been made as a result of the consultation. For example, one major event was cut from the annual schedule and the service is looking at amalgamating several publications. Surveys provided in the packs given to the new citizens at their citizenship ceremonies gave extremely positive responses with few (if any) negative comments.

2(4) Kent Trading Standards

Kent Trading Standards continued to run regular satisfaction surveys with both consumers and businesses. Last year (2009/10) businesses were largely complimentary about its services though some were unhappy about unannounced visits.

Consumers said their top priorities are around: ensuring that traders don't persistently deny consumers' rights, scams and doorstep criminals. Dissatisfaction amongst consumers arises mainly because Trading Standards adopts an "intelligence led" approach to focus resources and so does not investigate each individual consumer problem reported to it. Such results have influenced the Trading Standards approach to communications which is now considering more effective ways to get across the message that it does use the complaints it receives to inform its "intelligence led" approach towards targeting campaigns and enforcement activity.

The service's Buy With Confidence scheme achieved a very high satisfaction level (98% overall) with the vast majority of customers very happy with the service received from traders in the scheme. Customers have also been recommending traders for inclusion onto the scheme (based on their own good experiences) and several new Members have joined the scheme as a result.

Trading standards also ran an underage purchases survey to find out how easy or difficult it is for underage young people to buy age-restricted products such as alcohol or cigarettes and where they get them from. The results suggested that most underage young people buy their alcohol & cigarettes through older friends and family members, but the survey was not representative so future activity will be done via connexions rather than volunteer schools.

Trading Standards also tested satisfaction levels with its Alerts service (email messages to community group representatives) to help identify areas where improvements could be made. A third of recipients reported feedback about the messages indicating 100% consider the messages useful; 96% say messages informative. Warnings about scams and doorstep criminals considered most useful. Majority of messages passed on to others. Some improvements in layout and format were identified and current messages are now also published in full on the Kent Trading Standards website.

2(5) Country Parks

The Country Parks Service commissioned a survey of park users to find out who their customers are, what activities they like to see at the Parks and what their views of the country parks are. Visitors were interviewed to find out their demographic profile, where they lived, what they thought of the service including management, catering, retail offer and events. An external organisation was commissioned to develop a small research project interviewing visitors at three different parks on different days of the week, and analysing and reporting on the results.

The information has been used to inform the Country Parks Plan and also marketing activities to increase visitor numbers. A review of events is currently under way and a range of options is being costed. Comments on catering at Shorne Woods have resulted in a review of the café layout and a new system for service is in place. Comments on retail have resulted in a review of retail policy.

Visitors were asked if they would like to receive feedback and this has been provided where they agreed. An e-newsletter is being developed to provide news online, with the first edition scheduled for September 2010. The Country Parks Annual Report now includes a section on how information gathered from visitor feedback has been used to improve the service.

2(6) Countryside Access Service

The Countryside Access Improvement Plan includes a series of key objectives to improve the rights of way network, with linked priorities concerned with improved quality of life in Kent.

The Sheppey Cycle Routes project is highlighted in the plan, and is linked to the health and wellbeing of Sheppey residents and to increase tourism opportunities. A consultation took place in February and March 2010, with the objective of obtaining views on the proposed routes. Responses were returned via a questionnaire on the KCC website, and through meetings in the Gateway at Sheerness and at the parish hall in Leysdown, facilitated with partners. An update of the project and responses to the consultation have been included within local newsletters and made available on the Explore Kent website.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside_access/countryside_access_improvement/highlighted_projects.aspx

Explore Kent undertook a customer survey to obtain feedback from their readers about the magazine. The feedback has provided a better understanding of what distribution methods are effective, what information is useful, and what improvements the readers want to see. Questionnaires were included in issues 17 & 18 of the magazine, and 230 responses were received. Findings are reported back to readers in subsequent editions of the magazine, and information received is used to improve the website. There were no additional costs to undertake this survey, as the questionnaire was printed with the magazine.

2(7) Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)

During 2009/10 HWRC established a mechanism for monitoring customer satisfaction of contractor performance in relation to set criteria. Feedback obtained will provide data for Key Performance Indicators in relation to contracts management. The system being established will allow Waste Services Officers to obtain data directly from site users whilst they are undertaking their routine inspections of the sites in relation to other contractual obligations. An online survey on customer satisfaction with HWRC is being made available on the KCC website, to give users additional means of telling us how well the HWRC are serving their needs.

The results of the customer satisfaction surveys feed into an existing contract report detailing overall performance on a site-by-site basis, which is shared with the contractors at high level meetings.

2(8) The Highway Tracker Survey

This is an annual satisfaction survey to gauge perception of the highway service. Carried out in November and December 2009, it sought views from residents, County Members, Parish/Town Councils and for the second time, District Members. The survey is conducted by an independent market research company called BMG and the information is used by the Director and Senior Management Team to identify actions to help improve service delivery.

A significant issue highlighted in the 2009 survey has been the reduction in satisfaction of residents with minor roads (rural and residential). As a result, an additional £6.4 million has been invested in the 'Find and Fix' campaign for minor roads where the extreme winter weather caused a great deal of damage. The Tracker Survey links to the regular key performance monitoring for the average time to repair a pothole. It also confirms the internal reporting mechanisms that demonstrate improved performance on street-lighting issues.

A summary of results is available on:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads_and_transport/highway_maintenance/fault_reporting/how_we_will_respond_to_you/residents_satisfaction_survey.aspx

2(9) The Kent Highway Services Call-back survey

This is a monthly 'temperature-check' to obtain customer feedback on requests for service from the highway-using public. Contact Centre agents call back 100 customers from those who have logged requests for service. Calls are made in the same proportion to the volume of calls received i.e. if 25% of calls relate to street-lighting, 25% of the calls are made to customers who have logged street-lighting requests. The caller is asked if they were happy or not with the overall level of service they received and this is reported in the core monitoring report to Cabinet. It is discussed at the monthly balanced scorecard meeting with the Director and reported each month to Team-leaders. Customers are also encouraged to provide qualitative feedback on the level of service received.

The information is used to inform month by month service improvements as well as longer-term strategy via the business plan process. This work forms an integral part of the service level agreement between KHS and the Contact Centre, and analysis, review and action are essential elements of KHS management activity.

2(10) Kent Design - To test how effectively the Guide is used, where it is not used and the barriers. There was a very poor response to this consultation, but those received confirmed that the main Kent Design Guide and the Interim Guidance Notes are used when needed. However, the daughter Technical Appendices and the Making It Happen documents are not. The exercise was very useful in building a better working relationship with all the LPA's and representatives from each (including Medway) now sit on the Kent Design Initiative (KDI) Steering Group, and have a direct influence and input into the KDI annual action plans.

2(11) Parish Council Liaison

Kent Highway Services engages systematically with communities via the Parish Council network. The Head of Community Operations meets bi-monthly with representatives of Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), where highways issues of particular interest or concern can be addressed. Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) are linked to specific parishes and County Members. Their remit is to build and maintain close working relationships, and be the first point of contact on any highway-related issue. Parishes have a responsibility for reporting routine fault matters direct either by phone to the Contact Centre single number or via the online fault reporting process.

Community Liaison Officers systematically report to their County Members on a monthly basis, and provide a daily contact facility for parishes. Twice a year (or by agreement with individual parishes) CLOs visit each parish in their area. They also handle correspondence, complaints and compliments, governed by KCC guidelines.

My Kent Highways Online is a dedicated website for parish councils and Members. It has password access to highways information and data. Users are able to report faults, track progress and look at programmes / schedules of work etc. Work is currently under way to upgrade this facility and extend it to District Council members. The engagement approach is consistently appreciated by parishes, and feedback is typically provided in the form of compliments.

2(12) Maintenance scheme consultation and after scheme surveys

Positive engagement with residents is essential to ensure that local maintenance schemes are carried out effectively, and with the minimum impact on local communities. Kent Highway Services notifies affected residents, businesses and also local County Members of the purpose, nature, timing and potential impact of road maintenance schemes that are planned for their locality. This is done via letter, which is delivered two weeks in advance of the start date for the works.

In addition to informing the local community in respect of the project, the letter also seeks to identify residents who may have special requirements in term of access so that arrangements can be made to mitigate the effect of the works. Details of such measures are communicated to those affected.

To assess customer satisfaction with works once completed, a system was set up in 2009/10 based on survey cards to stakeholders: A total of 15 schemes received feedback for resurfacing. The average satisfaction rate was high at 89%. Where residents were dissatisfied with an element of the scheme it was more often due to the quality of information that was provided, although there were also examples of residents unhappy with the timescales and quality of work.

Scheme comments and major points of feedback both positive and negative, are returned to the engineers in charge and managers were made aware of any issues that arose, or negative comments relating to schemes (e.g. night work). The value of this feedback was recognised and from April 2010, this data is now captured electronically via 'My Kent Highways Online', and, using the 'Balanced Scorecard', is systematically fed into KHS' monthly reporting process to assess customer satisfaction levels and improve the way things are done.

2(13) Major Road Projects Scheme consultation

When major road projects are carried out, an essential part of managing the contract is engagement with local communities. This activity enables project managers to integrate local needs and also equality considerations into project plans, to minimise adverse impact. In 2009/10, the major schemes have included 'East Kent Access', the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, Victoria Way, Ashford and the A2 slips, Canterbury.

Engineers involve a range of stakeholders in consultation activities connected with the schemes, starting with the local county Member. They also attend regular meetings of parish councils and residents' groups to discuss traffic management and to provide updates on the progress of the scheme. They discuss land-take and mitigation works. In some cases, engineers visit local schools to raise awareness about site-dangers.

2(14) Archaeology and community engagement:

The East Kent Access scheme is being developed across an area of Kent which is very rich in archaeology, and as part of the works package, the entire length of the site is being excavated at a cost of £6m. This is the largest excavation in Britain in 2010, covering approximately 40 hectares. This package provided great opportunities for community engagement, with community digs and group visits to the site from schools and community groups. Many local volunteers worked on the site under supervision of KCC's Heritage team, and their activities have been fully documented on the site blog. When the scale of volunteering activity was analysed following the community digs, 91 individual volunteers had taken part, many of whom spent two or more days working on the excavations. Eighteen school and community groups made visits, a total of just under 400 people.

2(15) Section 38 – Quality of residential developments

KHS systematically surveys housing sites following completion and road adoption based on four basic criteria: attractiveness and friendliness, safety and satisfaction with parking. Sites that have been surveyed to date for this Key Performance Indicator (KPI) were designed as much as 10 years ago. As such, they are a form of benchmark for developments that are currently in the design phase and that are not likely to be surveyed for at least two years. In addition to these KPI sites, which relate to the street adoption process, over 200 other streets or entire sites have been surveyed.

Attractiveness and friendliness achieve high to moderate levels of satisfaction in almost all of the KPI sites. Feedback from customers provides valuable qualitative data for homebuilders, planning authorities and design professionals.

In general, safety is not so well rated, but safety concerns often relate to perceptions of speeding and parking problems. Parking is the only issue of any significant concern, with nearly half of the sites being negatively rated.

The impact of adopted guidance on quality audits and residential parking will be assessed as sites designed from mid 2009 onwards reach substantial completion and are surveyed as part of this KPI or within the wider survey regime.

2(16) Kent Reference Panel and Access Group liaison

The Sustainable Transport Group in KHS routinely attend stakeholder group meetings to listen and take action to adjust scheduling to improve connectivity, where this is possible, and subject to budget availability. For example:

When the Chalkwell bus company took over the operation of the commercial London-bound commuter coaches from New Enterprise, they opted to revise the route and timetable. The changes Chalkwell made adversely affected passengers travelling from Maidstone, specifically those from the Loose area where the coach would no longer serve. KHS was able to revise the times of the early morning 89 bus service funded by KCC between Coxheath, Loose and Maidstone, to enable passengers to make connections with London-bound commuter coaches.

The Kent Reference Panel is set up to enable systematic communication between KHS and disabled groups in Kent with the objective of improving accessibility for all to our transport network.

2(17) Sport, Leisure and Olympics planning.

The Sport, Leisure and Olympics Service worked closely with partners and stakeholders, through established and well-maintained networks, to make sure its business plan fully reflected their priorities and needs, and avoided duplication of work across the county.

Regular contact with groups and organisations at local, regional and national level enables the service to be aware of developments in policy as well as gaining invaluable ongoing feedback on partner requirements. In September 2009, staff in the service began to identify potential future priority areas of work for the following year (2010/11) at a Planning Day, based on the knowledge gained through these networks. Between October and December 2009, Senior Managers then held a series of individual meetings with district councils (as these are key partners). This enabled the Service to "profile" each of the districts and to discuss both their priorities and the future priorities that the Service had identified.

Districts said that the priorities the Service had identified were appropriate and that they complemented and supported their own local priorities, whilst not duplicating work. The individual district meetings on the overall direction of work were felt to be extremely valuable by the district councils and it has been decided that these should take place on an annual basis at the same time of year to assist both ourselves and the Districts to understand each other's priorities and to review the district "profiles".

2(18) The Country Parks Service

The Country Parks service organised focus group meetings with young people to find out more information about how much young people use country parks, the reasons for non-use and to understand ways of encouraging them to use our country parks more. Most of the young people who attended had not heard of the country parks, and could not easily access them because of the lack of good transport links. Improved methods of communication were discussed and also the types of activities that young people might prefer. The information was used to inform the Country Parks' communication Plan and the Parks' Activity programmes. As a result:

- The Country Parks' web pages have been updated and improved
- Social media training has been undertaken by the Country Parks Communication Officer
- Geocaching¹ has been rolled out at all the country parks
- Outdoor theatre productions have been staged at Shorne Woods Country Park
- Food and ice-cream are now available at Teston Bridge and Manor Park Country Parks
- Bush-craft activities have been piloted at Parkwood Wildlife Site
- A Halloween event is scheduled at Manor Park Country Park

¹ Geocaching was identified as one of the activities that would encourage young people to visit Country Parks. It is a countryside treasure hunt involving the use of hand-held GPS receivers. There is a global network of 'caches' with coordinates publicised via the internet.

2(19) Integrated Transport Strategy Consultation: 'Growth without Gridlock'. This consultation was carried out on behalf of the Kent Partnership to find out stakeholders' views of the draft Integrated Transport Strategy and identify any major concerns with the vision, objectives and measures outlined. Stakeholders were contacted in one of two ways: The draft consultation document with a questionnaire was uploaded to the KCC website, and stakeholders were contacted by email with a link to the consultation page. In addition to this, a series of meetings was held with the 12 district and borough councils, with Medway Council, and also via presentations to various bodies (Kent Economic Board, CPRE, Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)). 150 responses were received and the main comments received were:

- the pursuit of growth is overriding all other considerations
- the focus is still on more road building
- the ITS gives little indication of how measures are to be prioritised

The consultation draft is now being revised and the launch is planned for autumn 2010. In the meantime, more information is available on: http://kent.gov.uk/roads_and_transport/highway_improvements/our_transport_vision/integrated_transport_strategy.aspx

2(20) Cultural Strategy

The stakeholder consultation for the Kent Cultural Strategy was undertaken primarily with a group of selected delegates who attended three Cultural Summits over the course of a year. These Delegates were selected to reflect the range of partners who the strategy is aimed at – i.e. those with the strategic authority to influence decision making. At the third Summit (April 2010) the draft strategy was presented to delegates who debated the content, led by key cultural leaders. One of the participants proposed altering 'Intention 2' of the draft to a commitment to stewardship (and not custodianship). The change was supported by all delegates and adopted. Delegates were then given an online consultation tool to feedback in detail. Some feedback was used verbatim in the strategy document. The action plan is to remain a live e-document to allow for an ongoing consultation with partners on the delivery of the strategy.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/arts_development/cultural_summit.aspx

2(21) The Archive and Local History Strategy

The consultation centred on a key document produced for the purpose called '*Understanding Our Past, Changing Our Future*'. This document highlighted the potential of the service to work in new and different ways with different audiences. Individuals, customers and groups were engaged at meetings, promotional events, visits, tours and talks and questionnaires and comment cards were also used.

Information and comments from the consultation has been used to inform the archive and local history strategy and the new Kent History and Library Centre, especially in relation to collections, access, digitisation, partnerships and outreach. It is also informing the layout and design of the new centre. A

key theme from the consultation was more access to historic material from the collections locally. This is already being worked on, by scanning and copying historic documents and making them available to local groups, in local libraries and on the internet.

Consultees (who gave their contact details) are being kept up to date on the progress of the strategic plan and this will continue once the development plan is in place and underway. This is being done through the website, the Herald Newsletter, press releases and appearances in the media, and includes regular updates on progress with the Kent Library and History Centre. This document is due for publication at the end of November 2010.

2(22) The Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading: a strategy to engage the whole community

The Kent Approach to Reading and Literacy strategy aims to engage the whole community and will help underpin the work of schools, Kent's Regeneration Framework and the Children and Young People's Plan. A survey in Kent, disseminated by the Kent Partnership and Children's Trust, highlighted some of the barriers to success which will help to target future action. These barriers include:

- Lack of confidence of parents and practitioners around knowing what steps they could take to access help and support for literacy
- Attitudes of staff in some sectors which come into contact with adults with low literacy skills, including 'not my responsibility'
- A lack of effective signposting and referral.

This document is still being developed and is due for publication April/May 2011.

2(23) KCC Community Wardens

KCC Community Wardens provide a reassuring visible presence in 128 communities across Kent. They deal with low level crime and anti social behaviour working with partner agencies to make Kent a safer place to live. Much of their work involves engagement activities with local residents, often helping communities solve local problems themselves. They can have a real and lasting impact on the lives of the residents in their communities, as they have the time to listen to people, they can offer help and advice and are committed to finding solutions to their problems.

In 2009/10, KCC Community Wardens spent over 75% of their time on visible presence activities within their communities which included more than 34,000 interactions with the public and approx. 17,000 incidents relating to the environment (for example, highways, littering, dog fouling, flytipping). An example:

A warden received a high number of complaints from local residents regarding parking around school gates resulting in driveways being blocked and cars double parked. Children were also being noisy and rude, running over gardens and breaking down fencing. The warden with the local police, held a meeting for all residents to discuss the issues. The result was that a

Neighbourhood Watch has now been set up, community members are communicating, parking issues have been resolved and this was gained through engagement rather than enforcement.

Restorative Neighbourhoods Pilot (Community Safety) was implemented in Maidstone Borough and Shepway District in January 2009 to address the community's priority concerns by bringing victims, offenders and communities together (if appropriate) to decide on a response to a particular crime/issue. The pilot area was extended in November 2009 to the Tunbridge Wells Borough, to involve all frontline officers including KCC Community Wardens. An independent evaluation study (which will include an element of consultation) is currently underway.

2(24) The Kent Cultural Baton

Public and stakeholder involvement was used to shape the Cultural Baton project. The public were asked for their views on the Baton candidates based on a shortlist prepared by the Selection Panel. The Panel was a group of experts in the arts and culture field formed to decide which idea should be taken forward. The panel took into account all the views expressed by the public when making their decision. The successful candidate was also the public's preferred choice. The public can nominate places for the Baton to stop at during its journey up to the 2012 Games in London.

2(25) The Sport, Leisure & Olympics Service Customer Satisfaction Survey

This survey was run in autumn 2009 to ascertain the satisfaction levels of partners and customers, covering all of the key functions of the Service. Views were sought on the overall impression of the service, staff friendliness and helpfulness, accessibility of staff, clarity of forms and communication, usefulness of promotional material, quality of support and advice given, efficiency of dealing with requests and usefulness of the website. Partners and contacts expressed clear satisfaction with the service, with 96.7% of partners stating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service.

http://www.kentsport.org/news_customer_satisfaction_survey_feb10.cfm

2(26) Kent Scientific Services

Kent Scientific Services provides analytical and calibration services. The analytical section mainly serves local authority enforcement agencies. The calibration service is also open to the private sector. Therefore its consultation activities tend to be directly with existing clients, and aims to establish how services can be improved. Regular review meetings were undertaken and were usually positive, constructive and complimentary on quality and service delivery. A joint Client Forum took place with Hampshire Scientific Services. As a result of this sort of activity, new procedures were developed to meet client needs, such as melamine in foods, drugs of abuse screening and sample collection courier routes.

2(27) Around Kent publication

Around Kent, Autumn / Winter 2009 edition asked:

- *Would you like to get your district and county council news in one publication?* - 27 were positive, with some responses noting that this should be done “where it will keep costs down”. We have responded by continuing to pilot joint editions of Around Kent where there is will and it is financially viable to do so. We do a joint edition with Dover District Council
- *What’s missing from Around Kent?* Responses were mixed but a few of the comments highlighted included: entertainment (not just children’s) and more information on social services and sustainability. We have since worked to make sure that the entertainment listings are balanced and would appeal to a cross section of the community, including features on events at the Quarterhouse, Folkestone. We have also worked to balance articles to appeal to as many people as possible, including some features recently on adult social services
- *What is the best thing about this edition of Around Kent?* People liked the contact list at the front of the magazine as well as the walks and what’s on information. All of this content has been retained and improved
- *Is there anything that this edition of Around Kent could do without?* There weren’t very many responses to question four, those received were in the main specific issues relating to particular stories in that issue.

3. Influencing delivery and planning of Children and Young People’s Services

Children and young People have been involved in a number of initiatives over 2009/10 where their views are being used to shape decisions and policy:

3(1) Anti-Bullying: “Safe at School” Online Survey

The aim of this survey was to gain valuable information from children and young people about their perceptions and experiences of bullying. The survey is anonymous and provides schools with an excellent way to involve their pupils (Year 4 and above), raise awareness and produce valuable information. Participation has increased with targeting of under represented groups, including educated at home and those excluded and educated in Pupil Referral Units. Over 8,500 young people participated.

	Nov 2006	Nov 2007	Nov 2008	Nov 2009
Pupil responses	6,017	6,419	8,246	8,475
Schools taking part	230	146	239	171
% of pupils who enjoy school	80	81	83	80
% of pupils who have ever been bullied	55	51	50	47
% of pupils who were still bullied	29	25	12	22
% of pupils who thought their school was good at dealing with bullying	76	77	85	80

3(2) Survey of children with statements in respect of the secondary transition process

The experiences of disabled children who were moving from year 6 to 7 were sought in order to gain an understanding of the transition process that they had just been through and to improve experiences for future children and young people.

All children who had been through the process in 2009 were given the opportunity to participate. A low percentage of young people attended their Annual Reviews but most young people visited their new school, had a least half a day as a 'taster' day and met at least one member of staff before the start of the term.

An example of one key finding is that Children and young people transferring to a mainstream secondary school were more likely to feel "nervous" or "scared". The Special Educational Needs & Resources Unit will work with other colleagues in Children Families & Education to support schools to make the annual review process more inclusive for disabled children.

3(3) Parental Satisfaction Survey Educational Psychology Service

A sample of parents and carers of those whose children have received a service from the Educational Psychology Service are surveyed to find out how satisfied they were with the service. The information is used to review and modify practice. The survey indicated that 92% of the respondents agreed that the involvement of an Educational Psychologist was positive across all indicators measured.

3(4) Kent Family Group Conferencing (Kent FGC)

Kent FGC Service continues to offer on line feedback questionnaires to all family members attending FGCs. There is an active family members group that this year has taken part in the recruitment, training and leaflet re-design. Feedback remains positive with constructive suggestions being implemented in the development of the FGC Service.

3(5) Participation in Children in Need (CIN), Child Protection (CP) and Looked After Children (LAC) reviews

Children are encouraged to participate in the Children in Need, Child Protection and Looked after children reviews and process. This includes the opportunity for children to prepare their own reports for conference if they do not want to/cannot attend.

There has been a significant improvement in the percentage of children involved. 94% of children participated and communicated their views in their Looked After Children reviews in 2009. Kent's performance remains above national (87%) and comparator (86%) averages.

3(6) Voice of Foster Carers

Events were set up to allow fostering teams to hear directly the views and experiences of fostered children within Kent County Council Foster Homes. This information will influence the recruitment of future foster care.

The fostering teams, with the recruitment co-ordinator, encourage input to the newsletters by children & carers. A newsletter is distributed 4 times a year. Newsletters are now distributed on line.

Teams have run fun days for Looked After Children and Foster carers own children. Feedback indicated that the young people enjoyed the opportunity to get together in an informal “activity” based way.

3(7) The Youth Service’s ‘non-user survey’

The Youth Service’s ‘non-user survey’ used a short questionnaire asking (over 600) young people across Kent about why they do not take part in Youth Service positive activities. Rates of participation in positive activities found in our survey corresponded well with TellUs 4 at around 63%. The biggest barriers to participation were a lack of interest and being too busy with education or part-time work. Results were published and distributed to Youth Service managers and then taken to area meetings to produce some specific, localised actions. A report was also distributed to partners via the Youth Advisory Groups who were asked to propose specific local responses and action plans.

3(8) The Youth Service’s Peer Inspection programme

This covered the Ashford and Shepway areas in January – February 2010. Results were fed back to Area Teams and partners in a number of workshops. The report highlighted some specific areas for development such as an increased focus on curriculum delivery and improved planning and evaluation. The inspection involved a team of Youth Service staff from around the county along with some young people visiting and assessing the range of provision across the area and producing an Ofsted style report. Several specific pieces of work have taken place as a result of this work. For example family sports days focused on encouraging young people from the Nepalese community to engage with provision in Ashford have been very successful.

3(9) Youth Service Sub Group

A small group of young people (known as the Youth Service Sub Group) from across the county met together on several occasions to consult on the review of Kent Youth Service and the general service planning and direction.

3(10) The Youth Opportunities Fund and Youth Capital Fund

The Youth Opportunities Fund and Youth Capital Fund have supported young people’s engagement in positive activities since 2008. Last year (2009/10) nearly £1.4 million was awarded by young people to their peers across Kent. Panels of young people decide which projects get money from the funds. They have supported projects like the Maidstone Peace One Day Festival, the Skatepark refurbishment in Swanley and the East Kent Young Beekeepers’ Project.

3(11) Kent Youth Theatre Network

The county wide Network met regularly and is an important mechanism for learning about immediate needs and aspirations. Input from the Network

informed plans for the 2010 Youth Theatre Festival. New ideas and insights as a result of this two-way dialogue are shared on an informal and ongoing basis around the Network.

3(12) House

The Kent Youth Service working with the Public Health team and other partners have continued to develop the successful and innovative 'House' model which went live in December 2008. 'House' is a space aimed at young people aged 13 to 19 years old, giving them somewhere to 'chill out', where they can get informal lifestyle information to suit them in a relaxed and unthreatening environment. Its objective is to increase awareness of the damaging effects of smoking, alcohol, drugs and early or unprotected sex.

'House' has not been advertised conventionally and relies on 'viral' marketing (using pre-existing social networks) and word of mouth only. 'House' soon became a brand name among young people and has been successful because it is not immediately associated with agencies and services and the information and messages provided are discrete and offered on young people's terms.

The results have been phenomenal. By January 2010, 'House' had visited all districts across Kent and had been very well received by young people. By the end of February 2010 the project had made contact with more than 11,000 young people, including many young people who are currently unknown to and do not access existing services. Up to 150 young people visited the Maidstone 'House' per day with queues of young people to see the sexual health nurse for Chlamydia tests.

'House' is now continuing and engagement with young people produced the design brief for a mobile facility that is able to reach into local communities themselves, rather than town centres. 'House' activities can therefore be taken directly into the estates and communities that can most benefit. The new facility launched in March 2010.

3(13) Positive Ticketing Pilot

Positive Ticketing Pilot (Community Safety) was implemented in Sherwood, Tunbridge Wells in April 2009 and is an engagement tool that provides a gateway to better relationships between authority figures and young people by rewarding good or improved behaviour. An independent evaluation study (which will include an element of consultation) is currently underway.

3(14) KEY Training

Satisfaction surveys were completed during 2009/10 (as part of KEY Training's self assessment process). Quality Improvement Plans were completed as a result of the self assessment process so responses that required action would be included in the overall actions in this plan.

Accessibility surveys of KEY Training premises were undertaken at quarterly intervals with the full annual surveys, to include detailed Disability Discrimination Act checks to be completed in October 2010.

3(15) Children and Young People of Kent Survey (NFER)

The 'Children and Young People of Kent Survey' was conducted again in 2009/10 in order to enable KCC to see if any major trends had developed. Nearly 40,000 children and young people participated (which represented a slight decline on the response rate of the previous year) in the survey. The majority of responses were from primary age children.

The 2009/10 survey was the third Children and Young People of Kent Survey (NFER). It has produced very useful trend information and identified many areas of progress in services for children and young people in Kent. Given the current budget pressures, it has been decided not to conduct the survey in 2010/11. However consideration will be given to a survey in 2011/12. The "Tellus" surveys, conducted with a small sample of schools on behalf of DfE, will no longer be taking place.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/news_and_events/news_archive/kents_cyp_survey.aspx

3(16) The Kent Youth County Council (KYCC)

KYCC gives young people the opportunity to have their say on important issues and to get involved in making a difference to the lives of young residents. Members play a vital part in helping KCC politicians and staff to understand youth issues and concerns. In 2009, the KYCC elections saw 106 candidates standing and 170 schools, projects and town centres registering as polling stations. A total of 27,473 votes were cast and the young people elected were announced at the Results Day, at Session House, County Hall on Saturday 28 November.

Examples of the Kent Youth County Council activity include:

- Positive Activities Select Committee - KYCC members joined the county councillors in the chamber to discuss and advise on the provision of activities from young people around Kent
- The Kent Cultural Summit invited KYCC to share and exchange views on the strengths and needs of culture in the county, as well as agree on the process of working with other agencies
- Intergenerational Cohesion Seminar with 30 EU commissioners and members of the European parliament, KCC officers and researchers from the University of Kent. KYCC were invited to discuss the relationships between young and older people and how they can be developed.

3(17) Kent Primary Children School Council

The KPSCC is attended by 69 Year 5 and 6 pupils twice a year and is chaired by KYCC. Recent KPSCC meetings have debated the topics of Children's Rights and environmental issues. Information gained from this event is used to inform the work of Extended Services.

3(18) Kent Children's Trust Board panels of children, young people and parents

Panels of young people and parents have been established to act as reference groups for the work of the Kent Children's Trust Board and its Executive group. The panels give a view on key issues being considered by the Trust and act as a sounding board for the Trust. In addition the panels have an opportunity to raise their concerns and issues with the Children's Trust.

The Panels have been consulted on specific issues such as experiences of childhood in Kent, safety and access to services which has fed into the development of establishing the priorities of new Children and Young People's Plan and the improvement of services through Kent Children's Trust Activity.

One of the major changes in 2010 is the de-commissioning of the parent and children's panel. It was felt that the group was too narrow in relation to representation and also costly in relation to the outcomes delivered. The panels however did allow KCT partners to establish a way of working which involved gaining the view of children, young people and their families, and it is on this that future models will be based and developed.

3(19) Childcare Sufficiency Survey

This survey has become a requirement under the Childcare Act 2006, and was mainly carried out as a consultation with parents to give their views on early education and their childcare needs. The act specifies that it is the responsibility of all local authorities to make sure there is sufficient childcare in every community for all those who need it to enter work or training. It also states that analysis must be conducted at least every three years and preferably annually.

The report gives a description of the data that has been collected and analysed during the sufficiency assessment process. It identifies the gaps that exist and provides interested groups with an opportunity to comment on the assessment and highlight any issues they may have

Full copies of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) are held in libraries and on the Kent County Council website.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/childcare_and_pre-school/choosing_childcare/monitoring_childcare_in_kent.aspx

3(20) Parent Participation Strategy

The strategy has been written under the Short Breaks Pathfinder Programme as part of the communications strategy and relates to the participation of parents in service planning and decision making processes for all aspects of the Aiming High core offer.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/childrens_social_services/disabled_children/short_breaks.aspx

The strategy will aim to develop a structure for parent participation which is sustainable beyond the next three years. This strategy is now operational.

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/aenr_parent_cyp.cfm

Consultation events have been held across the county over the past two years, in partnership with Partnership with Parents. The Kent Parent Participation Network has been set up with a Department for Children Schools and Families, grant under Aiming High for Disabled Children. The network is working on a consistent, inclusive approach to parent representation on decision-making fora.

3(21) Young Carers strategy

Kent's Young Carers' Strategy was written following extensive consultation with young carers who identified the key themes around which the document focuses. During this year, consultation has taken place with young carers to evaluate the impact of the strategy. The consultation, based on the views of 68 young carers across the county (a 10% sample of the 600 known at time of commissioning) identified that:

- Support in school is most important element of the strategy for young carers. 44% of the young carers interviewed had a named worker, but all felt that support in school could be improved. Only seven young people stated that no-one in school knew about their caring status
- Young carers see support for the person for whom they care as the major consideration when seeking support for themselves. If the cared for person is not getting the support they need young carers are unlikely to seek or accept support themselves
- Young carers felt strongly that professionals from both Adult and Children's services, those within schools and in the community still do not understand the role that they undertake. They think more training and information should be made available to them.

The full consultation is being made available to Local Children's Services Partnership Staff and Children's Social Services District Managers, in order that young carers' views may inform and improve local delivery and commissioning of services. The new Preventative Service Managers will lead on this from September 2010 within the new local arrangements.

Our consultation with young carers provides a positive overview of what has been achieved in the last two years. However, the document does provide a salutary reminder that some professionals are unaware of the needs of young carers and that support for them, the person for whom they care and their family remains variable.

3(22) Resettlement of Young Offenders

Building on the participation work it carried out in 2008/09, the Youth Offending Service held a workshop in May 2009 to identify a best practice model for resettlement provision. The workshop, held between YOT staff and Cookham YOI staff explored some of the recommendations made in the report of the original resettlement study. This then subsequently led to a bid being made to the Youth Justice Board for funding for an Integrated Resettlement Service.

3(23) Apprenticeships

Supporting Independence Programme business and employer events were held to promote business involvement with apprenticeship schemes, in particular, and to find out more about what information businesses would want; what would incentivise them to engage in the scheme and what support they might need for example in setting down policies and strategies within their own organisations. This consultation covered private sector organisations, non-KCC public sector organisations and Kent schools.

Feedback was generally positive with delegates saying that they had found the information sessions useful and would consider taking on an apprentice. The information gathered was shared with strategic partners, The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and The Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO). The information has shown that it is increasingly important to promote the benefits of Apprenticeship to employers.

Following the relatively low attendance at these meetings and briefings (largely due to work conflicts and traffic problems) the service has responded by getting out on the road with an “Apprenticeships Bus” and also acted on other requests for additional information. Some were also assigned a training provider to meet with them on a 1:1 basis and support them in recruiting an apprentice.

4. Influencing delivery and planning of health and adult social care services

Users, carers and interested parties have been involved in a wide range of activities to improve and develop services for health and adult social services over 2009/10. These include:

4(1) Homecare Survey

This is a Department of Health survey to measure the experience of those people receiving a home care service. Kent agreed to participate in the extended version of the survey and the results were analysed by the Personal Social Service Research Unit (PSSRU) from the University of Kent.

- 59.1% of people were either extremely or very satisfied with the help received from [Social Services] in their own home (England 58.4%)
- 33% of people were quite satisfied (England 32.1%)
- 70.4% of people were always happy with the way their care workers treated them (England 67.1%)
- 31.6% of people felt in control of their life (England 25.5%)

The final report and spreadsheets were published by the Department of Health in December 2009 and is available on the web at:

<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/social-care/adult-social-care-information/personal-social-services-care-users-aged-65-or-over-england-2008-09-survey>.

4(2) Carers Survey

The national (voluntary) Carers Survey was undertaken in November 2009. The development of the national survey for 2009 was based upon the Kent Carers Survey in 2007 (Kent County Council (KCC) and the Department of Health commissioned the Personal Social Services Research Unit, University of Kent, to design a self-completion carers' survey for local use in Kent). The results show an increased use of services as well as an increase in satisfaction levels with services.

The percentage of people reporting the top level of service quality increased in all areas and in some this was statistically significant (being involved in decision making, ease of finding information). More carers reported that services made their lives easier.

What is clear in the comparison between 2008/09 and 2009/10 is that there are some smaller differences and the direction of change here is positive.

The results of the survey were published by the Department of Health on 30 June 2010 and are available on the web at:
<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/psscscarerssurvey0910>

4(3) Community Equipment

The national Community Equipment Survey is a survey of people in receipt of community equipment or minor adaptations between 1 September 2009 and 31 December 2009. A questionnaire was sent out to a sample of users in each Council to gain an understanding of their experience of the service they receive.

A provisional report and spreadsheets were published by the Department of Health in September 2010 and is available on the web at:
<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/social-care/adult-social-care-information/personal-social-services-survey-of-adults-receiving-community-equipment-and-minor-adaptations-england-2009-10-provisional-council-data>

Results will be published in a national public report in December 2010.

4(4) Shaping the personalisation modernisation programme

The Self Directed Support Planning User Groups met to look at the support planning template and factsheets. Revisions were made after the group felt the templates needed to be made simpler to use and the language needed to be less 'jargonistic' and in plain language.

4(5) East Kent Adult Social Care Focus Group

In February 2009, East Kent Customer Care held its first Focus group, with the purpose of reviewing the public involvement participation form and discussing possible design options for adverts of the new form. The focus group were presented with five different options for possible adverts and were asked to identify what they liked and did not like about each one. As a result, the final version was agreed and approved by the group. A copy of the final version was sent out to all participants

4(6) Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities - Maidstone

We have been consulting since January 2010 about the future of Maidstone Day Services since major roofing problems in November 2009, meant that the main day service building was no longer safe to use and there was no option other than to transfer all services to community locations.

Overall the result of the consultation found out that people would prefer to see time and resources put in to community buildings/activities and not at Boughton Mount. People said they preferred being in more central locations, as Boughton Mount was difficult to get to and at times made getting to events in the community hard.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services agreed that Maidstone Day Service should continue to be provided in the community and move away from the Boughton Mount site completely. This means that the Boughton Mount site will be closed and sold, with the money received being put back into services for people with learning disabilities.

A full report is available at:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/adult_social_services/get_involved_and_have_your_say/surveys_and_consultations/ld_consultation_in_maidstone.aspx

4(7) Development of sign language interpreting service

Deaf and Deafblind service users took part in an ongoing steering group developing the Tender for the new sign language interpreting service. These service users were involved in the short listing and interviewing of potential service providers and the final selection of Royal Association for Deaf people (RAD). A group of Deaf people were also brought together to look at what they considered important from any new service - information from this group was used to help draft the service specification.

4(8) Lift Maintenance User experience survey

Service Users were consulted on the service they had received with regard to lift maintenance. 65% rated the current services as excellent, 34% good & 1% poor. 100% felt the Service Engineers were polite & courteous, with 97% advising they knew in advance when the Engineer would be visiting. 100% said the Engineers left their home clean & tidy after works were completed. When making contact with the Property Service Desk to report breakdowns 20% felt this service was excellent, 42% good, & 2 % poor. 36% had no cause to call presumably because their lift remained reliable. We remain satisfied that Service Users are in receipt of a valued & reliable lift maintenance and repair service to enable them to live independently in their own homes. The outcome has been fed back to the Service Provider as part of the continuous improvement process and contract monitoring.

4(9) Review process for engaging service users and carers in commissioning process and Service user evaluation of tenders for service

In East Kent, some Informal Day services were re-provided and consultations took place to inform the outcome. Service users participated in a review of the service user and carers role in Joint Commissioning Boards. This led to a well

received paper with proposals written by User Involvement Support Workers, along with proposals from the council of East Kent Service User Forums in mental health. These informed the changes that were made.

4(10) Focus group for deaf Mental Health service users

Meetings have been held with Deaf mental health service users, supported by colleagues in Sensory Services, which resulted in a series of training sessions for GPs in East Kent and the re-provision of some specialist mental health services for deaf people from London to Canterbury and Maidstone locations.

4(11) Sensory Impaired

The Supporting Independence Programme (SIP) and KASS Kent Sensory Services team identified a gap in information for and about sensory impaired people living in Kent and a conference was held to promote existing services, gain the views of Kent residents and take forward a number of actions from the conference. An event planning group was established involving two blind and three deaf clients who met on a monthly basis. The conference format involved a panel question and answer session in the morning, a market place area with a variety of organisations demonstrating their products and round table discussions so all delegates could raise their concerns in smaller groups.

Following the panel session and round table discussions feedback was collated into a detailed report. The major issues identified were:

- Provision of services and support whilst attending a doctors appointment or receiving treatment in hospital. Staff are not always aware that the patient is deaf or sight impaired, this in turn can result in patients not understanding the treatment they need to receive or not knowing their food has been brought to their bedside.
- Public transport information, although lots of bus stops and train stations now have automated display boards or loud speakers announcing the next stop etc, this is not currently countywide so improvements need to be made.
- What benefits sensory impaired people are entitled to and the limits to personal budgets for purchasing specialist equipment, which is often life changing.
- Advertising boards ("A" frames) obstructing many of the pavements in towns across Kent.

This report is still in the development stages and once finalised will be shared in order to see how outcomes can be taken forward and actions taken to resolve the issues raised by Kent residents.

4(12) Adult Social Services Public Involvement Strategy

A review of the existing Public Involvement Strategy commenced in October 2009 with two events held in the county to gather feedback from the public. Further meetings were held between November 2009 and April 2010 to gather

views from various groups across the county – both known and previously unknown to the Directorate. Over 30 Groups were visited and have contributed to the new strategy, which is to be presented to the Senior Management Team in September 2010. The core objectives within the existing document remain relevant and this was reinforced from the feedback received during the review.

An overarching corporate involvement strategy is currently being developed and will link with each directorate's own strategy. Specific work has been commissioned around "seldom heard" or "hard to reach" groups, although the intelligence gathered to date does not differ from the feedback received when reviewing the Directorate's public involvement strategy.

4(13) Implementation of Deafblind strategy

Consultation on the involvement strategy d/Deaf, deafblind people took place on 28 April 2010 as a one day conference. The remit of which was expanded to include the opportunity for service users to hear about key issues from public services and present their issues to key providers. A user involvement questionnaire was provided and is currently being analysed for development of the strategy.

4(14) Community Learning and Skills (CLS) Strategy

Because of the nature of its business, Community Learning and Skills (formerly Kent Adult Education and KEY services) is increasingly developing a market research approach. Successfully operating in a competitive market place, while still having clear social drivers underpinning its activities are the twin goals.

A CLS Learner Involvement Strategy was introduced last year to foster and promote a culture of learner involvement throughout CLS. This is being achieved by supporting learners to be more actively involved in teaching and learning, the wider CLS community and quality improvement procedures. Clear information on the findings and subsequent actions taken in response is being provided. The first CLS Learner Forum was launched at the end of 2009 using paper and online surveys as well as informal focus groups (available if learners stated that this type of learner involvement was preferred to completing surveys). Top-up courses were rated highly and there was some interest in creating/attending own class or interest group (Learning Revolution Agenda). There is a high level of returners to the service which emphasises the need to maintain high levels of learner satisfaction to retain students. Learner Forum information was fed back to Programme Managers and district-specific feedback was fed back to District Staff.

Adults with learning disabilities were involved in developing a short version of the Adult Education Service's Disability statement because some student information was too wordy and not easy for everyone to understand - especially those with low literacy skills. Learners who attended Independent Living Skills courses wrote the text and chose the graphics for a statement. This document is now available in all centres and on our website. They have

also helped to develop a short version of our Student Charter and this will be available later this year.

4(15) Kent Alcohol Strategy for Kent 2010-13

The Kent Action on Alcohol Steering Group developed an Alcohol Strategy for Kent (2010-13) in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and interest groups. A partnership approach was adopted in creating the strategy, as such an approach was considered essential for an effective response to alcohol. The strategy built on the Report of Kent County Council's (KCC) Select Committee on Alcohol Misuse¹, which was developed around an extensive consultation with key stakeholders including service user representation, local councils, service providers and national experts.

http://www.kdaat.co.uk/about_kdaat/why_and_how/kent_alcohol_strategy-1.aspx

4(16) Hidden Harm Strategy

As part of the development of this strategy, a user-led Hidden Harm Focus Group was established which has informed the cross-organisational Hidden Harm strategy. The strategy itself also sets, as a priority for action: "Service user involvement in the implementation of the Hidden Harm strategy and to involvement of children, parents and families in the commissioning system.

The Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team's Hidden Harm Focus Group involves people who have been affected by substance misuse. Their aim is to raise awareness amongst service users, health professionals, social services and the criminal justice system of the harms to children and young people caused by a parent's substance misuse. To help achieve this they developed and implemented a public information campaign: "You Use – Your Children Lose?" It aims to encourage parents to question the effect of their substance misuse on their children.

http://kdaat.co.uk/about_kdaat/why_and_how/kent_hidden_harm_strategy-1.aspx

4(17) Substance misuse services:

The Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team (KDAAT) runs two permanent expert groups to bring together experience and opinions from both "sides" of the treatment system. Those receiving treatment are represented by the Service User Expert Panel. Those working in substance misuse services in Kent contribute to the Service Provider Expert Group. These two groups ensure that the Operations Team is able to make informed decisions on current issues and on the shape of future services.

The Service User Expert Panel meets on a monthly basis and membership of the group is by nomination or invitation in order to maintain an even balance of service users from across Kent and the different service providers. KDAAT staff are present and consult the group on different aspects of their work. External organisations, such as Job Centre Plus, often join the group to discuss areas of their operations. The group acts as a reference panel, provides independent views and feedback on local substance misuse issues.

Following a presentation at a Panel meeting by a Job Centre Plus adviser, the group was able to suggest more effective places where Job Centre Plus information could be displayed e.g. substance misuse agencies, supermarkets and amongst service user groups. The Panel's members also advised on the redevelopment of KDAAT's website. Their input influenced the information available on the site (which went live in July 2010), including:

- Where to find help should be easy to find - only 3 clicks away - services to be listed in town order
- Links to the service centres' websites where the individual could click on a map and directions on how to get there plus transport links
- Information needs to be blunt - not pink and fluffy. The addition of a few testimonies of people who have sought help would be encouraging for people to read.

Service user experts visited Gateways in March and provided feedback on the service from a KDAAT service user perspective.

The Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team Needs Assessment 2009/10 was completed in November 2009. The needs assessment informed the development of the KDAAT Partnership's 2010/11 Adult Treatment Plan.

KDAAT also ran several programmes to involve young people in the development of services. These activities were focused on particular themes including ADHD, needs of families and kin carers, and risk taking behaviours. All provided a deeper understanding of perceptions and factors affecting young people affected by substance misuse and their families.

4(18) Supporting People five year strategy:

To ensure that the strategy is fit for purpose the team consulted with all statutory partners to gain a thorough understanding of their priorities.

Consultations employed a range of mechanisms:

- Face to face meetings with officers and elected members of all districts / boroughs, and representatives of Kent Adult Social Services, PCTs in east and west Kent and 26 providers
- 14 focus groups involving 72 service users
- Electronic surveys submitted by 250 service users and 6 providers
- Workshop for members of the Commissioning Body
- Consultation conference for members of the Commissioning Body, Core Strategy Development Group, Executive Board of Providers and service user panel.

The consultation process involved asking some critical questions about the services, the way the programme had been shaped and the potential challenges for the future. A Service User Day took place at the end of 2009. Through their own experiences panel members were able to help identify ways that the programme can be improved and gave valuable insight into how

effective the support they have received has been. The material gained through all these processes and activities were analysed and fed into the strategy development process. Details of views and suggestions provided were included in the strategy document as an Appendix.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/community_and_living/housing-related_support/policies_and_strategy.aspx

'Walk to Win'

The aim of the 'Walk to Win' campaign is to bring about behavioural change that results in the target audiences living in NHS primary target wards in East Kent exercising more and living healthier lifestyles by accessing the countryside and coast near to where they live.

The campaign, which was funded by the NHS, is being delivered by Explore Kent, part of the Countryside Access group. Mosaic profiling data was used to target patients in deprived wards identified by the GPs registered with the project. Using communication methodologies recommended by MOSAIC, the audiences were given advice about improving their diet and about walking to improve fitness in order to help them develop healthier lifestyles. Around 600 people registered for the project, which is in the process of being evaluated.

5. Influencing other functions, services, investment and initiatives

5(1) Houses as Homes: Resettlement of Offenders

SILK have undertaken a project exploring the issue of housing for offenders, from the perspective of ex-offenders themselves, with a view to identifying solutions to reduce re-offending rates. The issue had been identified as critical by extended networks across Kent, including the Kent Housing Group (KHG) and the Kent-wide Joint Policy and Planning Board (JPPB).

SILK worked on this project with a wide range of partners including County and District Councils, Primary Care Trusts, Mental Health Trust, Supporting People, HM Prison, Probation, Registered Social Landlords, St. Giles Trust and Kent Police.

In this project we jointly commissioned ethnographic researchers, ESRO, to look holistically at individual customer journeys of offenders by mapping their lives and the services they have come into contact with, to see where there are system tensions and gaps. ESRO carried out three place ethnographies and seven individual ethnographies – the genuine real-life experiences of the offenders, the challenges they faced and the people trying to support them make for insightful reading.

The findings from the research were presented back to the core-team in January 2010. Workshop exercises were carried out that looked at where services could have been improved during the offenders' life and what kind of service interventions could have taken place that might have been more effective for the individual.

This project is moving into the next phase to define tangible solutions with practitioners and offenders, which compliment existing activity that is already being taken forward across Kent notably by the Joint Policy and Planning Board.

Houses as Homes: Rethinking Resettlement has been used to inform the Kent and Medway Leaders Housing Strategy which sits within the Kent-wide Regeneration Framework, making an important contribution to wider accommodation issues across Kent. The report is currently being enhanced to include additional solutions identified alongside the Offender sub-group of joint Policy and Planning Board; anticipate redrafted report end of November.

5(2) Parkwood R Shop Bulk-Buy and Timebank

This is a resident led project which was launched in May 2009 with a multi-agency team including residents. The idea for the Bulk Buying project came from a Parkwood mother as a solution to the day to day challenge and expense of taking her five children on the bus to the nearest supermarket. Those living on the estate who don't have access to a car find it difficult to benefit from the lower prices that supermarkets offer and often find that carrying bulky items, e.g. washing powder and nappies, back to the estate on public transport or by foot is a stressful experience. Bulk Buying was voted as a favourite idea by residents at a community 'user testing' event and SILK have supported those residents in setting up the project.

SILK co-ordinated the first phase of the project where residents gathered local intelligence about shopping habits and items that people would like to buy. Residents presented their business case to take forward the project and it was officially handed over in October 2009. SILK have continued to play a facilitator and advisory role, connecting people into services as required for example Adult Education and Trading Standards.

The project has been renamed 'R Shop' by the community and provides residents with local access to lower priced bulky items. The core team of residents take requests from the community about what products they would like to buy from the scheme and then source the item at the best price. R Shop was donated a disused kitchen within the local primary school which was refurbished by the team to become a Community Room. This provides Parkwood residents with a hub for community led activity including a resident led Mums and Dads group. The group now invite service providers into the room during designated times – for example a dental nurse. They have filmed themselves setting up the project and keen to share their ideas: they are working with Camden / Holy Cross Centre Trust (HCCT) Timebank to exchange ideas and practice.

SILK are working with Maidstone District Council and Parkwood Community to support asset transfer of local facility to community ownership;

5(3) Future Jobs Fund

Future Jobs fund (FJF) engaged with local business to support the development of employment opportunities through the fund. Different types of

business were approached and FJF was explained to them and interested in joining the scheme was established.

Businesses have shown their interest by signing a service level agreement to provide an employment opportunity - 64 companies signed up generating 758 job opportunities. Following meetings with managers and businesses, the way starts are recorded have been changed to look at wider issues. DWP only wanted to know starts and leavers; but this was amended to show *where* a leaver has gone i.e. to go back to Job Centre Plus, into employment, going into education & other. Working with Job Centre Plus the referral process was changed to improve efficiency and respond to the needs of clients to improve turn around time.

5(4) Margate Old Town Parking Access

Analysis of parking habits and opinions of different groups on current parking provision to develop a broader action plan to improve provision.

Results were inconclusive with extremely low sample rate (managed by local action group who completely over-estimated the local strength of feeling) and no clear way forward. No further action is proposed. Results were reported to Margate Renewal Partnership Board and the project abandoned. Local Action Group informed of position.

5(5) Sea Change Project

Preparation of cultural strategy and input to cable car and public realm projects.

- Cultural strategy – consultation period June to August 2009. Approx 200 interviews with residents and businesses. Strategy report just completed (June 2010) and will be fed back to consultees/wider public throughout July/August 2010
- Esplanade – consultation with general public through July to October 2009. Exhibition in Discovery Centre Dover and at Dover Castle and then formal consultation in Dover Gateway on 1 & 2 October by Jacobs with approx. 50 respondents.

5(6) Gravesend Old Town Hall

There has been ongoing consultation with the original partner organisation Fit Voices (now Whole Community Works - WCW) a multi faith charity. The initial vision was to create a place for the Gravesend Community to come together to support each other and in particular vulnerable people within it. Formal consultation has been provided via six workshops with invited stakeholders from the faith, arts and local history groups as well as representation from all ethnic communities in the Gravesend area and age groups. The purpose was to develop a vision for the building and to determine the likely uses of the restored Old Town Hall building and in turn to shape the final phases of this work. A Management Committee was formed from the most active of these stakeholders which continued to develop the vision further. A Memorandum of Understanding between KCC as building owners and WCW is now being drafted to establish usage of the building and to deliver the shared vision.

5(7) Kent Library and History Centre:

Consultation is ongoing and channels have been open during the intervening period (2009/10). However, the project is now moving into a new phase where feedback and views on the internal design, layout and services are being sought and used to shape plans.

Archive-related consultation has been with users, community archive groups, local and family history groups and District Councils who deposit their records with the service. This is informing the development plan for the service as a whole as well as the building itself. Library Service staff also took the opportunity to engage young people in the project and get their views by talking to them at the Maidstone HOUSE. Not only did the experience give useful insights on what sorts of things young people would value in the new centre, but it also reinforced the importance of engagement and involvement in the design and development of library services for young people generally. HOUSE is a branded campaign developed to raise awareness and change risky behaviours amongst young people, based on the principles of social marketing.

5(8) Ashford Gateway Plus

The consultation for Ashford is very similar to Kent History and Library Centre in that there was a major burst of activity about the external design for the building (in 2008) and now consultation on the internal layout, design and public services consultation is underway.

While channels of communications and opportunities to contact us with ideas and views remain open (for example through the dedicated project web page) there will be “spikes” of activity keeping pace with the various phases of the construction project. Current public consultation is taking place using display materials in Ashford’s County Square shopping centre, all the key service locations, local children’s and community centres and with the community partnership for adults with learning and physical difficulties. The Ashford Access Group was also consulted. These banners, plus those for the Kent History and Library Centre, were on display at the 2010 County Show.

Material generated through consultation activities is collated and analysed and fed in the appropriate decision-making process. As with the Kent History and Library Centre, posters are used to keep customers and other interested people informed about the feedback and queries received.

5(9) Gravesend Library

A Community Development Librarian is regularly visiting a vast array of community groups including the Gravesham Access Group, Kings Farm and Northfleet Forum. The role is twofold: to ask for views about the project and to feed back to communities and interested groups about progress with the project.

There has also been a display in Gravesend Library on which customers can post comments, and the Community Development Librarian has also been out

on Gravesend High Street to talk directly to the general public about the project (both providing information and asking for views/comments). All this information is collected on a central spreadsheet which all of the project team can access. Key themes and views are fed back to the board at regular intervals.

A good example of how our consultation work has led to changes with this project is that the original design for the new facade received a great deal of negative criticism from the public. So the architects were asked to go “back to the drawing board” and the new design they produced (which is the one being used) was received much more positively.

5(10) Housing-related support

The Supporting People team have actively encouraged service users to really get involved in helping to develop the Supporting People services and people who use or have used the services have offered help and advice in a number of ways including, for example:

- Improving information leaflets
- Writing policies on reimbursing expenses to service users
- Designing the Support Services Directory
- Helping us to decide what services might be needed in the future.

There is also a Service User Panel which is made up of people who are currently receiving support and who also attend one of their own support provider involvement groups. Members of the panel, attend meetings every six weeks for a maximum of one year. Each meeting has an agenda with a specific topic area and members get involved in a range of issues such as designing and amending policies; conference planning and recently the Panel compiled the Supporting People Service User Charter.

5(11) Turner Contemporary

Turner Contemporary works closely with the local business community, through the Margate Town Partnership, to understand local business needs and to coordinate activities to maximise benefits for the local community.

TOOL, an intergenerational project run by Turner Contemporary with a number of partners was established in direct response to requests from members of our young people’s and senior citizen’s group. It will help inform a future exhibition to be run in the gallery during 2011.

The Access Group were consulted during the design stages of the Turner Contemporary gallery and helped to inform the design of the building and its fixtures, fittings and signage. Cultural Ambassadors is run in collaboration with the University for Creative Arts and enables people with low or no qualifications to follow an accredited course exploring cultural regeneration. Cultural Ambassadors from past years now help us to recruit new participants and play a central role in delivering and shaping the course.

5(12) The Kent Coastal Network

The Kent Coastal Network was established by KCC in 2004 to improve communication between Kent's coastal stakeholders and raise awareness of the many activities taking place around the coast. A proposal to develop an Integrated Coastal Action Plan (ICAP) was considered by stakeholders through a consultation exercise and workshop with network members during 2009/10, but a decision was taken not to develop the ICAP at this stage, but to review it at a later date. In the meanwhile, very valuable partnership working has been established in the form of the Integrated Coastal Action Working Group and the Coastal Project Register developed. This resource will aid integration and is free for everyone to use. Stakeholders are informed and updated through the Kent Coastal Network website. <http://coastalkent.net/index.php>