

Locality Boards

The Vision Paper

1. Before Locality Boards

- Prior to Locality Boards one of the main ways for County and District Members to discuss priorities and delivery was through Local Strategic Partnerships. The general consensus of County and District Members was that these were ineffective, particularly as a way of bringing County and District Members together. The reasons for this include:
 - KCC Members not being invited (or only 1 or 2 invited);
 - KCC Members not attending;
 - Agendas being of insufficient interest to KCC Members.
 This resulted in a lack of democratic leadership or accountability of LSPs.
- The impression received is that often County and District Members use their respective mandates 'competitively' with each other rather than 'combining' the power of their mandate in the interests of the residents who elected them.
- There are 84 Members on KCC (73 Conservative; 7 LD; 3 Lab; 1 Indep). Only 10 of these have executive positions on Cabinet. The skills and experience of many 'back bench' Members could be better utilised with a clear role and better involvement in their communities as 'frontline councillors'.

2. Dec 2011 - Early development of Locality Boards (further expanded in Appendix 1)

There is massive potential for all Members in a locality to come together to:

- agree a combined county / district analysis of the priority needs for each locality which can be taken forward by:
 - agreeing a locality plan that will take forward the three ambitions and other issues of particular priority to the locality;
 - deliver the locality plans by engaging county and district decision makers;
 - performance managing priority issues;
 - developing place based commissioning, where appropriate.
- by recognising that their individual electoral mandate is all the stronger when used collaboratively with others. For example by exercising Member community leadership by challenging non local government providers about how their service delivery plans support the priority needs of the locality.
- Ensure more focus, better coordination and more synergy to the work of county and district authorities thereby creating efficiency savings that can reduce budget pressures. Improvements can be achieved in:

Services / Outward facing:

 - agreeing a single community engagement plan;
 - having a single relationship with the VCS;
 - integrated customer contact systems;
 - More joined up community safety and enforcement responsibilities / response to anti social behaviour;

- Local delivery of public health initiatives;
 - More joined up delivery of economic development function.
- Support and Back Office:
- sharing research, data and intelligence better;
 - requiring synergy between strategies / action plans and performance management;
 - eliminating overlapping partnerships, strategies and processes;
 - sharing property;
 - better workforce integration.
- Position the locality to maximise the potential for and make best use of new funding streams such as New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy.

3. Dec 2013 – Fully formed locality Boards

If successful the Locality Board will be **'the biggest show in town'**. It will be known as the place:

- that champions the needs for local residents;
- which has the expertise and resources to deliver / commission services;
- that holds other service providers to account;
- that has overseen improvements to services and improvements in customer satisfaction despite having a declining resource base;
- that is known and respected as **the place that gets things done.**

4. How does this make localism real?

Leaders of Kent's Local Authorities, by signing the Kent Recommitment, have committed to work together, to seek genuine devolution of powers to both county and district level, to respond to the needs and aspirations of local people and save taxpayers money. Working effectively through Locality Boards will be one of the main ways to achieve this. More decisions about local services will be taken at the local level, more genuine engagement with residents, greater opportunity for local people to be involved in the design and delivery of services, more transparency and enhanced local democratic accountability. The Boards will be pivotal in encouraging the development of the Big Society.

5. Advantages of the Locality Board approach

Successful Locality Boards will:

- Replace a 'competitive' relationship between county and district authorities with a stronger 'collaborative' relationship;
- Give a holistic and integrated response to residents, businesses and the voluntary and community sector, appropriate to that locality;
- Bring to life the community leadership role as all Members participate in the local decision making of their locality;
- Utilise the skills, experience and resources available of members and officers in each locality to far better effect resulting in better outcomes at reduced cost.

Examples of the type of issue that Locality Boards can drive

1. Developing a locality plan focussing on local priorities and the contribution to the three countywide ambitions.
2. Replacing the existing ad-hoc consultation exercises with a single coordinated approach to engage the community, incorporating:
 - residents and businesses generally;
 - looked after children;
 - older people;
 - disadvantaged groups.
3. Have a single / joint relationship with the voluntary and community sector.
4. Shape the Local Development Framework to deliver growth and economic development.
5. Maximise the financial gain from the new planning arrangements
 - Community Infrastructure Levy;
 - New Homes Bonus;and invest it in a way that delivers joint priorities:
6. Be the key local interface with other key stakeholders:
 - Police / criminal justice agencies;
 - Registered Social Landlords and other housing providers;
 - Health and GP Consortia;
 - Residents;
 - Business;
 - HE / FE and other skills training providers.
7. Building on the experience of Locality Pilots (incl Community Based Budgets) identify those services that may be better commissioned by the Locality Board through joint commissioning arrangements rather than by county or district authorities delivering or commissioning separately.
8. Establish how county and district and other partners can make more efficient use of property assets and more generic shared approach to back office functions, IT, and customer interface
9. Overseeing / engaging with the work of existing partnerships such as the
 - Community Safety Partnership;
 - Local Children's Trust Board;
 - Regeneration Partnerships;
 - Local waste arrangements.
10. Be a test bed for piloting new initiatives and new ways of delivery.