

By: Leader of the Council

To: Corporate Policy Overview Committee – 26 September 2008

Subject: Localism: A Strategy for Success

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## **Introduction**

1. (1) Members will recall that when I presented the report to the County Council on 19 June 2008 I informed Members of the ongoing discussions with the Local Authority family of authorities (Borough/District and Parish Councils) on the preferred models of engagement with the local community.

(2) Members will be aware that the Comprehensive Performance Assessment undertaken in late January/early February recognised the Dover model of local forums worked well, which is why I commissioned a piece of work for each Cabinet Member together with Mr Davies, Mr Gough and Mr Wells to engage all members for each Borough/District Council area to be consulted on their preferred option for taking the Localism Strategy forward. I have always been clear that “one size does not fit all”. This consultation which will result in a preferred way forward for each Borough/ District area will be completed early in October.

## **Models of Localism**

2. Early indications are that a range of models are emerging. For example:-

- (a) Gravesham, who are well advanced with a Neighbourhood Forum model with two rounds of the new fora Gravesend East, Gravesend West and Gravesend Rural (which includes Parish Council Forums) planned to take place prior to the County Council elections in 2009;
- (b) Productive discussions with Swale Borough Council around a model of mini local strategic partnerships; and
- (c) Maintaining the Thanet Local Board but being inclusive in its representation of District and Parish Councils; and
- (d) In Ashford, each member who represents an Ashford electoral Division having a Neighbourhood Forum, but from time to time those Members who represent in the urban centre of Ashford coming together for a joint meeting.

## **Conclusion**

3. I will be keeping all Members of the County Council informed of the outcomes of the ongoing discussions Cabinet Members and other Lead Members are conducting on my behalf with the local authority family for each Borough and District

area. I will notify all Members of the County Council of the pilots I intend to role out across the County Council prior to the County Council elections in 2009.

**Recommendation**

4. That the report be noted

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Background Information: nil