

**To:** Customer and Communities Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**From:** Mike Hill, Cabinet Member and Amanda Honey, Corporate Director, Customer and Communities

**Date:** 15th September 2011

**Subject:** Kent Partners' Compact - Refresh

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:**

The Kent Partners' Compact was launched in 2009. Work has been undertaken recently to update the Compact in line with national guidelines published in December 2010. The updated Compact has now been published as a consultation draft. The consultation period runs from July 7<sup>th</sup> 2011 to September 30<sup>th</sup> 2011. KCC Members were alerted to the consultation via the Information Bulletin published on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

The consultation draft and response form is attached to this report for any member that wishes to submit comments. Members are also invited to comment at the meeting.

**FOR INFORMATION AND COMMENT**

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**1. Introduction and Background**

1.1 The Kent Partners' Compact is a partnership agreement between the public and voluntary sectors in Kent that defines and improves their relationship and delivers improved outcomes for communities and individuals.

1.2 The Kent Partners' Compact was launched in 2009. The document sets out a series of principles and undertakings from both sectors and is of mutual benefit. It has enabled the two sectors to work together better and reflects national and local best practice. Kent County Council has contributed actively to the development and implementation of the Compact which was endorsed by the Kent Partnership in 2009.

1.3 Prior to the development of the Kent Partners' Compact, there had been multiple Compacts operating in Kent; effectively a series of bilateral

agreements. The single Kent Partners' Compact has been of great value in simplifying relationships and joint activity.

## **2. Recent Developments**

2.1 The coalition government has introduced a number of policies which have the potential to build a new relationship between public and voluntary sectors. Notably the Localism Bill and the Open Public Services White Paper present new challenges and opportunities, not least because of the intention to liberalise the market for providing public services. Nationally the commitment to a productive relationship between the sectors remains and a new national Compact was launched in December 2010.

2.2 The new national Compact is a streamlined document which focuses the relationship between Government and "Civil Society Organisations on five key outcomes.

1. A strong, diverse and independent civil society
2. Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services
3. Responsive and high quality programmes and services
4. Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services
5. An equal and fair society

## **3. Update on Refresh**

3.1 In Kent there is an established group of Compact partners who act as Champions and organisational advisors. In March 2011, the then Communities Directorate commissioned a refresh of the Kent Partners' Compact on behalf of the Kent Partnership.

3.2 The refresh has been based on wide consultation and, importantly, it has been agreed to continue with "a single county-wide Compact which sets out what can be expected from partners and is part of a highly evolved and productive relationship with the sector" (response to the Best Value Consultation – May 2011).

3.3 The consultation on the revised draft was launched on July 7th at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual VCS conference. In line with Compact principles it will run until September 30<sup>th</sup> 2011.

3.4 Once the scale and breadth of the feedback from the consultation exercise is known a timeline will be established for the publication of the document and partners will be asked to adopt the refreshed document. Whilst not formally a

policy, the Kent Partners' Compact has previously been adopted by KCC, other public sector partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector across the county. It is the intention to ratify this document via the Kent Forum and to request other partners who are no longer part of the Kent Forum to formally endorse the document to ensure the continuation of a single county-wide Kent Partners Compact.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

No resource implications have been identified other than officer time.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

To note the refresh of the Kent Partners' Compact and the opportunity to contribute to the consultation.

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Background documents (attached)

Consultation draft of the Kent Partners' Compact.  
Feedback Consultation Document