

## **Comments by East Kent Chief Executives Forum**

In deciding on the future role for this committee, it is important to bear two factors in mind. First, its terms of reference link it firmly to the responsibilities and functions of the EKJAC. Second that the individual councils have scrutiny functions and will be keenly interested in the delivery of shared services within their own districts.

EKJSC had a key role when shared services were being developed from concepts into organisations providing for the delivery of services. Scrutiny at that strategic level tracking decisions through EKJAC was an efficient use of resources.

A number of the recommendations in this report appear to trespass on what is truly the role of individual council scrutiny committees. Performance may not be uniform and scrutiny at the east Kent level may be too remote from more local performance of service.

We would suggest that before agreeing any of the recommendations in the report that a protocol is prepared between the councils allocating responsibility for scrutiny to the individual council or to EKJSC as appropriate. Such a protocol would still allow an individual council scrutiny committee to refer something to EKJSC if it thought that a particular matter was of wider concern but would seek to avoid an unnecessary duplication of work and activity. Having considered that protocol EKJSC would then be in a better position to decide how it should function in the future. Members will be aware that EKJAC has not felt the need to meet recently as there are no strategic decisions which need to be taken. The shared services are establishing themselves. EKJSC may likewise decide that whilst it may have a programme of meetings in the diary it does not need to meet on every occasion but only as and when business demands.

It is important to establish that whilst the structures delivering services may be cross district the delivery of those services is expected to be local and the prime responsibility for scrutiny at that level is conducted by the individual districts. Members are therefore counselled against approving the recommendations in the report at this stage but instead it is suggested that they ask the relevant officers of the councils to prepare a protocol allocating scrutiny responsibilities for production to a future meeting of this committee and in the light of any such protocol then approved to decide on the future conduct of its business.