

By: Oliver Mills: Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services

To: Adult Social Services Policy Overview Committee –  
18 November 2008

Subject: **KENT ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES – MEMBER BRIEFING**

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: The purpose of this report is to provide information to Members on current KASS Member Briefings and to ask for their comments on how they could be improved.

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## **Background and Context**

1. (1) KASS is committed to ensuring that Members are fully briefed on all the key issues at a countywide and local level. Currently, this happens in a variety of ways, all of which are advertised through the Corporate Member Information Bulletin.

(2) Currently County Council Members can find out more about the issues facing the Directorate through:

- Presentations at the start of every **Adult Services Policy Overview Committee**, which all Members are invited to. Over the last year the presentations have covered many of the big issues facing social services in Kent, including the budget, the new performance framework, the Mental health Trust's Foundation Trust application and the modernisation of KASS
- **The Countywide Briefing session**, which is organised twice a year and provides an opportunity for Members to talk to senior officers about a wide variety of issues in a more informal setting
- **The countywide paper briefing**, which provides a summary of all the issues discussed at the Countywide Briefing Session as well as providing updates on all the key issues for the Directorate as a whole. The paper Member Briefings are all available on KNet under 'KASS information for Members'

(2) In addition to these countywide briefings, KASS has also, over the last year or so, tried to improve the way it communicates at a local level through:

- **Local Briefings** in every District to look at the issues facing different Districts in detail
- **Local Boards**. KASS attends these Boards when requested and also to promote key strategic discussions such as the consultation on Active Lives (KASS' 10 year vision) and the Later Life Strategy.

## **Feedback**

2. (1) For the most part feedback on countywide and local briefing sessions has been very positive. However, a number of improvements have been suggested:

- The Countywide Briefings should be more frequent so that they can look at fewer subjects in more detail.

- Demand for Local Briefings has varied across the County and there should be more flexibility locally to meet demand
- All Briefings should be part of the broader Member Development programme, and therefore, should be diaried so that they are prioritised by Members and not cancelled due to other meetings.

### **Improving Member Briefing**

3. (1) Therefore, the following proposals are put forward to improve Member Briefings:

- Countywide Briefings will be organised quarterly (next briefing in January 2009). They will be diaried as Member Development sessions
- Countywide Briefings will continue to be followed by paper briefings to update those Members who were not able to attend
- Local Briefings will continue, but over the next six months we will test out different approaches in the two Areas. In west Kent, Districts will be paired, which will allow for more frequent local briefings over a larger area. In east Kent the briefings will continue as single District Briefings.

### **Recommendations**

6. Members are asked to NOTE and COMMENT on the contents of this report.

Phil Porter  
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*Background documents:* None