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To: Cabinet – 17 September 2007

Subject: Kent Children’s Trust Governance Framework

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This paper sets out the principles underpinning the governance arrangements for the Kent Children’s Trust. It seeks Cabinet approval for these principles and the continued development of the governance framework.

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## **Introduction**

1. (1) The development of children’s trust arrangements is part of a national programme of change to improve outcomes for children and young people in line with the Every Child Matters (ECM) framework. This outcomes framework sets out the government’s intention that all children should:

- (a) Be healthy
- (b) Stay safe
- (c) Enjoy and achieve
- (d) Make a positive contribution, and
- (e) Achieve economic well-being

(2) Through the Children Act 2004 (section 10) the following services have a duty to cooperate to improve outcomes for children and young people:

- District Councils
- The Police Authority and Chief Officer
- The Probation Board
- The Youth Offending Team
- The Strategic Health Authority and PCTs
- The Learning and Skills Council and related service providers

(3) As the Children’s Services Authority Kent County Council has a lead role to ensure that services comply with this duty and that arrangements for integrated planning and working are effective. Accountability for children’s services rests with the Children’s Services Authority and is secured through the Director of Children’s Services, and the lead elected member.

## **Progress in Kent**

2. (1) The Kent Children's Trust (County Board) was established in September 2006. Agreement of the governance framework is now critical to the continued development of trust arrangements. Formal terms of reference will also be agreed by December 2008.

(2) The vision for children's trust arrangements in Kent is of strategic county arrangements to commission improved outcomes for children and young people through the statutory Children and Young People's Plan. This plan will be implemented through a network of local children's trust arrangements. Four local children's trust pathfinders are currently exploring how local arrangements should operate.

(3) The vision for the future of children's trust arrangements in Kent includes radical and possibly unique arrangements for children's health services. An agreed framework for governance and accountability is a prerequisite of these arrangements.

### **Principles for the Kent children's trust governance framework**

3. These principles underpin the effective governance of trust arrangements in Kent:

- (a) Accountability rests with Kent County Council as the Children's Services Authority and is secured through the Director of Children's Services, Graham Badman and the Lead Elected Member, Chris Wells. This accountability can be shared but not delegated.
- (b) The Director of Children Services and the Lead Member exercise this accountability within the local authority structures for financial and business management and are held to account through the Local Authority scrutiny process.
- (c) Accountability for children's trust arrangements is shared through the Kent Children's Trust (County Board) which operates as a directly linked working group of the Kent Partnership.
- (d) The County Board is responsible for agreeing the Kent Children and Young People's Plan which forms part of the KCC planning framework. This plan sets the strategic direction within which locality arrangements will operate.
- (e) Members of the County Board are accountable to the organisations they represent and bring with them a range of statutory, policy and professional responsibilities. Membership of the County Board does not supersede these duties.
- (f) The Nolan Committee principles of public life have been adopted as a common framework for the partnership on which to build shared accountability for the work of the Trust.

## **Next Steps**

4. Children's trust arrangements in Kent will be the focus of an all party member briefing on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2007. There will be a particular focus on the governance and the debate will further inform the governance framework to be agreed by Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007.

## **Recommendation**

5. Cabinet are asked to consider and agree the principles for the Kent Children's Trust (County Board) Governance Framework.

Joy Ackroyd  
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*Background papers:*

Members may wish to look at the Children's Trust webpages for general background information: <http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Children/childrenstrust.cfm>