

# **Appendix B – Dover Gateway Public Consultation Report**

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## 1. Acknowledgement

- 1.1 On behalf of Kent County Council (KCC), we would like to say thank you to all those that went above and beyond to promote the consultation in Dover Gateway and encouraged service users and potential customers to take part. Their input has been invaluable and their efforts have been greatly appreciated.

## 2. Executive summary

- 2.1 A twelve week public consultation on the proposed relocation of KCC services from Dover Gateway ran from 21 March to 12 June 2016. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was conducted prior to the development and delivery of the public consultation. This has been updated and finalised taking into account the feedback received during the consultation (Appendix C).
- 2.1. The EqIA helped to shape the engagement and participation action plan; identifying protected characteristics which had the potential to be negatively or positively impacted by the proposals.
- 2.3 The consultation consisted of a consultation document and questionnaire (Appendix A), which was also produced in an Easy Read version and available in electronic and paper formats. Five drop in sessions were held at the Gateway where KCC staff were available to answer questions.
- 2.4 A variety of communication methods were used to promote the consultation, they included:
- A consultation page on the KCC website and link from the Gateway Service page
  - Emailed consultation documentation to KCC Gateway service leads to distribute to service users
  - Press release sent to Dover newspapers
  - Consultation pull up banner, promotional postcards and consultation document displayed in the Dover Gateway
  - Promotional postcards and consultation documents displayed in other KCC buildings in Dover including the Dover Discovery Centre; Library, Adult Education and at the main reception, Dover Leisure Centre, Age UK and Dover District Council (Whitfield)
  - Briefing of Gateway staff to direct customers to consultation material
  - Briefing of KCC Dover Members and the Leader
  - Engagement with Parish Councils
  - Direct email to relevant Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations including the Citizens Advice Bureau, Victim Support and the Probation Service
  - Promoted by KCC's Community Liaison Officer

- 2.5 In addition, the Gateway VCS partners were invited to attend pre consultation engagement sessions run by KCC and Dover District Council (DDC) officers. All VCS partners chose not to attend the face to face sessions, preferring to communicate by phone and email.
- 2.6 37 consultation responses were received.
- 2.7 This report sets out the background of the consultation, the consultation process, equality and accessibility considerations and discusses the consultation responses and key themes.

### 3. Introduction

- 3.1. Since Dover Gateway opened in Castle Street, Dover people have visited the Gateway to access a range of Kent County Council (KCC), Dover District Council (DDC) and partner services. To make sure every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for our customers, communities and businesses, we must review the services we provide and where we provide them from to ensure we are getting value for money.
- 3.2. We are now considering whether the Dover Gateway is the right location from which to provide KCC services. We know that customers frequently visit Dover Gateway to access services provided by Dover District Council. However, data collected over recent years has shown that customers rarely use Dover Gateway to access KCC services.
- 3.3. Out of 37,859 recorded visits to the Gateway in 2015:
  - 84% were for Dover District Council services
  - 5% were for other services
  - 11% (3,929 of visits) were for KCC services (or those that we commission or partly fund)

In 2009, KCC helped to establish the Dover Gateway by contributing £559,000 towards the cost of building the Gateway. In return Dover District Council has covered the annual property costs in full from 2009 to 2016. Should a decision to be taken to retain KCC services in the Gateway, KCC will be required to pay a 50% contribution towards the property costs, which would be in the region of £32,410 a year. Given the low footfall for KCC services, it is thought that this this would not represent value for money and in the current economic climate we have a responsibility to review our service offer to ensure that we are effectively using the resources that we have available.

Between 21 March and 12 June 2016, a public consultation was held on the future location of these KCC services currently accessed in Dover Gateway.

- 3.4 The consultation focussed on identifying how customers and services operating from Dover Gateway would be impacted if KCC decided to relocate services in July 2018. The consultation proposed like for like service provision to operate from the Dover Discovery Centre. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to assess the potential impact of the proposals on our customers with identified protected characteristics.
- 3.5 The consultation aimed to:
  - Identify how stakeholders (including: all service users, potential service users and service providers) could be impacted if KCC decides to withdraw from the Gateway.

- Present possible an option for the re-provision of KCC services and those commissioned by us and welcome feedback on their suitability.

The responses to the consultation have been used to review and update the EqIA, which will be considered along with the consultation responses before any final decision is made.

- 3.6 Following discussion of the feedback received and recommendations from Members of the Policy and Resources Committee, a decision will be taken by the Leader. If the decision is taken to withdraw, a delegated decision taken by a KCC officer is required on the enactment of the break clause to withdraw from the Gateway.

## 4. Background

### 4.1 Current Service Provision

KCC provides or commissions the following services from the Dover Gateway:

- 4.1.1 Kent Supported Employment clinics - 1 day per week  
Kent Supported Employment help people who face additional barriers to employment. This service uses the Gateway to hold pre-booked face-to-face clinics with customers. This takes place in the Gateway every Wednesday from 9.30am – 12.30pm.
- 4.1.2 Life Choice Independent Living - 3 days per week  
Life Choice Independent Living is a drop in service for adults with learning disabilities. The service is available from the Gateway every Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 9am – 12pm.
- 4.1.3 Smoking Cessation - 2 days per week  
The Smoking Cessation service provides advice and support for people to stop smoking. The service is available from the Gateway every Monday from 11am-5pm and Wednesday from 9am – 1pm.
- 4.1.4 Health Trainer Service – everyday of the week  
Health Trainers carry out health checks on all patients who have been referred to by their doctor. The service is available everyday of the week by appointment between 9am – 5pm.
- 4.1.5 Occupational Therapy Service – 2 days per week  
This service is available to assist in maintaining and increasing independence of our vulnerable customers. The service operates every Tuesday between 9am – 5pm and every Friday between 9am – 12pm
- 4.1.6 Blue Badge Assessments – 1 day per month  
The Blue Badge Scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems who have difficulty using public transport. The service is available on the fourth Tuesday of the month between 9am – 4pm.

#### 4.1.7 Community Wardens – 2 days per month

Community Wardens aim to help people live safely and independently in their neighbourhood and communities. They are available to discuss any concerns people may have about the area they live in on the first and fourth Tuesday of each month between 10am – 1pm.

#### 4.1.8 Hi Kent – 1 day per month

Hi Kent provides advice and support to help maximise the benefit of their aids and offer strategies to cope with hearing loss. The service is available on the second Tuesday of the month between 11am – 12pm.

#### 4.1.9 KCC General Enquiries - during Gateway opening hours

The Gateway staff can help customers with general enquiries on a range of KCC services including blue badges, concessionary travel, social services and highways. In addition Gateway staff can help by signposting to the right team or member of KCC staff.

#### 4.2.0 The breakdown of KCC customer transactions within the Gateway is shown below;

Service (KCC or commissioned by KCC)	
General Enquiry Non-intensive, re-direction by reception staff to other buildings, staff phone numbers or website address	KCC General Enquiry (unspecified)
	Kent Highways
	Kent Support and Assistance
Collecting and completing Blue Badge Application Form. Reception staff can help with completion of forms if needed.	Blue Badge Assessments and Applications
Service specific helpdesk in Gateway, run by service representatives	Community Wardens
Pre-booked clinic and /or drop in sessions run by service representatives	Health Trainer Service
	Kent Supported Employment
	Smoking Cessation
	Hi Kent
	Life Choice Independent Living
	Occupational Therapy Services

## 5. Consultation Process and Activities

### 5.1 Stakeholder groups

#### 5.1.1

5.1.1 The proposals outlined in the consultation had the potential to affect a number of different stakeholders. It was therefore important to devise engagement mechanisms to provide the opportunity for participation across stakeholder groups, being mindful of communication preferences and accessibility of information.

5.1.2 The following stakeholder groups were identified and targeted as part of the consultation:

- Health Trainer service users
- Life Choice Independent Living service users
- Occupational Therapy service users
- Kent Supported Employment service users
- Smoking Cessation service users
- Blue Badge Assessment service users
- Community Wardens service users
- Hi Kent service users
- KCC Gateway meet and greet customers
- All Gateway customers
- KCC and Dover Members
- The Leader of the Council and Member for Commercial and Traded Services, KCC
- Parish Councils
- Gateway staff
- Potential future Gateway customers living in the Dover area
- Dover District residents
- All other KCC staff members

## **5.2 Consultation and engagement activities**

5.2.1 All Gateway VCS partners were invited to attend pre consultation engagement sessions prior to the public consultation. These were to be jointly held by KCC and Dover District Council (DDC) officers, however each of the partners chose not to attend the face to face sessions, preferring to communicate by phone and email. Discussions were held on KCC's proposals and the importance of maintaining partnership working going forward regardless of whether a decision is taken to relocate from Dover Gateway.

5.2.2 Consultation and engagement activities included the following:

- A consultation document setting out the proposals accompanied by a consultation questionnaire to capture feedback.
- The consultation document and questionnaire was available on our website and in hard copy.
- Easy Read and Word versions of the consultation document and questionnaire were also produced and available online and in hard copy.

- Three drop in sessions were held at the Gateway with KCC staff available to answer questions.
- Verbal feedback from service leads and customers during the consultation.

5.2.3 The consultation document was downloaded from the website 220 times (PDF version 154 times and Word version 66). The Easy Read consultation document was downloaded 46 times. The Equality Impact Assessment was downloaded 102 times and the General Questions & Answers paper 99 times.

### **5.3 Promotional activities**

5.3.1 Promotional activity for this consultation was targeted at those who are potentially most impacted by the proposals, including KCC customers who access our services via Dover Gateway and Dover District residents.

5.3.2 Promotional activities included the following:

- Consultation page on KCC website and link from Gateway Service page
- Hard copies of the consultation document, pull up banner and promotional postcards displayed in the Dover Gateway.
- Promotional postcards and consultation documents displayed in other KCC buildings in Dover including the Dover Discovery Centre; Library, Adult Education and at the main reception, Dover Leisure Centre, Age UK and Dover District Council (Whitfield)
- Consultation promotion uploaded to television screens in the Gateway
- KCC Community Liaison Officers and Community Wardens asked to promote the consultation to their Dover contacts and at local meetings they attend during the consultation.
- Briefing email to KCC Dover Members and the Leader
- Consultation documentation emailed to all KCC Gateway service leads and distributed to customers and staff
- Press statements sent to Dover Newspapers
- Engagement with Parish Councils

5.3.3 A timeline of the consultation and engagement activities and the promotional activities is shown on the next page.

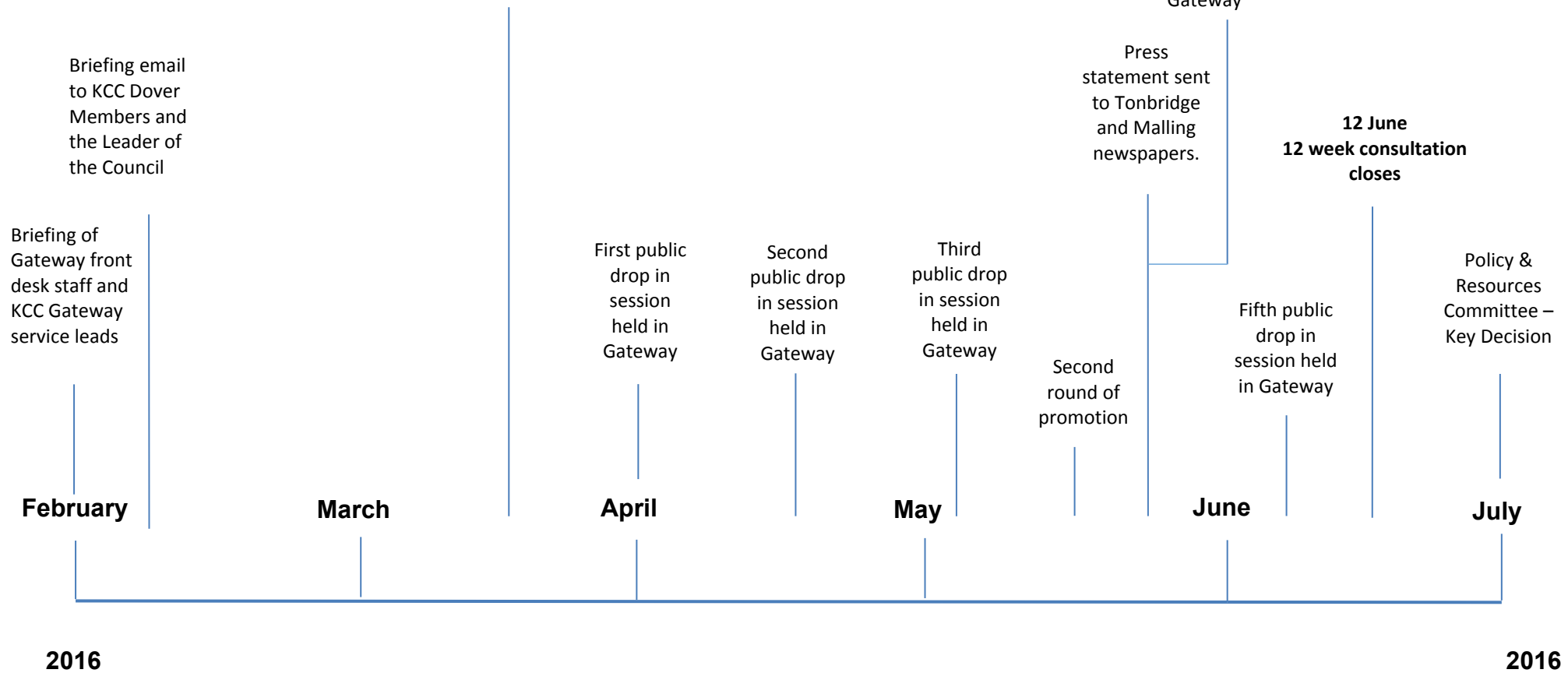


**21 March**

**Consultation opens**

Hard copy consultation documents, postcards and banner up in Gateway. Web version uploaded to consultation directory. Email notification sent to KCC service leads, partners, VCS organisations and Parish Councils

**Consultation timeline**



## **6. Equality and accessibility considerations**

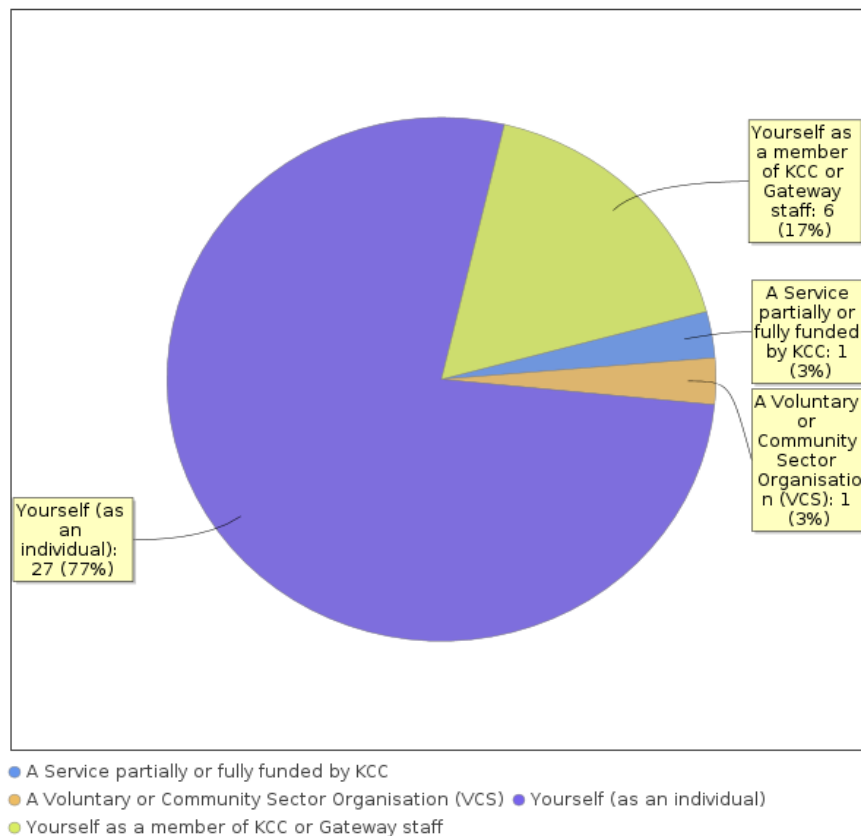
Equality and accessibility considerations relating to the consultation process were as follows:

- 6.1 Produced Easy Read versions of consultation document in addition to standard versions of the consultation document. Dover Gateway staff and KCC service leads used the Easy Read version when discussing the consultation with customers with learning disabilities over the course of the 12 weeks and helped them to fill in the questionnaire when necessary.
- 6.2 Provided Microsoft Word versions of consultation material to ensure that documentation is accessible to customers using audio transcription software.
- 6.3 Uploaded consultation document onto kent.gov website in addition to displaying hard copies in Gateway. Both the Easy Read version of the consultation document and the standard format were made available online and in hard copy versions to improve accessibility of the consultation.
- 6.4 Alternative formats and languages could be requested. It was stated in the consultation document that alternative formats could be requested through either an email or telephone number.
- 6.5 Holding face to face engagement sessions. The consultation process also included five drop in sessions where KCC representatives would be present in the Gateway to answer any questions customers have. The aim of these sessions were to improve accessibility for people to participate in the consultation, raise concerns or ask questions during the consultation process in a face to face environment.
- 6.6 Capture information on protected characteristics. As part of the consultation process the questionnaire included KCC's standard 'About You' questions to collect information to identify issues raised by customers who have recognised protected characteristics and ensure any additional equalities issues raised could be taken into consideration.

## **7. Consultation responses**

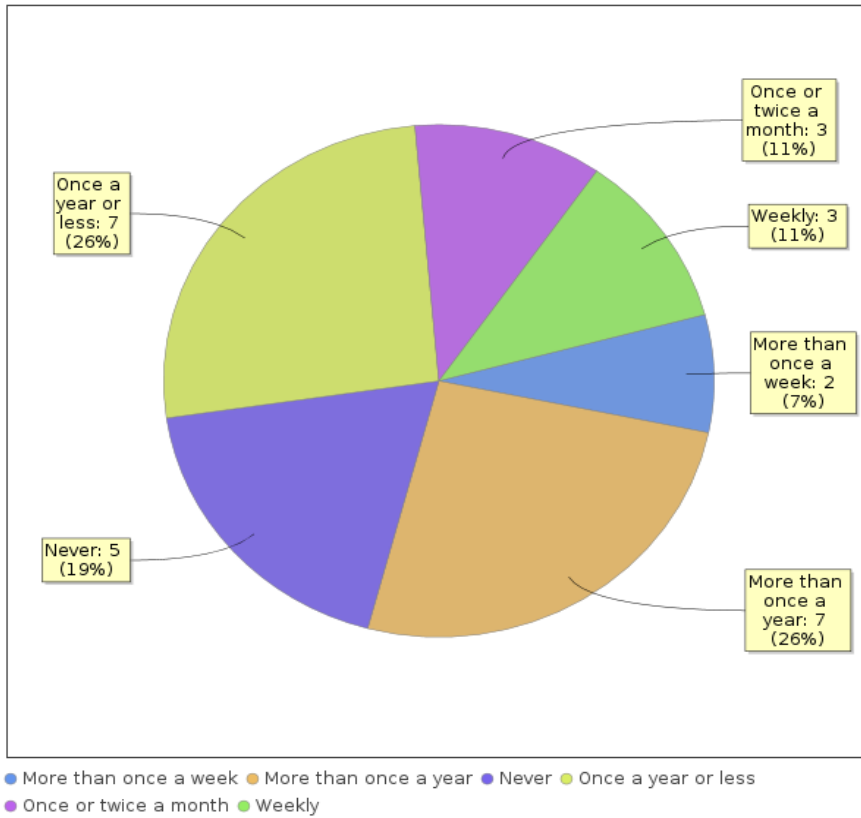
- 7.1 A total of 37 responses were received to the consultation, consisting of 9 hard copy responses, 26 online responses, 1 response at a drop in session and 1 by email.
- 7.2 Question one of the consultation questionnaire asked whether respondents were giving feedback on behalf of themselves, as a member of KCC or

Gateway staff, a friend or relative or another as a representative from another organisation; such as a District Council, Voluntary Sector Organisation or Business. A pie chart setting out the breakdown of responses is shown below. The largest respondent group were completing the questionnaire on behalf of themselves.

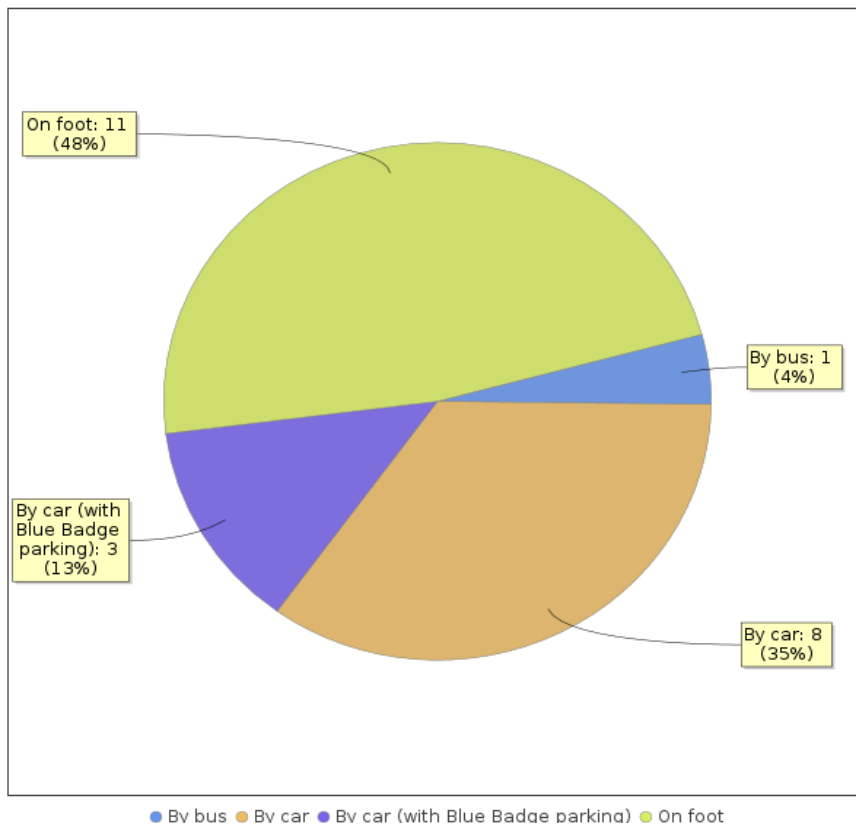


7.3 Question two of the consultation questionnaire asked respondents for their postcode. 23 responses to this question were received, 22 of which indicated that the respondents live in Dover and one response indicating that they live in Tonbridge. 12 people did not respond to this question.

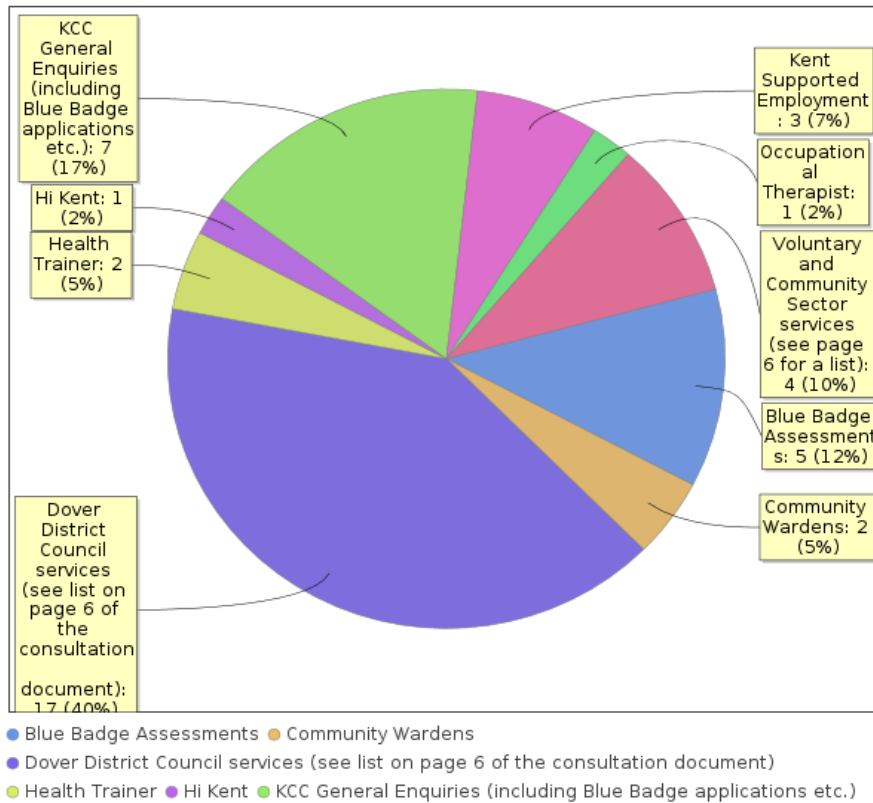
7.4 Question three of the consultation questionnaire asked 'How often do you visit the Dover Gateway?' A pie chart showing the breakdown of responses is shown on the next page. The largest respondent groups for Q3 are those that use the Gateway 'once a year or less' and 'more than once a year'. It was recognised that 4 out of the 27 respondents to this question were opposed to the relocation of KCC services from the Gateway.



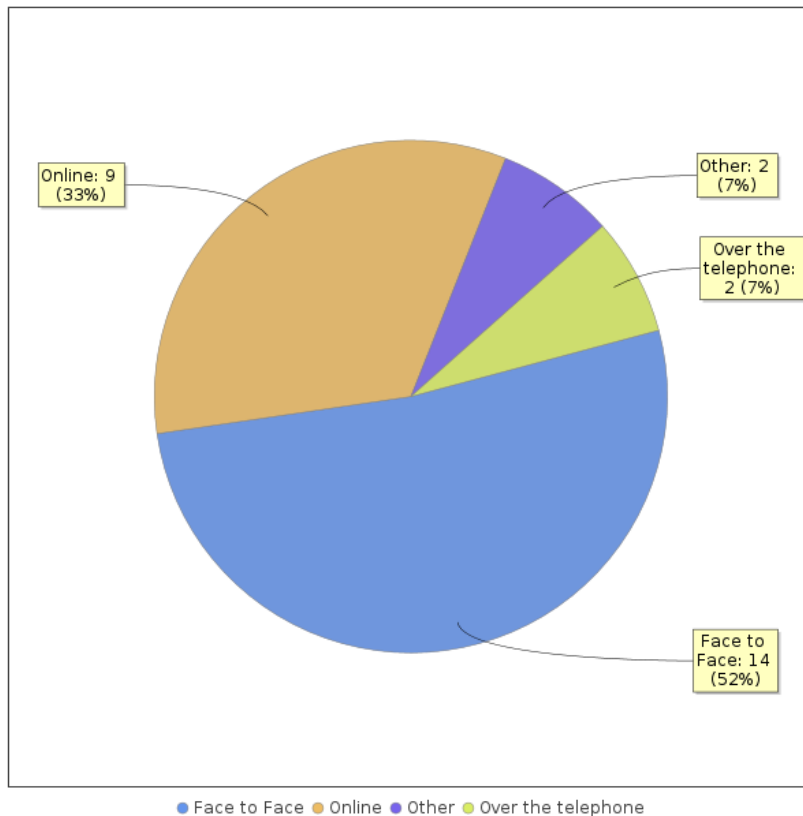
7.5 Question four of the consultation questionnaire asked 'How do you get to Dover Gateway?' A pie chart showing the breakdown of responses is shown below.



7.6 Question five of the consultation questionnaire asked ‘which services do you use at Dover Gateway?’ The largest number of respondents to this question reported that their main purpose for visiting the Gateway was to access Dover District Council services with only minimal access to the KCC services operating from the Gateway.



7.7 Question six of the consultation questionnaire asked ‘what is your preferred way of accessing KCC services?’ 52% of the respondents preferred to access KCC services face to face with 7% preferring over the phone communication and 33% online. This data reinforces the need to maintain a face to face provision of service.



7.8 Question seven was split into two parts, the first part asked the respondent on what level did they agree with the proposal to relocate KCC services from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A majority of 46% (16 responses) were 'strongly' in favour of the relocation with 26% (9 responses) in further agreement. The second part of the question stated that the consultation document outlines proposals to relocate the KCC services from Dover Gateway to the Dover Discovery Centre, and asked the question 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?' A number of detailed responses to this question were received with some respondents raising a number of issues within their comments. These have been split and grouped into the main theme groups below.

Table 1: Main themes of responses to open consultation questions, ranked by frequency.

Theme of comments	Number of positive comments	Number of negative comments	Most popular comments ranked
Economic Impact	17	1	1 <sup>st</sup>
Location of Sites	6	2	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Co-location of Services	4	3	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Accessibility of Proposed Site	1	3	4 <sup>th</sup>

## 8. Main consultation response themes

### 8.1 Theme 1 – Economic Impact

Example Comments
<p><i>Positive:</i></p> <p>“The relocation appears to be a sensible decision in light of financial constraints and should have little impact on the delivery of the Blue Badge assessment clinic.”</p> <p>“I think it is a brilliant idea to move the gateway service into the Discovery Centre! It would save a lot of money on property and it is also very close to the existing location meaning customers will still be able to access the service easily.”</p> <p>“As KCC need to reduce costs we can still offer a face to face service in alternative KCC property reducing costs but still maintaining excellent customer service and easy to reach services.”</p> <p>“By moving services to the Discovery Centre it will make savings on property costs and give access also to the Discovery Centre facilities”</p> <p>“Makes sense to save money but still offer a good service in a different location.”</p> <p><i>Negative:</i></p> <p>“Also £32,000 funding for property costs is miniscule amount in the scheme of things, tiny savings for a huge upheaval. Keep things as they are please.”</p>

8.1.1 The above consultation feedback notes both the positive and negative comments in relation to the relocation of KCC services from the Dover Gateway and the financial impact it may have. It was recognised that the majority of comments were in favour of the relocation based on the potential annual savings that could be achieved.

8.1.2 This feedback was received mainly by individuals, with one comment submitted from a VCS partner and another by a KCC/ Gateway member of staff.

8.1.3 This feedback supports KCC’s commitment to continually reviewing our services to ensure we deliver value for money to our customers. This includes looking at how and where our services should be provided from.

## 8.2 Theme 2 - Location of Sites

Example Comments
<p><u>Positive:</u></p> <p>“The distance between the two sites is not significant.”</p> <p>“It will centralise access by placing the centre within reach of the train and bus station and adequate car parking albeit public (pay and display) spaces.”</p> <p>“Whilst the distance between the present site and the proposed site is only yards away the Discovery Centre is more central to the town. Might even encourage some people to visit our wonderful museum.”</p> <p>“They are both very close to each other so it would be just as easy to get to each one.”</p> <p>“Close Whitfield Offices and move everything to the Discovery Centre. Lets have DDC services actually in the town and bring some benefit to local shops.”</p> <p><u>Negative:</u></p> <p>“It makes to save money on building utilities. But I am not sure that the Discovery Centre is the correct choice. How will children be safeguarded?”</p> <p>“The Gateway is centrally located in Dover and is a very valuable resource. My team at Kent Supported Employment do not have an office base in the Dover area and are fully dependant on the Gateway for meeting clients.”</p>

- 8.2.1 A key trend from the responses received was the accessibility of the proposed location. It was recognised by the respondents that the proposed site is within walking distance of the Gateway and that moving KCC services to this site may encourage interest in other services and organisations

## 8.3 Theme 3 – Co-location of Services

Example Comments
<p><u>Positive:</u></p> <p>“It would be beneficial if both KCC and Dover District Council services remain co-located in order for residents to benefit from the multi agency approach that Dover</p>



Gateway offers - if this can be replicated at the Discovery Centre then this would be a saving for both County and District Councils potentially without detriment to residents. Adequate space for the voluntary sector should also be made available.”

“It would be good for the building to provide more services and get used more often. I think it would also promote the library service to customers who may not know it is in the building.”

“KCC face to face services would be under one roof and accessible by all.”

“Discovery Centre has many little used room and facilities. Close Whitfield Offices and move everything to the Discovery Centre. Lets have DDC services actually in the town and bring some benefit to local shops.”

Negative:

“The current centre is purpose built. there will be limited access and space in the Discovery centre. This could lead to longer waiting times for individuals to be seen.”

“There are already too many things attached to the Dover Discovery Centre . KCC and DDC services should remain available at a separate location such as now in 'the gateway' which is absolutely fine as it is.”

“The Discovery Centre is currently used for library services - any intrusion by Dover Gateway would lead to a reduction in space for the services currently available there.”

8.3.1 The third most frequent response theme discussed the benefits of having a number of KCC, DDC and other services collocating in the same physical building.

#### 8.4 Theme 4 – Accessibility of Proposed Site

Example Comments

Positive:

“I believe this change would have no impact as their is still access for disabled individuals.”

Negative:

“Access difficult for partly disabled.”

“Parking is murder even if you have a disabled bay! Because of double line markings reducing the access to on road parking. There are not enough Disabled bays now. The Gateway building is ideal for disabled people as there are no steps.

I have claustrophobia so lifts are not good. Please ensure ground floor access is available.”

“Occupational therapy bathing clinic set up with equipment and computer wifi installed. Costs involved in moving this would cost money, so no saving.”

- 8.4.1 The fourth most frequent response theme discussed the accessibility into and around the proposed site including parking concerns.
- 8.4.2 The Dover Discovery Centre has stepped and ramped access into the building. There is also a lift to access all of the floors. Although this information was included in the consultation documentation, it is important that this is reiterated to all respondents once a decision has been taken on whether KCC services are to relocate.
- 8.4.3 All information in relation to the accessibility of the site will be documented in the Dover Equality Impact Assessment.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment Summary**

- 9.1 Table 4 of the full EqIA (AppendixC) shows a summary of the consultation responses according to the protected characteristics. This takes into account both feedback from the questionnaire “About You” closed questions, and any additional equalities feedback received in the open questions and is shown below.
- 9.2 There was also an open question inviting customers to add comments to the Equality Impact Assessment. One customer reported that disabled and vulnerable should have easy access and not be kept waiting. Whilst another reported that the change would have no impact as there is still access for disabled individuals at the Dover Discovery Centre.
- 9.3 Table 5 of the EqIA sets out an action plan relating to the identified issues. The key actions are as follows:
- Ensure all locations are accessible
  - Ensure that staff in alternative locations can assist service users in completing Blue Badge applications
  - Look at the feasibility of introducing hearing loops to alternative locations
  - Look at the feasibility of introducing an OT Suite to alternative locations
  - Raise awareness of transport routes to alternative locations
  - Consideration of disabled parking at alternative locations

## **10. Next Steps**

The consultation report and full EqIA will be used to inform the decision on whether to relocate KCC services from Dover Gateway. A decision will be made following recommendations made at Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee and information will be made available online and in the Gateway.

If KCC decides to relocate the KCC services in the Gateway, any changes will be in place from July 2018.

Details of Individuals Responding	Consultation response and potential impact
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 11% of respondents who completed this question indicated their age was 65 and over (4 people).</li> <li>- Older people may be more reliant on face to face service provision and less able to use the internet</li> <li>- Older people may be disadvantaged services are relocated to buildings which are not on bus routes or near to the town centre</li> <li>- Older people may be disadvantaged from having to make more than one trip to access council services if KCC services relocate from the Gateway</li> </ul>
<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 19% of respondents who completed this question said they had a disability (7). Of the respondents who said they had a disability, 57% reported to have a physical disability, 14X% had a sensory impairment, whilst the remainder had another type of disability.</li> <li>- Wheelchair users may be disadvantaged if proposed locations are not fully accessible</li> <li>- As there is a hearing loop in the Gateway, it will be beneficial if alternative locations could be hearing loop equipped to promote inclusiveness to deaf people.</li> <li>- Disabled people may be disadvantaged if there are insufficient numbers of disabled parking bays near to proposed locations</li> <li>- As there is an OT suite available at the Gateway, would it be feasible to introduce the same at proposed relocation site</li> </ul>
<b>Pregnancy/ Maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Race</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 68% of respondents (25 people) classified themselves as White English and 9% (3 people) classified themselves as White Scottish. The remaining responses were blank, other or prefer not to say.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 35 responses were received to this question. Of those 40% were male and 46% were female.</li> </ul>
<b>Carers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 14% or respondents (5 people) said that they are a carer.</li> </ul>

