

By Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services & Performance Management
Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive

To: Corporate Services Policy Overview Committee

Date: 25 September 2009

Subject: Corporate Services Connecting with Communities – Annual Report to Policy Overview Committee.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The purpose of this report is to update Members with developments regarding consultation, engagement and involvement within the Chief Executives Department. The report provides the national and local policy context and a summary of the key activities undertaken by the Chief Executives Department during 2008/09 and the activities planned for 2009/10.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the main aspects of consultation, engagement and involvement within the Chief Executives Department over the last 12 months. It also informs Members of key developments at a national and local level, on both existing and future work and highlights how the Department intends to further embed and extend engagement processes within our services.

Effective community engagement helps to make sure that:

- Public services reflect and respond to the views and concerns of local people
- People feel involved in and responsible for improving their quality of life
- Solutions work over the long term.

Engagement is more than consultation; it is a continuous process that requires day to day involvement at an operational level between KCC, its partners and communities, to identify needs, determine priorities, agree actions, deliver responses and assess and review progress and outcomes. Implemented effectively, engagement will also have strong strategic benefits by helping to inform and shape the priorities and needs of the county council and partner organisations without causing consultation fatigue.

2. NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 The government has pledged to promote active citizenship and community engagement at all levels and in all policy areas. This has led to community engagement being at the core of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities*) places a duty on Local Authorities to involve local people.

From April 2009 we have all had to comply with this new statutory duty to 'inform, consult and involve' people if we plan to make changes to our services (section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act).

It provides that where a best value authority, such as Kent County Council, considers it appropriate for 'representatives of local persons', or of local persons of a particular description, to be involved in the exercise of any of its functions they should be:

- (a) **provided with information** about the exercise of the function
- (b) **consulted** about the exercise of the function
- (c) **involved** in another way.

At the heart of the new 'Duty to Involve' is the aspiration to "ensure that local people have a greater opportunity to have their say about local issues and helping to shape service delivery in their area" and that we "embed a culture of engagement and empowerment", principally across the council's outward facing functions.

This will mean that we will need to consider **information provision, consultation activities and involvement opportunities** that are made available to people across the county. The new duty will help shift how the Council 'does business' and support council priorities.

The key changes for us are that we now:

- (1) need to **evidence** why each service has decided either to apply the duty or not and, if so, in which way e.g. by consulting, informing or involving people in another way
- (2) need to take steps **much earlier** in the preparation of service changes or new schemes/initiatives, to ensure it does not delay the decision-making process and takes into account the views of local people before taking any decision.

The good news is that we can use existing mechanisms in many cases – and more importantly we do have a degree of discretion about the level of involvement, meaning that the 'scope' and 'impact' of a proposed change will inform the degree and depth of the 'inform, consult and involve' path that needs to be taken. It is not a case of a one size fits all approach and different approaches will have to be adopted for different functions.

We should be able to demonstrate, through evidence gathered in the normal course of business, that:

- we understand the interests and requirements of the communities we serve
- we use our understanding of the county to ensure information, consultation and involvement opportunities are provided on the right issues, targeted at the right people and accessible to those we are trying to reach
- we have an appropriate corporate approach to providing information, consultation and involving in other ways that flows throughout our organisation, from strategic policies into individual service delivery and our work with partners where appropriate

- people feel that the authority provides relevant and accessible engagement opportunities and they will know how to get involved, either directly or through their elected representative
- people will recognise that the authority's policies reflect this involvement and that services are tailored to local and individual needs, even though difficult choices in service provision need to be made.

In December 2008, the White Paper '**Communities in Control: real people, real power**' was introduced into Parliament as **the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill 2008**. This builds on the 'duty to involve', and highlights a duty to promote democracy, participatory budgeting, and community led planning. It is aimed at driving power to local communities, with an emphasis on involving local citizens in the decision making process, and in their local communities.

The 'bill' proposes a duty on local councils to respond to all petitions, including e-petitions that relate to:

- services they are responsible for
- services where they share delivery responsibility
- to an improvement in the economic social or environmental well-being of the authority's area to which any of its partner authorities could contribute (upper tier only).

Every Council must adopt, publish and comply with a Petition Scheme and introduce an e-petition scheme.

The **Sustainable Communities Act** became law on 23 October 2007. The Act sets up a new process where local communities and their local authorities (district, county and unitary councils) can guide policy and action to promote local sustainability and reverse community decline by proposing changes in legislation or budgets that currently only central government can influence. Local authorities are currently the only bodies able to make these proposals. The Act sets out that any proposals must be discussed with a panel of local representatives and consensus reached where possible.

One of the key dimensions of the new **Equality Framework for Local Government** that we are working within (and aiming for 'Excellent' by the end of 2010/11) is the extent of our engagement with local communities from different Diversity backgrounds about our priorities and the services we deliver.

In April 2009, the **Comprehensive Area Assessment** (CAA) replaced the CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment). It has a greater focus on citizen experience and perspectives.

The new **Customer Service Excellence** standard was introduced following a detailed review of the Charter Mark. It includes criteria around developing an in-depth understanding of customers. This includes consulting customers and using the information gained to design and provide services, the importance of monitoring the outcomes of your services and whether customers are satisfied with them.

3. KCC CONTEXT

The expectations of residents and businesses as consumers of public services are changing. KCC is responding to the fact that service users increasingly see themselves as customers, expecting greater choice and services tailored to their needs and those of their families and businesses. Residents want to access services that meet their individual needs at convenient locations and at times that suit them.

In Kent we now need to bring together all the good practice that currently exists to demonstrate how we already meet the requirements and to identify areas we need to improve.

Locally we are doing more consultation, engagement and involvement than ever before. This has greatly increased the amount of feedback we get from our stakeholders and residents, and this feedback has been used in a variety of ways. However this needs to be achieved 'with fewer but smarter' questions being posed to Kent residents.

Much of this is rightly led by individual services in contact with their own customers. The corporate responsibilities are for setting and supporting coherent standards, challenging under-performance and creating the framework for work with partners on this agenda.

In 2008/09 links were made between community and democratic engagement, communications, access to services and engagement with residents. This is alongside, not instead of, the current strong emphasis on the involvement of direct service users.

Webcasting of our formal democratic proceedings extends the audience far beyond what could ever be achieved in the traditional way and the combination of public service information, community-based news and user-generated content on Kent TV offer a unique platform for people in Kent to get their views and priorities across to decision-makers and for decision-makers to connect with local people.

The Social Innovation Lab Kent (SILK) gives us a set of tools and a way of working to support in-depth conversations and the co-design of policy and services for some of the most vulnerable and least heard communities in Kent.

Other innovations at earlier stages include the piloting of the Pic N Mix approach to information for the public – where we enable pilot groups of residents and local businesses to access social, economic and performance data across the public sector to create 'shop windows' of information that meets their specific needs (as opposed to the needs of those publishing the data).

We need to ensure that we are clear about how feedback from, and information about, our various communities is being used to provide added value in our decision making. The emphasis should be not only on the *quantity* of consultations, but on the *quality*, and the *effectiveness* with which consultation results are converted into meaningful actions.

4. CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Customer Insight

This area of work is driven by the information and data we hold about residents of Kent, including the feedback we get from customer comments and complaints, referred to

elsewhere on this agenda. A range of other reports, studies and papers are also used by staff across the Department to help gain a better understanding of issues, communities and service users.

The Research and Intelligence Unit has corporate responsibility for all of the research and data areas outlined below:

- Demography
- Deprivation
- Economy and the labour market
- Land use:
 - Commercial
 - Housing
- Retail and town centres
- Customer Insight (MOSAIC).

The unit collects, collates, process, analyse and map data for a wide range of projects across the whole of Kent County Council and beyond. Some of the most recent projects contributed to include Kent Crime View, The Kent and Medway Structure Plan, The Kent Economic Report, The People of Kent, coastal town analysis, developer contributions and What Price Growth?

All of the latest data and publications on these topics can be found on the Research and Intelligence website www.kent.gov.uk/research

As part of the Gateway programme, partnership funding from the EU Interreg IVa programme has been obtained for all 14 Kent local authorities to work with French partners to use customer insight and profiling as the basis for a shared approach to shaping future service delivery – especially in relation to the location of public access premises.

4.2 Gateway Multi-Channel

KCC recognises that public access in the 21st century is changing and that the way we deliver services across the whole public sector needs to change accordingly, particularly the way in which we utilise technology, across all channels (face-to-face, phone and web).

During 2008/09, KCC began work on simplifying access to public services in Kent with the *Access Kent* programme (now part of the Gateway programme), which aims to deliver joined-up web and telephone access across the non-emergency public sector in Kent, along with providing a network of physical Gateway for improved face-to-face service delivery, enhanced further by a fleet of Mobile Gateway, for rural and hard-to-reach urban communities across the county. This is being led by KCC, in partnership with district and borough councils, NHS, Fire, Police, Medway council, the voluntary sector and business organisations.

4.3 Community Liaison Managers

KCC Community Liaison Managers provide a key link between local people, local organizations and decision makers in Kent. One of the roles of the team is working with elected members to arrange public meetings in each of the districts in Kent. The meetings are an opportunity for the Council to engage with the local community and understand

their views. The form of these meetings varies from district to district, and can be varied to suite the issues being raised. The team is a valuable resource and a good first point of contact for any KCC officers who need to undertake work which requires the duty to involve.

4.4 Neighbourhood Forums

The County Council working with its partners continues to pilot a range of models for community engagement. Building on the first successful pilot of Neighbourhood Forums in Dover which was recognised by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Team as a good model discussions have continued across the county with partners on a range of models of community engagement which is appropriate for each of the partners.

During 2008/09 productive discussions have taken place which have resulted in the establishment of three Neighbourhood Forums in Gravesham based on the Dover model.

In Swale the Borough Council and the County Council have established Local Engagement Forums which has created a stronger link to the Swale Local Strategic Partnership. Membership of the Swale Local Engagement Forums includes Local Strategic Partnership representatives e.g. Police, Primary Care Trust, local organisations in addition to Parish, Borough and County Council Members.

In Tonbridge and Malling and in Canterbury the County Council is joining models of community engagement established by the Borough Councils which have been in place for some time.

4.5 Kent Partners Compact

The Kent Partners Compact is an agreement between Public Sector and Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) partners in Kent, setting out how they will work together and act in their dealings with each other.

The *Compact* was endorsed by a meeting of the Kent Public Service Board in 2008 and is currently going through KCC's own policy processes.

The *Kent Partners Compact* commits each sector to specific ways of working in four Codes of Practice. The *Communication and Engagement Code of Practice* (pages 14 - 15) covers how we should ensure honest two-way dialogue between the sectors. The Code of Practice lays out VCS undertakings, Public Sector undertakings and joint undertakings. For instance:

- The VCS commits to “respect the confidentiality of information, when given access to it on that basis”
- The Public Sector undertakes to “give organisations enough time to respond to consultation and, where possible, a standard period of 12 weeks and a minimum of 8 weeks”
- The Sectors jointly undertake to “listen as well as talk”.

Whilst there is a compliance procedure in place should disputes arise, the value of the *Kent Partners Compact* is in the ethos it embeds in both Sectors, which will lead to a

positive working relationship between organisations. This can only help to lead to better services for the people of Kent.

4.6 Customer Impact Assessments

From 6 April 2009, Customer Impact Assessments (CIAs) replaced Equality Impact Assessments in KCC, to reflect the continuous mainstreaming of equalities and diversity into our everyday thinking about who our customers are and how we can best meet their needs.

A Customer Impact Assessment (CIA) is primarily a tool for improving council services. It enables policy and service managers to identify the potential impact of a policy, procedure, project or service on the residents of Kent and KCC's workforce. It can help KCC to provide and deliver excellent services to the people of Kent by making sure that these reflect the needs of *all* members of the community.

CIAs give KCC staff the opportunity to think about how their work impacts on local people or other staff, particularly those from diverse communities, and to take action to prevent unfair discrimination.

4.7 Kent Health Watch

Kent Health Watch is run by KCC in partnership with the NHS and provides another route by which people can make their voice heard. Kent Health Watch:

- is a 'signposting' service that points callers in the right direction
- helps ensure that all feedback about health and social care services in Kent - including compliments and complaints, comments and concerns - are captured in the most appropriate manner
- helps the NHS to ensure that all public views and suggestions are taken into account to improve services
- adds to and enhances, rather than replaces, existing services.

Data collected by Kent Health Watch - either by telephone or email - will be recorded and reported back to the NHS and Kent County Council.

5. CONSULTATION, ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT FOR 2008/09

5.1 2009/10 Budget Consultation Process

The annual budget process provides formally for consultation with the public, Trade Unions, the business community, opposition Members and professional organisations.

KCC commissioned market research firm Ipsos MORI to carry out a study of public attitudes to KCC expenditure priorities and Council Tax levels. This information has informed the recommendations made to County Council and a summary was attached to the report to Cabinet on 2 February 2009.

The main findings confirmed many of the themes identified by previous research for KCC by Ipsos MORI and others. Kent is generally well-liked by its residents; it is attractive, and with good transport links but there is also a very strong sense that the county faces many

threats. These centre on the growing population, which cannot be sustained by existing infrastructure / facilities.

Roads are a powerful symbol of this – both in regards maintenance and capacity – and they also tap into local unease about the presence of foreigners, whether transitory or permanent. Crime, education, health, social services and employment are also major issues.

As found in previous years, Kent's residents as elsewhere in the country display a typically vague understanding of local government structure, and the division of responsibilities between county and district. Policing, motorways, housing and local planning are all often supposed (wrongly) to fall under the county's jurisdiction although education is correctly seen as one of KCC's main areas.

The sources of council funding and division of spending are also not well understood, and people are generally unaware of the legislative constraints on budgets. Despite this, people know what they want. Among those areas for which KCC is responsible, education is a key priority, along with road maintenance, community safety and social services. Further, public transport is deemed to be in particular need of improvement, e.g. buses' operating hours.

A meeting with business leaders was held on 27 January and there was a consultation with staff representatives on 11 February. The budget proposals were reviewed at Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 26 January and 10 February.

5.2 Kent & Medway Citizen Panel

The Kent Residents' Panel was started in spring 2004 and had a membership of some 1,100 residents when it was closed in autumn 2008. In partnership with the Kent Messenger Group, KCC has established a new *Kent and Medway Citizens' Panel*, enabling us to seek the views of a large number of Kent residents aged 16 or over. The Panel marks a first in that it is the only citizens' panel in the country to be run jointly by a local newspaper and a local authority.

The new Panels coverage extends to Kent and Medway, meaning that Police, Fire and other partners can now use this Panel. The new panel is managed by Ipsos MORI, who hold all the Panellists' details and personal information and use their extensive resources to ensure that all Citizens' Panel surveys are truly representative. It is intended to use the new and more representative Panel as the appointed panel for *the duty to involve* under the Sustainable Communities Act.

Membership of the new Panel was started with a large scale survey undertaken by Ipsos MORI and has been followed by a £1,000 prize draw for new members and an open invitation for Kent residents to join either using the website www.kmcp.co.uk or by phone to 020 7347 3176.

So far two surveys have been undertaken with the Kent & Medway Citizens' Panel, the initial benchmark and recruitment survey and a subsequent snapshot survey.

In addition to seeking recruits for the Panel, the initial survey covered a total of 1,838 residents between 25 February and 31 April 2008 and included topics as follows:

- Living in Kent

- Moving out of Kent
- Satisfaction with Kent
- Satisfaction with the local neighbourhood
- Future change in Kent
- Priorities for Kent
- Economic optimism – national, Kent and personal
- Use of local media
- Use of technology
- Awareness of Kent organizations
- Social and political activity
- Community involvement
- Contact with the Council.

Further information on the results of these surveys can be found at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/publications/council-and-democracy/opinion-four.htm>

The subsequent snapshot poll was e-mailed out to KMCP members on 14 November and included questions on:

- Economic situation and its effects
- Intentions for Christmas holiday shopping
- Cooking at home and eating out.

Further information on the results of these surveys can be found at [http://surveys.glopanel.com/communities/default.aspx?p=p110689507&n=\(0%3a0-205450163%230%2c+238\)](http://surveys.glopanel.com/communities/default.aspx?p=p110689507&n=(0%3a0-205450163%230%2c+238))

5.3 Around Kent

In the April 2008 edition of Around Kent we asked the public how we could improve the publication. That, together with other research we have carried out, gave us a great insight into what the people of Kent think about the publication. As a result, changes were made and we reported back on the outcome in the July 2008 Around Kent edition.

5.4 Gateways

Customer surveys are carried out at all Gateway locations. Pre-opening questionnaires were carried out for the Tenterden Gateway in December 2008 and then the exercise repeated in March 2009. This feedback led to a re-design of the floor plan for Tenterden Gateway to better accommodate customer needs, and improve public access further. Tunbridge Wells Gateway have a web based customer feedback process that is collated and reviewed monthly.

Maidstone and Tenterden Gateway carried out surveys in March - April 2009 as part of the 'National One Stop Shop Benchmarking Group'. From July 2009 we will be rolling this out to all Gateways on a quarterly basis. Maidstone have made changes to their queuing system in response to some of the feedback received.

Along with SILK and Engine (a Service Design company) we have developed an 'Insight to Idea' tool. This is a staff development tool that introduces customer insight techniques and journey mapping to spot opportunities for service improvement. Working with staff the focus is on understanding customer needs and experiences as a means of

delivering an enhanced customer service and engaging customers in the Gateway service offer. As part of the rollout of this from Oct - Dec 2009, customer focus groups will be set up in each Gateway.

A DVD has been produced using real customers and their experiences. This can be seen on Kent.gov.uk by the public, along with Kenttv.com/gatewayexperience. This is also available in British Sign Language (kenttv.com/gatewayexperiencesigned).

5.5 Kent TV

In October 2008 Kent TV held its first debate, which focused on the local housing crisis in Canterbury. A panel of members, councillors and housing experts were invited to face an audience of local residents and students. A special web page was created for this purpose and included polls and somewhere viewers could upload their own comments and questions. The housing debate has been used to help inform policy decisions.

The housing debate proved to be an effective way of engaging, informing and interacting with the public. Since the first debate, Kent TV has also hosted a debate on Backing Kent Business in which the public could put forward questions to be answered by a panel of experts and covered the Kent 20-20 conference giving businesses a say on how the event works for them.

Results from the polls and the dialogue from the comments are available indefinitely on Kent TV, and have been used to inform relevant policies and agendas. All the videos filmed and uploaded from both the debates and the competitions are available for viewers to access on demand.

Additionally, Kent TV has been engaging young people through various competitions. The first was Sound Clash 2009, which was a battle of the bands type competition, giving singers and bands a chance to showcase their talents. Viewers were able to vote for their favourite band with the winning band getting £1,000 and a professionally made video. There were 84 entries from across Kent and 12,000 registrations to vote online.

The second competition was called Animate and Create and was aimed at children of primary and secondary age. They were asked to submit short animations around the theme 'Cleaner, Greener and Safer', and the chosen video won an animation kit for their school.

We wanted to gauge the views of the public on the direction of Kent TV and it was suggested that 2 members of the public become members of the Board of Governors. A press release was sent out and the search was mentioned in Kent on Sunday, sent out in the Business Link and the Chartered Institute of Marketing newsletters, emailed to students at Canterbury Christchurch University, as well as being placed online at Kent.gov.uk and Kent TV.

We received limited responses from the public and a decision was taken by the Board of Governors that Kent TV should direct its attentions to gathering wider feedback from other sources.

We also wanted to find out the public's opinions on various key topics and carry out ongoing engagement with viewers utilising the "Your Say" section on Kent TV to gather

feedback on a range of Kent issues and services, and use this information to help raise Kent's profile.

It was decided by the Board of Governors that the Your Say section of the website did not offer value for money. Instead Kent TV has found it useful to gauge the views of the people in other ways for example by conducting online polls and by asking people to submit comments and questions on various topics.

5.6 ***Social Innovation Lab for Kent (SILK)***

Through the work of the *Social Innovation Lab for Kent (SILK)* KCC has sought to place the person at the heart of service design, both within KCC and in partnership with others. SILK carries out intensive work with specific target groups and aims to provide a creative environment for people to work together.

The 'Just Coping' report on low income families was published in July 2008. The report is about the everyday lives and challenges of families who are coping with material hardship, and the ways in which they manage to survive. In an era where family life is given unprecedented levels of attention, and where parenting practice is closely scrutinised by a judgemental public, it highlights the social, cultural and environmental factors that combine to make life so difficult for 'just coping' families. It received a national level profile and has informed a number of additional projects in order to address the issues raised. Further information on this report is available on:

<http://socialinnovation.typepad.com/silk/2008/10/just-coping-rep.html>

A partnership was created with the Digital Inclusion team at Communities and Local Government (CLG) to explore ways in which technology can better support families at risk. A key theme emerging from this work was that of 'bulk buying'. Bulk-buying means simply buying items in bulk to cut down on costs. This has evolved into a new cross-sector, multi-disciplinary project under the umbrella of the poverty pilot, focussing on community involvement, to create a bulk-buying model in the Parkwood area of Maidstone. SILK is involved in the bulk-buying project because it was voted as one of the favourite ideas at a public event in November 2008 last year attended by 50 plus Parkwood residents.

SILK undertook focused work with the Sheerness Children's Centre to find new ways of engaging fathers in family life. The 'Engaging Fathers' report was published in August 2008, which resulted in the appointment of a full-time dads' worker at the Centre. Further information on this report is available on:

<http://socialinnovation.typepad.com/silk/2008/10/engaging-father.html#more>

In March 2009, SILK worked with *Gateway* frontline staff to co-design 'Insight to Idea' – a structured process for groups to reflect on customer needs, map the customer journey of interaction with the Gateway, and generate creative solutions for improved services. 'Insight-to-Idea' is now being used as part of a team building workshop day for the roll out of new Gateways around Kent.

6. PLANNED INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY THAT DID NOT TAKEN PLACE IN 2008/09

6.1 Usability and accessibility study of the Website

Due to budget restraints this survey was deferred to 2009/10 and has now taken place.

6.2 Usability and accessibility study of the KNet

Due to budget restraints this survey did not take place

6.3 Kent & Medway Citizen Panel

The attitudes towards migration and the attitude towards poverty questions were not included within the Kent & Medway Citizen Panel questions.

7. PLANNED INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY WITHIN CHIEF EXECUTIVES DEPARTMENT 2009/10

7.1 The following work will be carried out in 2009/10 to develop and support a coherent framework for a KCC approach to engagement with individuals (personalisation), communities (localism) and partners (V4K/LAA) in a 'Comprehensive' Engagement Strategy (CES) for KCC, taking a lead role on:

- developing a more coherent KCC approach to engagement, build links and common activities with partners – the ultimate aim being a series of approaches (if not a strategy) that works across partners and partnerships
- developing systematic KCC wide approaches to gathering and acting on customer insight (trends from complaints, the use of MOSAIC, lessons from user focus groups and other forms of soft and hard data)
- customer insight (e.g. KMCP, People of Kent, public perception PIs, learning from comments and complaints)
- quality assurance of KCC community engagement activities and leadership of corporate engagement initiatives.
- mainstreaming the SILK methodology and creating a permanent resource across KCC and Kent Public Service Board (KPSB) partners to drive service improvement and policy development
- ensuring that service-led engagement and member-led engagement work comes together - Local Boards and Neighbourhood forums used to engage communities
- a new system for dealing with petitions
- ensuring Equality & Diversity in service delivery (as opposed to in the workforce) should be simply a facet of wider performance improvement and engagement, not a separate 'industry' in its own right. This can be achieved by embedding it as part of the Performance, Improvement and Engagement structure, but still using the specific focus of the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG) to drive progress. Equality mapping and the mechanisms for community engagement are two of the key elements of EFLG and link strongly to the wider role of the unit and are complementary to it
- update and improve the Communication and Media toolkit so that it becomes the key guidance on communication standards at KCC
- pilot the October 2009 edition of *Around Kent* with a district council (possibly Swale) and explore options for a more joined up approach to the magazine with other public sector organisations and partners
- deliver a more usable, accessible and interactive kent.gov.uk website for the public, colleagues and members

- deliver a more usable, accessible and interactive staff intranet for colleagues and members
- develop and implement a Members' portal, giving members easy access to council and other information online in one place
- begin work on joining up online services and information with other Kent public services, as part of the Gateway Multi-Channel
- continue to support the ongoing review of localism across the County, with a view to ensuring the future and lasting success of participative and deliberative local government at all 3 tiers, subject to appropriate resources
- budget consultation with the public, consistent with best practice. Statutory duty to consult taxpayers on budget and council tax levels before setting budget

7.2 A list of consultations planned with the public in 2009/10 is included in Appendix 1.

8. CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates the Department's commitment to effective consultation and involvement, and highlights some of the work already being done. There continues to be a need for setting and supporting coherent standards, challenging under-performance and creating the framework for work with partners on this agenda and it forms an integral part of planning, procurement and performance review activity.

People are at the heart of everything KCC strives to achieve. We have an excellent track record of engaging with our service users in the design and delivery of what we do. We have good knowledge and customer insight. However, we have achieved less success in engaging with the wider Kent public, with our decision-making felt to be quite remote from local people.

We now need to ensure that we are clear about how feedback from, and information about, our various communities is being used to provide added value in our decision making. The emphasis should be not only on the *quantity* of consultations, but on the *quality*, and the *effectiveness* with which consultation results are converted into meaningful actions.

There are always opportunities to further improve what we do and how we do it and to ensure value for money from the various programmes that are underway. These will be reviewed as part of the forward planning and budget process, and the implementation of the new Duty to Inform, Consult and Involve which came into force on 1 April 2009.

A further detailed report on KCC wide community engagement will be presented at the next meeting. This report will look at the work carried out across the Authority in 2008/09, what we have learnt and future improvements.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) note the information contained in this report,

- b) decide what further information the Committee would like to see as part of the evolving process of improved public involvement

Janice Hill
Performance Manager – Performance, Improvement & Engagement
(01622) 221981
Janice.hill@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents: None

Other Useful Information: None

APPENDIX 1

Name	Start Date/ End Date	Feedback Date	Target Group	Target Area	Brief Summary	What we want to find out & how it will be used	Contact Name, email & phone no
Feedback from residents on Around Kent	Each edition - Spring 09 & Autumn 09	N/A	Residents	Across Kent	Request for feedback from residents printed in each edition of Around Kent	Feedback on the design and content of Around Kent to make sure that we meet residents' needs and improve the publication	Jane Clarke jane.clarke2@kent.gov.uk 01622 694015
Feedback on the success of KCC's contribution to the Kent County Show	Within 3 months of the end of the County Show	N/A	Officers and Members who were involved in the Show. Visitors to the Kent stands	All visitors to KCC stands at the Kent show and all officers and Members who were involved	Feedback meeting is held to gather views from officers and Members. Visitors' comments are captured on paper questionnaires completed by visitors at the show	Feedback on the success of Kent County Council's presence at the Kent County Show to use to improve for future years.	Deborah Malthouse deborah.malthouse@kent.gov.uk 01622 694119
Budget Focus Groups	01/08/09 – 30/09/09	January 2010	Random Sample of Kent Residents	Kent	Public consultation with council taxpayers on budget	Budget consultation with the public, consistent with best practice. Statutory duty to consult taxpayers on budget and council tax levels before setting budget.	Dave Shipton dave.shipton@kent.gov.uk 01622 671411
	Nov 09 – Feb 10	February 2010	Trade Unions		Consultation with Unions on budget	Trade Union's response to the Council's budget proposals.	
	Aug 09 – Nov 09	January 2010	Youth Council		Consultation with Youth Council on budget	Youth Council's response to the Council's budget proposals.	
	Jan 10	February 2010	Business Community		Consultation with Business Community on budget	Business Community's response to the Council's budget proposals.	
Feedback on how we handle complaints	01/07/09	31/03/10	Random sample of complainants	Kent	Monitoring our performance	To ensure we maintain standards conducive with our Charter Mark standards	Caroline Dodge Caroline.dodge@kent.gov.uk 01622 221652

Name	Start Date/ End Date	Feedback Date	Target Group	Target Area	Brief Summary	What we want to find out & how it will be used	Contact Name, email & phone no
Annual Client Survey	Aug 2008	Aug 2009	Senior Managers	All Directorates	Feedback from clients.	An indication of the areas in which we have done well, and those in which we need to improve.	Geoff Wild Geoff.wild@kent.gov.uk 01622 694302
Customer Survey - Schools	June 2009		Schools buying SPS services	Kent	Feedback from schools using KCC SPS services	Customer views/satisfaction will be compared with the previous 2 survey outcomes.	Nicky Whichelow Nicky.whichelow@kent.gov.uk 01622 694156
Kent Health Watch	Ongoing		Kent population	Kent	Ongoing service to ensure public attitudes to health and social care services are monitored and acted upon	Issues of concern to the public will be identified and dealt with appropriately. Feedback from callers to Health-watch will be used to further develop the service. Work with the Kent LINK will help identify gaps and overlaps in service delivery	Tish Gailey Tish.Gailey@kent.gov.uk 01622 696802
Public Health Strategy	01/03/09 – 31/05/09	30/06/09	Public and organisations in Kent	Kent	Consultation and engagement to produce a revised Public Health Strategy for Kent	Views on the public health priorities for Kent and how they should be addressed.	Mark Lemon Mark.Lemon@kent.gov.uk 01622 694853
Health Inequalities Action Plan	01/03/09 – 31/05/09	30/06/09	Principally district councils but also NHS, KCC & other partners.	Kent	Consultation and engagement to produce a revised Kent Health Inequalities Action Plan	Information and views on how health inequalities can be addressed.	Deborah Smith Deborah.Smith@kent.gov.uk 01622 696176
House campaign	Ongoing		Young people	Kent	Continued engagement in the development of the House campaign and concept.	To ensure relevance to young people is maintained	Deborah Smith Deborah.Smith@kent.gov.uk 01622 696176

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Kent & Medway Citizens' Panel	TBC	TBC	General residents	Kent	Snapshot survey	Proposed subjects – topical issues, place & belonging – to inform policy development	Nick Warren nick.warren@kent.gov.uk 01622 221959
Strategic Statement (statement of priorities to replace Towards 2010)	TBC	TBC	General residents	Kent	Variety of methods including surveys, events and on-line engagement	(a) seeking views about priorities (b) testing out the draft statement before it is finalised To ensure the new Strategic Statement reflects views of Kent public.	David Whittle David.whittle@kent.gov.uk 01622 696969
Kent Agreement 2	TBC	TBC	General residents	Kent	Tracking survey	Tracking National Indicators 3, 6 and 21 on citizen insight	Graeme Brown graeme.brown@kent.gov.uk 01622 696070
Kent & Medway Citizen's panel	TBC	TBC	General residents	Kent	Snapshot survey	Proposed subjects – topical issues & health- to inform policy development.	Nick Warren nick.warren@kent.gov.uk 01622 221959
Pic N Mix pilots	Apr – Sep 09	Oct 09	SME's	Cluster based on Enterprise Hub	Improving access to KCC data	What public sector information SME's need	Robert Hardy robert.hardy@kent.gov.uk 01622 221343
Web Jam	Feb	April 10	Residents	Kent	Alive on-line debate	Input to priority settings	Robert Hardy robert.hardy@kent.gov.uk 01622 221343
KMCP quarterly surveys and 'snapshot'	June Oct Jan	Aug Dec Mar	Citizens Panel members	Kent	Tracking public satisfaction and quality of life issues	Regular updates to cabinet, COG and POC	Nick Warren nick.warren@kent.gov.uk 01622 221959

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polls							
New Diversity Forums	From July 09	Ongoing	Diversity "Strands"	Kent	Community input into Equality Strategy and impact assessment	Feedback will determine actions in ES action plans	Emkay Magba-Kamara Emkay.magba-kamara@kent.gov.uk 01622 221851
Kent Partnership stakeholder consultations on V4K priorities and LAA	Nov 09 to Nov 10	At 3-monthly intervals throughout 09/10	Stakeholders	Kent	Seeking stakeholders views on priorities and actions	Contributing to the new V4K to be complete by Nov 2010	Graeme Brown graeme.brown@kent.gov.uk 01622 696070
Gateway Multi-channel	March 2009 / ongoing	At regular intervals	Kent residents	Kent	Using existing consultation forums and channels	How Kent residents wish to access services and shape Access Kent accordingly	Amie Barker Amie.barker@kent.gov.uk 01622 221391
Gateway surveys	Ongoing	At regular intervals	Gateway service users	Thanet, Ashford, Tunbridge Wells, Tenterden, Maidstone, Dover & Tonbridge	Surveys within existing Gateways	Satisfaction with Gateways and with the services accessible through Gateways. To shape current and future Gateways and to feed into each relevant organisation	Jane Kendal jane.kendal@kent.gov.uk 01622 694423
Contact Kent consultation individual services	Ongoing	At regular intervals	Contact Kent service users	Kent	Working with service units to obtain feedback	Levels of customer service and how we can improve Contact Kent	Derek Smith Derek.smith@kent.gov.uk 01622 221410

Name	Start Date/ End Date	Feedback Date	Target Group	Target Area	Brief Summary	What we want to find out & how it will be used	Contact Name, email & phone no
Kent TV	Ongoing	At regular intervals	Kent residents & other visitors to Kent TV	Kent	Gaining insight into customer base and targeting content	Informing the Kent TV review and enabling content to be shaped by Kent residents. This will be linked to the customer insight work being carried out by Gateways	Tanya Oliver Tanya.Oliver@kent.gov.uk 01622 694817