

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10th September, 2015

10.00 am

Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone





AGENDA

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10 September 2015, at 10.00 am
Darent Room, Sessions House, County
Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: **Ann Hunter**
Telephone: **03000 416287**

Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the start of the meeting

Membership (14)

Conservative (8): Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Miss S J Carey, Mr N J D Chard,
Mr J A Davies, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mr S C Manion,
Mr L B Ridings, MBE and Mrs P A V Stockell

UKIP (3) Mr J Elenor, Mr C P D Hoare and Mr R A Latchford, OBE

Labour (2) Mr D Smyth and Mr N S Thandi

Liberal Democrat (1): Mrs T Dean, MBE

Webcasting Notice

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for the live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site or by any member of the public or press present. The Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed by the Council.

By entering into this room you are consenting to being filmed. If you do not wish to have your image captured please let the Clerk know immediately

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

A - Committee Business

A1 Introduction/Webcast announcement

- A2 Apologies and Substitutes
To receive apologies for absence and notification of any substitutes present
- A3 Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
To receive any declarations of interest made by Members in relation to any matter on the agenda. Members are reminded to specify the agenda item number to which it refers and the nature of the interest being declared
- A4 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2015 (Pages 7 - 12)
To consider and approve the minutes as a correct record.
- A5 Meeting Dates for 2016-17
To note the dates for meetings of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee are scheduled to take place at 10am on the following dates:
- Friday 15 January 2016
Tuesday 15 March 2016
Tuesday 24 May 2015
Friday 22 July 2016
Thursday 8 September 2016
Friday 2 December 2016
- Friday 13 January 2017
Wednesday 8 March 2017

B - Key or significant Cabinet Member Decision(s) for recommendation or endorsement

- B1 Customer Service Policy (Pages 13 - 82)
To consider and endorse, or make recommendations to Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services on the proposed to decision to formally adopt the Customer Service Policy and its principles within KCC including the recommendations arising from the consultation
- B2 Final Draft of the VCS Policy and Consultation Feedback (Pages 83 - 156)
To consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community Services on the proposed decision to adopt KCC's VCS Policy
- B3 Award of Insurance Programme Contracts (Pages 157 - 164)
To consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement on the proposed decision to award contracts for insurance

C - Other items for comment/recommendation to the Leader/Cabinet Member/Cabinet or officers

- C1 Annual Business Planning Review (Pages 165 - 174)
To comment on the review of the 2015/16 business planning round and agree the business planning arrangements for 2016/17 set out in section 3 of the report

C2 Legal Services' Evolution Efficiency Enterprise Final Report 2012/15 (Pages 175 - 192)

To note the report

C3 Work Programme 2015 (Pages 193 - 196)

To consider and agree the work programme for 2015

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
(01622) 694002

Wednesday, 2 September 2015

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 1 July 2015

PRESENT: Mr A J King, MBE (Chairman), Mr R H Bird (Substitute for Mrs T Dean, MBE), Miss S J Carey, Mr N J D Chard, Mr J A Davies, Mr C P D Hoare, Mr B E MacDowall (Substitute for Mr J Elenor), Mr S C Manion, Mr C R Pearman (Substitute for Mr R L H Long, TD), Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr D Smyth and Mr N S Thandi

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G Cooke, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE and Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Burr (Director of Transformation and Commercial Services), Mr D Cockburn (Corporate Director Strategic & Corporate Services), Mrs J Dixon-Sherreard (Policy Manager), Mr D Farquharson (Head of Capital Projects), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Manager), Mrs G Galloway (Procurement Programme Manager - Legal Services), Mrs C Head (Head of Financial Management), Mrs C Jenden (FTC - Review Team Manager), Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

141. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item A2)

- (1) Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Dean, Mr Elenor, Mr Latchford and Mr Long. Mr Bird, Mr MacDowall and Mr Pearman attended as substitutes for Mrs Dean, Mr Elenor and Mr Long respectively.
- (2) Apologies for absence were also received from Mr Carter (Leader of the Council).

142. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item A3)

There were no declarations of interest.

143. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2015
(Item A4)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

144. Minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 27 March 2015
(Item A5)

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 27 March 2015 be received and noted.

145. Work Programme

(Item A6)

- (1) The report set out details of the proposed work programme for 2015 and asked the Cabinet Committee to consider and agree the programme.
- (2) Resolved that the work programme for 2015 be agreed.

146. Extraordinary meeting - 29 July 2015

(Item A7)

Resolved to note that an extraordinary meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee had been scheduled for 29 July 2015.

Post meeting note – The extraordinary meeting was subsequently cancelled.

147. Facing the Challenge - Legal Services - Report on the Procurement Process

(Item B1)

The Chairman said that the consideration of this item would be deferred to Part 2 of the meeting.

148. Facing the Challenge - Back Office Procurement Project including the following services: HR; Finance; ICT; EduKent; and Contact Point and Digital Communications

(Item B2)

- (1) Mr Simmonds (Deputy Leader) said much of the information in the report was already known and invited Claire Jenden (Market Engagement Team Manager) to introduce the report.
- (2) Mrs Jenden said the report built on previous updates to the committee and provided a detailed account of the back office procurement process as well as documenting the journey of the Customer Services (Contact Point and Digital Communications), Finance, HR, ICT and EduKent procurement project which was part of Phase 1 of Facing the Challenge. She drew Members' attention in particular to paragraphs setting out the value for money test and next steps.
- (3) In response to a question about the evaluation criteria Mr Burr (Director of Transformation and Commercial Services) said that bidders were required to score at least satisfactory against the evaluation criteria in each of the service areas. As both the Financial, and Business Development and Vision criteria were complex, and required bidders to score maximum points, no base points had been allocated.
- (4) Resolved that the progress to date and the next steps be noted and endorsed.

149. Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Dashboard

(Item C1)

- (1) Richard Fitzgerald (Performance Manager) introduced the report which contained the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate Dashboard showing progress made against targets set for Key Performance Indicators. He drew Members' attention to a new indicator, CS11 – percentage of customers satisfied with their visit to the KCC website. He also said that performance appeared to be on track and there was nothing of concern in the data for May.
- (2) In response to a question he acknowledged that the targets for HR03, HR04 and HR07 for 2015/16 had been set lower than the actual achievement last year because they had been rolled over and would be reviewed as part of the procurement of back office services.
- (3) He also explained how the Govmetric tool used to assess customer satisfaction worked and confirmed that the results were statistically very reliable. He undertook to circulate more detailed information to the members of the committee.
- (4) Resolved that the report be noted.

150. Provisional Financial Outturn Report for 2014/15
(Item C2)

- (1) Mr Simmonds (Deputy Leader) introduced the report which set out the provisional revenue and capital outturn for the Council for 2014-15. He drew Members' attention to the fact that this was the fifteenth consecutive year that the Council had been able to demonstrate sound financial management by containing its revenue expenditure within the budgeted level and commended the finance team and directors for delivering an underspend in the context of a savings requirement of £81 million in 2014-15 and £270 million in the previous three years. He said he was pleased that £2 million of the uncommitted balance had been allocated to pot-hole repairs and just under £4 million had been transferred to reserves to help balance anticipated gap in the 2016-17 budget. He anticipated that it would become increasingly difficult to deliver a balanced budget because of increasing cuts to funding and continuing high demand for services.
- (2) Cath Head (Head of Financial Management) said the final outturn report would be presented to Cabinet on 6 July and that it would be very similar to the provisional outturn.
- (3) It was proposed by Mr Smyth, seconded by Mr Chard and agreed that the finance team and directors be congratulated on delivering a significant underspend and balanced budget.
- (4) Resolved that:
 - (a) The provisional revenue and capital outturn for the Council for 2014-15 be noted;
 - (b) The Finance team and directors be congratulated on delivering a significant underspend and balanced budget.

151. Schedule of Commissioning Activity

(Item E1)

- (1) Mr Simmonds (Deputy Leader) introduced the report which included a schedule of commissioning activity across KCC over the next three years which enabled Members to have oversight of significant service delivery decisions in advance. He said the main purpose of the report was to indicate the size, scope and complexity of KCC's business and that the ultimate intention was to transfer the oversight of commissioning activity from the Commissioning Advisory Board to the cabinet committees.
- (2) David Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance) said the schedule of commissioning had been produced following a request from Members as it would assist with agenda planning and the identification of issues to consider in greater detail. He said that directorate business plans for 2016/17 onwards would need a greater focus on the medium term and commissioning planned for the following 2-3 years.
- (3) During discussion, views were expressed that it was important to: differentiate between commissioning activity and procurement or one-off capital investment; identify the most important commissioning activities for more detailed review; and increase awareness of the Kent Business Portal among local businesses.
- (4) In response to a question, Mr Whittle undertook to circulate information to the committee about the spend on consultancy services to support the development of the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework, the anticipated savings as a result of such investment and the impact on directly employed staff.
- (5) Resolved that the schedule of commissioning activity and the issues raised in the report be noted.

152. Basic Need Delivery Update and Outturn Costs

(Item E2)

- (1) Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure) gave a short presentation which is available online as an appendix to these minutes as an introduction to the report. The report provided an update on the Basic Need Outturn Costs and a delivery update of the Basic Need Programme consisting of primary and secondary school expansions and new primary school provision.
- (2) During discussion, comments were made about the: need to ensure that quality schools were built; successful lobbying that had resulted in Kent receiving the highest Basic Need Allocation of any authority in the country; continuing pressure on budget; and the over-riding objective of providing every child with the best start.
- (3) Questions were raised about apprenticeships and developer contributions.

- (4) Mrs Spore confirmed that Property Services had delivered all the requirements of the Education Commissioning Plan and undertook to provide information about the number of temporary classrooms in use, changes in their number over the last 5 years as well as information about the number supporting basic need requirements, the number supporting the general requirement and their condition.
- (5) Resolved that the achievements to date on the delivery of the Basic Need Programme be noted.

153. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

154. Facing the Challenge - Legal Services - Report on the Procurement Process *(Item B1)*

- (1) Mr Simmonds (Deputy Leader) asked Gilli Galloway (Procurement Programme Manager) to introduce the report which provided an update on the process undertaken to conduct a compliant Competitive Dialogue process to secure a commercial partner to enable KCC to form a joint venture. She also provided an update on the bidders and the negotiations that were currently taking place.
- (2) Mr Cockburn (Corporate Director of Strategic and Corporate Services drew Members' attention to paragraph 1.2 of the report and said that the aim of the Competitive Dialogue was to identify a commercial partner to form a Legal Joint Venture and as such would require a different comparator than the procurement of back office services.
- (3) During the discussion questions were asked about the infrastructure required to enable Kent Legal Services to further extend and develop its services without a partner as well as the implications for KCC of holding various numbers of shares in a joint venture.
- (4) The importance of ensuring all alternatives including investment in an in-house expansion and all outsourcing options were properly considered was emphasised as was the need for a robust internal comparator.
- (5) Mrs Galloway confirmed that negotiations were continuing and that the timetable for decision making would become clearer over the next few days.
- (6) Resolved that:
 - (a) The details and progress of the Competitive Dialogue process for Legal Services be noted;
 - (b) A further detailed report be considered by the cabinet committee setting out details of the outcome of negotiations, a strong internal comparator and details of the investment in infrastructure required to enable Kent Legal Services to expand without a partner;

- (c) The timetable for the decision required be confirmed as soon as possible.

(Post-Meeting Note – The meeting on 29 July was cancelled and it is anticipated that a further report will be considered at the next meeting of the cabinet committee scheduled for 10 September 2015)

From: Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services
David Whittle - Director of Policy, Strategy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance Strategic and Corporate Services

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee -10 September 2015

Decision Number: 15/00035

Subject: Customer Service Policy

Classification: Non-Exempt

Past Pathway of Paper: DMT, Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – January 2015

Future Pathway of Paper: CMT, Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report seeks to update the committee, following initial approval of the draft Customer Service Policy, on the results of the consultation and the recommendations following the feedback from our customers.

Recommendation(s): The committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services on the proposed to decision to formally adopt the Customer Service Policy and its principles within KCC including the recommendations arising from the consultation.

1. Introduction & Background

The Customer Service Policy was consulted on with the public from 10th March 2015 – 12th May 2015. Appendix A is the Consultation report which examines some of the responses received and the resulting recommendations.

As a result of the feedback, the Customer Service Policy has been revised to make it clearer and easier for customers to understand. Overall customers were supportive of the aims of the Policy and so the general direction of the

Policy remains the same but some clarifications in the language have been made. The revised policy can be found in Appendix B.

The consultation has also helped to inform the updated version of the Equalities Impact Assessment which can be found in Appendix C.

2. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been formulated to reflect the feedback received by our customers during the consultation; (further detail can be found in Appendix A)

- Customer Service training for KCC staff
- Communication plan to let customers know of proposed changes and also improvements made as a direct result of the customer service policy and their feedback.
- Ensuring maximising the use of digital does not exclude those who cannot use the internet.
- Devising Customer Service standards that can be monitored are put in place for both Kent County Council staff and commissioned services. This should be written in consultation with our customers.
- Actively consulting and communicating with our customers throughout the implementation of the policy, so that they can see the impact of both their feedback and the implementation of the standards expressed in the policy.
- Using a variety of ways to capture and understand customer experiences in using our services to help gauge the impact of changes made as a result of the policy. For example looking for improvements arising from complaints and comments and sharing best practice from compliments.

The committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to Cabinet Member for Commercial and Traded Services on the proposed to decision to formally adopt the Customer Service Policy and its principles within KCC including the recommendations arising from the consultation.

3. Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation Report

Appendix B – Revised Policy

Appendix C – Updated Equalities Impact Assessment.

Appendix D – Proposed Record of Decision

4. Contact Details

- Report Author – Pascale Blackburn-Clarke, Quality and Assurance Manager – 03000 417025
- Relevant Director – David Whittle - Director of Policy, Strategy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance Strategic and Corporate Services – 03000 416833

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Customer Service Policy

Post Consultation Report

1. Introduction:

Defining our approach to our customers is essential to help the organisation achieve its aim towards becoming a successful strategic commissioning authority.

Facing the Challenge, Kent County Council's transformation plan, places a heavy importance on the role of the customer in the work of a commissioning authority: - "By 2020, all KCC services will have a greater customer focus with services organised around the needs of service users and residents".

Facing the Challenge shifts the focus from improving our services through understanding our customers' experience, to a better understanding of our customers' needs by actively engaging them in the design and delivery of services.

In order to create this change in approach, the Council must firstly define and agree its core customer service values and principles.

The endorsement of a corporate Customer Services Policy will provide these principles and is designed to work alongside Kent County Council's Commissioning and Outcomes Frameworks towards the delivery of effective commissioning.

This Policy and its measures will be used alongside the Commissioning Framework, enabling KCC to hold to account all service providers for meeting customer service expectations. KCC will act as a guarantor of standards for service users and acting on their behalf where customer service principles and standards are not met.

The draft Customer Service Policy was agreed at senior officer and Member level within the Council ahead of seeking the views of service users via public consultation. The draft policy is attached to this document as Appendix One.

The final decision on the Policy will be taken by the Policy and Resources Committee in September. The committee will consider the consultation outcomes and the changes to the Equalities Impact Assessment.

2. Consultation process:

In order to seek wider views and comments from service users the draft Customer Service Policy was open public consultation from 10 March 2015 until 12 May 2015.

A questionnaire was developed to capture feedback on the draft policy and this is attached as Appendix Two. This questionnaire and a copy of all relevant supporting documentation was made available online via the 'Consultations' section of KCC's website. This included an 'easy read' version of the draft Policy to ensure of the content was accessible to those that may have found the main policy document difficult to read/understand, and plain text versions for those using document reading/accessibility software.

These documents were available in alternative formats upon request.

In order to raise awareness of the consultation a range of communication measures were taken, including:

- Relevant messages on KCC's 'twitter' feed
- Headline stories on the internal staff website 'Knet' outlining draft policy and encouraging staff participation
- Face to face engagement in Gateways, and advertising on Gateway screens
- Links to the consultation were placed on library computers for a period of 3 weeks
- Community Engagement Officers sent out information to various stakeholders across Kent including district, borough and parish councils, local Voluntary and Community Sector groups and umbrella VCS organisations
- Notifications of the consultation were sent to those that have registered on KCC's consultation directory

As part of the Equalities Impact Assessment process key groups were identified that could potentially be impacted by the Customer Service Policy. In order to ensure that the views of these customers were incorporated into the consultation, a small number of interactive workshops were undertaken across the County where more qualitative discussions and issues were explored. Workshops were undertaken with a BME (Black, Minority and Ethnic) community group, an older peoples forum and two groups of young people including a BME youth forum. A workshop was also held with a disability group – although this fell slightly outside of the consultation period comments have been included to ensure that their views are reflected.

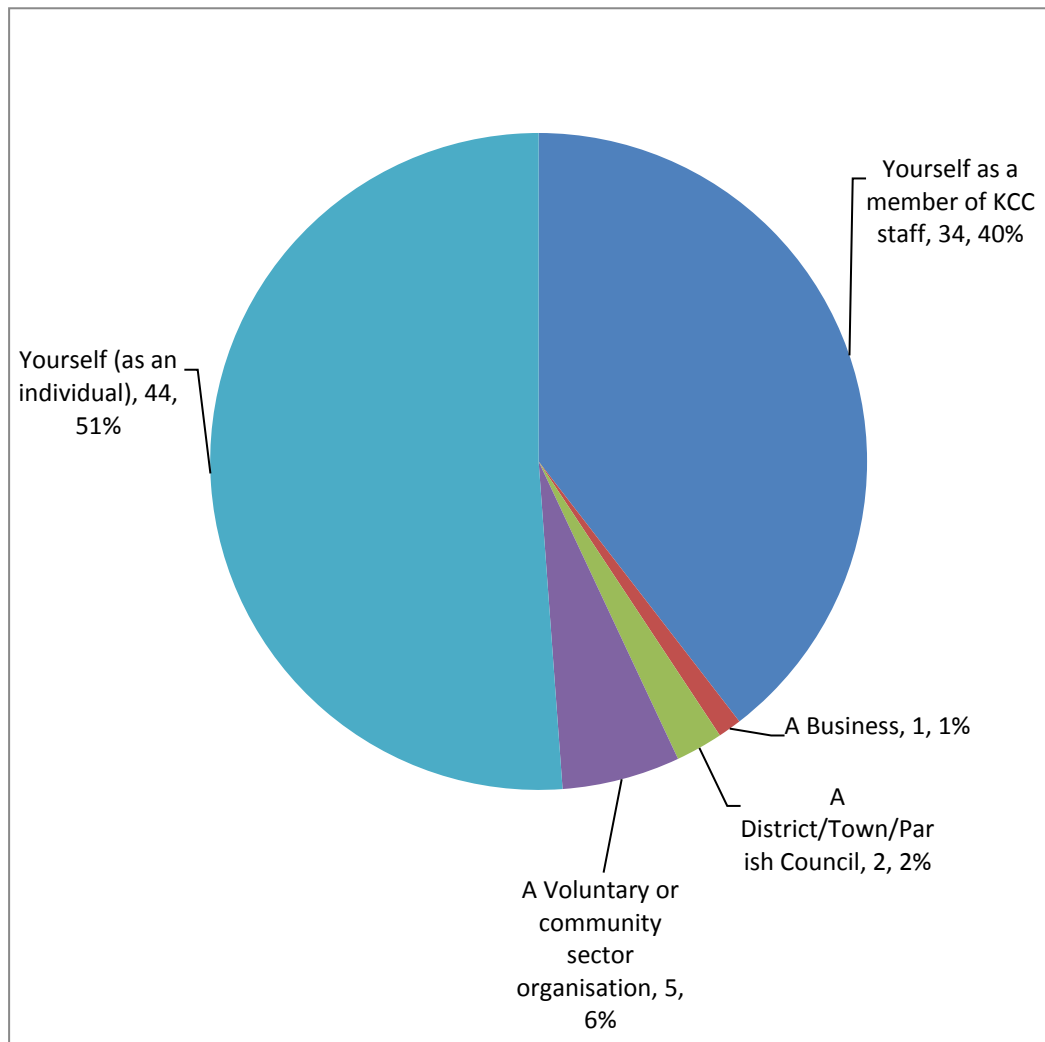
KCC's own representative staff groups were also contacted as part of this process to seek views across all people with protected characteristics, both as KCC officers and customers in their own right. This included UNITE, Rainbow, Level Playing Field and ASPIRE groups.

3. Respondents

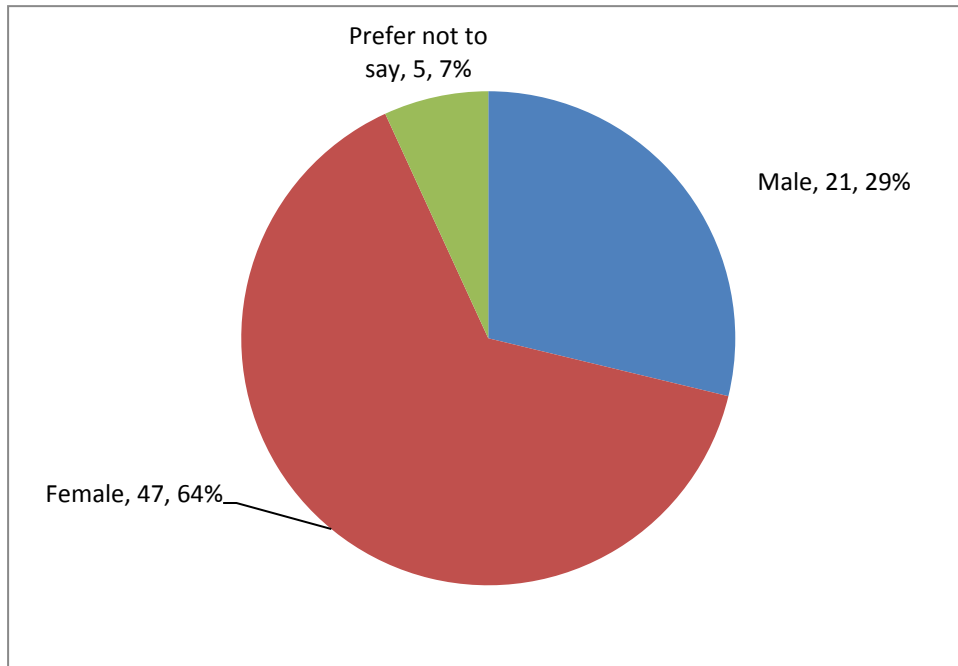
A total of 88 responses to the consultation questionnaire were received including paper copies that were filled in at Gateways. (Note: not all customers completed all the questions, therefore the totals will not add up to 88).

Analysis of the responses received shows the following:

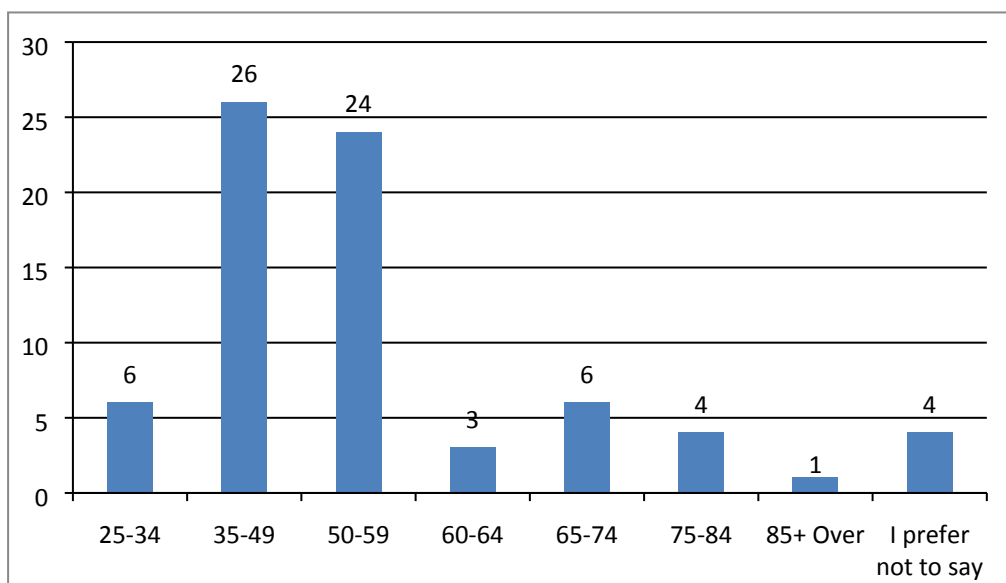
Respondent Type:



Gender:

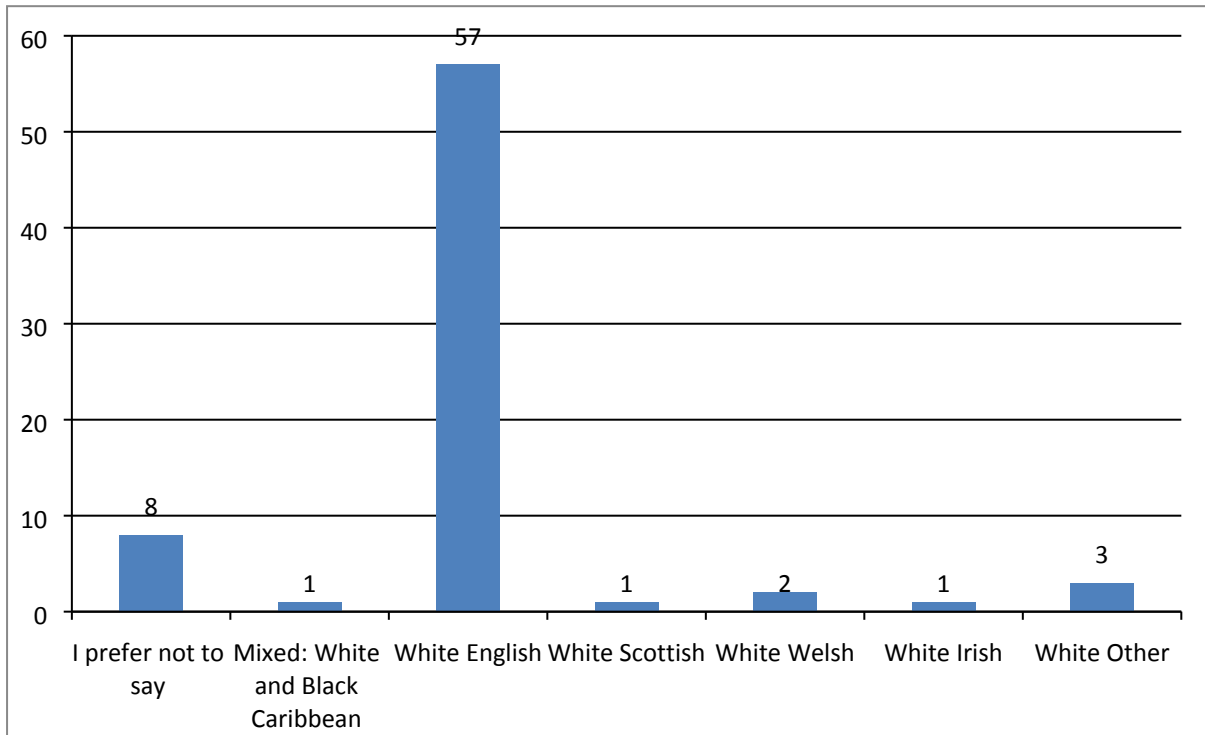


Age:

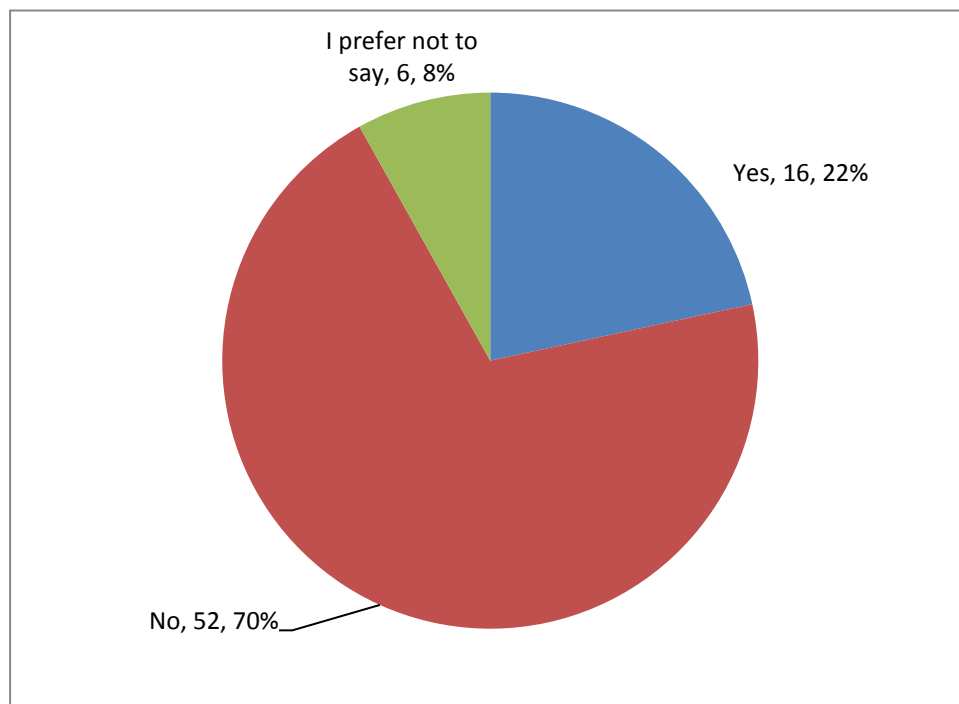


Customers 60 plus expressed concern at being able to access services online and wanted reassurance that services will continue to be delivered by other methods as well.

Ethnicity: Although workshops were undertaken with groups with identified as having protected characteristics (i.e. Race, Disability, age) not all of these participants opted to fill in a separate questionnaire and are therefore not reflected in the charts below.



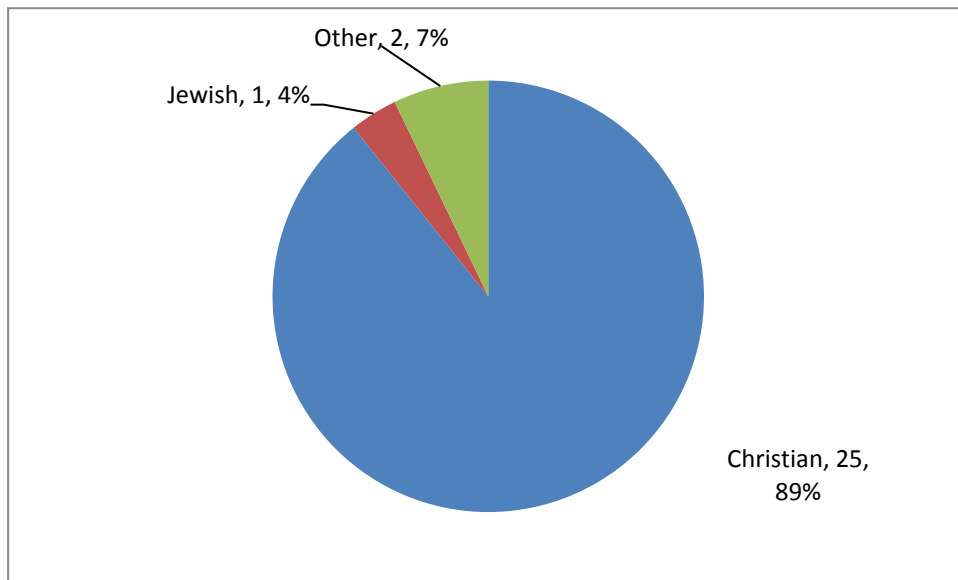
Disability:



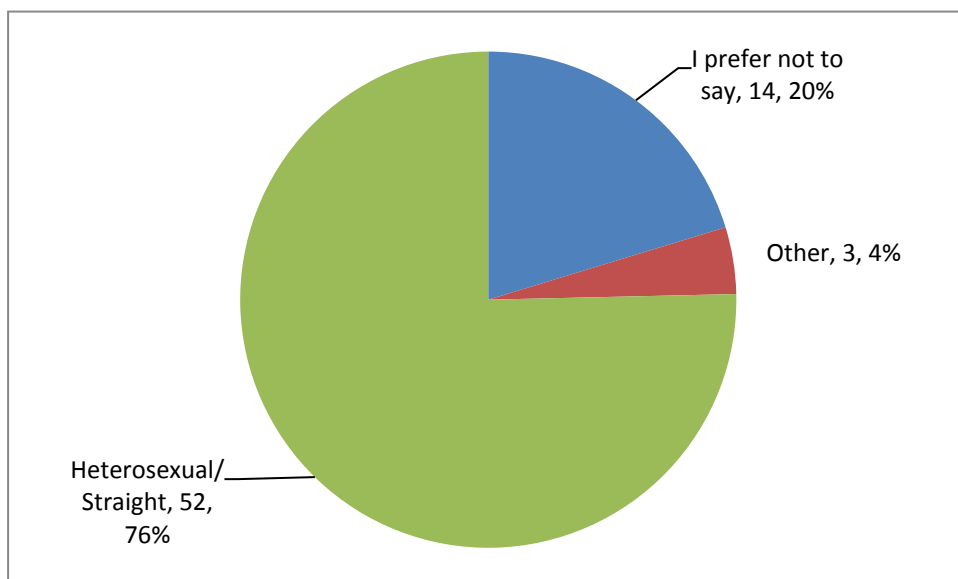
The majority of customers who expressed they had a disability selected the option 'that services provided by KCC are flexible and responsive to customers, and can be

accessed in a range of ways according to need' and that they wanted to feel that KCC was 'putting them at the heart of everything we do'

Religion:



Sexuality:



4. Consultation responses:

The following gives more detailed analysis on each question within the consultation questionnaire.

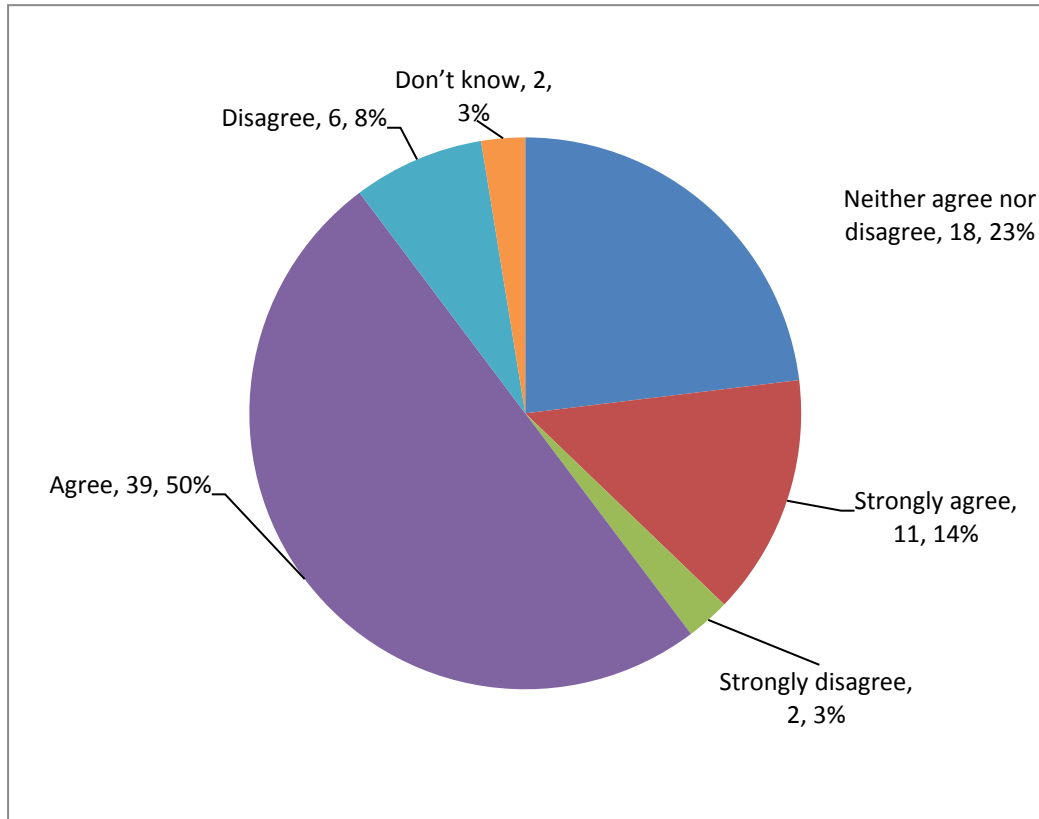
Question 1a – responding of behalf of an Organisation?

Those that completed this field are as listed below:-

- British Disabled Alliance
- Home Start South West Kent
- Thanet Community Networks
- Romney Marsh Website (www.theromneymarsh.net)
- Kent Equality Cohesion Council
- The Film Factory
- Plaxtol Parish Council
- Loose Parish Council

Question 2 - To what extent do you agree or disagree that the principles will help Kent County Council design services that are accessible to you?

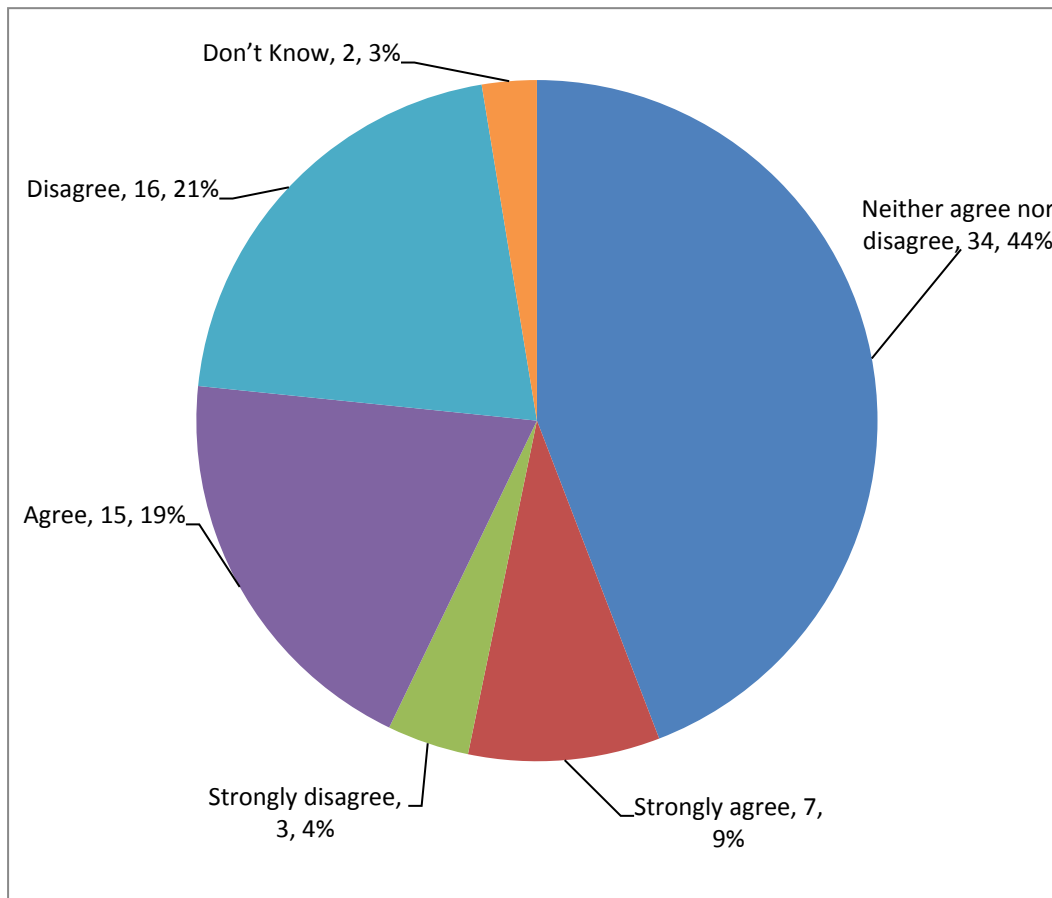
Respondents were given the opportunity to rank on scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, as well as the opportunity to express that they do not know.



This feedback suggests that the majority of respondents (64%) feel the principles outlined in the customer service policy will help KCC design accessible services.

Question 3 - To what extent do you agree or disagree that the principles will help Kent County Council deliver services at lower cost?

Respondents were given the opportunity to select a response on scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, as well as the opportunity to express that they do not know.



Responses to this question were less conclusive and spread almost equally across the possible answers. It is worthy of note that the highest proportion (44%) went for the 'neither agree nor disagree' option, suggesting further work will be required to help customers understand the potential for cost saving whilst protecting customer service principles.

Question 4 – How do you think the customer service principles could improve services for you?

Respondents were given the opportunity to enter their comments in response to this question. This question generated 61 responses. Examples of comments received include the following:

“By being applied ... a customer service policy of this type requires radical re-shaping of services and an investment in process. I recall previous stated ambitions towards a customer centred approach. This requires business intelligence and an understanding of performance metrics that services just

don't have. Change will I'm afraid remain driven by complaints rather than operational analysis. Also, once a service provider has a contract, and no matter how badly they serve this policy, there is no appetite or mechanism for challenge."

This response is not untypical of the sentiment expressed by other respondents i.e. that KCC must follow through with its promises and ensure delivery is driven by this policy. A number of respondents are sceptical as to whether this will happen.

Recommendation: We must actively consult and communicate with our customers throughout the implementation of the policy, so that they can see the impact of both their feedback and the implementation of the standards expressed in the policy

"Put them in plain English. What does "Customers have a clear escalation path for any comments or complaints that cannot be easily resolved by service providers" (Q5 below} actually mean?"

"There should be new campaign for clear English in all council correspondence including internal documents and legal notices"

Recommendation: These comments remind us that we should remember to use plain English wherever possible. The language used in the Customer Service Policy has been reviewed to ensure as simple and clear as possible, and this approach should be taken forward into delivery.

"Improved monitoring of organisations/services which receive funding to ensure that they deliver a more effective customer service."

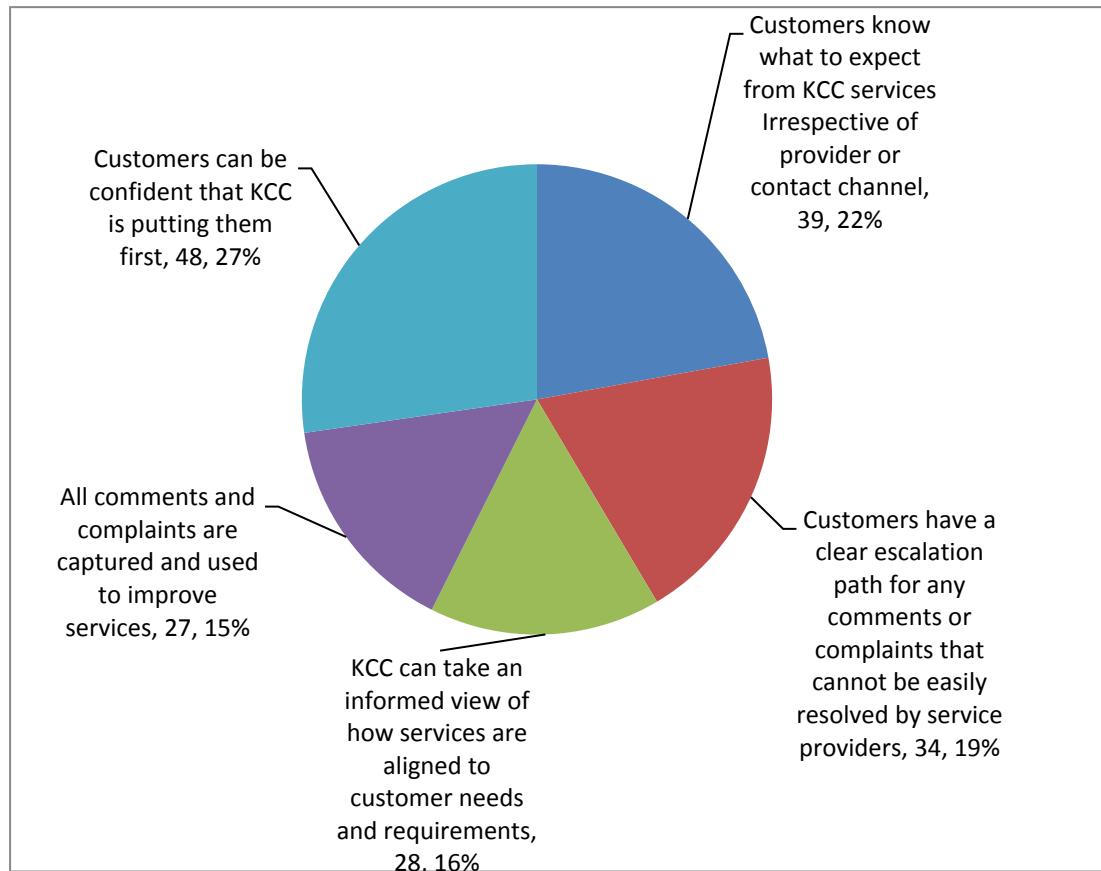
Recommendation: We must develop standards that can be monitored to ensure that there is a consistent approach toward achieving Customer Service outcomes throughout the supply chain.

"I want effective on line access; to be able to complete my enquiry at my convenience. I like the fact that your principles tell me there will be better digital access and that you are bothered about service standards and quality whether you deliver the service I need or someone else does."

A range of responses echoed this sentiment.

**Question 5 – Which of the following outcomes is most important to you?
(Relating to Principle 1: Delivering Quality)**

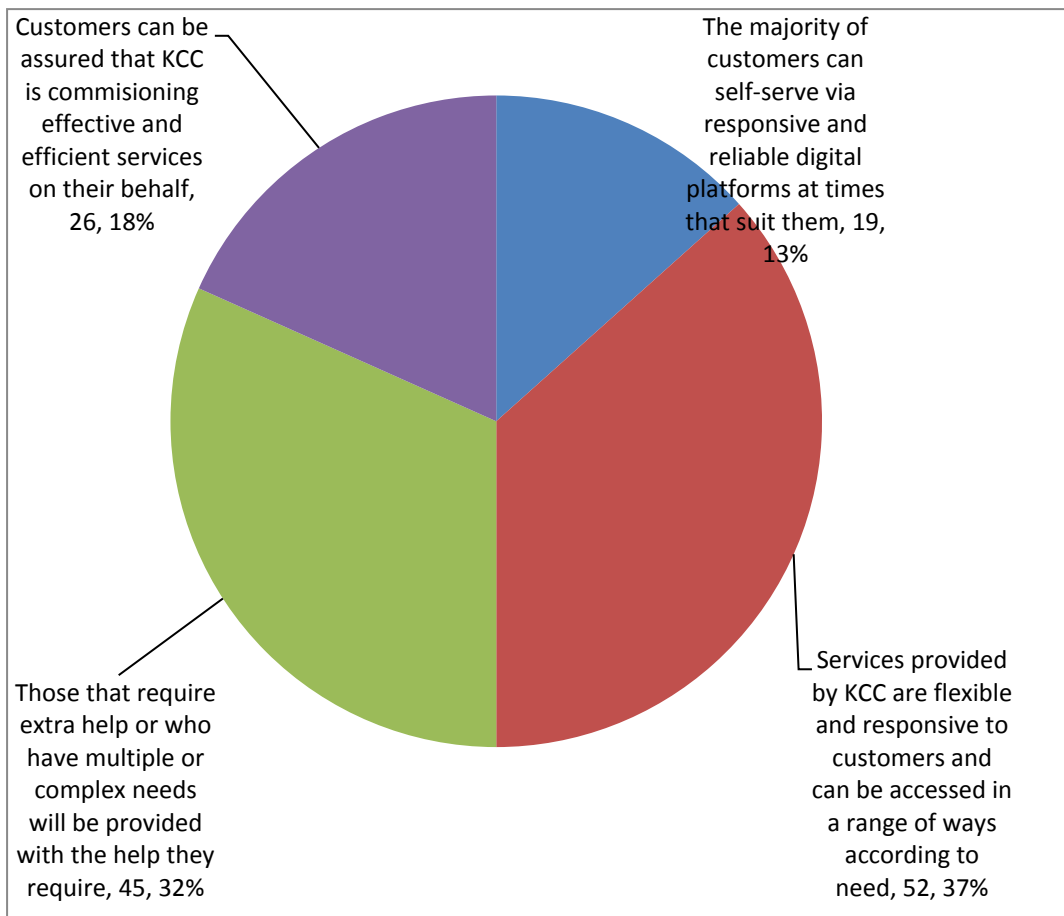
Respondents were asked to choose a maximum of three outcomes that were most important to them.



There is a fairly even spread across the outcomes described however expressing little preference between them. This also demonstrates that the Policy aims reflect customer expectations.

**Question 6 – Which of the following outcomes is most important to you?
(Relating to Principle 2: Customer Focused Services)**

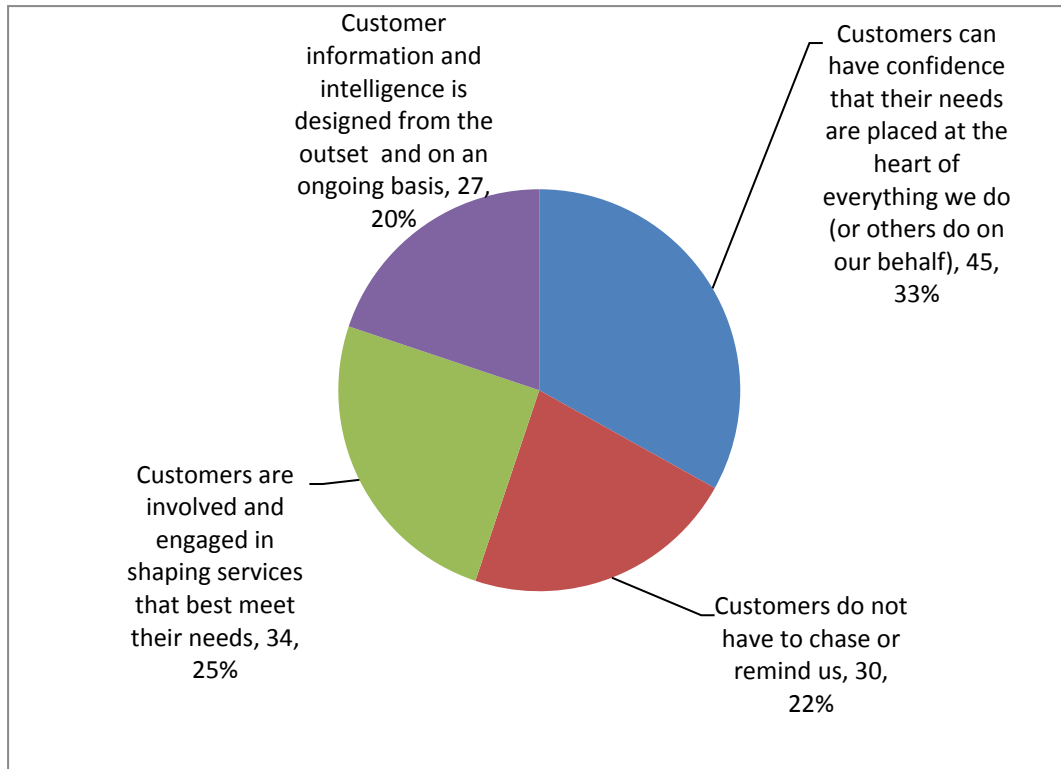
Respondents were asked to choose a maximum of two outcomes that were most important to them.



A clear preference can be seen towards the provision of services that are flexible and responsive to customer needs and that can be accessed in a range of ways alongside ensuring those that require additional support continuing to receive the help that they require. Self service via digital platforms ranked lowest with 13% of respondents prioritising this indicating that there is more work to do to establish the digital channel as a channel of first choice.

**Question 7 – Which of the following outcomes is most important to you?
(Relating to Principle 3: Intelligent Commissioning)**

Respondents were asked to select the two outcomes they felt were most important.



A fairly even spread of responses received, with a slight preference for customers feeling that their needs are placed at the heart of everything we do, and that customers are involved and engaged in service design.

Recommendation: The involvement of customers in service design should be strengthened in pre commission and change process planning by services to ensure compliance with the Customer Service Policy.

Question 8 – How do you think KCC will know if services are improving for you?

Respondents were given the opportunity to enter their comments in response to this question. This question generated 58 responses – below are some examples of the comments received;

“I will get the services I need, when I need them. I won’t have to keep chasing or complain when things don’t happen in time.”

“Need to involve customers in evaluating the services, not just feedback forms, but mystery shopping type visits etc.”

“This isn’t clear. It will depend on how good the business intelligence and data capturing from feedback / complaints is and how this is fed into the

improvement process. How will "lessons learned" be integrated into new and existing systems and processes?"

There is a clear expectation that we will go beyond simply monitoring complaints and capturing feedback. There is a much deeper need to understand customer experience, capturing more qualitative data and feedback in order to truly gauge progress.

Recommendation: We should explore a variety of ways to ensure we capture and understand customer experiences when in using our services, and actively involve customers in reviewing and reshaping services.

Question 9 – Do you have any further comments on the Customer Service Policy?

Respondents were given the opportunity to enter their comments in response to this question. This question generated 36 responses.

From some of the comments received, there would appear to be a lack of understanding around a 'strategic commissioning model' and its relation to outsourcing.

Positive comments received include:

"Very ambitious policy, dynamic to match the current modern requirement, my only worry is about the vulnerable population which may have no access in a digital form to the service."

*"I liked it.
But it must be remembered that the policy is only words. It will be the delivery of this policy that matters."*

Amongst the negative comments received are statements such as:

"The 'Commissioning Authority' aspect appears to be nothing more than the council trying to offload its responsibilities onto somebody else."

"That it is a forgone conclusion that everything will be outsourced. So why bother with a consultation when you are not going to listen to what the people think."

Other Comments were received seeking further clarity, such as:

"Needs more clarity about how you will involve customers from the beginning of the process, customers will need to be involved in writing specifications not just saying what they think when its already written."

Recommendation: Following the launch of the policy, the customer service standards for the council and delivery partners will be written in consultation with our customers. A clear accountability will be with service managers to evidence customer involvement in the pre-planning and redesign of services.

Question 10 – Views or comments on the assumptions made as part of the Equality Impact Assessment?

Respondents were given the opportunity to enter their comments in response to this question. This question generated 13 responses. Extracts are quoted below.

“Fully agree with the assumption that digital access to the service is vital and therefore providing a continuous access for computers to certain criteria of the population is a must and probably running new computers courses for the senior citizens.”

“Good grief - 39 pages long! That is a barrier in itself, surely? I wholly support the use of EIAs but if you want people to actually become familiar with their content, they need to be summarised as to the impacts that have been identified, and the key ways in which these will be overcome or accommodated. The full report can then be available for people who wish to drill-down into the detail.”

“I was pleased to see that digital exclusion particularly of the elderly has been identified.”

“There are ongoing financial impacts to the user (IT, internet etc.) that may be beyond some.”

Recommendation: Need to ensure that ‘Digital by Design’ does not exclude those who do not use the internet, and positively communicate the convenience and benefits of digital self-service.

Summary of Recommendations arising from customer feedback in the consultation

- We should actively consult and communicate with our customers throughout the implementation of the policy, so that they can see the impact of both their feedback and in the definition of and implementation of the standards that underpin the policy
- We should remember to use plain English wherever possible. The language used in the Customer Service Policy had been reviewed to ensure it is as simple and clear as possible, and this approach should be taken forward into delivery.
- We will develop standards that can be measured to ensure that there is a consistent approach to Customer Service throughout the supply chain.
- The involvement of customers in service design will be strengthened in the pre-commissioning, redesign planning to achieve the aims of the Customer Service Policy.
- We will need to explore a variety of ways to ensure we capture and understand customer experiences when using our services and use this to improve what we do
- Following the launch of the policy, the customer service standards for the council and delivery partners will be written in consultation with our customers.
- Need to ensure that 'Digital by Design' does not exclude those who do not use the internet

6. Summary of Workshop Discussions

6.1 Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) Group – Maidstone

- People were glad to be asked for their views and thought it was good that KCC were consulting on the policy.
- Flexibility is a key requirement, information is preferable in multiple formats, geography of Kent needs to be considered as this can have a big impact on customer experience. Language – both plain English and lack of understanding of English is still an issue.
- Consultations shouldn't be web only as there are still a high proportion of non-web users.
- Getting satisfactory answers through first point resolution – seeing something tangible after feeding back such as “you said we did”, we hate phrases such as “we will feed that back” – which seems false and we never hear back.
- Lots of service & staff turnover so it is hard to know who to approach to resolve issues – staff, arrangements and policies are not very clear - it is difficult for us to know who to contact and what to expect as often things are not responded to.
- There is too much reliance on Freedom of information Act to find things out rather than being transparent in the first place – “no one knows who is responsible when I call”
- There have been some successes such as the support to Ghurkha veterans through the Ghurkha settlement fund. Arrangements have been really good.
- There is a lot of value in community engagement – the wardens service is so important to provide reassurance and help sort out residents' issues.

6.2 Older People's Group - Shepway

General Discussion

- The group were almost unanimous in their view that regardless of what is said; the 'strategic commissioning authority' model meant that the County Council was engaging in an outsourcing programme.
- The group felt that outsourced delivery led to poorer performance, less accountability and is impossible to reverse once contracts have been let – examples given around health/hospital support provision.
- There was concern raised around how services will be overseen by the Council given ever decreasing resources and staff – will there be sufficient people to gather service users' views, intervene if required and listen to customer views? Doubts were expressed.
- Concerns were raised around staffing levels in Libraries and what will happen when the Trust model is operational – will the trust be looking make cut backs?

Customer Service Discussion

- Positive examples of customer service
 - District Nurses – attention to detail, regularity, well trained, instil confidence
 - William Harvey Hospital – one member of the group felt cared for, treated well, but this tended to depend on which nursing staff you got
 - Amazon – simple and straight forward process – always delivers when they say they will and usually quite quick. Good communication throughout.
 - The AA – good communication and reliable, track vans and always able to tell you how long before they get to you
 - Saga – mentioned as providing really good customer service. Their call centre knows who you are and often if you ring back you get the same person who recalls talking to you. Feels really personalised.
- Negative examples of customer service
 - Another online shopping experience, however demonstrating the need for full supply chain to perform to same standards. Group member found the experience of buying online with a particular supplier very slick and efficient, however the delivery team would not listen to her when they turned up. They unloaded the wrong shipment at her house involving many many boxes when she was expecting only one– she tried to tell them but they would not listen. Only when they thought they had finished and wanted to sign off did they realise they had wrong

address. Would have saved a lot of time and effort if they had listened to the customer.

- Private sector organisations contracted to provide homecare – the group felt that often performance of some of these organisations is poor, however clients are often afraid to complain as they fear their care will get even worse. People are genuinely scared to raise issues.
- Contact Centres in general were perceived to give poor customer service – too many automated switchboards, voice recognition systems that don't work were cited, alongside the length of time 'holding' to get through – an example of a 1.5 hour wait to get through to a hotel booking line was quoted. KCC contact centre was not well thought of by the group in general. The group were of the opinion that call centre operatives are under too much pressure to limit calls to a particular time, and managers 'stood over them' to increase pressure to perform to time limits.
- The group were also concerned around 'flexible working' and the move to people only being contactable by their mobile phones. This was seen as increased expense for the service user and you could not always get hold of the person. It was recognised that KCC's new telephone system could help with this.

Customer Service Channels

- Group felt that older people in general do not use the internet – especially those in their later years, although it was accepted that some were comfortable doing certain things on computers
- Smart phones in general were not a facility used by older people
- The group recognised that this may be a generational issue, with younger people being brought up with technology - they may be different when they reach older age.
- By far the most common channel used by older people is the telephone; however this brought considerable frustration as outlined above i.e. call centre experience.
- An example was raised about older people with hearing difficulties who sometimes appear to be shouting on the phone, but this is actually due to their condition. Staff who call them seemed to be unaware of this and accused them of being rude or aggressive.
- The group recognised that moving services online would suit some, however advised that other channels such as telephone remain very important to them – there should not be a scenario where 'digital by design' means ceasing the ability to access by other means.
- Some members of the group pointed out that although we often point to Libraries as a place to go to access computers and undertake online activity,

sometimes these are miles away and computers are fully booked or not operational when you want them.

Other Points Raised

- The group were not in favour of being called 'customers' as they were 'not buying services in a shop'.
- The group questioned the suggestion of describing 'minimum standards' for services – they saw this as a negative.

6.3 Young People's Group - Shepway

A small group of young people aged between 11 and 16 took part in a workshop at Folkestone Academy.

The following points were raised during the discussion in relation to customer service:

- The young people taking part made no distinction between the KCC and the District Council
- Most examples of good customer service for young people were quoted in terms of face to face contact with very little online or telephone service having been experienced by the group.
- Most important to the group was people following through on their promises and people doing what they say they will
- Information is not always clear and understandable to young people – examples were given around bus timetables which no-one could understand!
- The group also felt they were often mistrusted when with their friends just because they are a group of young people – this often made them feel angry
- Young people tend not to look online for help – they would more likely talk to someone they trust
- Awareness of services available to young people is poor – perhaps further discussions with schools would help and this is where most information is given

6.4 BME Young People's Group – Gravesend

Are you aware of the difference between the district and borough services and Kent County Council?

We are aware of the County Council and the various District Councils. Also aware of some of the services both councils offer/run, but not all.

What online services do you use?

- Travel tickets
- Bus passes

Examples of good and bad customer service and what matters to you as a customer

We will start with bad – Has anyone got an example of bad customer service, it can be anywhere i.e. retail, contact centres, council services etc.?

- “If you go to a place, for example a restaurant, and you want to get something and you have to wait for hours and no one is attending to you and then someone else comes in and they then speak to that person before you, you then come out feeling angry and like it was a waste of time”.
- “I was on a bus when the driver was rude to someone who got on, it was a mum and I think she was with a child and gave the driver a note to pay with. The driver was annoyed and said that she didn't have change and muttered under her breath. The passenger said it's not my job to have 50p's in my wallet as the driver was moaning and getting stressed”.
- “For me it's about being bounced around from department to department, for example cancelling a broadband contract when they say we can offer you this and we can offer you that and you just want to cancel the contract”.
- “I have an example about the borough Councils website. A client of mine applied for housing and was refused. He was asked to appeal the decision but was not told how and the only instruction on the website was to write a letter, it offered no guidance or support as to how the letter should be written. When my client wrote her letter to appeal it was rejected and informed that it was not in the correct format it is really confusing and not representing what the council stands for”.

By going through the bad examples, the group highlighted that;

- *They expected to be acknowledged when requesting a service*
- *To access services easily without front line staff making it difficult and not displaying a can-do attitude*

- *Services need to take responsibility when dealing with their customers*

Does anyone have any examples of good customer service?

- “I think it comes down to the individual that you deal with. If you have a big company and have people put in place for sales or dealing with clients you can have lots of good employees but if you have one bad egg it will give the whole company a bad name. If you place someone in the position of customer service they have to be happy all the time as they are representing the company.

I have met a few people and I have done research of my own, for example, if someone doesn't feel good they bring that to work with all the negative spirit and they take it out on customers. Maybe it's the way the company operates and it depends on the people but even in phone shops they are going the extra mile and they have good energy and that energy is transferable. If People help you and they are in a cheery mood it makes you happy for the rest of day. Good Front line support should be compulsory”.

- “We have had good people in the library in the town centre they show respect and get respect back”.
- “Another example are the schools which have improved standards and the students who come out now with better academics and personality. I met some people who came out of school recently and before there was crimes, knives and guns in the school but it now seems a much better place to be and they have much better personalities”.
- “All that you need to do for people is to change people's lives positively, like a high street homeless person if you view them in different way and you can change their lives, like even if you have £5, you can make a difference you don't know what that person is thinking about, because no one even cares. If you remember late last year people where killing themselves and there was the internet bullies, kids don't have relationships they don't have people to talk to, they bottle it up inside and that's dangerous, that's like a grenade waiting to go off. Not every young person wants to be bad sometimes they are just followers and we should try and channel the bad energy in to something positive”.
- “The youth clubs actually help. I've been in to youth clubs who try and change and give the attention youths need. Front line services and customer services are a good investment for KCC they should invest in street based youth clubs, apart from the ones they have already commissioned. Other organisations that are not known, they are doing a very good job around engaging young people”.

“Would you find it useful if KCC went to youth clubs to show what the Council can do for you?”

- “Yes, definitely, the only thing that makes me happy is to see people doing positive things. In my free time if I see someone that needs help, I help, that’s way I am. I have been to a few places and I see the way they are organised. Some people that just don’t care, they are there just to do the hours and to just get paid, they are not connected to youth. They need the right guidance and right supervision and can easily plug in and get the early intervention. When I was working there, a young guy was by himself in the corner with about twenty other kids on the other side of the room, not talking to him. I stood next to the person in charge of the youth centre and said why is he not talking to the others and he said, he never talks”.

By going through the good examples, the group highlighted that;

- *Front line customer service is extremely important in representing the brand of your company*
- *Local Youth Clubs are worthwhile and engagement with KCC services would be welcomed*
- *The group appreciated customer service workers who went out of their way to help them*
- *Communication and engagement are crucial in promoting KCC services to youth groups, they want to be involved in shaping KCC services*

What barriers you have encountered in accessing service?

- The wrong people in place, not helping customers to access services
- Struggles in finding what services KCC have to offer

“Sticking on the difficulties and barriers is there anything you can’t access online?”

“I think if it’s only available online and it is a small place and they have no posters around town it’s hard to find and search about it and you’re not going to search for something you don’t know the name of”.

“So for example if you were applying for a Blue badge on behalf of a family member do you think KCC are doing a good job of letting people know how to apply? Where would you go?”

“I would search online for parking websites and KCC blue badge parking on the KCC website and Gravesham Borough Council website. I’m not sure where to access it on the KCC website though”.

What can we do to get rid of barriers?

- Street services – KCC going out to see people in local towns and in local forums.
- Get to know the people who you are employing to make sure that they are not there just for the money and that they care about the service which they work for, as it's having an impact on customers.
- There is a disconnection between, young people and people in authority. Frontline services have little connection or links speaking to younger people, they have no idea what this group of people need or want or if a tailored service is required, it just doesn't happen at the moment.

“So for you it's about communication and engagement and making sure you are involved in decision making?”

Yes

Have you found any difficulties in accessing our services online?

“I think now your website has been updated, it has been made easy. Services are now grouped and they there is easier access to pages. It's easy enough now. Before when you went to the website you didn't know where to go, grouping the services has helped improve this. It is also now mobile friendly”.

The group were also asked if they would access KCC services via Social Media. Only a handful of the participants had Social Media accounts and the ones that did said that they were unlikely to access KCC services via these platforms. The group stated that they use social media for interacting with friends and would most likely avoid KCC links, some saying that they would see it as spam/untrusted links.

6.5 Learning Disability Group - Canterbury

Members of a Learning Disability Group took part in a workshop in Canterbury.

The following points were raised during the discussing in relation to their experiences in general with customer services and what they felt was important:

- Patience is required, as some tasks can take longer – this was deemed very important and as a customer they want to go where they feel comfortable.
- The group felt that Learning Disability and Dementia training would be beneficial for all staff. They felt that staff often rushed them and didn't have time to support their customers when they needed extra help or time.
- The group wanted clear guidelines of what to expect, particularly with regards to how long it should take for someone to call or email them back. They also wanted to feel as if staff had taken the time to prepare for meetings with them in advance.
- Someone raised that they didn't feel like they were listened to by staff about how they would like to be supported by the council
- The group felt too uncomfortable raising issues if they received bad customer service.
- Very few members owned a smartphone
- The majority of the group did not use the internet or needed help to do so. They said that it would be easier to use the web if it was more pictures based and easier to use. Some also said they didn't really like to ask others to help them online as they prefer to be as independent as possible
- When contacting the council the group were largely happy to call in for small issues but for more complicated enquires they preferred to see someone.
- The group were reluctant to use libraries as they find it difficult to read and didn't want to read children books. They would like to see more adults books that were easy read. Someone also said they might use the library if audio books were available.

7. Equality Analysis

The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated to reflect the comments raised during the consultation period.

These include the rewording of the Policy to make the language clearer for customers and ensuring that customers can still access services in a variety of ways.

The updated assessment can be found in Appendix A

8. Next Steps

The policy will be updated to ensure that the terms and language used in the Policy are clearer for all our customers.

An implementation plan will be put into place to reflect any recommendations that are approved by the Policy and Resources Committee following the consultation report these include;

- Customer Service training for KCC staff
- Communication plan to let customers know of proposed changes and also improvements made as a direct result of the customer service policy and their feedback
- Ensuring 'Digital by Design' does not exclude those who cannot use the internet
- Devising Customer Service standards that can be monitored are put in place for both Kent County Council staff and commissioned services. This should be written in consultation with our customers.
- Actively consulting and communicating with our customers throughout the implementation of the policy, so that they can see the impact of both their feedback and the implementation of the standards expressed in the policy
- Using a variety of ways to capture and understand customer experiences in using our services to help gauge the impact of changes made as a result of the policy

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Customer Service Policy

2015-2018

Who are our customers?

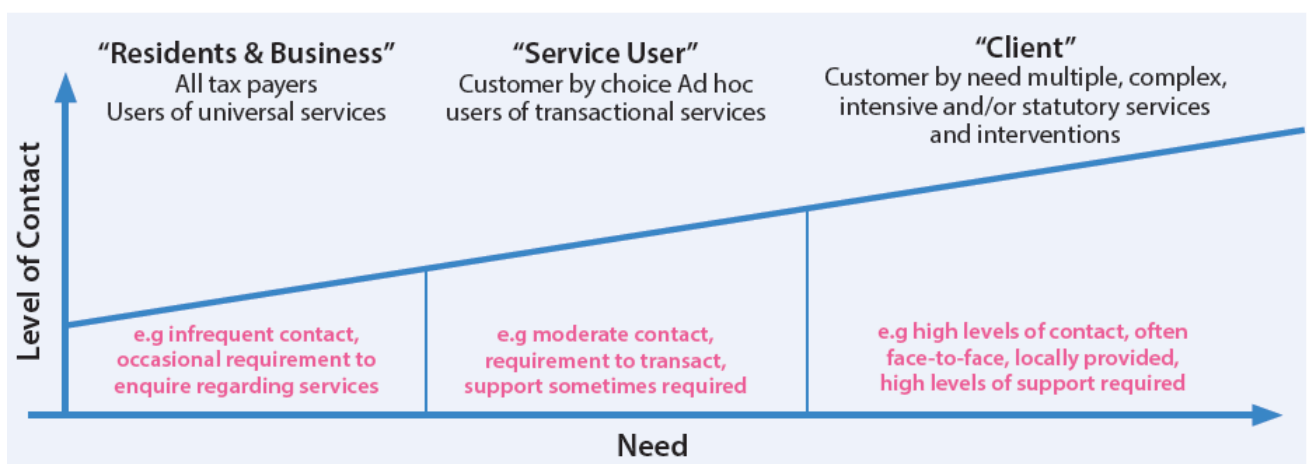
KCC's transformation plan 'Facing the Challenge' places a heavy importance and a focus on the role of the customer as we move towards a commissioning authority delivery model: -

"By 2020, all KCC services will have a greater customer focus with services organised around the needs of service users and residents, not the priorities of the service provider or service professionals." Facing the Challenge also sets out the direction of travel for our changing relationship with customers as we become a commissioning authority. Our focus will now be on how we evidence active engagement with customers in the design and delivery of their services, rather than on our historic understanding of their needs.

KCC provides a wide range of essential public services to a diverse range of people and is committed to ensuring that we meet our duties as described in the Equality Act 2010.

Individuals will often have relationships with different services. There are varying levels of need, complexity, intervention, risk, and value placed on personalisation, alongside varying levels of contact with KCC and its service providers.

Various terms and language are used to describe our customers. One size does not fit all – however it is possible to describe this relationship under the three broad groupings below.



The term 'customer' is used as a generic description for all. The customer relationship may change depending on the service they need to access. People may also move between these groups at different points in their lives.

The customer service policy describes KCC's commitment to customers, and is described in three core principles which should be applied when delivering services to customers. Commissioners must ensure that this policy and its principles are adopted throughout the supply chain. The Customer Service Policy works with and supports the Commissioning Framework, allowing KCC to hold all service providers to account for ensuring our customers have a good customer experience.

KCC's Customer Service Principles

Principle 1: Delivering Quality

As KCC moves to become a strategic commissioner of services, the number of service providers will increase. Each provider will be required to meet specified levels of service customer service, and will be able to evidence consistent quality and standards of delivery.

A set of corporate minimum service standards will provide a baseline framework enabling each Commissioner to develop specific standards and outcome targets for each service/service provider, demonstrating a response to customer needs.

Customer experience and how this will be monitored and reported must be part of all commissioning activity.

Commissioners will be required to prove that they have incorporated the standards and have appropriate evaluation activity to demonstrate that a provider meets the standards outlined in the customer service policy.

Principle 2: Customer Focused Services

KCC will ensure that direct or commissioned services can be accessed in the most flexible and convenient way by our customers, and demonstrate how value for money is achieved for Kent's taxpayers.

Service provision will be inclusive and responsive to customer need – ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable continue to be met.

Commissioners and providers will be expected to demonstrate how they have considered and incorporated customer needs into service design; and by using evidence and careful monitoring to show how digital and other channels will be used proportionately to support customers, especially for those who cannot transact digitally.

Principle 3: Intelligent Commissioning

KCC will require all services to collect and report on a range of customer feedback, data and intelligence to inform future commissioning and ensure that all services and providers are aligned to customer needs.

We will develop a deeper understanding of customers, their needs, changing trends and how and why they access our services in the way that they do.

Commissioners and service providers will be required to collect a range of qualitative and quantitative information about our customer activity and use this intelligently to improve services.

Customers must be involved in service design process. We will require all commissioners and providers to demonstrate how this is being achieved and evidence improvements as a result of customer engagement.

KCC's Commitment to Customers

1. We will treat all customers equally, fairly and respectfully, and do all we can to ensure that customers are able to access services when and how they need to

This will be achieved by listening to customer feedback and ensuring we actively engage with customers to understand the changing nature of contact preferences and needs when accessing our services now and in the future.

2. We will deal openly and honestly with customers; always taking the time to explain why KCC is taking a particular course of action; what the timescales are likely to be, and how the intended outcome will benefit the customer.

This will be achieved by ensuring we have systems in place to monitor response times and take steps to improve where we are not meeting agreed timescales.

3. We will try to get things right first time, and put things right as a matter of priority if they do go wrong

We will actively monitor first time resolution to customer contact and require commissioners to set standards for services to resolve issues should they arise; keeping customers informed of the action being taken and when they might expect resolution.

4. We will listen to your ideas, and use your feedback to improve our services

We will achieve this through a range of techniques including listening to your feedback through workshops and other face to face forums as well as monitoring comments and complaints. The customer voice will become clearer through regular analysis of feedback, ensuring that action and improvements follow.

5. We will always strive to communicate clearly with our customers (and will provide alternative formats if required) to ensure clarity and understanding

We will achieve this through involving customers in the design and production of communications material and publications and by refreshing our standards and applying these consistently

What this means for you

Principle 1: Delivering Quality

KCC values and owns the customer relationship regardless of how services are delivered

We will:

Ensure consistent quality and experience regardless of provider or channel

Hold service providers to account for delivery to our customers

Produce and incorporate a minimum set of standards into all commissioning stages, describing customer service expectations and the mechanisms by which these will be monitored and upheld

Provide a direct route to Kent County Council service commissioners for customer service complaints or comments which cannot be resolved by the provider

Retain ownership of all customer data related to our services.

Require customer service insight and feedback analysis to be a prerequisite of all service design and specification development

So that

Customers know what to expect from KCC services irrespective of provider or contact channel

Customers can be confident that KCC is putting them at the heart of everything we do

KCC can take an informed view of how services are aligned to customer needs and requirements

Customers know how and where to direct any comments or complaints about KCC services regardless of who delivers them

All comments, compliments and complaints are captured and used to improve services

Customers can be confident that their information is being used to inform our commissioning and service quality across the Council and that their data is managed safely and securely

Principle 2: Customer Focused Services

KCC will ensure that customers can access services in a range of ways, ensuring that value for money and flexibility are prioritised across all services

We will:

Ensure that services are accessible and flexible according to customer needs and driven by best value

Ensure KCC services are providing customers with the ability to access services through digital self-service as a minimum expectation

Incentivise digital access by improving customer experience in achieving their outcome through this channel; providing a positive change in customer experience through speed, convenience and personalisation

Ensure the full cost of delivering a service is understood and factored into commissioning decisions at all times – from first point of contact through to conclusion.

Review and reduce our service offer as the increase in digital take-up is evidenced. Helping to achieve best value for customers through self-service, whilst ensuring continuity of support for the vulnerable and those customers with complex needs, where digital channels may not be appropriate.

Ensure that services are always designed to be inclusive, with access based on evidence of customer need, ability and circumstance

Listen to our customers and continue to develop new ways in which services can be tailored to suit their needs

So that

Services provided by KCC are flexible and responsive to customers, and can be accessed in a range of ways according to need

The majority of customers can self-serve via responsive and reliable digital platforms at times that suit them

Customers can be assured that KCC is commissioning effective and efficient services on their behalf

Best value is achieved for customers and KCC avoids hidden or unintentional cost pressures or performance issues

Those that require extra help or who have multiple or complex needs will be provided with the help they require

Principle 3: Intelligent Commissioning

KCC will strive to continuously improve services through engaging and learning from our customers

We will

Develop a deep understanding of our customers, their needs and how and why they access our services

Require commissioners and service providers to collect a range of qualitative and quantitative information about our customer activity and use this insight to shape and improve service delivery

Actively promote the sharing of relevant data (as appropriate) to drive improvement in customer service

Require commissioners and service providers to involve customers in service design and evidence customer impact on delivery

Meet customer requirements at first contact wherever possible, minimising the need for repeat contact and ensuring that services are designed and delivered with the customer at the heart

Ensure contact demand is anticipated, managed and that customers can use the most appropriate channel for their needs

So that

Customer information and intelligence is used in designing services from the outset and on an ongoing basis

Customers are involved and engaged in shaping services that best meet their needs

Customers can have confidence that their needs are placed at the heart of everything we do (or others do on our behalf)

Customers do not have to chase or remind us about the things we have said we will do.

Glossary of Terms used in the Customer Service Policy

Contact channels by this we mean the mechanism or device which customers will use to access Council services, examples include telephone, text, email, online, social media, mobile phone, face to face, or post/letter.

Digital means that the organisation will aim to design or redesign services so that they can be delivered to customers online by using smart phones, tablets, PC's or laptops or smart TV.

This means that the digital element will not be a bolt on to existing service delivery. It means that services must use customer research and evidence to design or redesign services in a way that promotes self-service through digital platforms.

This means that well designed digital access will be fundamental to service delivery

This activity must include design of supporting contact channels for those who are not able to access digitally. Importantly this does not mean that we will force digital services upon customers who are unable to access in this way.

Residents & Business by this we mean all taxpayers and users of universal services such as roads and street lighting. This group has infrequent contact with KCC regarding services.

Customer is a generic description for all.

Client by this we mean a customer who receives a statutory service and interventions for example home care or a customer with multiple and complex needs for example a child with a disability. This group has high levels of contact, often face-to-face, locally provided with high levels of support required.

Service User by this we mean Customer by choice, moderate contact for support, for example someone who uses the Library, attends Adult Education classes, goes to Country Parks. This group is often able to 'self-serve' with limited need for support

Customer Intelligence/data by this we mean data, information and analysis about our customers, their needs, wants, views, preferences and ultimately behaviours in relation to KCC and their wider interactions. This includes using information about the customers protected characteristics to improve services.

Strategic Commissioning Authority As a strategic commissioning authority we will find the best, most effective and value for money services for Kent and ensure that these are providing the strategic outcomes we have defined. This is likely to include a range of provision, including in-house service delivery alongside better use of voluntary/community sector and private sector expertise. Importantly this does not mean that every service will be 'outsourced' or provided by a third party.

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March 2014

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
EQUALITY ANALYSIS / IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)**

**This document is available in other formats, Please contact
Pascale.Blackburn-Clarke@Kent.gov.uk or telephone on 03000 417025**

You need to start your Equality Analysis and data collection when you start to create or change any policy, procedure project or service

When developing high-level strategies under which other policies will sit, if those policies are jointly owned by KCC and partner organisations, they will need to take the partnership approach to EqIAs,

Please read the EqIA GUIDANCE and the EqIA flow chart available on KNet.

Directorate:

Strategic and Corporate Services – Engagement, Organisational Design and Development

Name of policy, procedure, project or service

Customer Service Policy

What is being assessed?

The Customer Service Policy which will define and agree the core customer service values and principles that it will require all commissioners and providers to uphold

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer

David Cockburn
David Whittle/Jane Kendal

Date of Initial Screening

01/12/14

Date of Full EqIA :

2nd February 2015

March 2014

Version	Author	Date	Comment
0.1	PK	01/12/2014	First draft
0.2	PK	17/12/2014	Updated
0.3	JH	30/01/2015	E & D Team
0.4	PK	03/02/2015	Further development
0.5	PBC	09/02/2015	Further development
0.6	PK	10/02/2015	Minor amends (formatting/typos)
0.7	PBC	03/03/2015	Development following meeting with Equalities Team
0.8	PK	04/03/2015	Further reshaping
0.9	PK	05/03/2015	Finalisation
1.0	PK	10/03/2015	Final before consultation
1.1	PBC	01/06/2015	Updates following consultation
1.2	AA	08/07/2015	Suggested Amendments and Developments
1.3	PBC	09/07/2015	Updated EQiA
1.3	AA	24/07/2015	Further amends
1.4	PBC	27/07/2015	Updated EQiA

Screening Grid

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service, or any proposed changes to it, affect this group less favourably than others in Kent? YES/NO If yes how?	Assessment of potential impact HIGH/MEDIUM LOW/NONE UNKNOWN		Provide details: a) Is internal action required? If yes what? b) Is further assessment required? If yes, why?	Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group? YES/NO - Explain how good practice can promote equal opportunities
		Positive	Negative	Internal action must be included in Action Plan	If yes you must provide detail
Age Page 55	<p>Yes - Digital exclusion for some older and more vulnerable residents could accrue if service not designed inclusively.</p> <p>There is also potential for increased isolation due to reduced face to face contact Age related disability and mobility prevent access.</p>	Medium	Medium	<p>Continue to build on programmes (for example within Libraries, Gateways and Children Centres) to promote digital inclusion. These have shown success in getting people online over the last 10 years. Ensure adequate alternative provision in place for those that cannot participate in digital service e.g. assisted service via Libraries.</p> <p>User testing of new systems to be carried out prior to launch, using a cross section of customers with protected characteristics</p> <p>Potential difficulty in contacting council by telephone to enquire or complete transactions. Other methods of communication to remain available to those who cannot contact the council by web</p>	<p>Increased accessibility of services for those that have access/can utilise technology</p> <p>Potential for decreased social isolation for those that have access /can use technology</p> <p>Remote self-service enabled for some services - mobility issues less problematic</p> <p>By moving the majority onto digital this will reserve more traditional channels for those who can only access services through those channels</p> <p>Clarity of expectation and experience – Standards developed in line with customer outcomes</p> <p>More regularised reporting on customer experience will help identify any further actions required</p> <p>By commissioning effectively, the</p>

					needs of all customer groups should be fully considered as part of the 'analysis' stage of commissioning any service The standards set out in the Policy requires commissioners to consider findings from their equality impact assessment in their service planning and to ensure the impact on all customer groups in relation to protected characteristics are considered in the design and ongoing delivery of each service.
Page 56	<p>Disability</p> <p>Yes - Difficulties with reading, standard methods of communication or physical access and isolation can create barriers for this protected group of people.</p> <p>People with sensory difficulties (for example deaf and/or blind) and complex communication needs will experience barriers accessing standard information and some digital services without us helping with assisted technology</p> <p>The learning disabled may require additional assistance in order to utilise digital services effectively. Other access options will need to be made available to ensure</p>	Medium	Medium	<p>KCC developers and website owners have utilised assistive technologies such as NVDA software to check and improve the general accessibility of our website for blind and partially sighted customers. As a result screen readers have an improved experience of the site. IT colleagues are looking to introduce further assistive technology in a similar manner to widen accessibility.</p> <p>Videos are provided with subtitles/transcribed or with audio file to assist those with sensory impairments.</p> <p>'Browsealoud' (Software) can be downloaded (free of charge) used on our website for customers who have dyslexia, learning difficulties and visual impairments; this will read content on our website outline. Content is written to ensure that customers get the information they need without having to read reams of information.</p>	<p>Build upon assistive technology to improve service/web accessibility for this group</p> <p>Web content accessibility improved by developing in line with the inclusive communication guide and the KCC style guide</p> <p>Potential to assist in decreased social isolation</p> <p>Mobility issues less problematic</p> <p>By moving the majority onto digital this will reserve more traditional channels for those who need it</p> <p>Clarity of expectation and experience – Standards developed in line with customer outcomes</p> <p>More regularised reporting on</p>

	<p>that customers are not excluded.</p> <p>Potential barriers in accessing services via phone</p> <p>Accessibility of buildings may prevent customers with particular disabilities from accessing services</p> <p>Risk that staff do not have the skills to address the requirements of various protected characteristic groups i.e. those living with dementia</p>		<p>We also provide easy read options on our website and when it is not practical to do we clearly indicate how a customer can obtain alternative formats i.e. large text. An easy read version of this policy was included as part of the consultation exercise.</p> <p>Ensure that our website works effectively on Smartphones to promote digital inclusion to customers who use these are their primary internet access</p> <p>User testing of new systems to be carried out prior to launch, using a cross section of customers with disabilities</p> <p>Ensure adequate alternative provision in place for those that cannot participate in digital service e.g. assisted service via Libraries.</p> <p>Risk that locations are not accessible to those with disabilities. Ensure that the KCC Asset Management Plan and commissioners service planning incorporates access considerations when considering a building as a location where face to face interaction with customers is intended.</p> <p>Potential difficulty in contacting council by telephone to enquire or complete transactions due to disability. For example Text Relay is used to enable hard of hearing and deaf customers to contact us or the ability to download Browsealoud to read content on our</p>	<p>customer experience will help identify any further actions required</p> <p>By commissioning effectively, the needs of all customer groups should be fully considered as part of the 'analysis' stage of commissioning any service. Following the standards set out in the Policy requires commissioners to consider findings from their equality impact assessment in their service planning and to ensure all customer groups are well reflected and involved in the design and ongoing delivery of each service.</p>
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				<p>website.</p> <p>A range of alternative contact channels (for example face to face provision where possible and telephone) will be made available to our customers to ensure that customers who require assistance in completing their enquiries or transactions are able to</p> <p>Expansion of training already available within KCC to enable staff to ask the right questions and consider potential impact of changes on their customers. This training has included dementia awareness, customer feedback, consultation, general customer service and customer journey mapping.</p>	
Gender	None Identified	Medium	Low	Consideration should be made to ensure that neither gender is affected by changes made	
Gender identity	None Identified	Medium	Low	Traditionally some transgender customers have been reluctant to approach services. Front line staff need to be aware and take into account their needs.	
Race	Yes - People who do not have English as a first language may experience barriers to accessing information, advice and services. Digital platforms not provided in users first language could provide difficulties and further assistance may be required	Medium	Medium	<p>'Browsealoud' (software) can be used on our website for customers whose second language is English; this will read content out loud in English.</p> <p>All content is written in plain English</p> <p>Alternative formats are offered to customers who require assistance including in alternative languages</p>	<p>Potential to assist in decreased social isolation</p> <p>Clarity of expectation and experience – Standards developed in line with customer outcomes</p> <p>By commissioning effectively, the needs of all customer groups should be fully considered as part of the</p>

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	Potential difficulties in accessing information by phone due to language barrier			Potential difficulty in contacting council by telephone to enquire or complete transactions due to language barriers. Non English speakers can request translation services offered by the council	'analysis' stage of commissioning any service. Following the standards set out in the Policy requires commissioners to consider findings from their equality impact assessment in their service planning and to ensure all customer groups are well reflected and involved in the design and ongoing delivery of each service.
Religion or belief		Medium	Low	Offer access to information and advice in a variety of different ways and format. Understand the particular needs of different Religions and beliefs when redesigning and delivering services.	
Sexual orientation	None Identified	Low	Low	Staff will need to be aware of particular needs that might arise and be responsive to these requirements	
Pregnancy and maternity	None Identified	Low	Low		
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	None Identifies	Low	Low		
Carer's responsibilities	Yes - Carers will hold multiple protected characteristics so consideration will need to be given to diverse needs including age, cultural, language, sensory requirements etc.	Medium	Medium	As above	As above

Part 1: INITIAL SCREENING

Proportionality - Based on the answers in the above screening grid what weighting would you ascribe to this function – see Risk Matrix

Low	Medium	High
Low relevance or Insufficient information/evidence to make a judgement.	Medium relevance or Insufficient information/evidence to make a Judgement.	High relevance to equality, /likely to have adverse impact on protected groups

State rating & reasons

Medium Risk – A consultation has been carried out however the relatively small sample size of those who responded means it cannot be considered representative of those who will be affected by the policy. In addition whilst every effort has been made to consider the potential impact to those customers with protected characteristics, the current way in which data is held within the council means that there is insufficient evidence to suggest that all impacts have definitely been mitigated.

All changes that will be made as a result of the policy will therefore be required to complete a separate EQiA in which impacts to customers specific to that service are considered.

This EQiA will be regularly revisited and updated to reflect any evidence or actions that might need to be taken during its implementation to mitigate potential adverse impact to customers with protected characteristics.

Context

The downturn in the national economy and reduced public sector resources means that Kent County Council (KCC) wherever possible needs to deliver more for less. KCCs approach to service transformation and the move towards becoming a ‘strategic commissioning authority’ is outlined in the Councils transformation plan “Facing the Challenge: Delivering Better Outcomes”.

It’s important that we focus our activity and investment on delivering what is most important to our customers. We will focus on strategic outcomes as described in Kent County Council’s Strategic Statement.

‘Facing the Challenge’ places a heavy importance on the role of the customer. KCC are going to improve how we use customer information and use customer insight and feedback to improve our services by focusing more on service user needs, and actively engaging customers in design and delivery of services.

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As our organisation transforms and adapts to this approach, we will need to revisit the way in which we deliver services, placing the Customer at the heart of everything we do and ensuring every pound spent is delivering results and outcomes for people.

The generic term 'customer' is used throughout the Customer Service Policy, however the Policy also fully recognises that 'one size' does not fit all. KCC provides a wide range of services to its customers, varying enormously in nature and delivery imperative. Customers themselves of course vary in their requirements, preferences and personal barriers to accessing services. In taking forward this Customer Service Policy, KCC recognises its duties with regard to its diverse range of customers and in particular the requirements of equalities legislation and protected characteristics.

The Customer Service Policy has been informed by the following strategies and policies;

- Facing the Challenge – Delivering Better Outcomes 2013
- Outcomes Framework 2015
- Commissioning Framework 2015
- Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy
- Inclusive communication guidelines 2015
- Information Governance policy 2013
- The National Digital Inclusion Charter

Aims and Objectives

The Customer Service Policy describes KCC's commitment to customers, and is described in three core principles which should be applied across the board when delivering services to customers. Service owners and commissioners must ensure that this policy and its principles are adopted throughout the supply chain. This Policy will be supported by the Commissioning Framework, allowing KCC to hold all service providers to account for ensuring our customers have a good customer experience.

The Customer Service Policy aims to provide this set of guiding principles for all services which must be applied to regardless of provider.

Principle 1: Delivering Quality

As KCC moves to become a strategic commissioner of services, there will be many service providers. These Providers will be required to meet agreed levels of service across various channels with consistent quality and standards.

A set of minimum service standards will be developed for each service in line with customer needs.

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Customer experience and how this will be monitored and reported must be part of all commissioning activity.

Commissioners will be required to prove that they meet the standards outlined in the customer service policy.

Principle 2: Customer Focused Services

KCC will ensure that its customers can access its services in the most flexible and convenient way so that good value for money is achieved for Kent's taxpayers. Services will be 'digital by design'

Service provision will be inclusive and responsive to customer need

Commissioners and providers will be expected to demonstrate how digital delivery is incorporated into service design, and how other channels will be used to support customers who cannot transact digitally.

Principle 3: Intelligent Commissioning

KCC will require all services to collect and feed-back a range of customer data and intelligence to inform it's commissioning and ensure that all services are aligned to customer needs.

We will develop a deep understanding of our customers, their needs and how and why they access our services

Commissioners and service providers will be required to collect a range of qualitative and quantitative information about our customers and use this intelligently to improve services

Customers must be involved in service design process. We will require all commissioners and providers to demonstrate how this is being achieved

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the policy are intended to be the customers of Kent County Council, ensuring that they are receiving services that are suited to their needs and requirements. For all our customers we are intending to improve services delivery, ensuring that they are not excluded by whether they are able to transact online or not.

By improving our digital offer, we hope that customers who can will opt to use this method, reserving more traditional contact methods such as face to face or telephone for those who have more complex needs or for those who cannot transact online.

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By having clear and defined principles we are setting out our expectations of all KCC services, whether they are delivered directly or by a commissioned service. This will allow KCC to hold all service providers to account for ensuring that customers have a good customer experience.

Information and Data

Following our consultation, we know that some of our customers will have barriers to using some of the channels that we will provide future services.

The consultation helped to understand which particular groups might have particular difficulties in accessing services digitally and this feedback is covered in the Involvement and Engagement section of this EQiA. This has helped us to inform this latest version of the EQiA and a rewrite of the policy.

However, relatively small sample size of those who responded means it cannot be considered representative of those who will be affected by the policy. In addition whilst every effort has been made to consider the potential impact to those customers with protected characteristics, the current way in which data is held within the council means that there is insufficient evidence to suggest that all impacts have definitely been mitigated.

Over the past three years, the Council has been involved in redesigning services from a customer perspective, using their feedback to understand how best to provide services and ensure that customers are not excluded due to their ability to transact online. The knowledge we have acquired through service changes, working alongside customers and examining customer needs, including understanding potential impacts to protected characteristics, have been used to inform the writing of this policy.

This policy is designed to improve services for all our customers or future customers. Services currently collect data about their customers which can be used to inform service design, however this data is not held centrally. Although we do not have all our customer data in one place, we do have some knowledge of the composition of Kent's population and have used this alongside our understanding of how people within the UK choose and need to access services.

As services look to redesign their offer, they will undertake an equality impact assessment to understand the potential impact of changes to their specific customer base.

With a resident population of just over 1.5 million, Kent has the largest population of all the English counties. The following information is understood from the 2011 Census and data produces from the Office for National Statistics in June 2015.

Age

- The mean age of the Kent population is 41. Kent has an ageing population with the number of 65+ year olds forecast to increase by 91,200 (31.8%) by 2026.
- Kent has a slightly smaller proportion of 0-4 year olds than the national average, but on the whole Kent has a younger age profile than the national average, with a greater proportion of young people aged 5-19 years than England.

Disability

There is no single measure available for disability. KCC uses a number of datasets to estimate the number of people that may have health issues or disability. This includes 2011 Census, Department of Work and Pensions benefits data, Annual Population Survey and Personal Independence Payment data,

- Using the broadest definition (2011 Census) 257,038 residents in Kent (17.6%) have a health problem or disability which limits their day-to-day activities.
- A higher proportion of people aged 65 and over (19.8%) claim disability benefits than those aged 16-64 (4.6%) or those aged 15 and under (4.0%)
- 7.4% of people in Kent were claiming a disability benefit as at November 2014, this equates to 110,470 claimants. This percentage is below the national average of 7.6%.
- 73.1% of claimants have a Physical Disability, 14.5% for a mental health problem and 11.4% claim for a Learning Difficulty.

Race

- 93.7% of all Kent residents are of White ethnic origin – this includes those who are White British, as well as other identities such as Irish, Eastern European origin etc. Kent also has Gypsy, Roma and Traveller populations greater than national average.
- 6.3% of Kent residents are classified as Black or Minority Ethnic (BME). This proportion is lower than the national average for England (14.6%), although has risen from the previous census and is anticipated to rise over time.
- 2.5% of households in Kent do not have anyone who speaks English as their main language living there.

Religion & Belief

- Almost three quarters of Kent residents follow a religion. 915,200 people are Christian which equates to 62.5% of the total population.
- The 2nd most popular religion in Kent is Muslim with 13,932 people which equates to 0.95% of the total population.

Gender

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- 51% of the total population of Kent is female and 49% are male

For more information on the social and demographic aspects of Kent's population can be found on the Kent.gov website

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/equality-and-diversity>

National reports, statistics and audits have helped us to understand how customers across the UK access the internet, for example the Office for National Statistics state that in 2013, 83% of UK households have access to the internet and 53% access the internet via their phones. 73% of adults used the internet every day.¹

By offering services digitally, it will enable those who can use lower cost and low intervention channels to do so, whilst enabling the minority of customers who are unable to access services digitally and those who have more complex issues to gain extra assistance and guidance from KCC.

The actions in this policy are about recognising the barriers that have stopped people going online until now and introducing initiatives that will either make things better or provide alternative methods as appropriate. Being digitally capable can make a significant difference to individuals and organisation's day to day. Reducing digital exclusion can help address many wider equality, social, health and wellbeing issues such as isolation. 81% of people over 55 say being online makes them feel part of modern society and less lonely.

This data and information has helped us to formulate this policy and has been used to inform this EQiA.

Involvement and Engagement

The policy went to consultation for 12 weeks, during this time 88 individuals submitted questionnaire forms and five interactive workshops were carried out with forums across the county.

Workshops were undertaken with a BME (Black, Minority and Ethnic) community group, an older peoples forum and two groups of young people including a BME youth forum. A workshop was also held with a disability group – although this fell slightly outside of the consultation period comments have been included to ensure that their views are reflected.

Issues with regards to accessibility raised during the consultation include;

¹ Office for National Statistics - <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/rdit2/internet-access---households-and-individuals/2013/stb-ia-2013.html>

- The Learning Disability Forum wanted clear guidelines of what to expect, particularly with regards to how long it should take for someone to call or email them back. They also wanted to feel as if staff had taken the time to prepare for meetings with them in advance.
- The majority of the Learning Disability Forum did not use the internet or needed help to do so. They said that it would be easier to use the web if it was more pictures based and easier to use. Some also said they didn't really like to ask others to help them online as they prefer to be as independent as possible
- Young People in both forums expressed that they didn't know what services were on offer and didn't know how to find out about services.
- Getting satisfactory answers through first point resolution – seeing something tangible after feeding back such as “you said we did”, we hate phrases such as “we will feed that back” – which seems false and we never hear back.
- The Black, Minority and Ethnic Forum highlighted that flexibility is a key requirement, information is preferable in multiple formats, geography of Kent needs to be considered as this can have a big impact on customer experience. Language – both plain English and lack of understanding of English is still an issue.
- The Older Persons Forum felt that older people in general do not use the internet – especially those in their later years, although it was accepted that some were comfortable doing certain things on computers
- More general feedback from the consultation focused on accessible language, that customers wanted to be involved in designing services and that we need to be careful not to exclude customers who cannot transact online.

Summary of Recommendations arising from customer feedback in the consultation

- We should actively consult and communicate with our customers throughout the implementation of the policy, so that they can see the impact of both their feedback and the implementation of the standards expressed in the policy
- We should remember to use plain English wherever possible. The language used in the Customer Service Policy should be reviewed to ensure they are as simple and clear as possible, and this approach should be taken forward into delivery.

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- We should develop standards that can be monitored to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the Customer Service throughout the supply chain.
- The involvement of customers in service design should be strengthened in delivery planning for the Customer Service Policy.
- We will need to explore a variety of ways to ensure we capture and understand customer experiences in using our services
- Following the launch of the policy, the customer service standards for the council and delivery partners should be written in consultation with our customers.
- Need to ensure that 'Digital by Design' does not exclude those who do not use the internet

Potential Impact

It is envisaged that the following will benefit from the Customer Service Policy and its implementation: -

- All customers of KCC whether they are businesses, residents or visitors to Kent.
- Partners; public sector, private sector and voluntary organisations assisting and working together with joined-up service delivery centred around customer needs
- Staff and members.

KCC is committed to delivering the best possible services to all customers and service users. In line with our Public Sector Equality duties, we are committed to understanding and dealing appropriately with any barriers to service delivery associated with protected characteristics.

In general terms all customers are intended to benefit from the three principles outlined, however it is recognised that especially within principle two, where services will be 'digital by design' there will be a need to understand fully any barriers that this may create and ensure appropriate actions are taken to prevent creating or exacerbating disadvantage in this regard. The protected characteristics of Age, Disability and Race will require particular focus for each service when considering digital solutions. This will involve assessing the available contact options which can include mobile, web, social media, text messaging, web chat, applications (apps) and more traditional contact methods such as face to face and telephone.

KCC already has in place standards to ensure that the needs of protected characteristics are met. This includes the accessible communication

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guidance, our website has been written to AA accessibility standard, the provision of text relay in our contact centre enabling the deaf and hard of hearing community to contact us and the ability to request documents in alternative formats.

As the policy is rolled out, KCC will establish a framework of standards as a benchmark. There will also be a design model to ensure that commissioned services are accessible to our customers regardless of who is delivering them on our behalf. KCC will ensure that no customer is left behind by the advancement of the digital agenda.

Each new project and/or service change that affects our customers will be consulted on to ensure that potential impacts on customers with protected characteristics are fully considered.

Key potential adverse impacts and benefits identified within each of the principles;

Principle One: Delivering Quality

Principle one will deliver clarity in terms of expectations of our service providers and commissioned services. Here we expect that minimum standards will be adhered to which will include demonstrating how services have been developed with their specific customer needs in mind.

This will include taking into account the needs of those customers with protected characteristics. Arguably this could potentially have a positive impact on those identified as the consistent approach to reporting and monitoring will also potentially highlight any further actions that may need to be taken to mitigate any adverse impact to those identified with protected characteristics.

Principle Two: Customer Focused Services

This principle focuses primarily on how services will be designed to suit the needs of our customers rather than our own historic understanding of their needs.

This includes the principle that services will be digital by design. This however, does not mean that customers who cannot access digital platform will be excluded from transacting with the council. This principle also highlights the importance of service providers to offer alternative means to those who cannot transact online.

This can include assistive technology, improved accessibility and offering alternative access channels for those who really need it. By offering digital solutions for the majority, it has the potential to improve service delivery by telephone and face to face, as it will release capacity to ensure that those with more complex needs and/or are unable to transact online are able to get help more effectively.

Principle Three: Intelligent Commissioning

To commissioning intelligently we will need to ensure that services have consistent standards when collecting and retaining customer data, so that we can understand who is using our services and design them appropriately for their needs. This will ensure that customers protected characteristics are considered in the design of our services regardless of who delivers them.

An increase in focus on outcomes will mean that we will hold commissioners to account, ensuring that customers are receiving services that are aligned to their needs.

Adverse Impact:

The consultation highlighted customer fears that they might be excluded if services were digital by design, particularly if they were older, had particular disabilities or did not speak English as a first language.

To mitigate these potential impacts the policy also requires service providers and commissioners to demonstrate how customers who cannot transact digitally will be supported.

The commissioning of services could result in reduced service provision or understanding of our customer needs; however the policy addresses this by compelling commissioned services to collect and feedback customer data as well as involving our customers in the design process for their service.

The action plan outlines some plans put in place to mitigate any potential adverse impact.

Positive Impact:

The policy focuses on designing services from the needs of our customers rather than our historic perception of what they might need. This will mean that customers will be given the opportunity to actively participate in the design of their services.

By focusing on digital by design, we are encouraging those customers who can to use cheaper and more efficient channels, this will free up capacity for those with more complex needs and who cannot transact online to access our services via more traditional routes.

JUDGEMENT

Option 1 – Screening Sufficient

NO

Justification:

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Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Protected Characteristic	Issues identified	Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Owner	Timescale	Cost implications
All	Customers noted that the terms and the language used in the Policy needed to be easier to read and understand	Policy to be reworded	Easier to read and understand	Customer Relationship Team and Policy & Strategic Relationships	June/July	None
All	Customers want to be informed of changes made as a result of their feedback and of the policy	Communications plan to be devised and continually updated	Customers will be informed of how their feedback has made a difference to service delivery	Customer Relationship Team	September and ongoing	None
All	No defined Digital Strategy for KCC	Strategy to be written to inform KCC's Digital ambitions	Strategy written which takes into account the needs of each of the identified protected characteristics	Customer Relationship Team/Digital Services		None
Race	Potential language	'Browsealoud' (software)	Customers will	Digital		None

	barrier for those whose second language is English	can be used on our website for customers whose second language is English; this will read content out loud. All content is written in plain English	be able to access services	Services		
Age, Disability, Race, Carer	Digital channels not accessible to all members of society especially age, disability.	Continue to build on programmes promoting digital inclusion - these have shown success in getting people online over the last 10 years. Broadband infrastructure roll-out across the county Ensure that alternative channels are available where necessary Assessment of alternative channels for those that require them. Test website and content using assisted technology to understand whether it	Making digital channels more accessible where possible Ensure better understanding of potential barriers Ensure understanding of appropriate alternative channels required Ensure cascade of information to commissioners and providers	Libraries, Registrations & Archives Economic & Regeneration. Customer Relationship Team/	Ongoing	Not yet known

		<p>works for those customers who rely on this technology to access our services online</p> <p>User test website inviting those with protected characteristics to feedback their views and inform us of any barriers they encounter</p> <p>Explore alternative ways of offering translated content</p>	<p>for service specification proposals.</p> <p>Customers using assisted technology can use our website</p> <p>Ensure customer feedback informs design and access improvements</p>	Digital Services Team/ ICT		
Age, Disability, Race, Carer	Potential unknown barriers found in the launch of new applications	<p>Test applications and content using assisted technology to understand whether it works for those customers who rely on this technology to access our services online</p> <p>User test applications inviting those with protected characteristics to feedback their views and inform us of any barriers they encounter</p>	Customers with assisted technology can use applications	Digital Services Team/ ICT	Ongoing	

Age, Disability, Race	Potential Difficulty in contacting council by phone	Other methods of communication to remain available to those who cannot contact the council by phone Assisted technology made available for those who would like to contact us by phone for example translation services or Text Relay for customers who are hard of hearing	Customers can access services in via a method they are most comfortable/able to	Service Owners	Ongoing	None
Disability	Risk that locations are not accessible to those with disabilities	Ensure that the KCC Asset Management Plan and commissioners service planning incorporates an assessment of access/egress when considering a building as a location where face to face interaction with customers is intended.	Customers can access services no matter where they are delivered	Property/Commissioners	Ongoing	None
All	Develop better understanding of	Identify current state-including alignments with	Customer Service	Policy and Strategic	Ongoing	None

	customer service delivery across KCC, as a commissioning authority working in a complex multiple provider environment	the principles outlined within the Policy in order to prioritise actions required to deliver compliance.	Improvement programme plan CS compliance – Self Assessment	Relationships / Customer Relationship Team/ Service Owners		
All	Lack of overarching Customer Service Standards and Performance measures	Development of KCC Customer Service Standards and Performance measures in consultation with our customers	Set of overarching standards that can be applied, measured and reported on across KCC and for its commissioned services.	Customer Relationship Team / CMT	Following launch of the Policy	None
All	Review all KCC policies to ensure alignment with customer service policy	Review policies to ensure alignment to customer service policy, including complaints/compliment and comments	Alignment of policies to Customer Service Policy	Policy and Strategic Relationships	Ongoing	None
All	No corporate overview of customers and	Introduction of KCC wide customer information capture system –	Ability to design services that are customer	Customer Relationship Team, and	Ongoing	Cost of implementation of a new

	how they access our services or achieve outcomes. Potential barrier to understanding impact to customers with protected characteristics	capturing real customer information. e.g. Customer Relationship Management System	centric. Will also help to identify customers with protected characteristics and therefore identify potential impact of proposed changes.	commissioners / service owners		Customer Relationship Management system
All	Expertise spread across the organisation, this includes front line staff, customer intelligence teams, customer feedback teams, customer service and the Social Innovation Lab for Kent Team (SILK)	Agree and establish a Design Authority. Establish a Customer Service Design Network to bring together skills to create customer centric service design	Expertise used to design services alongside customers	Customer Relationship Team	Ongoing	None
All	When service proposals (e.g. commissioning plans) are developed using the Commissioning	All commissioning plans will need to consider the equalities implications of the Customer Service elements that will be delivered.	Equality Impact Assessments completed for all commissioning proposals and commissioned	All commissioners	Ongoing	None

	Framework approach, changes will have the potential to have an impact on individuals within the population who have a protected characteristic.	Create a commissioners guide to the policy/standards and expectations.	services. Monitoring put in place.			
All	As services are changed in line with the policy, consultation will need to take place to assess the potential impact on individuals within the population who have a protected characteristic	All projects will need to investigate potential impacts, evidence and mitigate these where possible	Equality Impact Assessments completed for all proposals	Commissioners / Service owners	Ongoing	None
All	Training for staff prior to making changes to services.	Expansion of training already available within KCC to enable staff to ask the right questions and consider potential impact of changes on	Staff take into account potential impact to customers of any changes proposed	Service Owners	Ongoing	Cost of providing training

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Commercial & Traded Services

DECISION NO:

15/00035

For publication
Key decision*

To formally adopt the policy of the Customer Service Policy and its principles within KCC including the recommendations arising from the consultation

Subject: Customer Service Policy

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Commercial & Traded Services, I agree for KCC to formally adopting the Customer Service Policy including the recommendations arising from the consultation.

Reason(s) for decision:

KCC's transformation plan 'Facing the Challenge' places a heavy importance and a focus on the role of the customer as we move towards a commissioning authority delivery model: -
 "By 2020, all KCC services will have a greater customer focus with services organised around the needs of service users and residents, not the priorities of the service provider or service professionals."

Facing the Challenge also sets out the direction of travel for our changing relationship with customers as we become a commissioning authority. Our focus will now be on how we evidence active engagement with customers in the design and delivery of their services, rather than on our historic understanding of their needs.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The policy was originally discussed Policy and Resources Committee in January 2015. The Customer Service Policy was consulted on with the Public from 10th March 2015 – 12th May 2015.

Any alternatives considered: Not applicable

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None

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signed

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date

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From: Mike Hill- Cabinet Member for Community Services
 David Cockburn – Head of Paid Service, Corporate Director of Strategic & Corporate Services

To: **Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 10 September 2015**

Decision No: 15/00030

Subject: **Final draft of the VCS Policy and consultation feedback**

Classification:

Past Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Members and Corporate Management Team

Future Pathway of Paper:

Electoral Division: Countywide- all divisions affected

Summary:

KCC’s draft Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) policy, which was considered by Policy and Resources (P&R) Cabinet Committee on 16 January 2015, has undergone a 12 week consultation with the sector. The draft policy has now been updated to reflect the insights gathered and this report provides an overview of the consultation, the feedback and the subsequent changes to the final draft of the policy. Following P&R Cabinet Committee and any subsequent changes to the policy, the Cabinet Member for Community Services will take the decision to adopt the VCS policy.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- 1) Consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community Services on the proposed decision to adopt KCC’s VCS Policy. Comment on the consultation process and findings
- 2) Comment on the revised policy
- 3) Comment on the proposed next steps

1. Background

- 1.1 The LGA Peer Challenge which KCC undertook in 2014 recommended that KCC develop a VCS policy or strategy. This recommendation was subsequently agreed by County Council and a VCS policy has since been developed by a cross directorate group of officers, supported by a small member working group, which consisted of Mike Hill, Graham Gibbens and Mark Dance.
- 1.2 It was agreed that a council wide VCS policy needed to consider the role of the VCS in its broadest sense and KCC’s future support to the sector should be reviewed in this context. In developing the policy the working group identified the lack of standardised process around grant funding across the authority and with the introduction of the Local Government Data Transparency code 2015, which required

Council's to publish details of all their grants annually, it was agreed that a grant framework would be developed and defined within the Policy.

- 1.3 The draft policy was considered by Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee in January 2015 and it was agreed that it would go out to consultation with the sector for 12 weeks, in line with the Kent Compact. In particular the consultation would seek the sectors views on the proposed grant framework and the future support needs of the sector.

2 Consultation process

The draft consultation report and detailed findings are provided in Appendix 2.

- 2.1 The consultation began on the 26 March 2015 and ran until 18 June. FACTS International was commissioned by KCC to lead the consultation analysing survey responses and managing the consultation events given their experience of working with the VCS and knowledge of Kent's VCS.

Deliberative workshops with the VCS held in 3 locations	Online Questionnaire
An in-depth qualitative assessment of VCS organisations opinions via face to face deliberative workshops	The use of an online consultation questionnaire (also available in hard copy) hosted on the Consultation area of the KCC website and sent out through various internal and external channels.

- 2.2 The survey was hosted on the KCC consultation page throughout the consultation period and 127 responses were received with over 100 organisations responding. It should be noted that the consultation exercise gave organisations the opportunity to 'opt in' to give their views and was not intended to be a representative survey of the sector. However, the survey was sent out to a range of organisations through both internal and external networks to over 2000 organisations on KCC databases and around 1800 small and medium size organisations through the KentCan network. The responses collected through the survey were very detailed and demonstrated a great deal of time and thought had been given by organisations to ensure their views were heard.
- 2.3 In June 2015 three consultation events were held and facilitated by FACTS in Maidstone, Ashford and Canterbury. The invitations were sent out to 230 organisations that had expressed an interest either through completing the online survey or as a result of communications through, newsletters, KentCan's network and social media. In total 81 organisations attended the 3 events – Maidstone 31, Ashford 33 and Canterbury 17.
- 2.4 The main topics covered at the events included general feedback on the draft policy, plus suggestions around supporting activity that would benefit the sector: e.g. maximising availability and accessibility of grants as defined in the policy, Infrastructure support and facilitating information, skill sharing and engagement.

3. Main consultation findings

- 3.1 The findings from the consultation are summarised under each of the following headings and the proposed changes to the policy are provided. The revised policy is provided in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The consultation has been an invaluable process providing the opportunity to clarify areas of the policy but also providing informed challenge and indeed in many cases pushed KCC to think more radically and indeed take more risks, “Be bold, be brave, effective change is sometimes painful”.
- 3.3 We recognise that involving the sector in the development of the policy is key to its success and we are encouraged that the consultation process has been welcomed by the sector as a starting point for a more mature and professional relationship between KCC and the VCS. The feedback has therefore been used to change or inform the policy wherever possible and where issues have been raised that fall outside of the scope of the policy we have flagged this as potential next steps and new pieces of work, where appropriate. However in some cases there have been conflicting views across the sector and the feedback has rightly been balanced against the wider priorities of KCC.
- 3.4 **Demographics of respondents:**

Caveat: *The consultation was open to any organisation to respond and therefore not intended to be a representative survey of the sector.*

- 42% of survey respondents listed their primary activity as Adult Social services, 25% as Education and 25% Children’s services however there was good representation across a range of activities (see appendix 1).
- 52% of organisations that responded fell into the medium, large and major income band with 49% Micro and small.
- 63% of respondents had a funding relationship with KCC. In fact the larger the organisation responding to the survey the more likely they were to have a funding relationship with KCC
- 78% of large and major organisations responding were in receipt of funding from KCC. Larger organisations are overrepresented among survey respondents, re-affirming that micro organisations are far more likely to be ‘off-radar’.
- Attitudes of organisations do not differ by size but organisations in receipt of KCC funding were more likely to be positive about the policy, suggesting that there is a sense of ‘outsiders’ from those who do not receive funding; something highlighted through the deliberative events.

3.5 The development of a KCC VCS policy

3.5.1 Feedback:

The feedback from the deliberative events was positive about the development of a KCC policy, believing it offered clarity and recognition of the importance of the sector. Its existence was felt to give prominence to the sector within KCC and as a positive step forward because it provided an opportunity for the VCS to better understand KCC’s position. This was mirrored in the survey with respondents stating the top benefits of the policy as Clarity, Accountability, Transparency and coverage (across a diverse sector).

In the survey just under 4 in 10 organisations felt the policy would help their organisation with 37% responding ‘don’t know’. In discussion at the events and in comments through the survey it became clear that organisations wanted more

information particularly around grants and where appropriate the policy has been revised in response to these comments and this is highlighted later in the report.

It was generally felt that the policy reflected the diversity of the sector however some felt it could go further particularly recognising that the sector went beyond the health and social care arena and included organisations who were 'doing their own thing'. The scale of differences between different types of organisations could also be more fully appreciated and it was also emphasised that the policy must be backed up by action.

The language and tone of the policy was felt to be very 'local government speak' and concern that it could be overly paternalistic and patronising. It was felt that the future relationship should more overtly recognise the professionalism within the sector and not continue to be a paternalistic.

Some responses stated that the policy could better recognise the importance of Social Value itself and how the policy will help KCC to deliver on its Social Value objectives.

There was a suggestion that the link to other KCC documents such as the Compact should be strengthened and consideration given to how the two documents interplay.

3.5.2 Proposed changes to the policy and rationale:

We have made changes to the language and tone of the document in response to the feedback received, however this policy is intended to be an internally focused document, which will guide and support commissioners and so the style of the document must reflect this. We have placed greater emphasis on the need to view the sector as an equal partner and set out a future relationship with the sector built on collaboration not an overly paternalistic relationship driven through our funding arrangements (as set out in the diagram on page 8 of the policy). The policy has been updated to further emphasise the diversity in the sector and the distinct nature of VCS organisations, which are driven by their core mission and the needs of communities. In this sense it makes clear that many organisations are not indeed funded by KCC and have little engagement with the authority. However the policy clarifies that our future relationship and support should reach organisations right across the sector. The principles on page 1 of the policy have been updated to reflect these changes.

The policy sets out our commitment to social value and recognises the inherent social value of the VCS. However, it recognises that the detail of how we consider social value and develop our approach within all our commissioning is better considered within other KCC documents such as the Commissioning Framework and toolkit, which the policy links to.

Further detail about grant funding has been reflected within the relevant section of the policy and details are provided in 3.6.

3.6 Grant funding framework

3.6.1 Feedback

In relation to grants, many had felt that KCC would be moving away from grants entirely and so were reassured to see an explicit commitment. Participants mentioned advantages around a standardised approach to grants ensuring

consistency in approach and welcomed the concept of Innovation grants. It was felt that a consistent approach had been lacking to date and there was optimism that the policy could lead to a more “level playing field” giving more opportunities to a greater number and range of organisations – including smaller organisations that have not as yet been able to access KCC funding (not just “the big boys” or “the usual suspects”). Participants hoped that the policy would change the current limitations of a system where access to KCC grants could be “more about who you know, rather than what you do”. Encouragingly more than half of organisations that responded to the survey felt that the proposed grant definitions would enable grants to be more accessible to a range of organisations.

However, both in the feedback at the events and in the survey responses it was felt that the policy could go further in providing more detail on what funding would be available and indeed a lack of detailed information about grant funding meant some respondents were unsure of the benefits of the policy. It was recommended by a number of organisations that KCC should develop a ‘grant prospectus’ to provide the further information that the policy was lacking, whilst recognising that the policy itself may not be the correct mechanism for setting out this detail.

Where organisations responded negatively to the grant framework the main reason given was unsustainable funding and a ‘one size fits all mentality’. The feedback was consistent that short term grant funding was making the sector unsustainable and that longer- term funding should be considered so that interventions could gain momentum. It was also strongly suggested that consideration be given to working with a third party organisation to administer some grants and to facilitate better partnership working and promote a range of funding sources.

It was stated that a consistent, professional approach to grant funding had been lacking and using a panel of experts who have a deep understanding of pressing needs within the local communities may be a more effective way of awarding some grants than current practice.

Many organisations felt that the KCC website and portal were not fit for purpose in terms of making it easy to apply for grants, and that a downloadable application form may be more appropriate.

3.6.2 Proposed changes to the policy and rationale:

The policy has been revised to provide greater clarity about the appropriate use of grants and is clear that grants should not be used for the delivery of services which should be provided under contract. Instead, as we move to become a strategic commissioning authority and take an outcome based approach; a strategic change is required within KCC to ensure that grants are used to support the delivery of our outcomes, with innovation grants also offering opportunities to pilot new ideas and support the development of new organisations and approaches. The grant framework sets out how all grant funding should be linked to our strategic and supporting outcomes. The grant definitions have been revised to reflect this feedback and it is intended that these are as broad as possible to ensure that grants can be used flexibly to reflect the diversity in the sector.

The commissioning process will determine if outcomes are best met through a contract or a grant arrangement and of course it will take some time for an outcomes approach to be embedded. We will need to ensure that we are truly commissioning for outcomes through our engagement with providers through mechanism such as the annual provider survey.

Where grants are awarded the principles underpinning our grant funding have been made more explicit given the consistent comments about the importance of clarity and transparency, see page 11 of the policy. Furthermore due to the consistent feedback that the current grant arrangements had destabilised the sector, we have revised the grant framework and proposed that multiyear grant agreements are used wherever possible over the MTFP period in order to provide stability and create a more transparent funding environment. However it is recognised that KCC must retain the flexibility to remove multi- year grant arrangements if necessary, given the financial pressures we are under.

The policy has also been updated to include a commitment to developing a grant prospectus given the consistent comments across both the survey and events about the need for more information, particularly in addressing the 'don't knows' who felt more information was needed. We believe this will provide greater clarity and transparency in our grant funding and whilst publicising information about grant availability over the MTFP period will make it accessible to a wider range of organisations and enable them to plan. Building a grant prospectus around our strategic and supporting outcomes will enable us to monitor the impact of our investment against our priorities and areas of greatest need and will further enhance the transparency agenda.

Whilst we take on board the comments about the use of the kent.gov site and portal we believe that for grants which KCC administers it is appropriate that the KCC website is used, although we will review accessibility and ensure that a simple online platform can be used for both advertising and applying for grants. The policy does however, commit to developing a standardised application form, which is proportionately applied and we agree that this should be downloadable

3.7 Engagement

3.7.1 Feedback

There was a general feeling that KCC could do more to facilitate networking and information sharing across the sector and that this was an area which needed improvement. When asked how KCC could support the sector the majority of survey respondents stated networking and information sharing forums as most important. Some respondents felt that they would benefit from an understanding of other organisations that existed within Kent and that this overview was lacking.

Importantly given time constraints, engagement and networking needed to be worthwhile and offer opportunities to meet new contacts. Some participants felt that there may be potential for innovative ways of bringing sector groups together, perhaps on a thematic basis although meeting those with a different perspective was felt to be of particular use also.

It was felt that KCC could have a role in bringing organisations together e.g. small providers with larger organisations to skill share and could encourage connections outside of the sector e.g. with the business community. There was a general feeling at one event in particular that the public, private and VCS sectors could come together more and that the private sector should be encouraged to do more in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility.

3.7.2 Proposed changes to the policy and rationale:

Due to the detailed feedback regarding engagement and that this was an area raised for improvement we have added a new engagement section into the policy.

The policy commits to looking at how KCC can facilitate engagement, information sharing and networking opportunities within the sector and across sectors; in light of the feedback that this was seen as an important role for KCC in supporting the sector in the future. There was a particular interest at the deliberative events for KCC to facilitate engagement across sectors – the VCS and private business sector and the policy therefore commits to looking into this further. In addition 43% of survey respondents felt that training was an important area of support for the wider sector and many of the training needs identified were those where the business sector could offer a great deal of expertise e.g. legal, management, business training and opportunities for skill sharing in this way will be explored further.

The policy has been updated to reflect the feedback that KCC should have a partnership relationship rather than a paternalistic funding relationship with the sector and we believe our engagement should reflect this. Therefore the policy commits to putting in place an engagement mechanism that is at the heart of KCC, recognising it will be ever more important that we can come together as equal partners collaboratively in the future and not merely through funding arrangements.

3.8 Infrastructure support

3.8.1 Feedback

The consultation provided a very useful insight into the support the sector currently accesses, (support was interpreted as both funding and infrastructure) with 53% of survey respondents reporting that they do not access any support. 86% of those accessing support were in receipt of KCC funding. 16% of those not funded by KCC are accessing support. This supports the findings from the deliberative events that there are many VCS organisations which are ‘under the radar’ of KCC and are not connected to the infrastructure support they need, it also reaffirms the feeling of ‘outsiders’. From the evidence gathered during the consultation there is an issue of accessibility of support and ensuring that support in the future can meet the needs of the wider sector – including those who are currently ‘off radar’; support should go further than those organisations which KCC funds to be effective.

Most respondents recognised that the organisations most in need of support were small or newly formed and often unable or unwilling to pay for the support they required. This has meant that organisations providing infrastructure support have relied on local authority grant funding and have increasingly subsidised this with the delivery of services. It was suggested that this has weakened the appeal of accessing infrastructure for some organisations, as for it to be fit for purpose it needed to be impartial. It was therefore felt to be beneficial to separate out the delivery of infrastructure support from other competing activities. There were calls for a “clean hands” organisation to take the lead on this in order to ensure full trust in partnership working and support.

Respondents universally identified the future support needs as wanting support to access funding (both contracts and grants) and “business support”. In relation to supporting organisations to deliver services 61% of survey respondents identified support needs as marketing and promotion and 59% as business planning. Small organisations with the greatest need for support often found this hard to access, as did growing organisations, including those transitioning from operating on an entirely voluntary basis to employing a first paid staff member. A Business Link style organisation to support the VCS was suggested.

There was also a suggestion that KCC could help by offering access to organisational resources, leadership training and HR support. Mentoring was

considered a desirable support mechanism, with advantages in terms of its tailored nature and the sustainability of learning delivered in this way, with some participants explicitly mentioning that they would like more choice in terms of the infrastructure support available to them. The existing STAMP programme, which was commissioned by adult social care, health and public health for 18 months and provides a range of support, information and advice on areas such as public sector commissioning, Social Value Act, consortium working, fundraising and business sustainability was praised by some, but it was suggested that this could be opened up to a wider range of organisations. Some participants perceived that the STAMP events and advice had become expensive and questioned the value of their relevance and appeal.

3.8.2 Proposed changes to the policy and rationale:

The feedback from the consultation has been used to develop the principles upon which KCC's future offer of support will be developed (page 10 of the policy); setting out those areas which were highlighted as priorities by the sector, this must also be viewed in conjunction with the section on engagement.

Many organisations expressed concern that the current infrastructure support organisations were competitors; as they subsidised their funding through providing services on behalf of KCC and that any future arrangements must be impartial if they are to be successful. The policy therefore commits to a support model in the future that must be independent and recognises that KCC's contribution to any future model is significant. However it is equally important that any future model is sustainable, this means it will need to be able to diversify its funding and that it is accessible to a much wider representation of the sector and not simply accessed by those who are well networked with or funded by KCC. It is also recognised that the support model must be flexible and able to support organisations in a range of areas including business support and therefore the design of any future model will need to consider the diverse set of skills and expertise required and how best to achieve this.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 The draft policy will be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Community Services. Once this decision is taken a communication exercise will be undertaken to ensure that all KCC staff, in particular commissioners are aware of the policy and its implications, for example the new grant framework.
- 4.2 Given the strong feedback throughout the consultation process regarding poor information around grant funding opportunities and the perception that grants are awarded to the same organisations, it is proposed that a piece of work is undertaken to look into the development of a grant prospectus. This will need to be developed across KCC commissioning functions and would not only strengthen the transparency agenda within KCC it will support the development of an outcome based approach- setting out our grant funding against our strategic and supporting outcomes.
- 4.3 The development of a future model of support which is fit for purpose is a priority given the consultation feedback that highlights the limitations of the current model and that this was one of the key areas the policy sought to address. The proposal is for a cross directorate group to consider future models of support to the sector and that proposals will be put forward in due course; any changes to current infrastructure support will require an additional period of consultation with the sector given it is inevitable that changes to the current funding will be made. This work will also consider KCC's mechanism for engaging the sector in line with the proposals in

the policy (including facilitating better links with the business sector) and in light of the consultation feedback.

- 4.4 A report will be provided to all who expressed an interest in the consultation events or took part in the consultation. This will set out the consultation feedback and changes to the policy as a result – a ‘You said, we did’ and will be accompanied by the final policy document.

5. Recommendations:

For Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee to:

- 1) Comment on the consultation process and findings
- 2) Comment on the revised policy
- 3) Comment on the proposed next steps

6. Background Documents

Appendix 1- Final draft VCS policy

Appendix 2- Consultation report- FACTS International

Appendix 3 – Draft Proposed Record of Decision

7. Contact details

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Kent County Council

Final Draft: KCC's Voluntary and Community Sector Policy

Appendix 1
Final draft August 2015

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DRAFT

Foreword:

I am delighted to introduce KCC's first Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Policy. This is a key document for the authority reflecting the crucial part the VCS plays in achieving strong and resilient communities and in supporting KCC to achieve its outcomes for the residents of Kent.

This document is the starting point for working together with the sector to move us from a relationship in the past which has been criticised as overly paternalistic, to one of equal partners recognising the professionalism of the sector and the important role it plays within communities across Kent.

We recognise we have a duty of care to the sector, ensuring that it is sustainable, not overly dependent on one source of funding and that we help to uphold the sectors independence. We have therefore developed a new grant framework to be used across KCC which is built around the principles of clarity, accountability, transparency and sustainability and will ensure that our grant funding is accessible to a wide range of organisations.

However, we acknowledge the sectors concerns that a policy can only go so far and must be backed up with action and I look forward to starting work with the sector to deliver key areas of work identified within the policy, for example redefining infrastructure support and developing a grant prospectus.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part in the consultation and those who have supported us in making it a success; in particular Facts International who managed the consultation on behalf of KCC and KentCan for their support in ensuring the consultation reached as many organisations as possible.

The full consultation report is available here *(to be linked)*

Mike Hill
Cabinet Member for Community Services

Executive Summary

Key features of the policy:

KCC's future relationship with the sector (see section 3):

- Commits to a relationship with the sector in the future, which is based around equal partnership and is not overly paternalistic
- Acknowledges the sectors role both as a service provider but also the equally important role it plays within the communities of Kent
- Commits to a broader relationship with the sector rather than one that is purely financial; recognising that the majority of the sector is not funded by KCC

Future support to the sector (see section 4):

- Commits to reviewing our future support to the sector to ensure it meets the needs of the sector as identified and is sustainable
- Establishes a set of principles which will underpin our offer of support to the sector in the future which will be flexible, accessible and sustainable, recognising the diversity of the sector

Engagement (see section 5):

- Commits to looking at how KCC can facilitate engagement, information sharing and networking opportunities within the sector and across sectors, including how skill sharing can be facilitated with the private business sector.
- Places engagement at the heart of KCC to ensure it is not simply driven through our commissioning and financial relationships

Grant Framework (see section 6):

- Establishes a grant funding framework for the Council, which affirms our commitment to grants within a commissioning approach,
- Establishes two specific grant definitions **Innovation** and **Strategic** grants, in recognition that grants play an important role in supporting organisations within the community and in developing new and innovative approaches to delivering outcomes
- Establishes 4 principles, which will underpin our grant funding: *Clarity, Accountability, Transparency and Sustainability.*
- Makes clear that all grants will be linked to our strategic and supporting outcomes as set out in our *Strategic Statement*
- Commits to developing a Grant Prospectus which will set out our grant funding priorities over a 3 year period
- Commits to wherever possible looking to use multiyear grant agreements over the 3 year MTFP (medium term financial plan) period, paid on an annual basis to provide security and enable organisations to better plan their business. Whilst KCC will reserve the right to review this on a case by case basis and remove the multi-year arrangements if necessary
- Commits to all KCC grants being advertised online or in our prospectus and will where appropriate, use a proportionate and standardised application form to improve accessibility and ensure transparency

1. Introduction

Kent County Council (KCC) is an organisation in transition, with an unparalleled degree of change taking place across the local authority and across local government nationally. This policy is intended to offer clarity amongst all this change and set out our future relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Kent.

The future relationship set out in this Policy encompasses the sectors role as both a provider of services and its wider role in supporting individuals and communities in Kent. The balance struck within this policy we hope reflects the equal importance of these roles but also recognises that the majority of organisations within the VCS have no direct relationship with the state; nationally only a quarter of voluntary organisations have a direct relationship¹.

As set out in *Facing the Challenge*, KCC is moving to become a strategic commissioning authority. This means that we want to ensure that we use our resources in a more joined up way, that our services make the greatest difference to Kent residents and that our decisions are informed by evidence and when our services are not working well for residents we take tough decisions. The VCS has a key role to play within this approach and our strategic relationship with the sector will need to reflect this. However we acknowledge that commissioning may feel very different to some of our local providers such as the VCS and we will need to support them to adapt to this change. In this context this policy should be viewed alongside our *Commissioning Framework*.

Through our commissioning process we will establish the best mechanism for delivering and funding services and in some cases grants will be appropriate. This policy therefore sets out our grant funding framework ensuring that our grant funding is accessible to a range of organisations and affirms our commitment to grants within a commissioning approach.

The *KCC VCS policy* is a key document for the authority reflecting the crucial part the sector plays in achieving strong and resilient communities and in supporting KCC to achieve its outcomes for the residents of Kent.

Principles underpinning this policy:

1. Recognition of the contribution of the VCS in Kent, not only those that provide services on our behalf but also the vital role they play in building capacity and resilience within our communities
2. Ensures our grant funding is outcome driven, accessible and transparent supporting innovation and projects that meet the needs of communities
3. VCS organisations in Kent are supported to deliver their mission without being overly dependent on local authority funding

¹ NCVO The UK Civil Society Almanac 2014

4. To build the capacity of the sector to support KCC to achieve the outcomes it wants for the residents of Kent
5. To safeguard sector independence

How will this policy be used?

- To provide a framework to guide the Council's engagement and relationship with the VCS
- To underpin KCC's engagement with the sector
- To provide consistency in our approach to funding the VCS particularly in relation to grants
- To shape and clarify our future offer of support to the sector
- To strengthen and widen KCC's engagement with the sector
- To enhance our commitment to volunteering

2. Background

2.1 National Context

This policy is set within the context of unprecedented financial challenge and a dramatically changing public sector landscape. This has seen a shift in relationship between the VCS and statutory bodies and a changing funding environment. Whilst the valuable role the sector plays continues to be held in high regard, the sector has had to contend with a reduction in its overall income. This is not wholly surprising given the financial pressures being felt across the board.

In real terms the sector's income from government in 2012/13 was £1.9 billion less than the peak seen in 2009/10. The sector's income from grants nationally has fallen considerably in recent years, with 83% of government funding to charities now received through contracts for delivering services rather than grants to support their work². However individuals still remain the sector's main source of income. For smaller organisations this is particularly true as they receive very little statutory funding, relying on individual donations and fundraising.

It is also important not to overlook the wider contribution the sector makes to the UK economy and that this is comparable to other sectors. NCVO estimated that in 2012/13 the voluntary sector contributed £12.1 billion to the UK gross value added (GVA), equivalent to almost 0.7% of the GVA of all industries in the UK³. This value however only includes the value of the paid work and therefore not of volunteers. The ONS estimated from the 2012/13 Community Life survey data that engagement in regular volunteering in the UK is worth £23.9 billion per year⁴.

Whilst the past few years have been challenging the sectors ability to adapt to change must not be underestimated and as public sector funding has been increasingly under strain the sector has been responding to these

² NCVO UK civil society Almanac 2015 <http://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac15/government/>

³ NCVO UK civil society Almanac 2015 <http://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac15/economic-value/>

⁴ NCVO UK civil society Almanac 2015 <http://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac15/economic-value/>

challenges by diversifying and re-evaluating the support it needs to adapt to its new environment. For some organisations this has meant exploring social investment as an alternative funding stream, for others they have rebooted their fundraising strategies and indeed a proportion of the sector have developed their business model and successfully entered the competitive market.

What is clear is that this has been a time of great change and reflection for the sector and it is this backdrop, which has driven the development of KCC's VCS policy.

2.2 Local Context:

There are approximately 4,658 registered charities active in Kent, of which, 3,631 operate at a local level⁵. 43% of these charities have an income under £10K.

In 2013/14 KCC's total spend with Kent based VCS organisations for the provision of services was £123m. Whilst KCC is a significant funder of the VCS in Kent alongside statutory partners, its contribution to the sectors income as a whole should not be overestimated.

The sector brings in significant investment to Kent; research by NCVO and Big Society Web found that the 3142 charities in Kent⁶ with income have an income of £398.7m⁷. We should also not underestimate the sector as a significant employer, as well as the significant social and economic value of the many volunteers who provide the backbone to a range of VCS organisations. In 2012/13 the largest charities in Kent (those with an income greater than £500,000) employed 6489 staff (FTE)⁸. In the same year these charities also had 11,386 volunteers within their organisations⁹.

2.3 Legislative framework

We value the unique contribution of the sector in Kent and are committed to supporting its growth and sustainability. There are a number of pieces of legislation, which underpin KCC's relationship with the VCS and are of particular importance to this policy:

1. The Best Value Duty (revised guidance 2015) sets out reasonable expectations of the way authorities should work with the VCS and small businesses when facing difficult funding decisions but is intended to be flexible. It also states that "authorities should be responsive to the benefits and needs of voluntary and community

⁵ NCVO and Big Society Data based on UK Civil Society Almanac definitions <http://data.ncvo-vol.org.uk/areas/kent>

⁶ This is based on the "general charities" definition. This definition takes all registered charities as a base, but excludes certain categories of charity to produce a tighter definition. The general charities definition excludes independent schools, faith charities, those controlled by government and others.

⁷ This total income figure is based on the latest income of charities in the population, so does not reflect the total income in one financial year <http://data.ncvo-vol.org.uk/areas/kent/income>

⁸ <http://data.ncvo-vol.org.uk/areas/kent/workforce> Figures based on 103 charities who returned data

⁹ <http://data.ncvo-vol.org.uk/areas/kent/workforce>. Charities are not required to record this, and measurement can be inconsistent, results should be treated with caution. Only 65 charities returned data on volunteers.

sector organisations of all sizes (honouring the commitments set out in Local Compacts) and small businesses".

The Best Value guidance and the Kent Compact should be viewed alongside this policy. The adoption of this policy does not impact on our obligations set out within these however we will be undertaking a review of the Kent Compact since it has not been refreshed since 2012.

However, there are two primary pieces of legislation which give the local authority power to fund the VCS:

- 2** The **Health services and Public Health Act 1968** provides a legal framework for the local authority to give grants to the VCS where it is providing services which the Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide.

"A local authority may give assistance by way of grant or by way of loan, or partly in the one way and partly in the other, to a voluntary organisation whose activities consist in, or include, the provision of a service similar to a relevant service, the promotion of the provision of a relevant service or a similar one, the publicising of a relevant service or a similar one or the giving of advice with respect to the manner in which a relevant service or a similar one can best be provided" (Section 65).

- 3. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000** gives the local authority the power to give support to organisation(s) which promote the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of their area, which includes incurring expenditure.

2.4 Social Value

We recognise the inherent social value of the VCS, not simply in terms of commissioning services but also the sectors contribution to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Kent. Social Value is therefore not simply a duty under the Social Value Act in relation to public services but is about recognising the contribution of the wider sector and the role it plays in Kent and this underpins our support to the sector.

However, there is still a need to continue to develop our approach to social value when commissioning services and the VCS should be a key partner in this development. The detail of this sits within the *Commissioning Framework* for KCC and the Commissioning Toolkit developed internally for our commissioners and this should therefore be viewed alongside this document.

In relation to the Social Value Act and in terms of commissioning services we have set out our commitment to social value within our *Commissioning Framework*:

We will consider economic, social and environmental well-being **within all the commissioning that we undertake regardless of the financial threshold, this will apply when procuring goods as well as services.**

The way in which we apply these considerations will differ from case to case, however the commitment to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Kent will be consistent.

We will consider and act to ensure that social value can be enhanced and equality can be advanced **both a) through the delivery of a service itself as well as b) through additional value that a provider might offer in addition to the core requirements of a contract.**

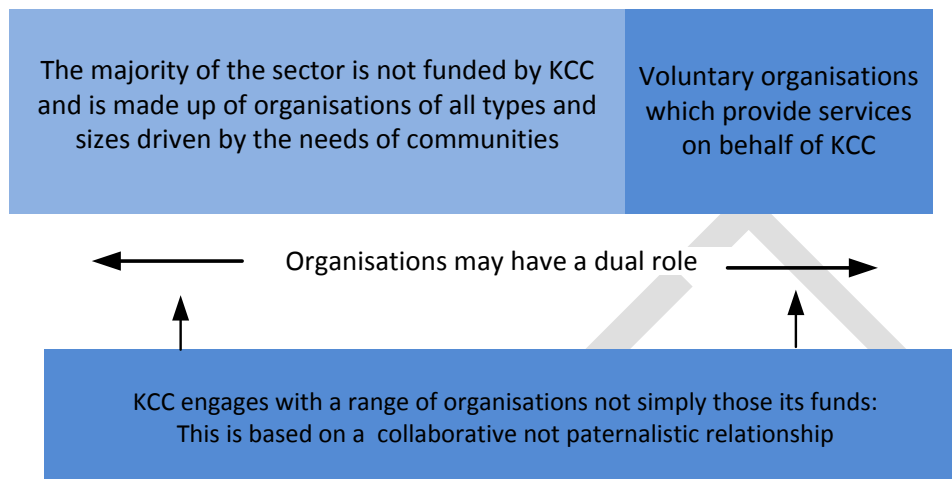
We recognise that this commitment does present a challenge to us all; KCC must become more sophisticated at determining the outcomes we wish to achieve and our priorities in relation to social value but providers must also get better at proving their social value contribution. The VCS and social enterprises are well placed to deliver social value but articulating this presents a challenge, however over time measures will mature as good practice is shared.

We have begun to clarify through our commissioning framework the social value priorities that are most relevant to KCC:

- **Local Employment:** creation of local employment and training opportunities
- **Buy Kent First:** buying locally where possible to reduce unemployment and raise local skills (within the funding available and whilst minimising risk to KCC)
- **Community development:** development of resilient local community and community support organisations, especially, in those areas and communities with the greatest need
- **Good employer:** support for staff development and welfare within providers' own organisation and within their supply chain
- **Green and sustainable:** protecting the environment, minimising waste and energy consumption and using other resources efficiently, within providers' own organisations and within their supply chain.

3. KCC's future relationship with the VCS:

KCC's future relationship with the VCS



We recognise that the role of the VCS in Kent is diverse and extends far beyond those organisations which have a direct relationship with the local authority. The majority of the VCS in Kent has no financial relationship with the local authority, is rooted in the local community, at the heart of civil society, however, we know that these organisations play a vital role in the resilience of communities and building community capacity. By this we mean that the support they offer to communities and individuals plays a vital role in keeping people active, connected, less isolated; generally increasing well-being. This is not driven by the local authority but the sector itself responding to needs, operating outside of the public sector sphere and we want to ensure that the wider sector in this context continues to thrive.

By comparison, a proportion of the VCS in Kent are a key partner in the delivery of services to both vulnerable client groups and the wider population. We recognise the sector's professionalism in the delivery of its services and ability to provide flexible services, which respond to and meet the needs of local people and in this context KCC has a direct financial relationship with a proportion of the VCS, who help us to achieve our strategic outcomes and objectives.

We are undertaking significant transformation activity across service directorates to ensure that services are responsive to need, delivering the desired outcomes, offer value for money and are supporting a diverse market in Kent. In some cases this will mean services, which were previously delivered under grant, will be delivered under contract; the best funding mechanism will be determined through the commissioning process.

Whilst the sector is well placed to deliver services we recognise the challenges facing the VCS within an increasingly competitive market of public service delivery. We want to ensure that the VCS in Kent is sustainable, not overly reliant on one funding source and can access a range of funding

streams, including contracts. We believe that financial sustainability plays an important part in sector independence.

However, whilst the sectors roles may be diverse and KCC's relationship must reflect this, what we believe makes the VCS distinct as a sector, is that it is driven by its core mission- the needs of communities, and our relationship with the sector in the future must be built around this. After all, it is the pursuit of that mission which is most important to the people of Kent, communities and therefore KCC.

It is our intention that this policy will underpin a future relationship with the sector that moves us from a relationship in the past which has been criticised as overly paternalistic and overly focused on funding, to one of equal partners recognising the professionalism of the sector and reflecting the feedback we have heard from many organisations during our consultation.

4. Future support to the sector

We recognise that the sector may need support to achieve both its own aims and priorities and to develop its business model to be successful within an increasingly competitive environment of public service delivery. In this sense KCC is committed to supporting infrastructure support to the sector whilst recognising the need for infrastructure to be redesigned to meet the challenges of the future.

However, supporting the sector is also about KCC behaviour and we have set out a number of ways in which we can support diverse markets in our *Commissioning Framework*. This includes ensuring that our commissioning intentions are clearly communicated giving providers time to prepare for procurement, that our commissioners are working to support local providers to combine skills and expertise and we are seeking opportunities to engage consortia of small and medium sized organisations.

Nationally there has been much debate about the type of support the sector needs in the future and NAVCA (national association for voluntary and community action) announced an Independent Commission to look at the future of local infrastructure in March 2014. The final report was launched on 20 January 2015 and we have reviewed their recommendations and findings as part of our commitment to reviewing our future infrastructure support locally.

We have used feedback from the consultation process to establish the principles which will underpin our future infrastructure support, recognising that support must be flexible to meet the needs of a diverse sector. We believe that the measure of success for our infrastructure support will be that the VCS in Kent is diverse; with a range of organisations responding to the needs of individuals and communities. Although some organisations will be directly funded by commissioners within KCC, many will choose not to be, drawing their funding elsewhere through fundraising and donations, national grants or earned income. However, KCC's role is to help to ensure that a range of organisations whether funded by us or not, can thrive and feedback from our consultation has told us that future support must be more accessible

in order to achieve this. It is in all our interests to ensure that there is a strong civic society in Kent.

Whilst we recognise that KCC's contribution to any future model of support is significant given the limited ability of some parts of the sector i.e. small organisations to pay for their own support, we believe it is equally important that any future model is sustainable. The future model of support must therefore be enabled to diversify its funding wherever possible but must also be considered independent by the sector. As highlighted in the consultation support must be viewed as genuinely supportive of the sector and not in competition with it, or it will ultimately fail. The most effective support model will be one that is flexible and responsive to the needs of the sector, engaging a wide representation of what is a diverse sector.

This policy sets out a number of principles upon which we will base our infrastructure support model in the future. We recognise that these principles are broad and may not be delivered as one model of support; how this support is provided in practice will be co-designed alongside the sector itself in line with this policy.

Principles underpinning our future infrastructure support-

Strengthening and Developing the VCS in Kent

KCC's future support will recognise the diversity in the sector:



Supporting the VCS to respond to communities needs

Supporting the VCS as a key partner in delivering services on behalf of KCC

Future support will need to:

- Facilitate productive partnerships and broker relationships across the VCS and look for opportunities to form new contacts across sectors
- Empower local organisations – not be focused on self-perpetuation but focused on the needs of communities
- Encourage sharing of information, skills and best practice
- Uphold the sectors independence and not create a dependency culture
- Provide access to business support and expertise such as HR, tendering for contracts, bid writing
- Be relevant for different size and types of organisations
- Promote volunteering in Kent and looks for new ways to effectively engage volunteers from across communities

5. Engagement

The engagement undertaken during the development of this policy has been widely welcomed. Many participants at the consultation events commented on the need to build on this and keep an ongoing dialogue; a two way channel of both online and face to face engagement and information sharing. There was also a desire to build better networking opportunities and to build new contacts with the business sector, after all many VCS organisations are social businesses themselves.

Through this policy we commit to looking at how KCC can facilitate this type of engagement, within the sector and across sectors, including how skill sharing can be facilitated with the private business sector. We will look at the best mechanisms for both online and face to face engagement with the sector to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

We recognise that engagement is also an important part of the commissioning cycle - engaging potential providers to understand the innovation within the market and involving providers and residents in the design and review of services. We recognise that the VCS holds a huge amount of intelligence about the way our services operate but also about our communities and residents and we will expect our commissioners to engage the VCS throughout the commissioning cycle both as a service provider but also in its capacity as a voice for communities, for example, through forums and interest groups. Our engagement with the sector will be underpinned by our commitment to the Kent Compact.

However, we are clear that whatever the mechanism, our future engagement with the sector must not only be directed through our commissioning arrangements. It must take on board the consistent feedback about the importance of partnership, information sharing and networking. In this sense we will ensure that there is an engagement mechanism at the heart of KCC; it will be ever more important that we can come together as equal partners in the future and not merely engage through funding arrangements.

6. Grant funding framework

Our grant funding framework provides a bridge between the different parts of the VCS in Kent. Grants play an important role in supporting organisations within the community in pursuit of their aims and for developing new and innovative approaches to delivering outcomes.

Whilst we recognise that we need flexibility in how we fund the VCS in the most appropriate and efficient way the absence of a standardised approach to grant funding within the local authority has created confusion across the sector and a perception that grants were not accessible to all, it has made it difficult for us to effectively monitor the impact of our funding. Feedback from the consultation has supported this view, with over half of respondents stating that the proposed approach to grants would make grants accessible.

Principle of grant funding endorsed by KCC:

Grants should not be confused with contracts. A public sector organisation funds by grant as a matter of policy, not in return for services provided under contract.

Edited from Managing Public Money (HM Treasury 2013):

However, we need to ensure that we use grants appropriately and that grant funding is not used for the delivery of services that should be provided under contract. However as we move to a strategic commissioning authority model which is founded on an outcomes based approach we will use grants to support the delivery of our strategic and supporting outcomes set out in our Strategic Statement. In this respect all of our grant funding should be linked to our outcomes, however whether outcomes are met through a contract or by using our grant framework will be down to the relevant commissioning manager and determined through the commissioning cycle. It will of course take some time to embed an outcome based approach across the authority and this will require a cultural shift.

We have adopted a set of principles from which commissioners across KCC will award grants, to ensure that there is consistency and equity in our grant funding and that we are not funding the same need twice. This grant framework must be viewed within the context of reduced resources however, the feedback from the sector has been that the widespread use of 12 month grant funding has destabilised the sector. We will therefore commit to wherever possible, looking at multiyear grant agreements over the 3 year MTFP (medium term financial plan) period, paid on an annual basis to provide security and enable organisations to better plan their business. However we must reserve the right to review this on a case by case basis and remove the multi-year arrangements if necessary, given the financial pressures the local authority is under.

We received extensive feedback throughout the consultation that information about grants has been lacking, with organisations having no information about what grants will be available over the financial year. This has rendered organisations unable to develop their business plan and for smaller organisations not enabled them sufficient time to develop effective applications. Whilst it is not appropriate to put the detail of grant funding within a policy document we commit to developing a grant prospectus for the authority which will be outcome based and will set out our priorities over the MTFP period in relation to grant funding. Our intention is that our grant funding is used to support the sector to innovate and meet the needs of communities in the most effective way and an outcome based grant prospectus will support this. KCC's strategic and supporting outcomes have been developed alongside staff and residents and reflect those areas of need that are most important to communities in Kent.

KCC's Grant Framework

All KCC grants are awarded against our strategic and supporting outcomes

Strategic

Innovation

Principles underpinning all grant funding

Clarity

Accountability

Transparency

Sustainability

Clarity

KCC's criteria for awarding grants:

Grants awarded should meet one of the following criteria (*this does not include Combined Member Grants*):

- i. **Innovation Grants:**
 - a. payment for innovations/ pilots
 - b. payment to help develop new organisations and approaches which will contribute to the Council's strategic outcomes
- ii. **Strategic Grants:**
 - a. Payments to organisations of strategic importance given under the Local authority's wellbeing power (as provided in Section 2 the Local Government Act 2000) to help the authority to achieves its strategic and supporting outcomes

Both strategic and innovation grants will be awarded over the 3 year MTFP period and where possible and appropriate will be awarded on a multi-year basis with payments made annually. KCC reserves the right to refuse multiyear agreements where necessary.

It is not proposed that either Innovation or Strategic grants should have a financial limit but would not normally be over OJEU limits

State Aid: When awarding grants officers must consider state aid rules and seek advice where necessary.

Accountability

There are common overarching risks to the local authority when awarding grants and therefore there is a need to apply a common policy and ensure there is a process in place for monitoring the impact of our funding. All of our grant funding will need to align to our three strategic and supporting outcomes set out in our *Strategic Statement*. This will enable us to evidence the impact of our funding making sure that every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for Kent's residents, communities and business.

KCC's three strategic outcomes are:

- 1. Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life**
- 2. Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life**
- 3. Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently**

These are underpinned by a number of supporting outcomes as outlined in our strategic statement.

Grants should be monitored proportionately however arrangements for monitoring should be made at the time the grant is awarded, in discussion between the commissioning manager and the applicant. Any changes to monitoring during the life of the grant should allow for a reasonable lead in time.

Innovations funded by grant will usually include arrangements for full evaluation of impact and value, which should be agreed during the application process. KCC may wish to support the evaluation process but this will be decided on a case by case basis. Evaluation will enable us to properly monitor the effectiveness of investment in innovation and facilitate access to external funding for roll-out or extension.

Transparency

Under *The Local Authorities (Data Transparency Code)* KCC is required to publish annually (from February 2015) the details of all its grants, and therefore ensuring we have robust internal processes in place is ever more important in enabling us to track our investment. Our grant register is published on our website and can be found [here](#).

A standardised application form will be used when applying for KCC grants, where appropriate and will offer consistency for organisations applying for KCC funding although this must be applied proportionately by commissioners. This will be available on our website as a downloadable form.

All KCC grants will be advertised online and within our grant prospectus to ensure transparent processes and that grants are accessible to a wide range of organisations. We will ensure that the webpage is easily accessible to organisations.

When applying for grants applicants will be asked to declare any potential conflict of interests to protect both the organisation and KCC from challenge e.g. elected members or senior officers on their governing boards.

All grant funding which is used to fund the provision of specific services should be treated as 'restricted funds' in an organisations account in accordance with guidance from the National Audit Office.

KCC will expect organisations to declare financial information as part of their application and a copy of the organisations reserves policy will be requested where appropriate. This will be in line with Charity Commission guidance.

Sustainability

KCC has a duty of care to the sector to ensure that it is not financially dependent on one source of funding, to an extent that the sector becomes de-stabilised. Grants should not be considered an ongoing funding stream beyond the agreed period and arrangements should therefore be put in place when awarding a grant to manage the closure or alternative funding of the project/service once the grant funding has ceased.

When applying for grants organisations may be asked (at the discretion of the commissioning officer) to outline their risk mitigation in the event that KCC's funding is withdrawn.

Any grant funding which exceeds 25% of an organisations annualised income may trigger a risk assessment on financial sustainability to be carried out by the commissioning officer. This does not mean that funding will be automatically withdrawn in this situation but that risks are managed; it will be down to the commissioning manager to discuss these risks with the grant recipient.

7. Monitoring and reviewing the Policy

An annual assurance report will be completed by Policy and presented to Cabinet to enable them to monitor our grant funding against our strategic and supporting outcomes. An audit of this policy may also be carried out internally to ensure any grants awarded in the previous financial year are compliant and to monitor progress.

It is recognised that grants already awarded may not meet the requirements of this policy and therefore transitional arrangements will be put in place. The new policy will become effective when an existing grant reaches its end date.

As this is the first KCC, VCS policy it is proposed that this policy will be reviewed no later than 2019.

September 2015

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KCC Draft Voluntary & Community Sector Policy - Consultation Report



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Background

- Kent County Council’s Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Policy is intended to set out aspirations for KCC’s future relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).
- Consultation on the draft policy took place between March 26th and June 18th 2015.
- Consultees were invited to submit their views on the policy via an online consultation and/or at one of three face to face events.
- KCC ran the consultation in association with Facts International, an independent research agency, to ensure an open and transparent process and the gathering of unbiased feedback.
- A key objective of the consultation was to explore the views of a range of organisations, including both those who already have a funding relationship with KCC and those who do not receive any KCC funding currently.

Online Consultation

- Publicised via KCC networks, Inside Track newsletter, Kent CAN website and tweets from KCC and Kent CAN
- Mix of closed ended (yes/ no, multiple choice) questions and open questions with opportunity for a free response
- 127 respondents, including:

Answering on behalf of a VCS organisation	101
Answering as an individual	21
Answering on behalf of another body (e.g. town/ parish council)	5

The following slides summarise the key messages emerging across the online consultation and consultation events. Further detail on the points raised at the events is set out in the Deliberative Events Summary Report, included at Annex 2.

Consultation Events

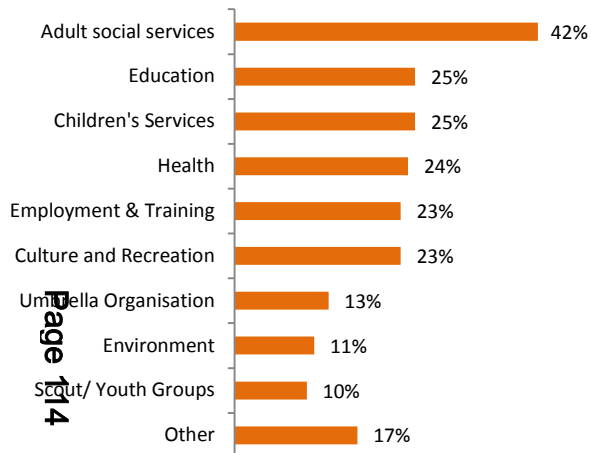
- 3 identical events run in Maidstone, Ashford and Canterbury. 81 participants in total:

Location	Date	No. of participants
Maidstone	Thursday 5 th June	31
Ashford	Wednesday 10 th June	33
Canterbury	Friday 12 th June	17

- A range of organisations and roles (including both volunteers and paid staff) represented.
- Each event lasted 2 hours and included facilitated small group discussions plus whole group plenary sessions.
- Event invitations were sent to those expressing an interest in attending via the online consultation, plus those finding out about the events through emails or phone calls from Facts International (using KCC’s database), from publicity via the Kent CAN website or newsletter, from Inside Track or via Twitter.

A diverse range of organisations participated in the online consultation e.g.:

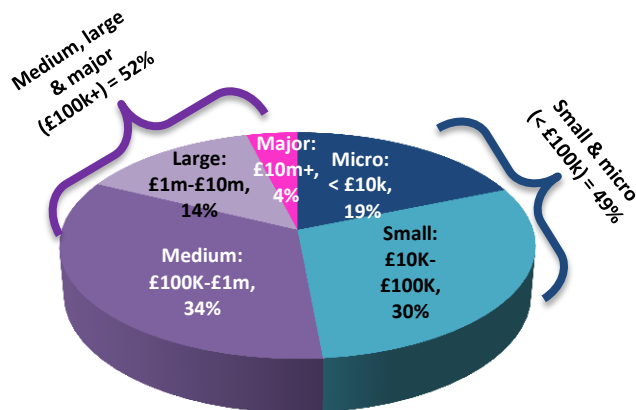
Primary area of activity



Base: 100 respondents completing on behalf of a VCS organisation (Multiple responses possible)
From Q3: Which activity does your organisation primarily undertake?

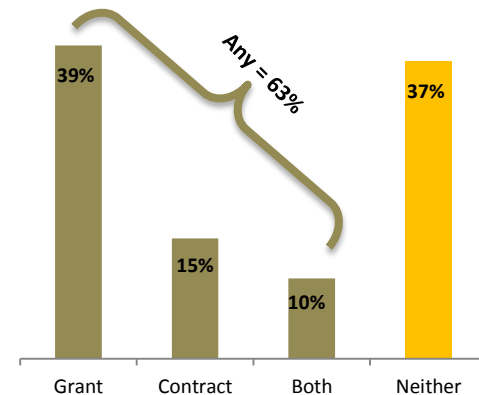
Note: This was a consultation exercise with organisations given the opportunity to 'opt in' to give their views. It was not intended to be a representative survey of the sector. Participants were not required to answer every question.

Size band by annual income level



Base: 101 respondents completing on behalf of a VCS organisation.
From Q4: Which income band does your organisation fall within

Funding relationship with KCC



Base: 101 respondents completing on behalf of a VCS organisation.
From Q5: Is your organisation currently in receipt of KCC funding?

- The range of organisations completing the online survey is sufficient to enable attitudes across different groups within the sector to be compared.
- However, there are organisations that remain "off the radar" for KCC e.g. the NCVO data tool* suggests that larger organisations are over-represented among survey respondents:

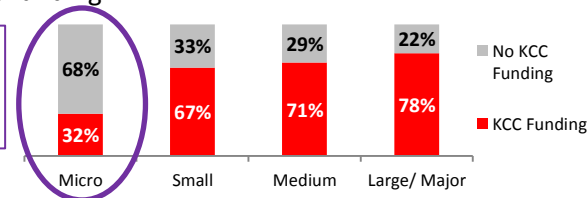
It should be noted that larger organisations cover a greater number of end users and potentially have greater scope to engage with KCC. Small organisations without a relationship currently may not necessarily want one.

	Kent VCS Organisations (NCVO estimate)	Survey respondents
Micro	44%	19%
Small	41%	30%
Medium	13%	34%
Large	2%	14%
Major	-	4%

*Source: NCVO Kent Data Tool. Based on charities where income is known.

- Larger organisations participating in the survey are more likely to be in receipt of KCC funding:

Micro organisations stand out with less than 1/3 receiving KCC funding



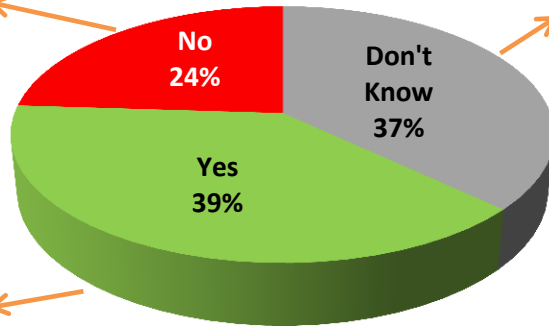
- Contracts are particularly rare among micro/ small organisations:

	% with contracts with KCC
Micro/ small	10%
Medium/ Large/ Major	50%

Bases: Micro = 19 respondents, Small = 30, Medium = 34, Large/ Major = 18

Overview of Attitudes: Will the draft policy help VCS organisations to meet their objectives?

Will the draft policy help your organisation to meet its objectives?



Just under **1/4** feel the draft policy will not help with their objectives

Just under **4 in 10** organisations believe the draft policy will help them

Base: 82 respondents answering From Q12: Will the draft policy help your organisation to meet its objectives?

But just under **4 in 10** are unable to say what the impact might be

This reflects a feeling that it would be helpful for the Policy to include more **detailed information**

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"I hope that by having a fair and open process there will be opportunities for organisations like us to be able to make a case for the positive work we deliver in Kent and apply for funding rather than relying on ad-hoc arrangements."

Small culture & recreation organisation KCC grant funded

"You will give more grants to organisations that you already favour and work with, this will create laziness and complacency and will create a system of one size fits all services, when we all know that this does not work."

Small community organisation not KCC funded

"It's a good mission statement but may need some "polishing" before going live."

Small culture/ education organisation not KCC funded

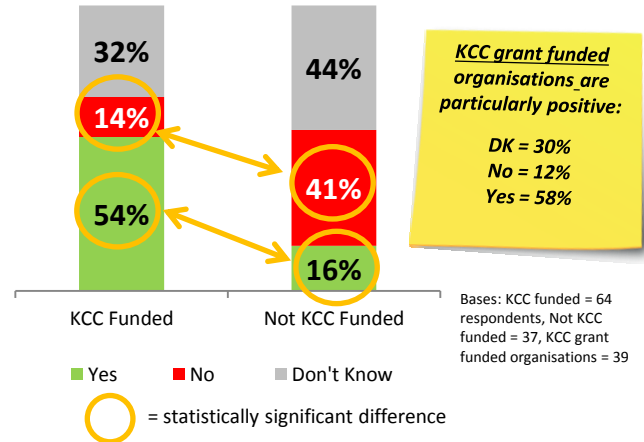
"The proposed policy will mean that we cannot expect a regular annual grant and will have to look elsewhere for funding or pass on the increased costs to our users."

Small health organisation KCC grant funded

Note: Not all grant funded organisations are positive. Some are concerned about the continuation of their funding

Attitudes do not differ by organisation size – but are influenced by current receipt of funding or support - **"Outsiders"** not currently in receipt of funding or support are less positive:

Will the draft policy help your organisation to meet its objectives? – by funding relationship



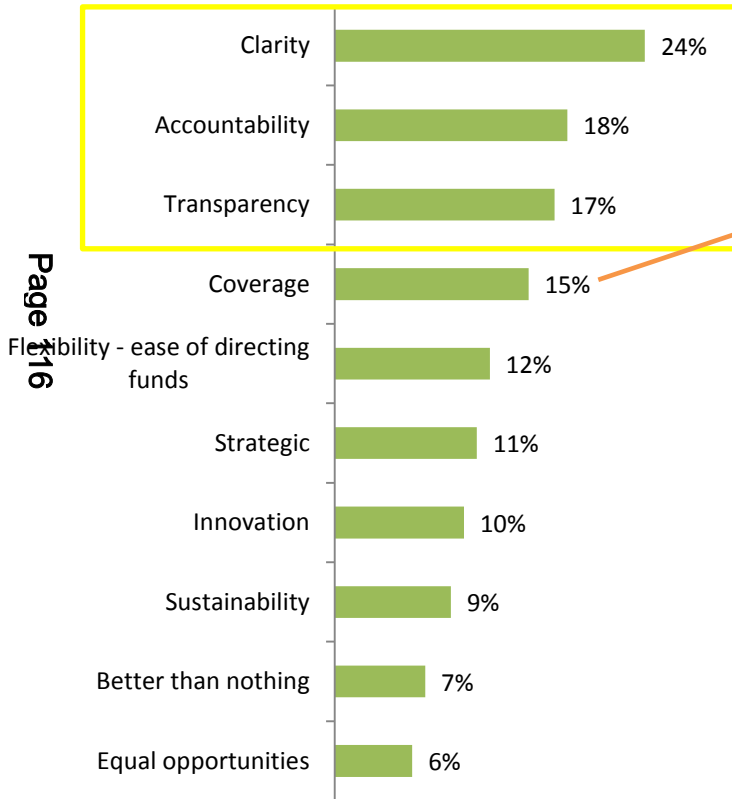
Key Message:

Some organisations, particularly those without a funding relationship with KCC, need to be further convinced that the Policy will help them to meet their objectives.

- Providing additional information is likely to help organisations to resolve areas of uncertainty and to anticipate a positive impact
- Event participants suggested that the policy should include/ be accompanied by a fuller grant framework document and/or grant prospectus.

Positive feedback centred around the themes of **clarity, accountability** and **transparency**. The wide **coverage** of the policy and the commitment to grants was also praised.

Top 10 benefits identified in the online survey



Also Mentioned: New initiatives/ provision, Support, Reflection, Self Reliance, Simplicity, Accessibility, Growth, Recognition

Base: 99 respondents answering.
Coded responses to open question – multiple responses possible.
From Q11: What are the benefits of the policy?

Key benefits identified at Deliberative Events

- Bringing **clarity** and **transparency** to the relationship between KCC and the VCS Sector and to the grants process
- Acknowledgement of the key role played by a diverse range of VCS organisations
- Commitment to the sector and recognition of its importance
- A clear **commitment to grants**
- A catalyst for collaboration

"It will provide a framework upon which to place or develop organisations uniformly and fairly and will guide the voluntary sector as to where we will best fit in and support the statutory authority in its aims."
Small adult social services organisation KCC grant & contract funded

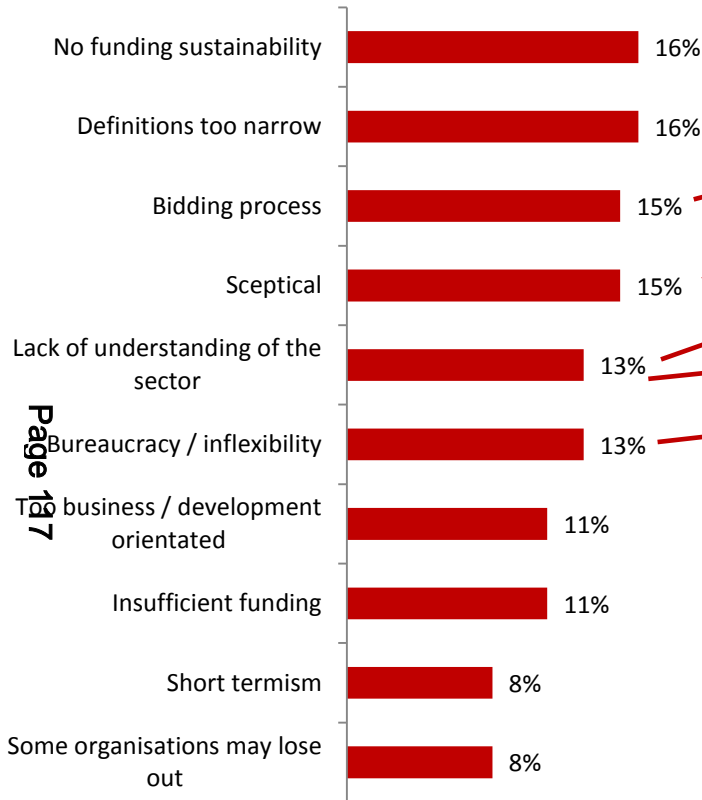
"It seems to be quite straightforward and user friendly for people to understand."
Parish Council

"If implemented correctly there will be considerable benefit to the sector allowing for the development of viable service providers that currently find it difficult to raise seed funding."
Micro employment & training organisation not KCC funded

"It seems to set out your agenda from the beginning and encourages organisations to be less reliant upon your funding. Accessing KCC grants has sometimes been a mystery to me, so the transparency aspect is a benefit."
Medium children's services organisation in KCC contract funded

Identified risks tend to relate to the **appropriateness of proposed funding structures** especially grant timescales. **Scepticism** that the promise of the Policy will translate into reality is also a key theme.

Top 10 risks identified in the online survey



Also Mentioned: Favouritism, Too complicated, Lack of Commitment, Monitoring Issues, Portal/ Website issues, Duplication

Base: 93 respondents answering.
Coded responses to open question – multiple responses possible.
From Q13: What do you consider to be the risks of the policy?

Key risks identified at Deliberative Events

- Timescales given for both Innovation Grants and Strategic Grants may be too short to allow them to have a real and continuing impact
- Funding mechanisms identified in the policy may not be the most effective approach
- Opportunity/ promise set out in the written document may not translate into real benefits
- The diversity of the sector may not be fully considered/ accounted for
- Language and tone of the policy may not be seen to reflect the true value of the sector
- Inappropriate focus on “tick box” outcomes
- Continued confusion surrounding KCC’s position
- Insufficient focus on building relationships with sector organisations

“Policy is one thing....delivery is another.”
Small multi beneficiary organisation not KCC funded

“Accessing such funding then monitoring and evaluating can be very time consuming - this may mean that smaller organisations miss out. .”
Small umbrella organisation KCC grant funded

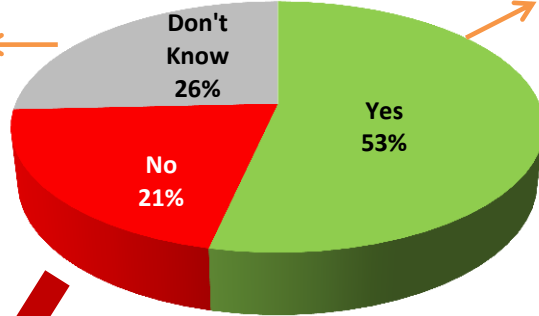
“If the grants are only given for a year is this risking the continuation of innovative projects? I see there is a clause for max 3 year funding but its not clear who will be eligible.”
Medium children’s services organisation KCC funded

“Narrow definition excludes smaller niche organisations from participation.”
Small adult social services organisation in KCC grant funded

Availability and Accessibility of Grants

Will the proposed grant definitions and framework ensure that grants are accessible to a range of organisations?

Around $\frac{1}{4}$ are unable to answer this question, reflecting an appetite for more information on the **detail** of the grants to be made available

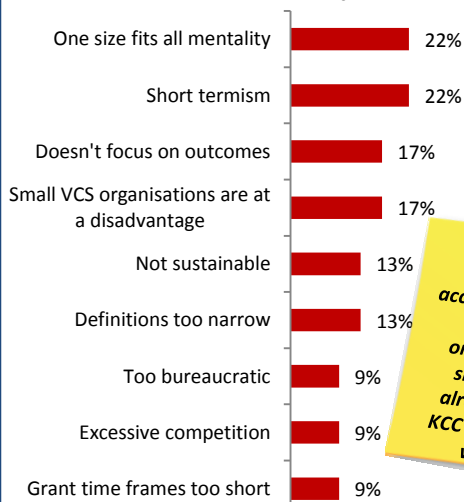


More than $\frac{1}{2}$ of respondents think that grants as proposed will be accessible – but this differs by organisation type with those not receiving funding currently least likely to agree

Base: 121 respondents answering
From Q10: Will the proposed grant definitions and grant framework (on page 9 of the draft VCS Policy) ensure that grants are accessible to a range of organisations?

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Why not? (most common responses)



Base: 23 respondents not believing that the grant framework and definitions will ensure accessibility to a range of organisations.
Coded responses to open question – multiple responses possible
From Q10: If you have answered "no", please tell us why

Note: Concerns around the accessibility of grants to smaller organisations are shared by some already funded by KCC as well as those who are not

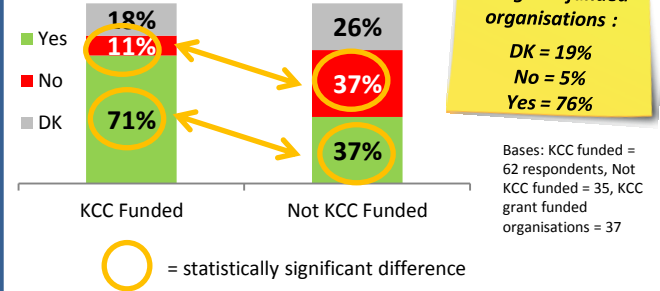
"It does not seem to consider the constraints of Micro/Small VCS organisations. These organisations rely on relatively few volunteers to run their core activities. As such they do not have paid staff who would be able to project manage and monitor grant spending, putting increasing pressures on trustees/governors (also volunteers) to do this."

Small youth organisation not KCC funded

"Many organisations, especially smaller ones, will not be skilled in writing this sort of funding bid. Money will end up going to larger organisations, or those who prioritise spending money on bid writing consultancy over direct services for users. Services which provide great user value because of this will lose out."

Small adult social services organisation KCC grant funded

Will the proposed grant definitions and framework ensure that grants are accessible to a range of organisations? – by funding relationship



Suggestions for ensuring availability and accessibility of grants from Deliberative Events

- Ensure that application processes are proportionate and as simple as possible
- Provide help and support for potential applicants where needed
- Ensure that grants are well publicised
- Effectively communicate what KCC are looking for from applicants

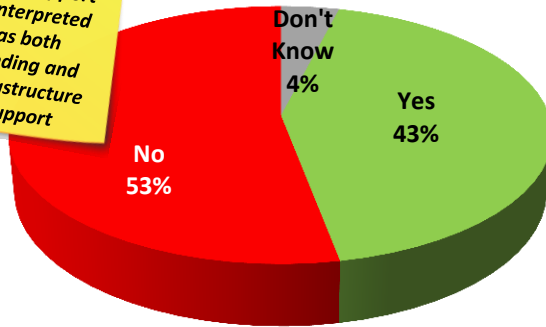
Key Message:

Feedback suggests a need to communicate further detail on the proposed grant landscape and to ensure that smaller organisations face appropriate bidding and evaluation procedures, with the ability to access support if they need it.

Over **1/2** of organisations participating in the online consultation are **not currently accessing any support**. Those not receiving KCC funding are less likely to be accessing support

Does your organisation currently access any support?

Note: Support is interpreted as both funding and infrastructure support



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Base: 81 respondents answering on behalf of an organisation
From Q8: Does your organisation currently access any support?

"We are the only charity to specifically support those bereaved by suicide. The unique thing about the charity is that it is run, led and attended only by those similarly bereaved. We have no funding or support from the public or private sector, and therefore grants, and advice on fundraising would be extremely useful, as would networking and getting ourselves known to all appropriate agencies."

Micro health support organisation, not KCC funded

- Organisations which have a funding relationship with KCC are much more likely to currently access support such as training, STAMP, networking events and mentoring than those which do not have a funding relationship with KCC (see next slide)
- This supports the findings from the deliberative events that there are many VCS organisations which are 'under the radar' of KCC and are not connected to the infrastructure support they need
- These organisations have the potential to deliver services and to receive funding for them, but lack the infrastructure support which could help them to access funding and to operate as effectively as possible

61% of those receiving KCC funding are accessing support compared with **16%** of those not funded by KCC

86% of those accessing support are receiving KCC funding

25% of organisations taking part in the online consultation are neither KCC funded nor accessing support

- Organisations of this kind represent a key "off the radar" group, who could potentially benefit from the VCS policy

"I'd like to see more focus on support for small groups. We signed up to a scheme last year only to find that we were too small for the scheme & much of the assistance to work for us"

Micro organisation, wide remit, not KCC funded

Funding and training support are the key support areas for those currently accessing this – but the existing support offer could potentially benefit more organisations

- Access to and use of support services varies widely across the sector. At the deliberative events it became clear that this access depended on many factors, such as: geographical location, sector, history, personal contacts and knowledge. Many participants identified a lack of leadership in the VCS support arena in Kent making it more difficult for organisations to access the appropriate support they need.
- In the deliberative events, the existing STAMP programme was praised by some, but it was suggested that this could be opened up to a wider range of organisations. Some participants perceived that the STAMP events and advice had become expensive and questioned the value of their relevance and appeal.

Page 7/20

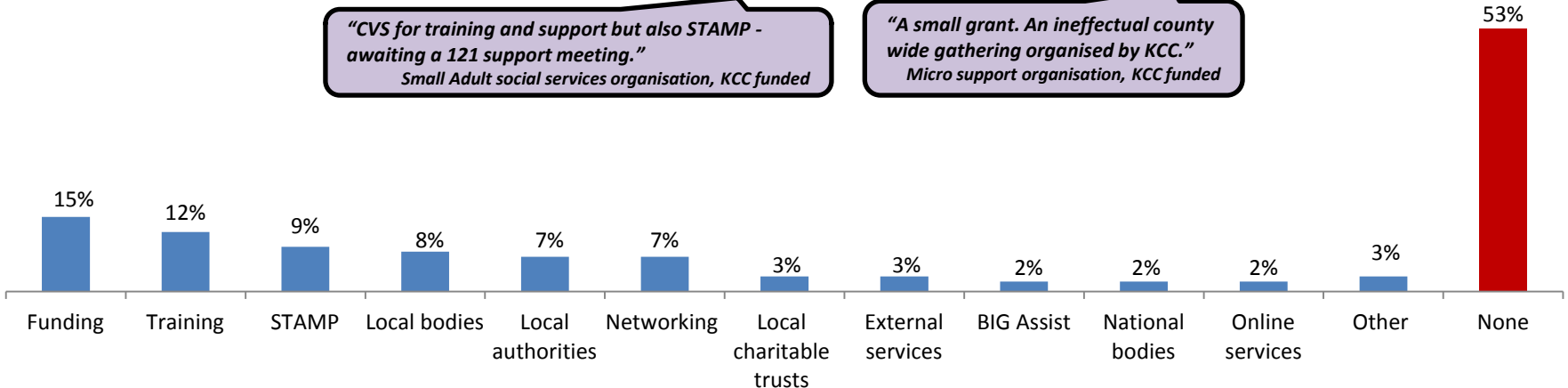
What support do you access?

*"We get a newsletter from the KCC external funding unit via other organisations."
Micro Culture and Health organisation, not KCC funded*

*"STAMP programme and various voluntary sector forums."
Small multi-beneficiary organisation, KCC funded*

*"CVS for training and support but also STAMP - awaiting a 121 support meeting."
Small Adult social services organisation, KCC funded*

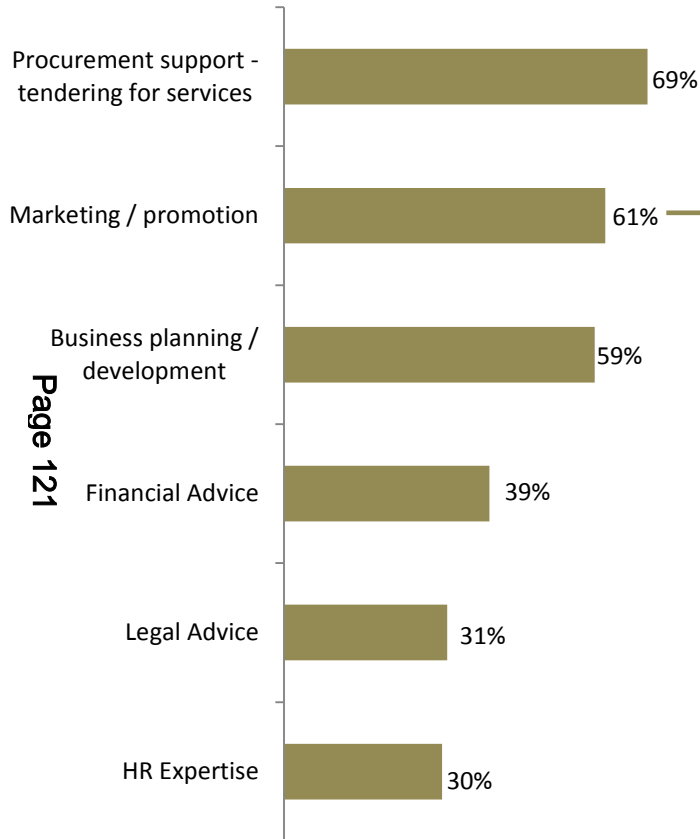
*"A small grant. An ineffectual county wide gathering organised by KCC."
Micro support organisation, KCC funded*



Base: 101 respondents answering on behalf of an organisation
From Q8: Does your organisation access any support and 8a: What support do you access?
Coded responses to open question – multiple responses possible

In the context of service delivery, VCS organisations want **tailored** support that will help them to win funding and promote and develop their services

What do you believe are the future support needs of the sector in relation to the delivery of services?



Base: 123 respondents answering

From Q6: A proportion of the Voluntary and Community sector helps us to achieve our strategic outcomes and objectives through the delivery of public services. We recognise that these organisations may be facing challenges within an increasingly competitive market and we want to ensure that the sector can build its capacity to deliver services. What do you believe are the future support needs of the sector in relation to the delivery of services?

Respondents were prompted with a list of options – multiple responses possible.

These priorities were reflected in the deliberative events:

- Participants **universally wanted support to help secure funding**. This was particularly important for smaller organisations who lack the specialist teams and resources of larger organisations, and for whom the procurement/grant application process is often onerous and challenging.
- A common theme at the events was that **many VCS organisations are social businesses**, and as such they would benefit from support to help them grow and develop. Marketing/promotion and business planning/development support would deliver this. However, to be useful it needs to be **flexible and tailored** to the needs of the organisation – not one size fits all. **Small organisations with the greatest need for support often found this hard to access**, as did growing organisations, including those transitioning from operating on an entirely voluntary basis to employing a first paid staff member.
- Most importantly **infrastructure support needs to be delivered by organisations that are genuinely supportive of the sector** and not competing for funding for delivering services.

“Review the Kent Business Portal and website. Provide us with funded positions so that experts in funding, bid writing, tender writing, HR etc... can be tapped into by small charities.”

Ashford event participant

“Infrastructure for the VCS must be seen as essential support for community based services and for local engagement.”

Ashford event participant

“Include more emphasis on the Care Act 2015 in terms of practical support to independent voluntary organisations who have specialist skills”

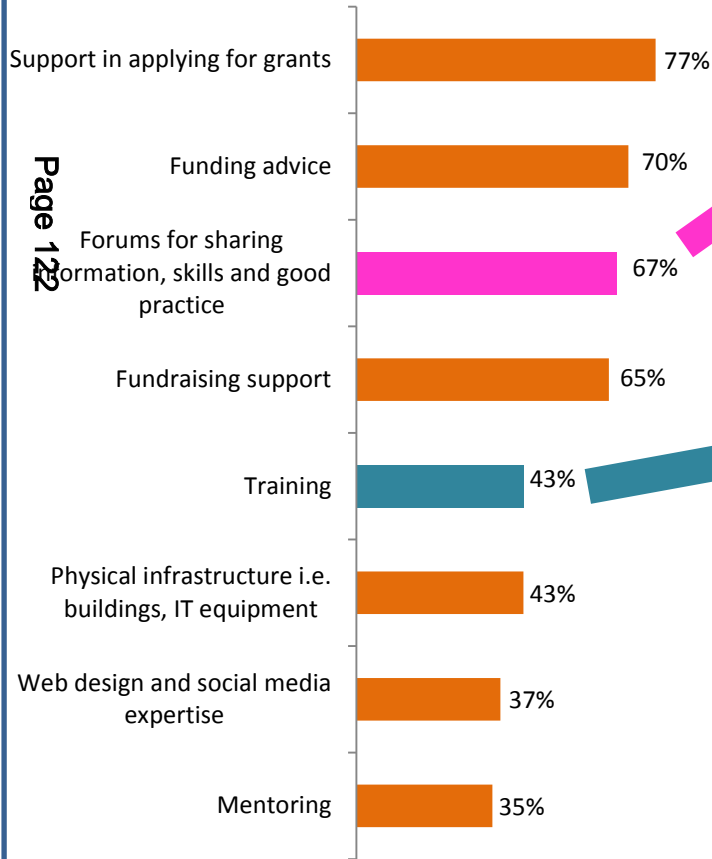
Maidstone event participant

“Support all voluntary sector organisations with becoming business focused”

Maidstone event participant

Again, respondents identified the priority future needs of the sector to be **accessing funding and fundraising support**. This reflects the critical importance of financial support in enabling the sector to function. The next most commonly identified need was **forums for information sharing, skills and good practice**.

What do you believe are the future support needs of the wider VCS in Kent?



Base: 125 respondents answering From Q7: What do you believe are the future support needs of the wider VCS in Kent?
Respondents were prompted with a list of options – multiple responses possible

Participants at the deliberative events felt that information sharing across the sector is currently patchy. Organisations would value more help and support to make beneficial connections with others:

- Networking must have a purpose; combining networking opportunities with filling an information need could be particularly successful, especially events related to accessing funding
- Mapping the sector and matchmaking organisations who can learn from each other
- Encouraging connections outside of the sector – e.g. with the business community
- Encouraging connections/ sharing with those outside of Kent

Future training needs



Base: 38 respondents answering Training – please specify From Q7: What do you believe are the future support needs of the wider VCS in Kent?
Coded responses to open question – multiple responses possible

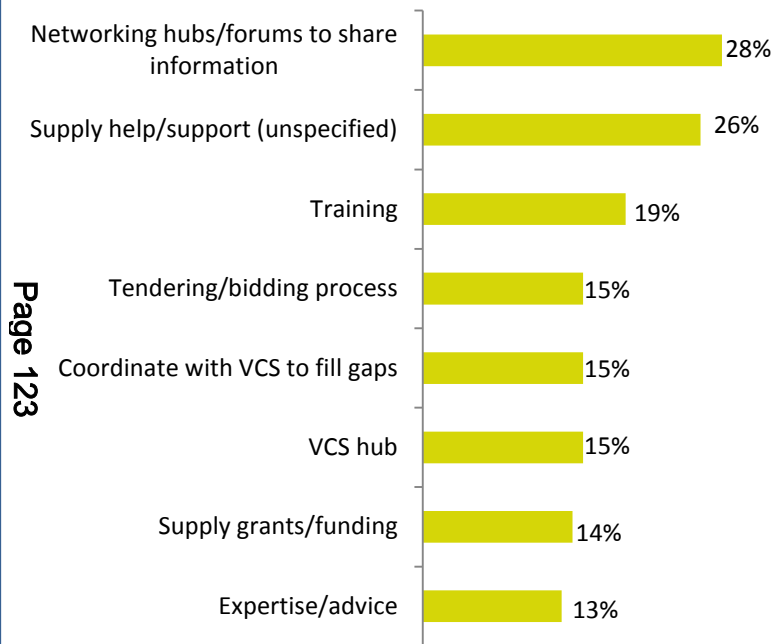
“Helping the VCS to collaborate and form consortia to ensure that richness and diversity of skill, talent and local knowledge is nurtured. Evidence shows that with consolidation of supply chains the small and micro organisations don't get a look in.. There are key champion organisations in Kent that cover networks of like minded group that could help with this. If we ignore this opportunity we do it at our peril in terms of the grass roots talent.”

Small Arts organisation, not KCC funded

There is **clearly an appetite for KCC to take a strategic leadership role in supporting the VCS in future**. Whilst KCC may not be able to deliver this wishlist, the needs identified highlight the current gaps in support provision.

Please briefly describe how you think KCC can meet the future support needs that you have identified

(Most common responses)



Base: 108 respondents answering
From Q9: Please briefly describe how you think KCC can meet the future support needs that you have identified
Coded responses to open question – multiple responses possible

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Summary of suggestions from the online consultation

1. **Expertise provided by KCC: “one stop shop solution” to help the sector identify and support their needs**
 - Specific KCC department to work with the voluntary sector
 - Structured, consistent approach to meet VCS needs
 - Practical support in terms of meeting facilities, secretariat
2. **Provision of forums and networking opportunities**
 - Forum so that the voices of the VCS are heard
 - Forum for skill sharing opportunities, best practice, networking
 - Networking opportunities – getting “on the radar” of all appropriate agencies
3. **Help with accessing grants and funding**
 - Helping with applying for grants, particularly for smaller organisations who lack the knowledge and capacity to do this
 - How to write bids
 - More transparent tendering process to give smaller organisations greater opportunity to tender to provide services
 - Single website where all funds are listed to help organisations save time etc.
 - Annual funding fair free to attendees
4. **Training and capacity building**
 - Workshops to develop key skills
 - Mentoring provided by independent organisations



How can KCC meet the support needs of the VCS: online verbatim

"Practical help to make funding bids. Actually seeking and completing funding bids on the behalf of the small organisations who do not have the capacity or expertise to do this and deliver their services."

Small Adult social services organisation, KCC funded

"KCC only supplies support to infrastructure organisations to provide general support. To be effective, organisations need specialist support and, in order to provide long-term sustainability, these organisations need to be mentored through the various processes to cover all their requirements in order that these groups will have the skills, knowledge and confidence to be able to meet future needs."

Small employment & training organisation, not KCC funded

"Whilst there are a great many small charities that could benefit from things such as training, web design etc., we mustn't forget that there are also charities that have all the necessary framework to move forward but are limited by physical size and capacity."

Small culture and education organisation, not KCC funded

"Identification of existing networks and training providers who are set up to support VCS organisations. Support and promotion of wider VCS activities through existing channels including social media. Advice and guidance available through online channels."

Small youth organisation, not KCC funded

"By having a department established to work with the voluntary sector, by regulating and supporting poor performance and encouraging good results, by reporting on successful outcomes and connecting all organisations to facilitate sharing of skills, by funding organisations such as EKVAS to run funded training programmes for trustees and volunteers, etc."

Small Adult social services organisation, KCC funded

"We'd like to meet with commissioning officers to get a real understanding of the needs of specific sectors and have a chance to share some of our concerns. We are now competing for funding alongside major charities with large marketing teams and would like ring-fenced opportunities to show what grass roots provision can really do"

Small education, employment & training organisation, KCC funded

"The policy should include an aspiration to raise awareness amongst its own staff of the role of the VCS, require that thought is given to how their functions can usefully engage with the sector, and widen potential for volunteering and volunteering opportunities. It would be helpful for KCC to act as a strategic lead and work with all other layers of local government to provide a shared approach to the sector and an easier way to navigate between, and communicate with, them."

Small other services organisation, not KCC funded

There were mixed views at the events regarding the extent of KCC's role in meeting VCS support needs. However, **all participants wanted KCC to increase its engagement with the sector** and demonstrate its long-term commitment to understanding the sector better

- Some participants thought that **KCC should play an active role in facilitating information, skill sharing and engagement** across the VCS and that this would demonstrate commitment to the sector.
- However, **others believed that this was not the place of the local authority** and it should leave the sector to take this forward alone without interference.
- There was also a suggestion that KCC could help by offering access to organisational resources, leadership training and HR support.
- The general feeling was **that KCC's involvement in some capacity may be useful**, either through funding forums or events or through "in kind" support such as the provision of venues.
- Participants were asked to write a message to KCC at the end of each event. The full list is included in the Annex. The following verbatim comments encapsulate participants' key views on KCC involvement and support.

Page 125

"Please get officers and Cabinet members out to meet with the sector."

Maidstone participant

"That KCC listen more to the people on the ground who understand the needs of the community better."

Maidstone participant

"Learn from successes and failures outside of Kent and celebrate/support great work done by the VCS here... especially where you have been part of the mechanics that has helped create these positives!"

Canterbury participant

"Keep talking to the sector, there are some people with fantastic ideas already operating that you could learn from."

Maidstone participant

"Support all voluntary sector organisations with becoming business focused. Encourage those organisations to take responsibility and not expect KCC to give, give, give."

Maidstone participant

"Does KCC fully understand the scope of the sector from volunteer-led organisations, professional niche organisations, and social businesses? Do KCC know which parts, or parts of the hierarchy it wants to commission and how they work together?"

Ashford participant

"Consider grants to be an investment not a 'hand out'. An investment in creating a better community. An investment in preventing people needing statutory services."

Ashford participant

1. The language used for the policy needs to better reflect the partnership between KCC and the VCS

- A less paternalistic and more respectful tone which overtly recognises the professional, expert, committed nature of the VCS and the value investing in it brings to KCC, not just in financial terms but in terms of Social Value.
- Overtly recognising the importance of Social Value itself and how the policy will help KCC to deliver on its Social Value objectives.
- Demonstrating that KCC understands the diverse scope of the sector from volunteer-led organisations to professional niche organisations and social businesses, meaning that one size does not fit all; KCC's approach to interacting with the sector and awarding grants needs to reflect this complexity.
- Explaining how this policy fits with other existing policy documents such as the Compact.

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2. The policy should recognise that contracting, tendering and bidding processes create a competitive environment and outline how KCC can help to mitigate any negative impact this may have on partnerships and consortiums amongst the VCS.

3. The policy needs to set out more clearly how KCC sees grants (investments) fitting within its wider relationship with the sector

- How grants fit with contracts and the strategic commissioning process.
- Whether grants are complementary to contracts; how they fill the gaps and what the relationship is between them.
- How these are segmented; by size, value, purpose?
- Demonstrating that KCC understands which parts of the sector it wants to commission and how they can work together.

4. The Grants framework section of the policy should be revised so that the grants (investments) available fit more closely with the needs of the sector

- Grants that offer longer-term funding (with in built review points), thereby helping the VCS to be more sustainable in light of the challenges involved in maintaining momentum and expertise on projects.
- A commitment to a Grants framework document which is clear to understand, sets realistic deadlines, and enables access through a dedicated and informative, easy to access and user friendly portal (involve the VCS in the creation of this to ensure it is fit for purpose).
- A consistent, professional approach to awarding grants using a panel of experts who have a deep understanding of the most pressing needs to be addressed in local communities (Opportunity for Kent Community Foundation to possibly be involved in part of the grants awards process).
- A simple, proportionate grant application and monitoring process which explains what and how outcomes are measured.
- A commitment to publishing grants that have been awarded.

5. Infrastructure support needs to be flexible and relevant to a wide variety of organisations' needs

- Relevant for different sizes and types of organisations; particularly small charities and community groups.
- Developing business skills, providing practical support, providing support from experts in bid writing, tender writing and HR processes.
- Infrastructure organisations need to be genuinely supportive of the sector and not competing for funding for delivering projects.

6. The policy will be a success if:

- Strategic commissioners are experts who fully engage with the sector and are able to judge accurately what is needed and why in terms of funding.
- It is dynamic and has a life beyond the page – it adapts to changing circumstances in the sector and funding environment.
- KCC listens more to the people on the ground who understand the needs of the sector and who can share learnings.
- KCC senior management and Cabinet members participate in ongoing engagement with the sector.
- Strategic commissioners are less risk averse about using the VCS to deliver public services.
- KCC actively develops relationships with the whole of the sector.

Engaging the Sector

1. There is huge appetite from the sector for more engagement between KCC and the VCS. The sector expects an ongoing dialogue with KCC.
2. KCC should seize this opportunity to forge stronger links with the sector which will help the authority further develop its knowledge of the contribution the sector can make
 - Mapping the sector is hugely important.
 - KCC could revisit the work which was completed under the Comprehensive Area Assessment in 2009.
3. There is opportunity for genuine partnership working, especially between the sector and KCC strategic commissioners who make the decisions about what is needed and how to meet that need through grant (and contract) funding.
4. KCC could build upon the conversation which has begun through the consultation by:
 - Conducting regular information sharing events at which KCC strategic commissioners are present.
 - Producing an annual Grants Prospectus and holding events to present/publicise the contents and answer questions from prospective bidders.
 - Providing an online portal for two-way information sharing between the VCS and KCC.
 - Sharing information from grant beneficiaries who can share best practice with other VCS organisations.
 - And throughout, continuing to build its database of the VCS to ensure that KCC reaches as many relevant VCS organisations as possible with its engagement and communication activity.
5. Some practical suggestions from VCS participants for improving future events are:
 - Starting after 9.30am,
 - Allowing sufficient structured time for networking,
 - Allowing sufficient structured time for answering questions,
 - Circulating an attendee list to all participants to help improve sector networking and connections,
 - Ensuring that any KCC officers or Councillors who attend at the beginning of an event stay for the whole event, otherwise their absence (and implied disinterest) is noticed by the sector.

Additional key messages for KCC outside of the policy scope

1. KCC needs to pay organisations on time.
2. KCC should celebrate the many great successes of the VCS in Kent.
3. KCC should learn from successes and failures in other parts of UK in terms of local authority involvement with the VCS.
4. KCC should recognise and foster greater links between not just the public sector and the VCS but the private sector too.
5. Public health grants should be available especially for issues that affect certain communities.
6. KCC should consider appointing an independent third party organisation to administer grants

Annexes:

Additional Information

Profile of respondents answering as an individual

21 respondents participated in the online consultation as an individual. Their characteristics, where stated, are set out below:

	No. of respondents
Affiliated to a VCS organisation or volunteer for one	15
Not affiliated or volunteering	6

Total answering: 21 respondents

Age	No. of respondents
25-34	1
35-49	6
50-59	6
60-64	1
65-74	1

Total answering: 15 respondents

Disability	No. of respondents
Yes – Physical Impairment	2
Yes – Long standing illness/ health condition	1
Yes – Prefer not to say	1
No	9
Prefer not to say	3

Total answering: 15 respondents. Multiple responses possible

District	No. of respondents
Shepway	3
Ashford	2
Canterbury	1
Dover	1
Maidstone	1
Tonbridge & Malling	1
Tunbridge Wells	1
Out of County	1

Total answering: 11 respondents

Ethnic Group	No. of respondents
White English	11
White other	1
Asian or Asian British Indian	1
Other ethnic group	1
Prefer not to say	1

Total answering: 15 respondents

Religion	No. of respondents
Christian	8
Hindu	1
Other	1
None	4
Prefer not to say	1

Total answering: 15 respondents

Gender	No. of respondents
Male	7
Female	7

Total answering: 14 respondents

Orientation	No. of respondents
Heterosexual/ Straight	10
Gay man	1
Other	1
Prefer not to say	2

Total answering: 14 respondents

Annex 2:

KCC Voluntary & Community Sector Draft Policy

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Deliberative Events Summary Report

19th June 2015

Background

- Kent County Council's Policy and Strategic Relationships team launched a public consultation on the draft Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Policy on 26 March 2015 for 12 weeks.
 - The policy sets out aspirations for KCC's future relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).
 - The consultation was primarily aimed at VCS organisations. Consultees were invited to submit their views on the policy via an online survey and at three 2 hour events in Ashford, Maidstone and Canterbury.
 - KCC commissioned Facts International, an independent research agency, to arrange and facilitate the events and to analyse and report on the results of the consultation. This is intended to ensure that the consultation process is open and transparent and that the feedback gathered on the draft policy is unbiased.
- Facts International was responsible for planning the three events and recruiting participants, including a spread of organisations that KCC has a funding relationship with and those that it does not.
- Around 230 organisations were emailed with an invitation to take part in the consultation. This included all those expressing an interest in event attendance as part of the online survey, plus others wishing to attend after finding out about the events through emails or phone calls from Facts International (using KCC's database) or from publicity via the Kent CAN website or newsletter, from Inside Track or via Twitter.
 - 81 representatives from a broad range of organisations attended the three events. Some were employed by a charity while others were volunteers, reflecting the diversity of the sector:
 - Maidstone, Thursday 5th June – 31 participants
 - Ashford, Wednesday 10th June – 33 participants
 - Canterbury, Friday 12th June – 17 participants
 - The events were well received. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to find out more about KCC plans directly from KCC, as well as sharing views with colleagues in the sector, and appreciated that KCC was actively listening to their views and intended to act upon them.

Introduction

- This report summarises the feedback shared across all three events.
- Participants views were explored and captured via facilitated small group discussions plus whole group plenary sessions. They were also invited to write a postcard to KCC expressing their key messages and thoughts in their own words.
- Each event followed an identical structure. The main topics covered included feedback on the draft policy itself, plus suggestions around supporting activity that would benefit the sector:
 - Benefits of the draft policy
 - Risks of the draft policy
 - Maximising availability and accessibility of grants as defined in the policy
 - Infrastructure support
 - Facilitating information, skill sharing and engagement

The report sets out the key points made in relation to each of these areas, followed by conclusions and recommendations for KCC around revising the policy and engaging with the sector in light of the feedback gathered.

Key messages to KCC from the Voluntary & Community Sector: Ensuring its voice is heard

At the end of each event, participants were encouraged to write down a key message to KCC. Here is a selection of these messages. The full list is included in the Appendix.

Page 134
Great opportunity to share views and give input
"Please listen"

Ashford

KCC must recognize the social value of the Voluntary/Community/Sector

£1 supporting the VCS results in £8 benefit to volunteers/service users/the local authority/health service

The Policy and the Authority needs to recognise this

We are not a cheap alternative - we are fabulous value for money! Professional, expert, committed and dedicated people in the VCS sector - support them properly.

Key Messages

Please ensure this is a dynamic strategy.

Build in review process that responds to changing circumstances & needs

Have you consulted with other stakeholders? - Borough/District Councils, CCS's, Police (etc).

Key messages to KCC from the Voluntary & Community Sector: Ensuring its voice is heard

Diversity is everything - one size

DOESN'T fit all. Keep it simple and as local as possible.

Make sure the people who decide who gets funding have all the information - panels make better, more accountable decisions than one person in isolation.

Very informative meeting.

Funding must be people led. Relevant to all needs to large + small Charities

Funding needs to be published

Grants for more than 1 year.

KCC - to look at other countries

KEY MESSAGE

ENSURE THAT INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT MEETS ALL THE NEEDS OF THE WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY SECTOR PROJECTS BY PROVIDING SPECIALIST SUPPORT.

Key benefits of the draft policy

1. The development of a policy suggests a commitment to the sector and recognition of its importance

- The concept of formalising KCC’s approach in a single policy document was welcomed.
- The policy’s existence gives the sector formal recognition and potentially greater prominence within KCC.
- The policy was seen by many as a positive step because it provides an opportunity for the VCS to better understand KCC’s position.

2. The policy acknowledges the key role played by a diverse range of VCS organisations

- It outlines the valuable work done by the VCS in Kent (although many felt that it could go further in emphasising the sector’s contribution more strongly).
- Some participants were pleased with the recognition of the diverse nature of the VCS e.g. it includes organisations of a variety of sizes and structures, it extends beyond the health and social care arena and includes organisations who are “doing their own thing” without necessarily being aligned with KCC’s agenda (however many wanted this diversity to be more strongly stated in the policy).

3. The policy will bring clarity and transparency to the relationship and the grants process

- Participants mentioned advantages around a standardised approach, consistency, openness, fairness and accountability.
- This was felt to have been lacking to date and there was optimism that the policy could lead to a more “level playing field” giving more opportunities to a greater number and range of organisations – including smaller organisations that have not as yet been able to access KCC funding (not just “the big boys” or “the usual suspects”).
- Participants hoped that the policy would change the current limitations of a system where access to KCC grants could be “more about who you know, rather than what you do”.

4. The policy includes a clear commitment to grants

- Many participants believed that KCC was intending to move away from the provision of grants entirely. They were relieved to see a continuing commitment to grants made explicit within the policy.

Some believed that the policy may act as a **catalyst for collaboration** within the sector – but this view was less widespread than those outlined above

Identified risks of the draft policy (1)

1. Risk that the opportunity/ promise set out in the written document may not translate into real benefits

- Participants emphasised that a written policy can only go so far – this must be backed up with action if the relationship is to realise its full potential, rather than being a corporate document that merely “pays lip service” to the sector.
- It was felt that involving the sector in the development and implementation of the policy was key to ensuring its success – the consultation process was praised as an important starting point in this.
- The hope that the policy would result in broader interactions with the sector and a more level playing field was felt to involve quite a radical change to the status quo. Some participants feared that KCC might not be brave enough to see these changes through to fruition.
- If the policy is to have an impact, it needs to secure buy in from all relevant parties; the whole of KCC (including strategic commissioners), the sector, and other stakeholders such as District Councils.

2. Risk that the diversity of the sector is not fully considered/ accounted for

- While the diversity of the sector is mentioned in the policy, there was a concern that the scale of differences between different types of organisation may not be fully appreciated (e.g. a small volunteer-led organisation will face very different challenges and constraints compared with a national charity with a large paid workforce). Some participants felt there was a risk that diversity may be overlooked in an attempt to develop a “one size fits all” approach.
- Small organisations are likely to need help if they are to benefit from the opportunities potentially open to them in light of the policy. There will be a need for proportionate grant processes to truly achieve an “opening up” of grants to smaller organisations without a history of working with KCC (see subsequent section on Grants).

Identified risks of the draft policy (2)

3. Risk of inappropriate focus on “tick box” outcomes

- There was concern that the funding system described by the policy would place undue focus on outcomes as evidenced by counting/ measuring/ numerical analysis, rather than benefits which are more difficult to measure and the Social Value of any given activity. Preventative impact was considered particularly likely to be overlooked and there was a call to ensure that appropriate emphasis was placed on soft outcomes.
- It was suggested that the sector and KCC need to work together to develop an effective and objective model for measurement of Social Value. More personal interaction between strategic commissioners/ evaluators and VCS organisations was also seen as key to improving holistic outcome measurement.
- There was also a view that the system outlined in the policy may encourage organisations to target their activities towards KCC funding priorities, rather than towards areas of genuine need within the community.

4. Risk that the funding mechanisms identified in the policy may not be the most effective approach

- There was support for adding to the policy an explanation about the relationship between contracts and grants from KCC’s perspective. Some participants feared a move towards commissioning of services, rather than grant funding, could have an adverse impact on organisations reliant on grants and unable to generate income in any other way.
- Some participants expressed concern that the Strategic and Innovation grants described in the policy merely replicated current grant funding available from other providers both in terms of their parameters and their timeframe. They wanted KCC to be more bold in devising grants that would fill a gap in funding availability, such as grants for capacity building and staff development. They recommended that KCC should ensure that its grants would genuinely respond to a need in the sector rather than duplicate existing funding.
- The concept of Innovation Grants was generally welcomed, particularly for smaller organisations, although it was felt to be equally important to ensure that tried and tested schemes which work well are able to access from KCC the funding they need to continue.

Identified risks of the draft policy (3)

5. The timescales given for both Innovation Grants and Strategic Grants were considered too short to allow them to have a real and continuing impact

- There was concern that the 1 year and 3 year timeframes could lead to an abrupt end to successful programmes before they had the chance to become sustainable, leaving beneficiaries without the support they had come to rely on.
- Participants drew particular attention to the limitations of a 1 year Innovation Grant. Taking into account time for project set up, this was considered a very short period for any actual activity which would have a genuine impact. Furthermore, it was felt that true innovation could sometimes be a more long term endeavour – more akin to R&D in the private sector, which can take several years to pay off.
- There was very limited recognition of the draft policy statement that grants would “not normally” exceed 1 year for Innovation Grants or 3 years for Strategic Grants and this was considered too vague to provide any real reassurance.
- With respect to health and social care in particular, concern was expressed around the potential impact on smaller local organisations if the commissioning approach outlined were to lead to consolidation within the sector – e.g. with contracts and support being focused on a small number of large players without understanding of the local context. It was felt that requirements for a consortia approach may help to secure continued involvement of small local suppliers, but that these would need to be managed carefully to ensure that smaller organisations are not disadvantaged.

6. Risk that the language and tone of the policy did not reflect the true value of the sector

- Some participants felt the policy contained too much jargon and “local government speak”. There was also concern that the tone of the policy could be seen as patronising and paternalistic.
- Many participants called for the policy to more overtly recognise the professionalism and value of the sector.
- Some participants highlighted that “sustainability” of the sector was essential and that reliance on funding should not be depicted as a “dependency” issue, rather that KCC should make a commitment to ensure that success within the sector is sustainable.
- Some participants were concerned that the policy did not recognise the fact that many VCS organisations are social businesses.
- Some participants suggested that greater VCS involvement in re-drafting the policy would ensure that it communicated more clearly to the sector.

Identified risks of the draft policy (3)

7. Risk of continued confusion surrounding KCC's position

- Although the policy was praised for bringing greater clarity and transparency about KCC's approach, participants identified some outstanding areas of uncertainty that the policy left unresolved:
 - The definition of "Strategic" and "Innovation" grants and the distinction between grants, contracts and service level agreements – not just the technical differences but also the rationale for the use of the different mechanisms in different circumstances
 - How the policy differs from and fits with the Compact
 - What the grants will look like, including the likely value of the "grant pot"
- Many participants felt that there was not enough information on the detail of the anticipated grant offer and processes. They wanted the policy to include or be accompanied by a fuller grant framework document and/or grant prospectus.
- In the absence of information on this, there was some concern that while some grants will continue to be offered, grant funding may be "tokenistic" in nature.
- There was also some element of uncertainty around whether the landscape envisioned by the policy would exacerbate drivers of competition between players within the sector (considered to be unhealthy), rather than fostering collaboration.
- The policy does not contain a definition of what the VCS is.

8. Risk that the policy does not place enough focus on building relationships with sector organisations

- Many participants felt that the policy needed to be more explicit about the value of building a stronger relationship between KCC and the sector, as well as the mechanisms for doing so.

How can KCC ensure that grants as defined in the policy are available and accessible to a wide range of organisations? (1)

1. Ensure that grants are well publicised

- It was felt that, to date, knowledge of the grant funding available from KCC was patchy, and that disseminating this knowledge more widely was vital to achieving the aim of greater transparency in the funding system.
- Organisations would like to have a full picture of the funding opportunities open to them and to be made aware of these opportunities in sufficient time to allow them to make an effective application.
- It was suggested that an annual grant prospectus, setting out the detail of the grants to be offered across the year, would be particularly useful in allowing organisations to target their applications towards those opportunities where they are likely to have most chance of success and to plan for application deadlines well in advance. A prospectus of this kind has been successfully developed in East Sussex.
- The importance of partnership working in sharing information about grant opportunities was highlighted. Making use of organisations such as Kent CAN or the Community Foundation was considered a key way for KCC to avoid replication of effort and to reach a wider range of organisations.
- The possibility of collaboration with other funders was also mentioned. Helping Kent VCS organisations to find out about and access other funding sources was considered to be an important role that KCC could play, alongside direct funding provision.

2. Effectively communicate what KCC are looking for from applicants

- A lack of detailed information on exactly what KCC would be looking for in terms of grant applications was identified as a weakness of the policy. Having a clear understanding was considered vital to allow organisations to make an informed decision about whether they should bid and to ensure they are able to put forward an effective business case as part of their application.
- Publication of information/case studies about previous successful bids would be a useful tool to help with this.

How can KCC ensure that grants as defined in the policy are available and accessible to a wide range of organisations? (2)

3. Ensure that application processes are proportionate and as simple as possible

- Complex application procedures were identified as a key barrier potentially discouraging smaller, less experienced organisations from applying for grants.
- Participants called for the process to be made as easy as possible, with clear language and transparent instructions around the requirements to be met and evidence to be submitted.
- Proportionality of application processes in relation to the scale of funds available was considered vital. Overly arduous procedures for small pots of money were considered unnecessary and off-putting. This was also felt to be true of evaluation/ reporting at the end of any funded project.
- The KCC website and Portal were not considered fit for purpose in terms of making it easy to apply for grants, with a suggestion that something more tailored, for example a separate site or specific sign-posted area, would be more helpful. The website was felt to be difficult to navigate while the Portal was identified as too complicated and not user-friendly. It was suggested that a downloadable application form may be more appropriate than the need to submit applications via the Portal.
- It was suggested that appointing an independent third party organisation such as Kent Community Foundation to administer grants could be beneficial.

4. Provide help and support for potential applicants where needed

- Many participants, particularly those from smaller organisations, highlighted the need for guidance and support around applying for funding successfully. Identified needs include training/ mentoring as well as resources such as step by step guides to the application process.
- It was suggested that fostering an environment of more open dialogue between the sector and KCC staff/ commissioners could be very helpful e.g. if this meant that organisations could easily check their understanding of application criteria or “sound out” a KCC representative for an initial response to any ideas before committing to a full application (considered particularly important for Innovation grants).

How to ensure infrastructure support is fit for the future?

1. Try to overcome the “market failure” issues affecting the provision of infrastructure support

- Many participants recognised that the effective provision of infrastructure support will involve overcoming some difficult issues. The organisations most in need of this support (generally those who are smaller or newly formed) can be unable or unwilling to pay for it, meaning there is no commercial market for these services. This makes providers reliant on funding to deliver this support but also often in need of other grants or contracts to be sustainable, which can make smaller organisations wary and reluctant to engage if they see them as competitors.
- It was suggested that to be fit for purpose, infrastructure support needs to be impartial and that it would be beneficial to separate out the delivery of infrastructure support from other competing activities. There were calls for a “clean hands” organisation to take the lead on this in order to ensure full trust in partnership working and support.

2. Encourage the provision of specific, tailored support

- Areas of identified need include help with accessing funding and making grant applications but also “business support” type activities in areas such as HR or payroll. More strategic support around business planning was also mentioned. Small organisations with the greatest need for support often found this hard to access, as did growing organisations, including those transitioning from operating on an entirely voluntary basis to employing a first paid staff member.
- A Business Link style organisation to support the VCS was suggested. There was also a suggestion that KCC could help by offering access to organisational resources, leadership training and HR support.
- It was felt that generic, “one size fits all” support was not always appropriate. Support needs to be relevant, flexible and worthy of the time commitment required to engage with it. Mentoring is considered a desirable support mechanism, with advantages in terms of its tailored nature and the sustainability of learning delivered in this way.
- The existing STAMP programme was praised by some, but it was suggested that this could be opened up to a wider range of organisations. Some participants perceived that the STAMP events and advice had become expensive and questioned the value of their relevance and appeal.
- Some participants mentioned that they would like more choice in terms of the infrastructure support available to them.

How to facilitate information, skill sharing and engagement? (1)

1. Information sharing across the sector is felt to be important but currently patchy

- This was seen as an area where improvements could be made. There was an appetite for more sharing of information but a feeling that there were challenges to overcome around the fragmented nature of the sector and historic pressures fostering an atmosphere of competition rather than collaboration.
- There was a suggestion that the principles of clarity and transparency outlined in the policy could help to address some of these issues.

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2. Networking must have a purpose

- While networking is considered important, small organisations in particular can find it hard to justify spending time on this. Therefore, potential attendees must be confident that they will get something out of any networking activity or forums if they are to participate.
- It was suggested that combining networking opportunities with filling an information need could be particularly successful, with events related to accessing funding considered likely to be particularly popular.
- The most valuable events were considered to be those giving the opportunity to meet previously unknown new contacts. There was considered to be potential for innovative ways to bring sector groups together, perhaps on a thematic basis. However, meeting those with a different perspective (e.g. operating a different model or serving different beneficiaries) was in some cases felt to be of particular use.

How to facilitate information, skill sharing and engagement? (2)

3. Making connections

- Organisations would value help and support allowing them to make beneficial connections with others, including:
 - Mapping the sector – to give a picture of the other organisations that are in existence (currently felt to be lacking)
 - “Matchmaking” – e.g. bringing together small new organisations with large experienced players they may be able to work with or learn from
 - Encouraging connections outside of the sector – e.g. with the business community. There was a feeling that the public, private and VCS sectors should come together more and that the private sector should be encouraged to do more in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility
 - Encouraging connections/ sharing with those outside of Kent (although the unique nature of the county should be borne in mind)

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Mixed views regarding KCC's role

- Some participants thought that KCC should play an active role in facilitating information, skill sharing and engagement across the VCS and that this would demonstrate commitment to the sector. However, others believed that this was not the place of the local authority and it should leave the sector to take this forward alone without interference.
- The general feeling was that KCC involvement in some capacity may be useful, either through funding forums or events or through “in kind” support such as the provision of venues.

Messages to KCC from participants

All participants were invited to write a key message to KCC at the end of each event. Here are their messages:

Message to KCC: Maidstone participants (1)

- Full marks for undertaking this
- Read the feedback document thoroughly and listen to what the volunteer sector has to say
- That the final document reflects the “partnership” and is worded appropriately – and it is not seen as a dictate
- Include more emphasis on the Care Act 2015 in terms of practical support to independent voluntary organisations who have specialist skills
- That KCC listen more to the people on the ground who understand the needs of the community better
- Support all voluntary sector organisations with becoming business focused. Encourage those organisations to take responsibility and not expect KCC to give, give, give
- As well as the feedback from consultation groups see if there are any other policy documents in any other areas that have been produced to compare
- The devil is in the detail – look forward to seeing how it is implemented
- Importance of on-going flexible support for small/community/local groups
- Stop creating artificial markets
- Keep grants and maintain infrastructure support
- Thank you for the time and consideration given to host this event. Please don’t let this just be tokenistic but have an impact for those communities it really effects
- Be brave! Be bold! Effective change is sometimes painful. Outsource all grants admin to KCF
- I would like to see more info about how KCC sees Social Value objectives in VCS
- Please get officers and Cabinet members out to meet with the sector
- Keep talking to the sector, there are some people with fantastic ideas already operating that you could learn from
- Many policies/strategies overlap and there is a knock on effect to others. Please ensure all organisations have an opportunity to comment on every strategy and not just those relevant to their organisation

Message to KCC: Maidstone participants (2)

- Engagement should include beneficiaries, e.g. in sharing best practice with other areas
- You can sometimes learn more from organisations who are not related to your area than from those who do a similar thing to you
- Very informative meeting. Funding must be people led. Relevant to all needs of large and small charities. Funding needs to be published. Grants for more than 1 year. KCC to look at other counties.
- Continue to invest in the Third Sector
 - Diversity is everything – one size DOESN'T fit all. Keep it simple and as local as possible. Make sure the people who decide who gets funding have all the information – panels make better, more accountable decisions than one person in isolation
 - Funding innovation is important but so is funding what works and 1 year funding is OK for pilots but 2-3 year funding should be considered with built in reviews
- Keep infrastructure support for volunteers and volunteering
- Please ensure this is a dynamic strategy. Build in review process that responds to changing circumstances and needs. Have you consulted with other stakeholders? Borough, District Councils, CCGs, Police etc

Message to KCC: Ashford participants (1)

- Please take on board, listen, and act on the comments and feedback these sessions have provided
- Treat us fairly, professionally, and with the respect that we deserve. KCC needs to get its own house in order first to support us adequately
- Does KCC fully understand the scope of the sector from volunteer-led organisations, professional niche organisations, and social businesses? Do KCC know which parts, or parts of the hierarchy it wants to commission and how they work together?
- 1) Plan what service you need, 2) Put it in writing, 3) Go out to tender, 4) Be consistent in your approach, 5) Be professional
- The contracting and tendering processes are forcing organisations into competitive silos. Lead partnerships / consortiums in the future will be affected by these barriers. Think carefully!
- Set realistic deadlines for grants and contracts (and stick to them) so that all organisations are able to apply – whilst also doing the day job

KCC must become proactive deliverers, not reactive. Money will be an issue.

Brilliant response about culture change that is happening in relation to Social Value Act. Happy to engage/hear more.

Good opportunity to discuss the policy. Hope what was said is acted on.

Concerns regarding the ability of KCC's future strategic partners being able to provide a large proportion of services themselves. This will reduce capacity and diversity within VCS.

- Remember the true value of the voluntary sector – we are not just a 'cheap' solution!!
- It really doesn't have to be so complicated and time consuming. Review the Kent Business Portal and website. Provide us with funded positions so that experts in funding, bid writing, tender writing, HR etc... can be tapped into by small charities.
- Thanks for organising this, lots of wisdom and experiences in the groups – if policy is tweaked accordingly it would be great.
- Great opportunity to share views and give input "Please listen"
- Application/mentoring process needs to be proportionate to grant awarded. Process needs to be simplified – portal is difficult to access
- **Continued...**

Message to KCC: Ashford participants (2)

- Thank you for the opportunity for an open discussion and debate. But how do we keep the conversation going over the years
 - With the advent of KCC becoming a Strategic Commissioning Authority it is my view that commissioners need to be less risk averse about using the Third Sector to deliver public services
 - More emphasis on developing relationships. Involve the whole of the sector (e.g. religious and other groups)
 - Need to understand clearly in advance of grant applications both: what outcomes are measured and importantly how they are measured
- Page 150 Procurement and payment must be on time – not late as can be the case. Infrastructure for VCS must be seen as essential support for community based services and for local engagement. Access to grants, KCC and other funding to be simplified and not over monitored
- KCC must recognise the Social Value of the Voluntary/Community/Sector. £1 supporting the VCS results in £8 benefit to volunteers/service users/the local authority/health service. The policy and the Authority needs to recognise this
- Take into account the value of the Voluntary Sector when commissioning services
 - Language – talk about investment in the VCS NOT the cost to KCC in documents
 - Consider grants to be an investment not a ‘hand out’. An investment in creating a better community. An investment in preventing people needing statutory services
 - We are not a “cheap” alternative – we are fabulous value for money! Professional, expert, committed and dedicated people in the VCS sector – support them properly
 - Glad KCC are having these conversations. VCS still has a way to catch up whether it admits it or not. Having just joined the statutory sector after 10 years with the VCS there are definitely lots of potential partnerships and collaboration to develop and build upon
 - Very positive meeting in terms of quickly unearthing key issues and honest input. Would get more benefit from following up with specific requests for comments after reflection, than, ‘please feed in your thoughts’

Message to KCC: Canterbury participants

- Joint commissioning of the VCS with health. Public health grants especially for issues that may affect certain communities more than others e.g. HIV
- The policy needs to be clear about your plans re grants vs contracts
- Thank you – useful event. I hope that key points will be actually carried through.
- (1) Need to see relationship context: Grants: commissioning, Complimentary? Filling the gaps?
 - (2) Anxiety over commissioning toolkits: can have the best toolkits in the world, but if we aren't culturing [?], expecting 'intelligent' commissioners, evaluators....
 - (3) It's worth revisiting some of the earlier stuff "the baby that went out with the bathwater" 2010, from some of the really excellent stuff developed for key line of enquiry with CAA
 - (especially re: CVS – "Where life value approach" (not cost) (I looked at this when working as a programme manager for the National SPC Group)

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Learn from successes and failures outside of Kent and celebrate/support great work done by the VCS here... especially where you have been part of the mechanics that has helped create these positives!

I think the elected members need to get more involved to understand what is happening.

A more strategic approach to the VCS as a business sector

- To clarify the grants system, service level agreements and contracts. Is it by size, value, purpose?
- Please make the portal easier or train us how to use it
- If you ask for innovation there has to be space for successful innovation to be measured and developed
- Don't tell us in your language, listen to us in ours
- Venn diagram of Public, Private and VCS
- The STAMP events have been arranged for the VCS but there has been a hefty charge! It is quite unacceptable that we have been invited and then asked to pay. No doubt there was a poor attendance from the VCS as a result.

Appendix

Event invitation circulated amongst the sector

Invitation email

Share your views with Kent County Council – Come and shape the development of a new policy for the VCS sector

Dear Colleague,

Kent County Council are currently developing a new policy for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in the county and would like to invite you to a consultation session to allow you to share your views on the draft policy as well as on the support the sector will need in the future to ensure that it is self-sustaining, that it continues to thrive and that your organisation can continue to achieve its aims.

Three identical sessions will be taking place as follows:

Maidstone (Hilton Hotel) – Thursday June 4th, 2PM-4PM

Ashford (International Hotel) – Wednesday June 10th, 9AM-11AM

Canterbury (Christchurch University, Hall Place Campus) – Friday June 12th, 9AM- 11AM

Facts International is an independent market research company. We are working with the Council to arrange and facilitate these events to ensure the feedback gathered on the draft policy is unbiased and to aid open and transparent engagement.

If you would like to attend one of the events, please use the following link to register your interest:

<http://survey.euro.confirmit.com/wix/p1843718197.aspx>

Spaces are limited but if there is a place available at your chosen event we will contact you to confirm and send you further information about the events and venues.

We are aiming to get feedback from as many VCS organisations in Kent as possible, from small community groups to larger constituted charities. Therefore, if you know of any associates who may be interested or if you have a colleague who you would like to attend on your behalf, please forward this email to them and encourage them to register.

An online survey is also being conducted to gather feedback on the draft policy. This can be found here: www.kent.gov.uk/vcspolicy and should take around 10 minutes to complete. The online survey will be open until June 18th.

The consultation exercises we are undertaking will inform Kent County Council's final VCS policy and the Council's future relationship with the sector. Engagement in this process will play a vital role in ensuring that the policy truly reflects the crucial part the sector plays in achieving strong and resilient communities and in supporting KCC to achieve its outcomes for the residents of Kent.

We do hope you are able to make one of the events and really appreciate your contribution to this valuable consultation. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or queries at all or if you experience any problems with registering for an event.

Kind Regards

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services

DECISION NO:

15/00030

For publication
Key decision*

Affects more than one electoral division- County wide policy.

Subject: KCC's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Policy

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Community Services, I agree the adoption of Kent County Council's VCS policy.

Reason(s) for decision: The VCS policy is a significant strategic document for the County Council, setting out our future relationship with the VCS, our future offer of support and engagement with the sector and a grant framework for the local authority.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The draft policy was considered by Policy and Resources Committee in January 2015, where it was agreed that a 12 week consultation would take place with the sector. This was undertaken from 26 March 2015 until 18 June. All comments throughout the consultation period have been considered and where appropriate have informed the final policy as set out in the accompanying report.

Any alternatives considered:

N/A

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

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From: John Simmonds, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement
 Andy Wood, Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee - 10th of September 2015

Decision No: 15/00078

Subject: Award of Insurance Programme Contract(s)

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Not applicable

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This paper advises on the Procurement Plan and Key Decision to be taken in relation to the current tender of the corporate insurance programme due to commence on 1 January 2016.

Recommendation(s): The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement on the proposed decision to award the contracts for insurance which commence in January 2016 and associated inspections in accordance with the terms and conditions of the recent tender exercise undertaken by the Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Insurances for the Council, including its schools, are arranged corporately. All existing insurance contracts expire on 31 December 2015 and it is necessary to ensure that a new corporate programme of insurance is in place ready to commence on 1 January 2016. This report advises on the current tender exercise that has already commenced and seeks authority for the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement to make the decision on the award of contracts(s).

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 The costs of insurance premiums are recharged to the Kent Insurance Fund and then charges are made to service directorates and schools.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1 The insurance programme supports the above as it helps to provide financial protection against the risks associated with the delivery of services as well as enabling the Council to comply with contract/agreement terms and conditions.

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All of the contracts under the current corporate insurance programme, which commenced in January 2009, expire on 31 December 2015. Since they are not capable of being extended further it has been necessary to commence a tender exercise and invite bids from the insurance market to compile a new programme.

4.2 Background

Business Objectives

4.2.1 The business objectives of the programme are to:

- Provide financial certainty in relation to KCC's maximum exposure to individual high value claims and the overall cost of claims in any one year
- Provide financial certainty for claims that have been incurred but may not be reported for many years into the future
- Comply with legislation (Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance Act, Road Traffic Acts as applicable to local authorities)
- Comply with the terms and conditions of contracts/agreements entered into by KCC

It should be noted that in the absence of an appropriate insurance programme the Council will be at risk of significant financial loss.

Value

4.2.2 The overall cost of external premiums for 2015 exceeds £3 million. The cost of premiums is met from the Kent Insurance Fund which is financed from recharges to directorates and schools. Indications from recent tender exercises undertaken by other county councils would suggest that the overall cost of future external premiums could increase.

4.2.3 The cost of premiums are controlled through KCC retaining the 1st part of any loss through variable levels of self-insurance (excess) which is £100k for each and every Public Liability and Employers Liability claim and up to £250k for claims involving damage to our own establishments. As part of the tender exercise the cost benefit of increasing self – insured levels will be explored as a means to try and control expenditure on external premiums.

Current Supply Arrangements

4.2.4 Insurance is provided by number of suppliers. Zürich Municipal Insurance is the main insurer however a few smaller policies have been placed with other insurers in the Lloyd's market where they were more competitively priced. KCC has been insured by Zürich Municipal since 2002 and has enjoyed a long period of stability.

4.3 Insurance Market

- 4.3.1 The local authority and commercial insurance markets work very differently. Whilst private sector insurers are used to working with heavy risks (e.g. oil rigs) they are reluctant to enter the local authority market. It seems that the root cause of the problem lies with the public sector procurement process which they are not prepared to engage with. As a result, competition in the public sector insurance market has been historically problematic.
- 4.3.2 Over the years the Government has tried to intervene in this market to improve competition with the last venture being the Crown Commercial Service (CCS). This has met with limited success and it is understood that the government is undertaking a further review to see how more private sector insurers might be encouraged to enter the restricted local authority market. Unfortunately, the results of this exercise will not be available in time to assist the Council with its tender.
- 4.3.3 There have also been attempts by local authorities to improve market opportunities through locally developed procurement frameworks. One such framework is that based in the south-west which is open for the Council to use.
- 4.3.4 Both options have been considered as part of the ongoing management of the procurement of insurance but ultimately we have dismissed them. The insurance programme is already a sizeable piece of business and the Council does not need to join with any other authority to bolster its purchasing power within the insurance market. Whilst some authorities have entered into collaborative arrangements or worked with frameworks they have reported mixed results with regard to savings. Unfortunately, if the Council decided to use CCS or any other framework it would not be possible to obtain separate bids in parallel to compare costs. Also, CCS and framework providers require an annual fee payment of around 0.5% of the overall value of the contract which, during the life of Council's future contract, could exceed a total additional payment of over £100k whereas the current external fee of running an independent tender exercise with the assistance of the Council's broker is a one-off payment of less than £5k.

4.4 Procurement plan

- 4.4.1 The approach to the current tender has been influenced by the significant price increases applied to recent tender exercises undertaken by other local authorities and the need to obtain best cover at the right price.
- 4.4.2 The tender is being done through Finance and Procurement and KCC's appointed insurance broker Arthur J Gallagher. The Council has traditionally procured its own contracts through a specialist local authority insurance broker and will again follow this model.
- 4.4.3 Due to the restricted nature of the local authority insurance market and refusal of certain insurers and Lloyd's syndicates to deal with clients direct, working through a broker is the only viable option to enable the Council to maximise its access to opportunities within the market.
- 4.4.4 The Council has sought advice from its specialist insurance broker as to how it might structure its tender to obtain best value from the market. The broker

recommended that the Council work with the widest of options to allow insurers to present a menu of bids and maximise the Council's flexibility when assessing submissions.

4.4.5 The recommended options for bids were:

- Block programme with the majority of main policies placed with one insurer and minor policies place where overall best value can be achieved.
- Separately insuring risks by class i.e. one insurer provides cover for motor, another for Public Liability/Employers Liability etc.
- Some other hybrid i.e. insuring risks in layers where one insurer covers the 1st £20m of risk, the 2nd covers the next £20m and so on until 100% of cover has been arranged.

4.4.6 All contracts will be awarded on the basis of an initial three-year period with two times two year optional extensions to make a total of seven years.

4.4.7 It was agreed by the Commissioning & Procurement Board December 2014 that the tender would follow the Open Procedure.

4.4.8 The Prior Indicative Notice was published in February 2015 and the OJEU notice was published at the start of July with all tender responses being received by the end of August.

4.4.9 Evaluation and clarification is now being undertaken by KCC in conjunction with its insurance broker and is expected to complete by the end of October.

4.4.10 It is then proposed that John Simmonds, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement, will take the Key Decision for the award of all contracts by 6 November 2015 so insurance policies can be confirmed and with all necessary certificates obtained prior to 1 January 2016.

4.4.11 There are no legal implications other than the Council must have adequate arrangements in place in compliance with the Employers Liability and Road Traffic Act requirements.

4.4.12 There are no inequalities implications.

5. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement on the proposed decision to award the contracts for insurance which commence in January 2016 and associated inspections in accordance with the terms and conditions of the recent tender exercise undertaken by the Council

6. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

6.1 There are no background documents.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Record of Decision

8. CONTACT DETAILS

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION To be TAKEN BY:

John Simmonds, Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement

DECISION NO:

15/00078

For publication
Key decision*

Expenditure exceeds £1m

Subject: Title of Decision Award of Insurance Programme Contracts
Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement, I agree to:

Award the contract(s) for insurance which commence in January 2016 and associated inspections in accordance with the terms and conditions of the recent tender exercise undertaken by the Council.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Council has to be insured to comply with legislation and provide certainty around its financial exposure to risks. The various contracts that have been awarded achieve the above and provide best value.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

(to be added after the meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 10 September 2015)

Any alternatives considered:

No

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None

.....
signed

.....
date

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From: Paul Carter, Leader of the Council
 David Cockburn, Corporate Director, Strategic and Corporate Services

To: Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee
 10 September 2015

Subject: Business Planning 2016/17

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report reviews the 2015/16 business-planning round and sets out the arrangements for 2016/17 business plans.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) **Comment** on the review of the 2015/16 business planning round
- (2) **Agree** the business planning arrangements for 2016/17 set out in section 3

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Policy, Strategy and Assurance division is responsible for coordinating the annual business planning process. Each year the team reviews the previous year's planning arrangements and makes recommendations to Policy & Resources Committee regarding any changes necessary for the next business planning round.

1.2 This paper reviews the 2015/16 business planning round and seeks comments and endorsement of proposed changes for 2016/17.

2. BUSINESS PLANS 2015/16 - REVIEW

2.1 2015/16 is the second year that business plans have been produced at Directorate level. The review of business planning in 2014/15 found that the new process had been successful, and so the process was largely kept the same for 2015/16.

2.2 The 2014/15 review did recognise however that the 2015/16 business plans needed to support the move towards KCC becoming a strategic commissioning authority. Members agreed that some additional content would be added to the directorate business plans in 2015/16 in order to achieve this. The new content was:

- Better identification of what services each Directorate provides and whether those services are provided in-house or by an external provider (naming the providers and where appropriate, identification of contract periods and spend on each service)

- Identification of major service redesign, commissioning or procurement exercises expected over a rolling three-year period to allow CAB and Cabinet Committees to plan their forward agendas
- A statement regarding how each Directorate considers social value in its commissioning and service delivery

2.3 The 2015/16 business planning round was successful in a number of areas including:

- a) Business plans were developed collaboratively with DMTs and Cabinet Members, led by the Strategic Business Advisers (Strategy, Policy and Assurance) for each directorate
- b) There is clear identification of how services are provided, including external spend and contract information
- c) Sections are included in each business plan detailing how the directorate will play its part in achieving the Strategic Statement outcomes
- d) Plans were produced on time with drafts being taken to the relevant Cabinet Committee so that Members could comment on them before approval by Cabinet Members
- e) Like last year, there has been a good degree of self-discipline in producing divisional business plans. Divisions have taken the opportunity to adapt the format of these lower level plans to suit their circumstances. Divisional plans have been published on KNet.

2.4 There are a number of areas where improvements can be made, which are picked up in the proposal for the 2016/17 business planning round:

- a) The 2015/16 business plans are lengthy documents, between 50 and 80 pages, and are narrative-heavy, diluting the focus on priorities for delivery over the year
- b) The 2015/16 business plans reflect the priorities of Cabinet Members, but in some cases these priorities were captured mid-way through the process, leading to redrafting
- c) All directorates responded to the new request to identify major redesign, commissioning and procurement activity. However, the information provided tended to take a one-year view, rather than thinking forward across the next three years
- d) Having the business plans designed while still draft reduces the time available to get the draft content right

3. PROPOSALS FOR 2016/17 BUSINESS PLANNING ROUND

3.1 The change to business planning in the last two years has aimed to support KCC’s move to become a strategic commissioning authority, and we have made improvements iteratively.

3.2 Broadly, we are proposing that the overall process for developing, approving and publishing business plans remains the same. Member approved plans will be at the Directorate level, and will be considered in draft by each relevant Cabinet Committee before approval by Cabinet Members. Directorate level business plans will be published on the KCC website.

3.3 Divisional level plans will be approved by the relevant Corporate Director in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and published on KNet for accessibility and transparency purposes. As in 2015/16, Table 1 below provides a summary of the ownership, approval, consultation and publication detail for each tier of business plans:

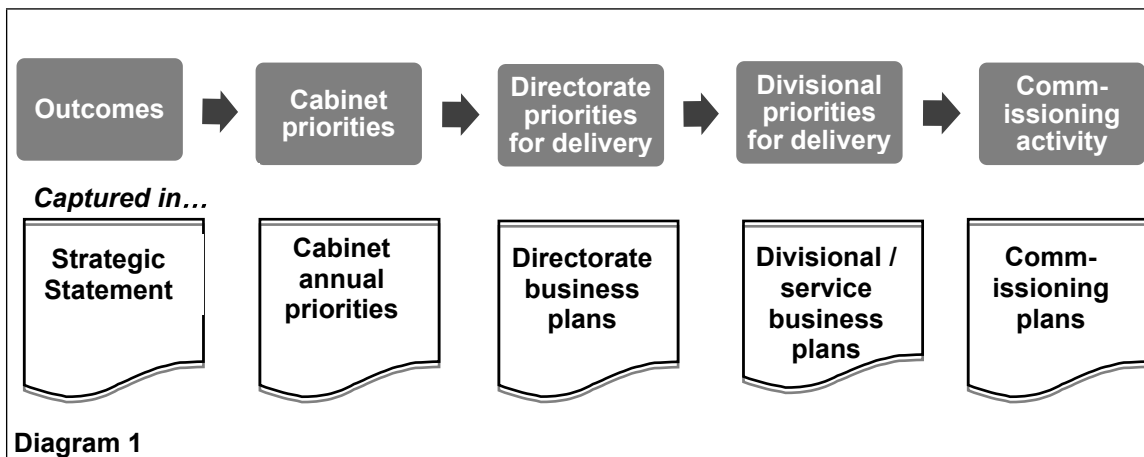
Tier	Owned By:	Approved By:	Member Consultation:	Template Used:	Published:
Directorate Level business plan	Corporate Director	Leader and Cabinet Members	Cabinet Committee(s)	Corporate	KCC website
Divisional level business plan:	Director	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member(s)	None – as per needs of the business	KNet
Service level business plan:	Head of Service	Relevant Director	None - but must be accessible by Members if requested	None – as per needs of the business	Internally to Division /Directorate

Table 1: Business Planning Matrix 2016/17

3.4 To continue to support KCC’s move to a commissioning authority and build on the improvements already made over the last two years, we propose some changes to the content and focus of directorate business plans and the way in which priorities are identified.

3.5 Firstly, Cabinet Members have indicated that they wish to collectively agree annual priorities for the authority over the coming year at the start of the business planning round to ensure that these are incorporated into and shape the development of the directorate business plans.

3.6 Gaining collective agreement of Cabinet’s annual priorities would provide greater clarity around how the outcomes in the Strategic Statement translate into priorities for directorates and divisions to deliver each year, and therefore what commissioning activity will be required, as shown in Diagram 1 below.



3.7 It is suggested that Cabinet collectively agree their ‘Top 10’ annual priorities for the authority during Autumn 2015, with final agreement reached by end November.

3.8 This early identification of annual priorities will support earlier conversations at DMTs, with support from Policy, Strategy and Assurance, to identify Directorate and Divisional priorities which will need to be captured in the business plans.

3.9 We are also proposing some changes to the content of the Directorate business plans. Appendix 1 provides a list of the content to be included, and the bullet points below explain the main changes:

- Each business plan will clearly articulate directorate and significant divisional priorities, which will incorporate the relevant priorities from Cabinet’s annual priorities and how each directorate will contribute to delivering against the outcomes in the Strategic Statement
- Directorates will be required to identify major service redesign and commissioning activity over the next three years. ‘Major’ will be defined as any activity of this nature that will require a key or significant decision. Directorates will be supported to think beyond the coming year and plan over a rolling three year period, using the stages of the commissioning cycle (Analyse, Plan, Do, Review) to map activity, and identify the point where a Key Decision will be required. This will further support Commissioning Advisory Board and Cabinet Committees to identify activity that they wish to look at so they can schedule it into their forward agendas. It will also support the organisation to plan sufficiently far ahead, which is necessary as we become a strategic commissioning authority. A template will be provided to assist directorates in providing the required information. The draft template is provided in Appendix 2, and we will adjust this as necessary based on feedback from DMTs before drafting of directorate business plans begins.
- As last year, Directorates will be required to list all in-house and external service provision, including contract value and contract end date where relevant. This year, a date for the next review of the provision will be required. Where the provision is in-house, this review will provide an

assessment of contestability, which is to be led by the service. A template will be provided to assist directorates in providing the required information. The draft template is provided in Appendix 3. As above, we will adjust this as necessary based on feedback from DMTs before drafting of directorate business plans begins.

- A new section will be added to set out the directorate's property and ICT infrastructure requirements. The intention is that this will help identify and commit services to delivering the authority's Corporate Landlord savings. It will also help Property and ICT plan ahead for requirements over the medium term.
- To reduce the length of the business plans and focus on priorities, some sections that have previously been included in directorate business plans will not be included:
 - Divisional 'Who we are, what we do'
This information has remained fairly static for the last two years and takes up a lot of space without adding significant value to the forward planning of priorities for the coming year. It is suggested that divisions make use of their individual KNet pages to explain who they are and what they do, if they wish to
 - What else drives our activity?
This section has provided lengthy narrative around the internal and external drivers that affect services. Relevant drivers and internal and external factors will be taken into account in identifying directorate priorities, so it is not necessary to include this analysis in the content of the business plan
 - Detail on transformation programmes
Transformation is now embedded into our everyday work. Therefore it is not necessary to provide explanations of the aims and scope of transformation programmes led by the directorate. As above, this will be factored into the development of directorate priorities
- It is important that we continue to document our commitment to achieving social value, but this will be better achieved through the Strategic Statement annual report which will go to County Council each Autumn from 2016. This will no longer be a requirement in the directorate business plans.
- Finally, the business planning review this year has shown that having the directorate business plans professionally designed while still draft is expensive and time-consuming, as changes continue to be made iteratively. Therefore the draft business plans presented to Cabinet Committees will be Word documents.

3.10 Based on these proposals, outline timescales for the development, approval and publication of 2016/17 directorate business plans are provided in Table 2 below:

Activity	Timescale
Development of Cabinet annual priorities	Sept - Nov 2015
Development of directorate and divisional priorities by DMTs	Dec 2015 - Jan 2016
Drafting of directorate business plans including all the required information including approved County Council budget	Feb - Mar 2016
Draft directorate business plans to Cabinet Committees	March / April 2016 round of meetings
Directorate business plans finalised taking into account Cabinet Committee comments	April – May 2016
Final collective approval of directorate business plans by Cabinet Members and publication on the KCC website	May 2016

Table 2: Timescales for development of 2016/17 directorate business plans

3.11 Divisional and service level plans can be developed alongside Directorate level plans and should be approved in time to be published on KNet in May 2016.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (1) **Comment** on the review of 2015/16 business planning round
- (2) **Agree** the business planning arrangements for 2016/17 set out in section 3

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Directorate Business Plan 2016/17 – contents

Appendix 2: Draft template to capture major service redesign and commissioning activity

Appendix 3: Draft template to capture service provision

Background Documents: None

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Relevant Director:

David Whittle, Director Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance
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Appendix 1: Directorate Business Plans 2016/17 – contents

- Corporate Director's foreword

- About the directorate summary
- Directorate priorities (crosscutting)*
- Significant divisional priorities (service-specific)*
- Identification of major service redesign and commissioning exercises expected over a rolling three-year period (using template provided)
- Identification of in-house and external service providers including contract periods and spend where appropriate, and next review date (using template provided)
- Levels of resource available for each Directorate (budget and FTE establishment)
- Property and ICT infrastructure requirements
- Key Directorate risks (linked to the Directorate Risk Register)
- Key Performance Indicators and targets linked to the Quarterly Performance Report and Directorate Performance Dashboard
- Directorate organisational development priorities

*incorporating Cabinet's annual priorities and the directorate's contribution to the Strategic Statement outcomes

Appendix 2: Draft template to capture major service redesign and commissioning activity

Category*	Description (briefly what and why)	2016/17				2017/18				2018/19			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
e.g. C	Commissioning of x service because current contract due to expire end Aug 2017	A	P	K		D	R						

***Categories:**

- Commissioning (C)
- Service Redesign (SR)

Each activity to be mapped by:

- Analyse (A)
- Plan (P)
- Do (D)
- Review (R)
- Key decision point (K)

N.B. Procurement activity is part of the commissioning 'Do' phase

Appendix 3: Draft template to capture service provision

Service*	Internal or external	If external:			Next review date**
		Contract value (£)	Provider name	Contract end date	

*Use the breakdown of services provided in the 2015/16 directorate business plan, amended as necessary

**Could be a contract break clause, contract end date, internal contestability exercise, or other review activity
There is no time constraint on the review date given

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From: **Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member Commercial & Traded Services**
Geoff Wild - Director of Governance & Law

To: **Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 10 September 2015**

Subject: **Legal Services' *Evolution Efficiency Enterprise* Final Report 2012/15**

For information

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway: The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee has received regular updates on the Evolution programme. Past agendas can be viewed here:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=750&Year=0>

Future Pathway: The Evolution, Efficiency and Enterprise project is now concluded.

Summary: This report provides a final summary of the extensive work that has been undertaken as part of the *Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise* project within Legal Services over the past three years.

Recommendation:
The Committee is asked to note the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At various of its meetings over the past three years the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee Committee has received quarterly updates on the progress made in delivering the Legal Services *Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise* project. The project was developed in response to a growing need for high quality, innovative, income-generating in-house legal services at a time of significant budgetary restraint.
- 1.2 This report provides a final concluding report on the progress made over that three year period, summarising the contents of previous reports and also considering the future.
- 1.3 Detailed information about the achievements and progress of the project is set out at Appendix A to this report.

2. Recommendation

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the report.

3. Appendices

Appendix A – Kent Legal Services’ Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise End of Project report 2012 – 2015

10. Contact details

Report Author Alexander Saul Democratic Services Officer 03000 419830 Alexander.Saul@kent.gov.uk	Director Geoff Wild Director of Governance & Law 03000 416840 Geoff.Wild@kent.gov.uk
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KENT LEGAL SERVICES



Evolution

[eev-uh-loo-shuhn] - noun

A process of formation or growth; progressive change or development

Efficiency

[ih-fish-uhn-see] - noun

The accomplishment of something with the least waste of time and effort

Enterprise

[en-ter-prahyz] - noun

Project, esp. one requiring boldness, originality or adventurous spirit

End of Project Report 2012 – 2015

INTRODUCTION

Just as all divisions within the council are tasked with difficult challenges to re-imagine their service, Governance and Law used the process set out in this paper over a period of three years to take Legal Services to the next level, through a combination of evolution, efficiency and enterprise.

By 2012, it was apparent that KCC and the public sector generally were going through a period of unprecedented change. At the same time, the legal services market was experiencing some of the most significant changes for a generation. These two major factors meant that the time was right to examine what it was that Legal Services did and how it delivered its services, both internally and externally. This gave rise to the *Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise* project, a bold and innovative 3-year change programme, designed to make Legal Services fit for the future.

BACKGROUND

Kent Legal Services is uniquely different from other in-house legal departments, whether in local government or the commercial sector. It is designed and managed to run along private sector lines and as such:

- Is set up as a fully-traded operation with an income generation budget to deliver
- Receives no internal subsidy
- Has no guaranteed work or tied clients
- Competes for work in the open market
- Operates a full trading account
- Earns every penny of its budget through charging for its services
- Has sold its services to over 600 other public sector bodies nationwide
- Generates a surplus each year that is returned in its entirety to KCC

It is important to understand that Legal Services was not broken and did not require fixing on a grand scale. It was already a highly successful, effective and efficient award-winning and internationally-recognised leader in its field. *Evolution, Efficiency, Enterprise* was all about taking the next steps to keep Legal Services ahead of the game and lead it to the next level.

This involved looking at every area of the business, including issues such as:

- Challenging overheads and actively reducing them
- Introducing technology to improve performance and reduce cost
- Critically examining our relationship with KCC and how we could help our colleagues reduce their legal risk and cost
- Looking at the appropriate vehicles for the provision of legal services, including the exploration of Alternative Business Structures
- Ensuring that Legal Services meets KCC's needs now and is prepared to meet those of the future
- Embracing and delivering new and different ways of working

We promised to deliver:

- Significant cost savings
- Increased income from a growing list of external clients
- Improved ways of working
- Greater corporate resilience

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the journey taken by the *Evolution Efficiency Enterprise* project over the past three years, recognising the successes and achievements made, and the benefits felt across the whole council. It summarises the results reported quarterly during that period to the Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee.

From April 2012, the Legal Services management team carried out a root and branch review of what it is that they did and how they did it. It involved critical challenge and radical review, aimed at reducing costs whilst, at the same time, increasing income and improving quality, corporate resilience and good governance.

It has proved to be far more than a theoretical, salami slicing exercise or corporate comb-over. It is practical and tangible. It has coincided perfectly with the preparation and delivery of the *Facing the Challenge* review of Legal Services. Here are just a few of the highlights that have prepared Legal Services – and the council – to be fit for the future, whatever that future might look like.

WE PROMISED	WE DELIVERED
Cashable and non-cashable savings of £3million	Savings of over £4 million
Reduced external legal spend	External legal spend reduced by £2million; now delivered more efficiently in-house
Increased in-house advocacy instead of using external counsel	Hundreds of court and tribunal hearings each year now handled by KCC lawyers instead of barristers
Introduce technology to deliver services more efficiently	New case management system delivers streamlined workflows, seamless billing and a paper-light office
Provide comprehensive legal training to KCC staff	Over 200 hours of legal training delivered on a wide range of council activities
Closer working with internal colleagues and external partners to get results	The time taken for care proceedings slashed by 60%, improving outcomes for children and reducing costs for KCC
Improve billing processes	Timeframe for billing clients has significantly reduced and joined up with Collaborative Planning
Maintain market leader status in terms of external income	Despite challenging market conditions, Kent Legal Services remains one of the most profitable local government legal teams in the country for external income generation
Greater involvement in key corporate initiatives	Increase in legal advice being obtained on key issues by Cabinet and CMT
Create professional career opportunities for local people	Creation of 20+ legal assistant posts, 5 trainee solicitors and numerous apprenticeships
Build and enhance outstanding reputation	Awards and recognition from the Financial Times, The Law Society, the British Legal Awards, Legal Week, The Lawyer and Legal Business
Reduce environmental impact	Significant reductions in paper/ink usage, mileage and travel

DELIVERY STRANDS

Legal Services charges for its work at extremely low rates, especially when taking into account the experience and knowledge of the in-house lawyers compared with their counterparts in the private sector. This project nonetheless critically evaluated opportunities for doing things differently and at even lower overall cost.

We already delivered a wide-range of services equivalent to a medium sized law firm but from a considerably lower cost base. The project considered how to reduce those costs still further, whilst at the same time improving the quality and timeliness of that service.

Overheads

The challenge to reduce costs cannot be under-estimated. Unlike many authorities, we had already gone through the process of reviewing all our costs and overheads, cutting them to a minimum with external legal spend already limited. So we needed to think radically and imaginatively about the remainder.

This strand was designed to specifically consider tangible costs, which include training, third party suppliers, computer licences, staffing, etc, and establish whether these could be procured and delivered more cheaply, in a leaner way, or not at all.

The savings and efficiencies account below shows just how much we achieved in this area.

External Income

This is, and will continue to be, a central part of our business strategy. We are currently a market leader and a key brand within the legal sector, and want to stay that way. This delivery strand needed to develop our existing client base and continue to grow our external business in the face of growing competition, deregulation of a highly competitive market and shrinking public sector budgets.

We needed to increase market share and enhance profitability. It was important to retain our existing business advantages and build new opportunities using innovative delivery mechanisms, including considering Alternative Business Structures (ABS) and the creation of a regional hub. It was important, however, that any changes in delivery mechanism continued to provide best value to the council and our KCC service users.

These issues were largely absorbed into and overtaken by the *Facing the Challenge* review of Legal Services.

Corporate Alignment

We needed to look at how we were joined to KCC. What was Legal Services' role within the council? What did KCC want from its lawyers and, crucially, what did it need from them (but not necessarily want)? This strand considered how we actually plugged into the broader council and what our role was - and could be. It resulted in us taking a lead role in organisational learning, contributing to strategic and operational risk management and helping the council to deliver savings through suppressing demand for legal services.

There was a key overlap between the "Overheads" delivery strand and this one. We explored ways of delivering a reduced spend on legal advice for our KCC clients. We helped suppress demand, encouraged prudent budget management and ensured efficient service delivery. The savings and efficiencies account below shows just how much we have saved in this area.

Review External Legal Spend

Despite the presence of the in-house legal team, KCC still spends millions of pounds each year on external legal services. We needed to establish exactly what the council spent on external legal services and why. Because of the way Oracle is set up, this proved extremely difficult to ascertain and quantify, but from what we were able to find, there were significant opportunities for cost-saving alternatives, including handling the legal aspects of many of KCC's insurance claims.

Technology

It is vital that Legal Services embraces technology to help it to deliver services differently and as efficiently as possible. We have already delivered a new case management software system during the project, which forms the first stage of a wave of further technological advances. Further investment in the rapidly advancing and enabling field of legal technology is required if we are to keep pace with the market leaders and client demand.

This requires a step-change in thinking and service delivery to become a digital business that happens to do law, rather than a legal business that happens to use technology. This is discussed in further detail later in this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

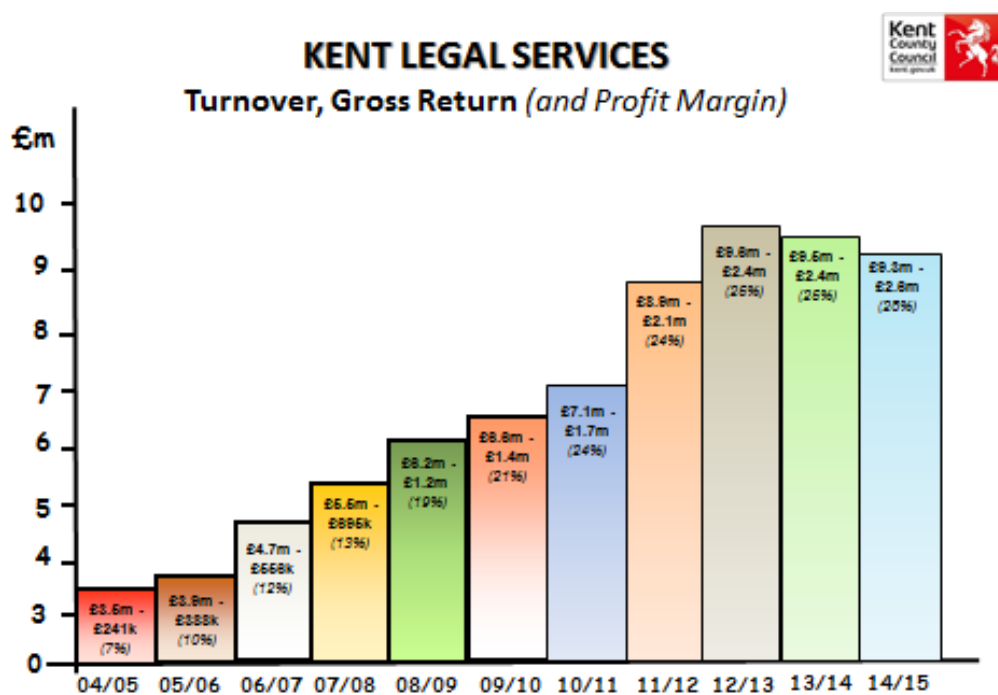
Savings & Efficiencies¹

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Grand Total
	£	£	£	£
<u>Cashable Savings & Income Generation</u>				
Reducing the cost of service provision to KCC	157,500	400,000	559,000	1,116,500
Advice on projects which would otherwise require external advisers	55,750	184,000	170,000	409,750
New external clients	57,319	91,985	94,851	244,155
Training initiatives & schemes	43,500	45,000	66,264	154,764
Total	314,069	720,985	890,115	1,925,169
<u>Non Cashable Savings & Efficiencies</u>				
Initiatives and activities to suppress/avoid costs to KCC	1,076,250	777,600	526,000	2,379,850
Grand Total	1,390,319	1,498,585	1,416,115	4,305,019

¹ Full details are shown in Appendix 1

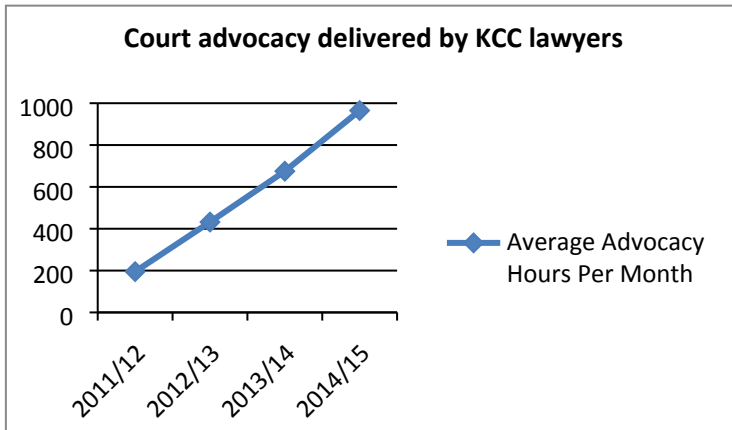
Income & Expenditure

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total
	£k	£k	£k	£k
Internal Income	8,602.6	8,537.1	8,327.9	25,467.6
External Income	980.1	1,075.4	971.6	3,027.1
Expenditure	7,174.1	7,227.4	6,604.1	21,005.6
Net Surplus (Excluding Disbursements & Corporate Overheads)	2,408.6	2,385.1	2,695.4	7,489.1
New external client income	57.3	92.0	94.9	244.2
Number of new external clients	68	80	58	206

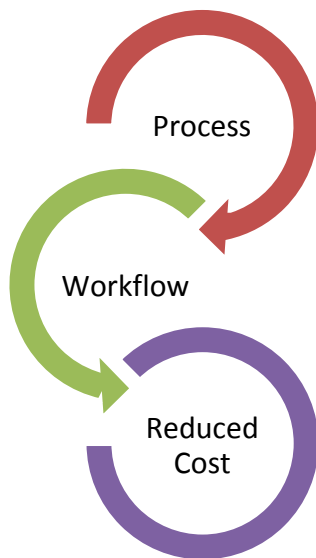


During the 3-year *Evolution Efficiency Enterprise* project:

- Gross Return grew by over 8%
- Turnover reduced by 3%
- Profit margin rose from 25% to 28%
- £7.5m surplus returned to KCC

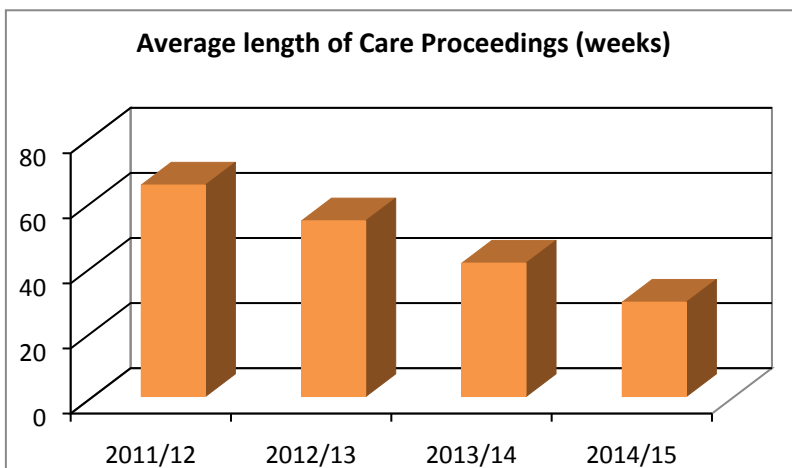


Over the past three years, Legal Services has developed a team of specialist advocates who have replaced external barristers in representing the council in family courts, employment tribunals, civil courts, criminal courts and even the Court of Appeal. We are now delivering five times as much advocacy as when the *Evolution Efficiency Enterprise* project began.

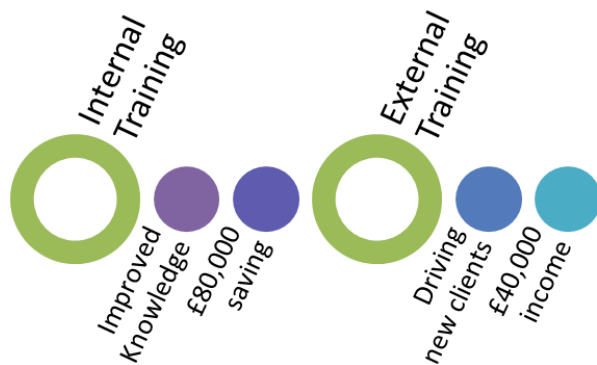


Legal Services has developed a series of workflows that automate the delivery of legal advice in areas such as stopping up orders, empty home loans and secured lending. Both time and money are saved in the process.

The methodology is now being applied to more complex areas, such as care proceedings, which cuts significant time and cost, meaning that more precious resources are available to deal with frontline issues.



Through joint working between Legal Services, Specialist Children's Services and external partners across the Family Justice Board, the timeframe for care proceedings has reduced from over 64 weeks in April 2012 to just 27 weeks in April 2015.



Legal Services' extensive training programme has improved the education and development of KCC staff, whilst delivering savings to the council and reducing legal risk.

At the same time, we have delivered training conferences to a wide pool of external clients, increasing income and driving new business into KCC.



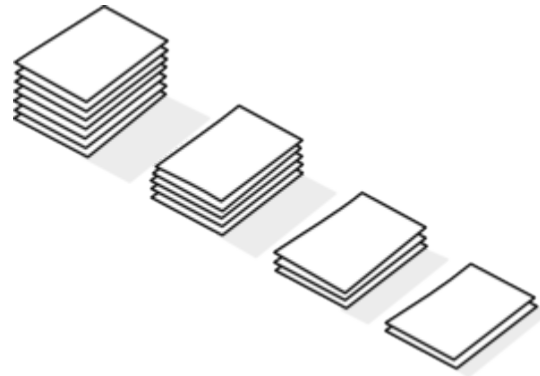
Legal Services have added over 200 new external clients to their list of 600+ public sector bodies nationwide to whom they have delivered advice and assistance. From as far afield as Devon and Yorkshire and everywhere in between.

Introduction of E-billing

	2012	2015
Time taken to bill clients:	6 weeks+	5 days
Payment authorisation:	Up to 12 months	80% < 1 month

**2012**

1 million+ documents printed

**2015**

< 100,000 documents printed

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Great care has to be taken to ensure a cost effective and high quality legal service continues to be provided to the council, but at the same time develop that service to ensure that, in an increasingly competitive and demanding environment, efficiency improves and client satisfaction increases.

The benchmark measure used in the *Facing the Challenge* Legal Services review when assessing the external market, is whether it is “Better, Cheaper and More Profitable” than the in-house team. To this list I would now add “Faster”.

We are currently the market leader in the provision of specialist local government and public sector legal advice and want to stay that way. But it won't happen if we simply continue to do what we do now or at the pace we do it. The *Evolution* project has achieved a great deal in the past three years, but further change is both inevitable and necessary.

Regional Hub

We need to protect what currently works well, whilst evolving to provide a service of even greater efficiency and more enterprise. At the same time, we need to continue to find ever more innovative ways of influencing and leading the public sector legal market. This might include the creation of regional hubs (perhaps using the SE7 or South East LEP groups of authorities as bases).

There is a real opportunity to remove waste and duplication in the operation of back-office services across the whole of the public sector by establishing Kent as a regional hub for the south-east, into which literally dozens of public sector bodies (not just

councils, but health bodies, educational establishments, charitable bodies, NGOs, etc) could each transfer their legal work.

Whilst this would depend on political and administrative co-operation amongst a coalition of the willing and require a move away from the ‘profit centre’ approach previously adopted by KLS, all those involved would be able to reap the benefits of economies of scale, high quality standards and significant savings, through locally delivered and centrally managed services.

Alternative Business Structures

Whatever route is chosen by the council, serious consideration must be given now to the creation and use of an alternative business structure (ABS) in order to service the increasingly diverse range of externally commissioned local government services, as well as local SMEs and other private sector clients, for whom Legal Services are currently prevented from working.

The current statutory and regulatory restrictions governing in-house local government lawyers seriously restrict the types of client that Legal Services can work for and trade with. For example, Legal Services can trade at a profit with councils without restriction, but we can only work for charities whose objects relate to Kent (not those outside the County). Similarly, we can act for companies, but only where KCC is a shareholder. We cannot, for example, act for a non-charitable trust or mutual set up by the council to run its services and cannot act for a private sector company or even one run by another council. We can act for schools outside Kent, but not academies.

Following widespread criticism of their restrictive nature, the regulations governing the work that local government lawyers can do are about to be reviewed. However, this is unlikely to result in any change before 2017 and, even then, will not necessarily result in a lifting of the restrictions currently in place.

Therefore, in order to be able to act now and with certainty, full trading freedom is only possible through the medium of an ABS company, either solely-owned by the council or in conjunction with a partner.

Market Conditions

Some would say there are more lawyers than needed. That would be true if they were serving the under-served. Instead, they are primarily focused on a shrinking share of the “top tier” legal work and cannot afford to provide services to the poorly served at rates the clients can afford.

Unfortunately, whilst there is currently an enormous legal market, it is served so expensively and with such complexity that it has become inaccessible for 80% to 90% of the population.

In the USA, numerous surveys reveal that 4 out of every 5 individuals and business entities will “go it alone” rather than have their legal needs met by a lawyer. In the UK

that ratio is 9 out of 10. Simultaneously and ironically, hundreds of lawyers are unable to find clients.

Over 80% of divorce actions are handled without lawyers. That amounts to an amazing amount of post-divorce issues in child support, access and taxation that never have the benefit of legal advice. Whole sections of the population in criminal and civil matters cannot be served due to the paucity of legal aid and pro bono services. As public sector lawyers, we have a greater duty than most to solve this “Access to Justice” issue and to do more than move the needle only slightly. The way to do this is through disruptive innovation and investment in technology.

Technology

Law is something that is set to be radically reshaped by the emergence of technology that, at its heart, is about the management and manipulation of data on an entirely new scale. This is a characteristic that has only recently shown up in law in a significant fashion, but it is due to transform the sector beyond recognition. E-discovery has been a forecaster of things to come. Previously, the high-end review of documents related to litigation was done by lawyers at a significant cost to clients. This manual and expensive legal service has been replaced by the technology of information management, which produces superior results, more quickly, at vastly reduced prices.

As technology continues to be developed to provide other means of support to provide “better, faster, cheaper” legal services, clients and those providing legal services will innovate the legal workplace.

Some economic forces are too great to be ignored, dismissed or regulated. An industry ripe for disruption will be disrupted. Tsunamis cannot be stopped. The only thread that ultimately saves the industry is the thread of disruption. All others have broken.

In future, we will no longer have a legal business that happens to use technology. Instead, it will be a digital business that happens to do law. It is not yet a tsunami, but the surf is retreating and we must be ready for the advance of the coming disruption. To do that requires investment now to make savings in the future. Whether that investment comes from within the council or externally remains to be determined.

One thing is certain - maintaining the status quo is not an option if Legal Services is to continue to innovate, make progress and enjoy the success of the past 10 years.

Geoff Wild

Director of Governance & Law

July 2015

APPENDIX I**Evolution Efficiency Enterprise Account 2012 - 2015**

Year	2012/13
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Cash/non Cash	Heading	Reported Efficiency Saving	Narrative	Total £
Cashable & Generation	Reducing the cost of service provision to the council	Counsel reduced rates	Renegotiation of counsel rates	87,500
		Proceeds of Crime Act recoveries	Proceeds from complex criminal litigation. Now part of KLS business	33,000
		CPD savings	Efficiency saving from running in-house training sessions (Child Care Conferences etc)	12,500
		Costs awards	Other side ordered to pay our costs	7,500
		Legal Assistant/Apprenticeships (employing)	Decision to take on lower cost staff and train the lawyers of the future	7,500
		Iken Efficiency savings	Automation of work processes	4,750
		Trainee Solicitor savings	Decision to take on lower cost staff and train the lawyers of the future	4,750
Reducing the cost of service provision to the council Total				157,500
	New External Clients	New External Clients	Additional income from marketing initiative	57,319
New External Clients Total				57,319
Advice on projects which would otherwise require external advisers to be retained		Complex litigation work savings vs private practice	Previously delivered by external providers	50,000
		Superannuation Fund litigation	New work stream	5,750
Advice on projects which would otherwise require external advisers to be retained Total				55,750
Training initiatives & schemes		Other training savings	Previously delivered by external providers	27,950
		Community Care Conference savings	Previously delivered by external providers	10,000
		Property and Planning Conference savings	Previously delivered by external providers	2,800

		HR lunchtime employment law briefings	Provided in house	2,500
		Free legal update service	Previously delivered by external providers	250
	Training initiatives & schemes Total			43,500
Cashable & Generation Total				314,069
Non Cash Saving/ Efficiency	KLS initiatives and activities to suppress/avoid costs to KCC	PCT litigated recovery	Debt that KCC would have not recovered as part of the sudden DoH announcement to wind up PCTs	421,000
		Increased use of internal advocacy	Gate keeping initiatives with SCS	225,000
		Inflationary savings price freeze	Non-cash part of KCC efficiency savings. Rates unchanged/did more for the same	110,000
		Improved and more efficient partnership with SCS	SCS reduced demand through gate keeping initiatives	90,000
		Self-funding TCP/cost of living rise	Non-cash part of KCC efficiency savings to deliver no impact on the budget line for the council	65,000
		Supplies and Services savings	Suppression of costs for clients	54,000
		Improved working with courts	Reducing care proceedings towards 50 weeks (now around 26weeks)	33,000
		Advocacy savings on employment matters	Gate keeping initiatives with SCS	15,000
		Premises savings	Suppression of costs for clients	11,000
		Highways & Planning – flexible workforce deployment	Suppression of costs for clients	10,000
		Work with Procurement on Standard terms & conditions	Suppression of costs for clients	10,000
		Crown Court trial/education savings for KCC	Suppression of costs for clients	8,500
		Transport savings	Suppression of costs for clients	8,000
		Office relocation/New Ways of Working	Suppression of costs for clients	7,500
		Transcription savings	Suppression of costs for clients	4,250
		Tenancy at Will precedents	Suppression of costs for clients	4,000
KLS initiatives and activities to suppress/avoid costs to KCC Total				1,076,250
Non Cash Saving/ Efficiency Total				1,076,250
Grand Total				1,390,319

Year	2013/14
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Cash/non Cash	Heading	Reported Efficiency Saving	Narrative	Total £
Cashable & Generation	Reducing the cost of service provision to the council	Reduction of counsel fees and other disbursements	Estimated saving on reduction in spend to 2012/13 on like for like basis	400,000
	Advice on projects which would otherwise require external advisers to be retained	Advice on projects which would in the past have required external advisers to be retained. Estimated savings against external firm rates	Previously delivered by external provider	184,000
	New External Clients	New External Clients	Additional income from marketing initiative	91,985
	Training initiatives & schemes	Bespoke training courses carried out for KCC by KLS. Estimated savings against cost of using external trainers	Previously delivered by external provider	45,000
Cashable & Generation Total				720,985
Non Cash Saving/ Efficiency	KLS initiatives and activities to suppress/avoid costs to KCC	Reduction of counsel fees and other disbursements	KLS & SCS lobbying around the unfairness of the then cost regime for court fees	400,000
		Reduction in salary bill for legal staff	Decision to take on lower cost staff. Impact on KCC nil	199,100
		Unfunded pay award for legal staff	Additional saving to find each year - rates stay the same. Impact on KCC nil	93,600
		Reduction in expenditure for supplies and services	Part of the drive to balance the budget - rates stayed the same. Impact on KCC nil	72,000
		Reduction in transport costs	Part of the drive to balance the budget - rates stayed the same. Impact on KCC nil	12,900
Non Cash Saving/ Efficiency Total				777,600
Grand Total				1,498,585

Year	2014/15
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Cash/non Cash	Heading	Reported Efficiency Saving	Narrative	Total £
Cashable & Generation	Reducing the cost of service provision to the council	A key part of <i>Evolution</i> has been the replacement of external locum staff with junior, developing lawyers as part of a “right person, right job” methodology (saving £150,000 per year).	Previously delivered by external provider	150,000
		Delivering SC savings by reducing spend on previous year	SC savings in time and disbursement charges compared to previous year	409,000
	Reducing the cost of service provision to the council Total			559,000
	Advice on projects which would otherwise require external advisers to be retained	A key part of <i>Evolution</i> has been to extend the nature and scope of work that KLS does, in order to reduce KCC’s reliance on external law firms.	Previously delivered by external provider	75,000
		Advising in respect of the re-structuring and re-aligning of Commercial Services.	Previously delivered by external provider	50,000
		KLS staff are advising and supporting KCC on a growing list of major projects, reducing reliance on more expensive external lawyers	Previously delivered by external provider	45,000
	Advice on projects which would otherwise require external advisers to be retained Total			170,000
	New External Clients	New External Clients	Additional income from new clients marketing initiative	94,851
	New External Clients Total			94,851
	Training initiatives & schemes	Training Schemes	Additional income from marketing initiative	31,264
		KLS now delivers 60% of its own training.	Previously delivered by external provider	15,000
		Training for procurement staff	Previously delivered by external provider	10,000
		KLS continues to expand the range of training and legal learning opportunities. These outputs are bespoke and designed around improving KCC service delivery and outcomes.	Previously delivered by external provider	10,000
	Training initiatives & schemes Total			66,264

Cashable & Generation Total				890,115
Non Cash Saving/ Efficiency	KLS initiatives and activities to suppress/avoid costs to KCC	Deliver SC Savings	Supported the argument for the Home Office to change the court fees payable	491,000
		Negotiating settlement of the Archbishop Courtenay CPO reference with BT, avoiding the expense, uncertainty and delay of a tribunal process.	Previously delivered by external provider	35,000
	KLS initiatives and activities to suppress/avoid costs to KCC Total			526,000
Non Cash Saving/ Efficiency Total				526,000
Grand Total				1,416,115

From: Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee –10 September 2015

Subject: **Work Programme 2015**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: Standard item

Summary: This report gives details of the proposed work programme for the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee

Recommendation: The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and agree its work programme for 2015.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed Work Programme has been compiled from items on the Forthcoming Executive Decision List; from actions arising from previous meetings, and from topics identified at agenda setting meetings, held 6 weeks before each Cabinet Committee meeting in accordance with the Constitution and attended by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and group spokesmen.
- 1.2 Whilst the Chairman, in consultation with the Cabinet Members, is responsible for the final selection of items for the agenda, this item gives all Members of the Cabinet Committee the opportunity to suggest amendments and additional agenda items where appropriate.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 At its meeting held on 27 March 2014, the County Council agreed the following terms of reference for the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee “To be responsible for those functions that fall within the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate”.
- 2.2 Further terms of reference can be found in the Constitution at Appendix 2 Part 4 paragraph 21 and these should also inform the suggestions made by Members for appropriate matters for consideration.

3. Work Programme 2015

- 3.1 An agenda setting meeting was held on 24 July 2015 at which items for this meeting’s agenda were agreed. The Cabinet Committee is requested to consider and note the items within the proposed Work Programme, set out in appendix A to this report, and to suggest any additional topics that they wish to considered for inclusion on the agenda of future meetings.

3.2 The schedule of commissioning activity 2015-16 to 2017-18 that falls within the remit of this Cabinet Committee will be included in the Work Programme and considered at future agenda setting meetings to support more effective forward agenda planning and allow Members to have oversight of significant services delivery decisions in advance.

3.3 When selecting future items the Cabinet Committee should give consideration to the contents of performance monitoring reports. Any 'for information' or briefing items will be sent to Members of the Cabinet Committee separately to the agenda or separate member briefings will be arranged where appropriate.

4. Conclusion

4.1 It is important for the Cabinet Committee process that the Committee takes ownership of its work programme to help the Cabinet Members to deliver informed and considered decisions. A regular report will be submitted to each meeting of the Cabinet Committee to give updates on requested topics and to seek suggestions for future items to be considered. This does not preclude Members making requests to the Chairman or the Democratic Services Officer between meetings for consideration.

5. Recommendation: The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and agree its work programme for 2015.

6. Background Documents

None.

7. Contact details

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WORK PROGRAMME –2015
Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee

Agenda Section	Items
18 September 2015	
B - Key or Significant Decisions for Recommendation or Endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back Office Procurement • Legal Services Procurement
11 December 2015	
A Committee Business	Work programme
B – Key or Significant Decisions for Recommendation or Endorsement	
C - Performance Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Dashboards • Financial Monitoring • Facilities Management Contract Monitoring • Annual Equalities Report • Review of consultation and engagement and equalities considerations within the key decision making process
D - Other Items for comment/ recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Planning 2016/15 • Comprehensive spending review
Other items not allocated to a particular meeting	<p>LATC Partnership Register Update on managed print service Live Margate</p>

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