

# BRIEFING EDITION 3 OCTOBER 2011

Welcome to the Kent Forum Briefing.  
A chance to find out about the key initiatives, developments  
and meetings across the Kent Forum.  
[www.kentforum.org.uk](http://www.kentforum.org.uk)



## KENT FORUM UPDATE

The Kent Forum met on 22 September to discuss a wide ranging agenda including items on Locality Based Commissioning, Welfare Reform, Voluntary and Community Sector engagement and Strategic Finance Issues. A brief summary of the key items is included in this briefing. The full agenda, papers and minutes from the meeting are available on the Kent Forum website [www.kentforum.org.uk](http://www.kentforum.org.uk).

For further information visit: [www.kentforum.org.uk](http://www.kentforum.org.uk) or contact: [david.firth@kent.gov.uk](mailto:david.firth@kent.gov.uk)

## STRATEGIC FINANCE

Lee Colyer, Chair of Kent Finance Officers Group, attended to give an initial presentation on strategic finance issues including the Local Government Resource Review, the Review of LG Pension Scheme, and Budget projections. A further paper will be brought to the November Forum meeting which will include a detailed discussion on potential changes to Business Rates following modelling being undertaken with LG Futures.

A more collaborative approach to strategic finance was supported with a discussion on the benefits of partners sharing information at an early stage.

For further information contact: [graeme.brown@kent.gov.uk](mailto:graeme.brown@kent.gov.uk)

## VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

KentCAN were invited to introduce a discussion on the key issues that the Kent Forum and VCS can work together on and on identifying the best county level engagement arrangements between the Forum and the VCS.

The Kent Forum were appreciative of the impact the voluntary and community sector has across the county. The Forum is eager to continue conversations with the VCS both at a county and local level and to ensure that opportunities for collaborative working are pursued.

For further information contact: [david.firth@kent.gov.uk](mailto:david.firth@kent.gov.uk)

## WELFARE REFORM

Kent Forum agreed a joint response to send Government on key welfare reforms including Universal Credits and Council Tax Benefit changes. The Forum considers that the existing proposals can be improved to reduce the risk to the welfare of some of the most vulnerable residents in Kent. The response identifies a number of potential solutions that would offer a more appropriate way of delivering Universal Credits and Council Tax Benefits. These solutions include:

- Provision of a local contact point to provide support
- Develop a proposal for managed transition
- Greater freedom on discounts and Council Tax benefit scheme design
- Review of implementation timetable

For further information see the [Kent Forum response](#)  
or contact: [graeme.brown@kent.gov.uk](mailto:graeme.brown@kent.gov.uk)

## OPEN PUBLIC SERVICES WHITE PAPER

The Kent Forum agreed a joint response to the Open Public Services White paper, following work by the Kent Policy Managers Group. The response will now be submitted to the Cabinet Office.

The response sets out a number of key issues including:

- Urging Central Government to focus on transparency rather than added bureaucracy
- Stressing the roles of elected representatives who are accountable for spending the public's money
- Promoting a localist approach to performance frameworks
- Requesting a 'Right to Challenge / Bid' for Whitehall services.

For further information see the [Kent Forum response](#)  
or contact: [david.firth@kent.gov.uk](mailto:david.firth@kent.gov.uk)

## IMPORTANT DATES

2011

- 9 Nov** Joint Kent Chiefs  
**17 Nov** Kent Forum Conference  
POSTPONED  
**24 Nov** Kent Forum

## LOCALITY BOARDS

Locality Boards are designed to bring more democratic accountability to local services, placing both County and District Members centre stage in public service delivery at a locality level. It will be through these Boards that local priorities are agreed and new ways of delivering services that support those priorities developed, evaluated and where they work made available to other Locality Boards. This was illustrated in a discussion at the Kent Forum with reference to youth service and library service commissioning .

For further information contact [mary.blanche@kent.gov.uk](mailto:mary.blanche@kent.gov.uk)

## KENT POLICE

Following a presentation from the Chief Constable to Joint Kent Chiefs in July work has been progressing to develop a joint Anti-Social Behaviour strategy.

Conversations have been taking place with Districts with an update being brought to Joint Kent Chiefs in November.

Work is also being taken forward to develop a shared database to better respond to the public.

For more information contact:  
[stephen.corbishley@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:stephen.corbishley@kent.pnn.police.uk)

## AMBITION BOARDS

Ambition Boards are a way to bring more democratic oversight and accountability to the partnership working that supports the three countywide ambitions. A progress report will be brought to the Kent Forum at its next meeting in November.

Ambition Board 1 - There is agreement in principle for the well established Kent Economic Board to develop into a Board that combines both business and local government and which can drive forward our shared economic priorities. A meeting on 1 November will discuss the scope and role of the Board.

Ambition Board 2 has met for the second time and more detail is emerging on its core focus of tackling family poverty  
Ambition Board 3 will meet for a second time in November to develop its focus with discussions over the summer taking place on its potential role.

For more information contact: [david.firth@kent.gov.uk](mailto:david.firth@kent.gov.uk)

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

As part of the ongoing NHS reforms introduced by the Health and Social Care Bill currently before Parliament, the shadow Kent Health and Wellbeing Board is now meeting as a full committee of the County Council.

Three District Councils have been nominated by the Kent Forum to sit on the shadow Board -Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Swale, alongside KCC representatives and GP leads for each of the eight Clinical Commissioning Groups across Kent, who will take over responsibility for health commissioning from the Kent & Medway cluster PCT by April 2013.

Although in shadow form until April 2013, the Health and Wellbeing Board will be responsible over the next 12 months for developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the first Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Kent, which Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health and Social Care commissioners must align their commissioning plans to.

Roger Gough has been elected Chairman of the shadow Board.

For further information contact:  
[david.whittle@kent.gov.uk](mailto:david.whittle@kent.gov.uk)

## VISION FOR KENT - CONSULTATION

The Vision for Kent 2011-2021 consultation closed on 22 August. We have received approximately 800 responses from groups, organisations, and individuals across the different sectors in Kent.

Initial feedback on the consultation was taken to the Kent Forum in September with further analysis taking place in the coming weeks. A final draft of the Vision for Kent will be presented to the Forum in January.

A locality based breakdown of consultation responses is being prepared.

To read the draft and find out more visit [www.kentforum.org.uk](http://www.kentforum.org.uk)  
or for further information contact: [david.firth@kent.gov.uk](mailto:david.firth@kent.gov.uk)