

**BRIEFING  
EDITION 4  
DECEMBER 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)

The Kent Forum wish you a happy Christmas.



## KENT FORUM UPDATE

The Kent Forum met on 24 November to discuss an agenda focused on growing the economy including items on strategic planning, digital connectivity and an update from the Homes and Communities Agency. 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 PLANNING

Richard Alderton, Ashford BC, gave a short presentation setting out the hard choices affecting planning and infrastructure, the limitations of CIL and how to finance the investment needed. The paper made a number of recommendations where common approaches or tools could be used.

A Leaders Steering Group, supported by an officer working group, will take forward the paper's recommendations.

For further information visit [www.kentforum.org.uk](http://www.kentforum.org.uk)  
or contact: [richard.alderton@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:richard.alderton@ashford.gov.uk)

### HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY

Terry Fuller, Executive Director, HCA gave an overview of HCA developments over the past year. He spoke about the current housing challenges and how best to work with the HCA, including on affordable housing and the Government's new Housing Strategy.

It was highlighted that the housing market in Kent is very diverse and emphasised that the South East was UK PLC's centre for growth.

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

### STRATEGIC FINANCE

Lee Colyer, Chair of Kent Finance Officers Group, gave an overview of three key areas:

Business rate proposals - The consultation proposals were disappointing, missing the opportunity to rebalance the relationship between local services and business rates.

Medium term budget projections - Outlining the difficult context in which budget savings are being made and the budget gaps faced by partners.

Kent Forum's communication and influence - Raising a number of key areas including the need for greater collaboration to avoid cost-shunting.

The recommendations of the paper were agreed and are being taken forward by the Kent Finance Officers Group.

For further information visit [www.kentforum.org.uk](http://www.kentforum.org.uk)  
or contact: [lee.colyer@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:lee.colyer@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

### DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Kevin Lynes, KCC Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise, confirmed that a bid for BDUK funding had been successful with Kent and Medway being allocated £9.87m. KCC have agreed to match fund £10m and are developing a campaign to energise the market to provide the additional monies required to install broadband across the County.

A number of areas where partner support would be valuable were identified. These included the 'Vote for Better Broadband' demand registration campaign and facilitating applications for the new Defra/BDUK rural community broadband grant scheme.

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

## NEXT MEETINGS

2012

- 26 Jan** Joint Kent Chiefs  
**8 Feb** Kent Forum

## LOCALITY BOARDS

Locality Boards are a Kent initiative in response to the Localism agenda and provide an opportunity to bring together the democratically elected members in a District to help to identify and meet the needs of the area. Locality Boards will be able to help set priorities and are already involved in looking at the provision of some services e.g. libraries and youth services within their areas. Locality Boards have currently been set up in six Districts and most Districts have plans to set up Boards in the New Year.

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

## KENT FORUM CONFERENCE

The Kent Forum Conference will take place in the new year. A date in March is currently being sought.

The conference will focus on youth employment and how to prevent a 'lost generation'. It will provide an opportunity to launch the Kent Employment Project and the 14-24 Skills Strategy.

Further information on the conference will be available in our next briefing and on the Kent Forum website [www.kentforum.org.uk](http://www.kentforum.org.uk)

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

## KENT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Kent Fire and Rescue Service are currently undergoing a consultation on their service re-configuration.

The re-configuration poses the biggest change for KFRS in the last 50 years and will ensure stations are located due to need rather than on an historical basis. The consultation runs until 16 January.

For more information contact:  
[james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:james.finch@kent.fire-uk.org)

## VISION FOR KENT

The Vision for Kent 2012-2022 was approved by Kent County Council on 15 December. The Vision is being considered by District Councils over the next couple of months and will be approved by Kent Forum on 8 February.

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

## SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

In a challenging economic climate, Kent Forum has focused on supporting the conditions for growth. In East Kent, £40 million has been secured from the Government's Regional Growth Fund to provide finance direct to business and improve infrastructure, while the world-class research and development facility at Discovery Park, Sandwich has been designated as an Enterprise Zone following Pfizer's decision to exit.

In addition, Kent's major potential in the offshore renewables sector has been highlighted by Vestas's plans for investment at Sheerness, and although economic conditions remain difficult, development plans for Kent's regeneration and growth areas in the Thames Gateway, Ashford and the coastal and principal towns are well advanced and moving ahead, opening up some of the most significant investment opportunities in the South East.

For further information contact: [ross.gill@kent.gov.uk](mailto:ross.gill@kent.gov.uk)

## HEALTH UPDATE

The transformation of the NHS and public health continues. The Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board has met for the second time and considered items on the developing Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Kent, proposals on changing how we care for people with dementia and how the Board should work with provider organisations. The Clinical Commissioning Groups are continuing their authorisation process and hospital trusts are aiming to achieve Foundation Trust status. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment continues to be developed and will be published for consultation, along with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, in the New Year.

For Public Health we are still awaiting key documents from the Department of Health concerning the budget we can expect to be allocated and the outcomes framework we will work within as well as further guidance on workforce issues. The government has just issued a number of "Factsheets" that outline their expectations about how some of the system will work including the Operating Model for the new national organisation - Public Health England.

For further information contact:  
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