

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD

26 July 2011

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 VISION FOR KENT – FORMAL CONSULTATION

To agree a formal Borough Council response to the above consultation.

1.1 Vision for Kent Consultation

- 1.1.1 The 'Vision for Kent' (V4K) is the County-level sustainable community strategy. The existing document is being refreshed for the period 2011-2021 and this work is being led by the Kent Forum, a multi agency, Kent-wide partnership which has been developed from the former Kent Partnership.
- 1.1.2 An early draft of the revised V4K was reported to the March 2011 meeting of the former Community Development Advisory Board and a number of comments were submitted at that stage. For reference, these are reproduced at Annex 1 to this report.
- 1.1.3 The V4K continues to focus on three key 'ambitions':
- To grow the economy - for Kent to be 'open for business' with a growing, successful economy and jobs for all
 - To tackle disadvantage - for all people in Kent to achieve their potential and to have increased confidence that their quality of life is improving
 - To put people in control - for all people in Kent to be able to use their own resourcefulness to take control and responsibility for themselves, their families and communities
- 1.1.4 For each of these ambitions, V4K sets out why the ambition is important to the people of Kent, what positive impacts need to be achieved, and what actions need to be undertaken to achieve the ambition. Three county-wide Ambition Boards are now in place to take forward specific actions.

- 1.1.5 A period of formal consultation has now commenced across Kent which is running until 22 August 2011. The Borough Council has assisted in the consultation by informing our Parish Councils and local groups of the opportunity for them to comment on the document. The Borough Council's website also contains information and links to the V4K website to further promote the consultation exercise.
- 1.1.6 A full copy of the document can be viewed or downloaded from the Kent Forum's website at <http://www.kentforum.org.uk/>. A summary of the V4K consultation leaflet has been reproduced as Annex 2.

1.2 Borough Council Comments

- 1.2.1 As can be seen from the earlier comments set out at Annex 1, the Borough Council had a number of concerns about the earlier draft document:
- We expressed concern about the level of prescription in the draft document concerning how district councils should make specific partnership arrangements in the form of joint KCC/District member 'Locality Boards' to take forward the three ambitions
 - A need, under Ambition 1 (to grow the economy), to recognise the work of sub regional partnerships including the West Kent Partnership, the need to reflect the high number of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the county and the needs of rural businesses
 - More specific references under Ambition 2 (to tackle disadvantage) to the need to address mental health issues and more emphasis on preventative work to tackle entrenched deprivation
 - Concern that Ambition 3 (putting the citizen in control) was too aspirational in nature and should focus more, for example, on supporting the voluntary and community sector
 - The Board was also concerned about the technical language used in the early draft and the need for the document to be more action-orientated and thus meaningful for local people.
- 1.2.2 The latest draft of V4K continues to assert that 'during 2010/11, the emerging Locality Boards will establish themselves'. There remains no reference in V4K to the fact that not all Kent districts will wish to establish a formal 'Locality Board'. Indeed, recent information indicates that at least half of the Kent districts are not in favour of such arrangements and, like Tonbridge and Malling, would prefer to base delivery of V4K actions on the work of the existing Local Strategic Partnerships. I believe we should therefore re-iterate the point made previously that section 6 of the V4K should reflect a diversity of local approaches being developed to take forward the ambitions.

- 1.2.3 Changes have been made to the section on Ambition1 including references to the West Kent Partnership, the rural economy and the importance of the SME sector. As a result, I believe this section of V4K to be much improved compared to the earlier draft.
- 1.2.4 Similarly, a number of changes to the section on tackling disadvantage have been made to reflect the Borough Council's earlier concerns including references to mental health support for young people and the need to tackle entrenched deprivation. Whilst this to be welcomed, this section of V4K does have a very wide remit and a more targeted approach is to be recommended. For example, if disadvantage is to be tackled effectively, there needs to be a more concerted focus on the underlying causes of deprivation rather than, as at present, a series of actions which cover some of the causes as well as the symptoms and consequences of disadvantage. I suggest, therefore we invite the Kent Forum to look again at this part of V4K with this objective in mind.
- 1.2.5 A similar situation continues to exist with the third ambition – putting citizens in control. The temptation here has been to include a wide range of actions and proposals with the result that there is no overall focus. By way of example, V4K quotes a list of 17 priorities under this ambition, which, according the title of the section are merely 'some' of the top priorities. It is useful for V4K to focus on just three 'ambitions' but when each is supported by a vast number of priorities under each, the focus becomes diluted. Overall, V4K would, as the Borough Council suggested at the earlier consultation, benefit from a much smaller number of priorities under each ambition. The three Ambition Boards have in effect be asked already to consider this refinement at their initial meetings. It is suggested, therefore that the final version of V4K should be recast to reflect those discussions and to ensure that the document is more concise, focused and more easily understood. The work of each ambition board would then also be purposeful and would have a better chance of making a real difference to the issues under discussion.
- 1.2.6 Further work also needs to be done to improve the legibility of the document to the wider public in terms of its technical language, which is still in use.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 None

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 N/A

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 N/A

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

1.6.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 That the comments set out above **FORM THE BASIS** of the Borough Council's formal response to the draft Vision for Kent.

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	This is a response to a Kent Forum consultation.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	N/A	As above.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.