

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



## EXECUTIVE SERVICES

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### Chief Executive

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**NB - This agenda contains proposals, recommendations and options. These do not represent Council policy or decisions until they have received proper consideration through the full decision making process.**

Contact: Committee Services  
[committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk)

6 June 2018

To: MEMBERS OF THE PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel to be held in the Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Thursday, 14th June, 2018 commencing at 7.30 pm

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

## A G E N D A

### Part 1 - Public

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes

5 - 12

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel held on 15 February 2018

3. Update on action identified in the last Minutes

4. Kent Police Services Update

*Representatives of Kent Police to be present to address crime prevention issues and Chief Inspector Pete Steenhuis (sub-divisional commander for Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge) has been invited to provide the service update.*

5. Local Plan

*Update on the progress made to date and next steps*

6. Kent County Council Services Update

13 - 18

7. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Services Update

## DISTRIBUTION

### Borough Council Representatives

Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman)  
Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs J A Anderson  
Cllr Mrs S M Barker  
Cllr R P Betts  
Cllr T I B Cannon  
Cllr R W Dalton  
Cllr D Lettington  
Cllr B J Luker  
Cllr D Markham  
Cllr R V Roud  
Cllr T B Shaw  
Cllr B W Walker

### Parish and Town Council Representatives

Addington  
Aylesford  
Birling  
Borough Green  
Burham  
Ditton  
East Malling and Larkfield  
East Peckham  
Hadlow  
Hildenborough  
Ightham  
Kings Hill  
Leybourne  
Mereworth  
Offham  
Platt  
Plaxtol  
Ryarsh  
Shipbourne  
Snodland  
Stansted  
Trottiscliffe  
Wateringbury  
West Malling  
West Peckham  
Wouldham  
Wrotham

### County Councillors

Trudy Dean, Malling Central  
Matthew Balfour, Malling Rural East  
Sarah Hohler, Malling North  
Peter Homewood, Malling Rural North East  
Harry Rayner, Malling West

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## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

Thursday, 15th February, 2018

**Present:** Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr Mrs S M Barker, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr D Markham, Cllr R V Roud and Cllr T B Shaw.

Together with Addington, Aylesford, Birling, Borough Green, Burham, Ditton, East Malling and Larkfield, Hadlow, Kings Hill, Leybourne, Offham, Platt, Plaxtol, Shipbourne, Snodland, Stansted, Wateringbury, West Malling, Wouldham and Wrotham Parish/Town Councils and County Councillor Mr H Rayner.

Councillors Mrs S Bell, Mrs A S Oakley, D A S Davis, O C Baldock, M R Rhodes and T C Walker were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T I B Cannon, R W Dalton, D Lettington, B J Luker, Hildenborough, Trottscliffe and Mrs S Hohler.

### PART 1 - PUBLIC

#### **PPP 18/1 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **PPP 18/2 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES**

The Chairman referred to Minute Number PPP 17/7 (Parish Charter) and as the final version of the Parish Charter had been approved by Cabinet on 8 February 2018, it was formally signed by the Leader of the Borough Council (Councillor N Heslop) and the Chairman of the Kent Association of Local Councils (Tonbridge and Malling branch) (Patrick Thomas) on behalf of the parish councils.

#### **PPP 18/3 KENT POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (Mr Matthew Scott) set out future aspirations and priorities for Kent Police and advised of a number of new initiatives planned to recruit additional officers.

Members were reminded that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was an elected representative who set policing priorities for the county; created a Police and Crime Plan in consultation with the public; held Kent Police to account and had overall responsibility for the policing

budget, including setting the council tax precept for policing. In addition, services for victims of crime were commissioned and community safety projects funded. The overarching guiding principles of the Police and Crime Plan was safer communities, ensuring people got the right care from the right people; protection of vulnerable people; putting victims first and tackling all forms of abuse and exploitation.

Particular reference was made to initiatives supporting vulnerable people and one of Mr Scott's priorities was to make sure that those with mental health issues who came into contact with the police had access to the right support. Funding had been allocated within the commissioning budget to enable schemes or projects directly related to this priority to be supported.

Future priorities were summarised and included continuing discussion and liaison with communities, parish councils and the Kent Association of Local Councils, with visible and accessible policing remaining the primary focus.

Particular reference was made to the financial challenges around the policing budget which had resulted in a £12 increase to the police element of Council Tax. However, this increase represented a significant commitment and investment in neighbourhood policing as £1 per month funded 200 additional police officers. This also enabled a further 80 call operators to be recruited to improve the 999 and 101 call handling. Government funding for local policing remained unchanged and Mr Scott would continue to press and lobby for increased funding.

There was a commitment to maintain and protect Police Community Support Officer (PCSOs) numbers at 300; increase the size of rural and road policing and maintain a visible police presence.

In-depth discussion followed on a range of issues as summarised below:

**Speeding on rural roads:** Wouldham Parish Council asked whether it was possible to undertake 'speed traps' to enforce speed limits in the village and change road priorities. Mr Scott reiterated that road safety remained a policing priority and that many organisations could offer assistance. Acting Chief Inspector Martin advised that many options were available to address speeding on rural roads and parish councils were encouraged to contact Kent Police direct to discuss the Speed Watch initiative.

**On-line reporting:** In response to a query raised by Aylesford Parish Council, Mr Scott confirmed that on-line reporting of some offences was currently being piloted. Unfortunately, it was not possible to upload attachments, such as photographs, at the current time but this would be introduced in the future. However, if photographs were available individuals could be contacted by officers for further information.

**Police Community Support Officers:** Burham Parish Council thanked Mr Scott for successfully getting PSCOs 'powers' to address certain issues.

**Visible policing in communities:** Snodland Town Council asked that local police officers consider patrolling side roads in communities to be more visible. Reference was made to incidents of anti-social behaviour at allotments and the difficulties in contacting 101 to report these offences. Acting Chief Inspector Martin asked that any local intelligence regarding anti-social behaviours be shared with local PCSOs to follow up. Police operations could then be considered for those areas or wards where problems had been identified.

**Helping vulnerable people:** Reference was made to the number of cases where police were offering support to vulnerable people in Accident and Emergency, especially those with mental health issues. It was observed that this reduced the number of visible police officers available to deal with crime. As this was recognised as a significant problem, Members asked what steps were being considered to alleviate this and whether there was a risk that the additional officers being recruited would be diverted away from policing to support vulnerable people.

Mr Scott referred to an initiative called Street Triage being piloted in Medway and which aimed to improve assistance to those in mental health crisis. This involved one mental health nurse supporting police officers to help people get into the right health based place of safety quicker by identifying what the issues were. There was potential for this pilot to be rolled out further across Kent.

In addition, it was noted that Mind based in Tonbridge operated a well-being café that offered support to vulnerable people.

**Increase of pavement parking:** Several parish councils expressed frustration at the increase of pavement parking which created obstructions for both pedestrians and motorists. Mr Scott recognised these frustrations and would encourage the Road Policing Unit to include guidance on considerate parking as part of their road safety campaign. Acting Chief Inspector Martin advised that local PCSOs were pro-actively tackling inconsiderate parking in their areas by speaking to individuals where possible. Referrals could also be made to the Road Policing Unit who could contact Kent County Council to see if it was possible for road traffic orders to be amended and double yellow lines introduced.

If the obstruction was in a dangerous place, such as a junction, and concerns were raised, Kent Police would look into the matter.

**Investment in additional police officers:** In response to a question raised regarding increased police visibility on streets as a result of the

announced recruitment, Mr Scott confirmed that investment in 200 extra officers would mean more would be allocated to community policing. Demand on policing was significantly higher than in previous years and represented significant challenges when handling resources. It was reported that police officers were busier than in the past due in part to increased anti-social behaviour and support of those in a mental health crisis. However, Members were assured that Kent Police continued to investigate all crimes.

**Community Police Volunteering Scheme:** Kings Hill Parish Council asked for an update regarding the volunteering scheme for community policing and whether there were any volunteers from the Tonbridge and Malling area. In response, Mr Scott explained that volunteers would be available to provide 16 hours per week of visible policing and work with communities. The volunteers would be in addition to PCSOs. There had been a positive response and once the pilot scheme was implemented further details would be shared.

**Attendance at parish council meetings:** A lack of police attendance at some parish council meetings was reported. Acting Chief Inspector Martin reminded Members that police resources needed to be managed carefully and it was important to use officers to deal with service priorities. However, Members were assured that Kent Police would try and attend a parish meeting once a quarter and if it was not possible to attend in person due to ongoing operations, then a written report would be provided.

**Neighbourhood Watch:** Kent Police were supportive of local neighbourhood watch schemes and details of the local co-ordinator (David Spitter) were available on the following link:

<https://www.kent.police.uk/advice/community-support/neighbourhood-watch/>

**Youth Education Officer:** A Youth Education Officer was working with local schools to educate and improve relationships with young people. The Chairman suggested that Kent Police liaise with the Advisor Network which was an initiative that aimed to strengthen links between education and businesses for the benefit of young people.

In closing, Mr Scott advised that attending this type of forum and discussing issues with community representatives was beneficial. Parish councils were also encouraged to promote the fact that Kent Police was actively recruiting and there were good career opportunities for the right candidates.

The Chairman thanked Mr Scott for attending the meeting and participating in such a detailed discussion. An open invitation to attend a future meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel was also extended.



**PPP 18/4 KENT POLICE SERVICES UPDATE**

As any significant items of business had been discussed as part of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner debate, Acting Chief Inspector Martin provided a brief update on current police operations and initiatives.

Particular reference was made to a spate of thefts from motor vehicles, primarily BMWs, in the Aylesford and Ditton area. This was part of a national crime series and media releases had been produced to encourage and offer crime prevention. Unfortunately, no perpetrators had yet been apprehended.

There had also been recent operations to tackle drug offences.

Acting Chief Inspector Martin emphasised that Tonbridge and Malling remained a low crime area and that Kent Police had a good working relationship with partners, especially the Borough Council.

**PPP 18/5 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS**

The Kent Association of Local Councils requested further advice in respect of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and the consequential position of parish councils with Dog Control Orders.

In response, the Head of Service for Licensing, Community Safety, Customer Services and Tonbridge Castle advised that a number of documents giving further guidance were available on the website, together with some Frequently Asked Questions.

<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/services/community-and-living/community-advice/community-safety/pspo-consultation>

A briefing paper had also been prepared which attempted to answer further questions raised and this would be circulated with the Minutes for information.

The current PSPO would end in April 2020 and in order to ensure continuity the process of reviewing its operation had already begun. It was reported that the Borough Council would start looking at evidence for either continuing the existing Order or whether any new provisions should be included to address recurring issues of anti-social behaviour.

The points to consider when gathering evidence for this process was to understand if there had been any continuous behaviours which were having an adverse effect on the quality of life of residents.

In addition, during 2018 the Borough Council would review how parish councils could provide evidence of breaches of existing PSPOs.

Particular reference was made to bye-laws and Dog Control Orders (DCO) and it was noted that where bye-laws were already in place these would remain. However, this was only to the extent that they regulated activities covered by the PSPO and the bye-law would be of no effect for the duration of the Order. From April 2020, existing bye-laws would come back into effect unless a further PSPO had been granted.

In summary, any existing Dog Control Orders had been superseded by the Public Spaces Protection Order so enforcement fell to the Borough Council.

The Head of Service reiterated that the Borough Council enforced PSPOs and if sufficient evidence was provided this would be progressed. A number of authorised officers within the authority were being trained on how to identify a breach of the PSPO and this would involve not only the current Enforcement Officers, but other officers who travelled around the borough during their day to day work. At the current time, it was difficult to predict the number of officers that would be used for enforcement.

In response to a question raised about using parish council volunteers, the Head of Service advised that an initiative to train and empower parish council representatives for the future could be considered as part of the ongoing review.

Members expressed frustration about enforcement of dog fouling and any support offered by the Borough Council was welcomed, although the pressure on already stretched resources was recognised. Specific issues would be raised and discussed at the next PSPO Review meeting. In the meantime, Members were reminded that Environmental Health Services could be contacted for advice and assistance.

Kings Hill Parish Council highly recommended contacting the Environmental Projects Co-Ordinator who had implemented a series of educational events, including 'flag and bag', which had been a great success.

#### **PPP 18/6 BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET 2018/19**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation and Property presented the report of the Director of Finance and Transformation, which set out information on the Borough Council's budget preparations for 2018/19.

It was reported that the Borough Council was due to see a further reduction in its Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) cumulating into a decrease by 2018/19 of some 23% since the start of the 4 year settlement. Fortunately, the New Homes Bonus allocation for the year would be better than expected due to the exceptional delivery of new homes, so the additional funding over expectation negated some of the loss in the SFA.

Particular reference was made to the recent announcement of the Secretary of State that for shire district councils, a referendum would be triggered when council tax was increased by 3%, or more than 3% and more than £5. Proposals for setting the Borough Councils budget assumed that the option to levy a council tax increase of up to 3% would be taken up. This represented an increase of £5.91 per annum on last year's council tax.

The continued need to deliver savings was reiterated and further detail was set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report. However, in summary it was anticipated that the focus for any potential future savings would be around the themes of 'contracts' and 'service change and reduction'.

Parish Councils were advised that Full Council was due to meet on 20 February to set the Borough Council's budget and council tax.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation and Property emphasised that the Borough Council's financial position remained challenging, especially against a continuing reduction in Government funding.

[Subsequent to the meeting, Full Council on 20 February had agreed the proposals summarised at the Parish Partnership Panel and the full detail would be set out in the Council Minutes in due course].

#### **PPP 18/7 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE**

Members noted the report of the Kent County Council Community Liaison Officer (Anne Charman), which set out details of a number of County initiatives and consultations.

All Kent County Council consultations could be viewed online at:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti>

#### **PPP 18/8 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE**

The Chairman, in his role as Leader of the Borough Council, advised that there were no significant issues to report that had not already been raised earlier in the meeting.

However, reference was made to a commitment made at a previous Parish Partnership Panel regarding the creation of a 'directory' that would provide information on points of contact for areas of relevance to parish councils, such as development control, licensing and street scene.

It was anticipated that a draft 'directory' would be circulated in advance of the next meeting (June 2018), either attached to these Minutes or as soon as possible thereafter, for comment.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

## Tonbridge and Malling Parish Partnership Panel

Thursday, 14 June 2018

### Kent County Council Services Update

#### Did you know that many of KCC's meetings are webcast?

KCC broadcasts some of its council meetings live online, giving you the chance to see council decision making in action.

Webcast council meetings from the past year are also available to view:

<https://kent.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>

**Key points taken from the Report by Paul Carter, Leader of the Council to Full Council on 17 May 2018** (minutes not yet published).

- Mr Carter provided a progress update on Health and Social Care integration through the Sustainable Transformation Programme (STP), focusing on the delivery of local care. Mr Carter has recently been invited, as a sub group of the STP Board, to Chair the Local Care Implementation Board across the health economy of Kent and Medway. To date the Local Care Implementation Board has held three productive meetings. From these sessions it has become clear that the vision put together for local care, primary care and community health has been signed up to and adopted by all in the health and social care world across Kent. Now it is important to put the vision into practice and, most importantly put GPs at the heart of local care, taking a bottom up approach and working with local consortia of GPs and GP practices. Recently Mr Carter was invited to discuss this with a district-consortia of GPs to develop a model of delivery and determine what 'good' looks like. This must include involving GPs and empowering them to serve local communities. In addition, further funding is needed for acute hospitals and the delivery of local care. Mr Carter is optimistic that the CCGs will be able to find additional funding in the current year which will provide extra resources for front-line services and enable workforce expansion.
- Mr Carter addressed issues that will affect the budget for Education, both capital and revenue. KCC has been working nationally and in Kent, on the provision of sufficiency of school places, and the basic need allocation, working with both the Education Funding Agency and Department for Education to address the £100m shortfall in capital. This is not just a Kent problem but a nationwide problem. It is important that KCC inputs into the Spending Review next spring to ensure there is adequate resource to deliver expansions at secondary level in Kent. This alongside getting adequate High Needs Funding which is overdrawn by £10m to £12m resulting in KCC using its reserves to lend schools money to meet demand.

To view the whole meeting visit:

[https://kent.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/348503](https://kent.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/348503)

## **Guide to apprenticeships / 'Made in Kent'**

Visit [Guide to apprenticeships](#) for careers advice and information about different types of jobs.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/jobs/starting-your-career/be-an-apprentice/guide-to-apprenticeships>

Apprenticeships are an excellent way to get work-based training, working with real employers, training on the job and working towards an industry-standard qualification.

The 'Made in Kent' campaign continues to encourage employers to register vacancies as numbers of young people registering for apprenticeships still exceeds placements.

## **Kent Fostering - Open your Heart**

KCC urgently needs people to provide children and young people with loving homes. KCC is recruiting 200 new foster carers and urgently needs to fill the remaining 120 vacancies. For more information please contact 03000 420 002 or visit <http://www.kentfostering.co.uk>

## **Kent Public Health Observatory (KPHO) <http://www.kpho.org.uk/>**

KPHO provides public health intelligence through data collection, analysis and interpretation. Its library gives access to knowledge, resources and evidence to support public health and social care.

It has a library based in Sessions House, Maidstone. Library membership is open to anyone who works in Kent County Council or public health in Kent and Medway.

Non-members are welcome to use the library for reference and study purposes, although there may be a charge for this facility. You can also subscribe to its weekly e-bulletin and receive a weekly summary of what's new with links to new reports, policy and resources organized by topic.

## **Fact and Figures about Kent**

The Kent County Council Strategic Business Development & Intelligence Unit provides regular monthly updates on unemployment in Kent and other facts and figures, including area profiles, economy and employment data, population and census data, equality and diversity data, children and young people' data, land and property data, energy and environment data and deprivation and poverty data. Visit: [Facts and Figures about Kent](#)

## **KCC Highways – report a problem on the road or pavement**

KCC Highways, Transportation and Waste welcomes feedback from its customers and has designed a fault reporting tool so that residents can quickly and easily let us know about any problems on the roads and footways or about any equipment such as streetlights, that may not be working.

**If you wish to report a fault visit:** [www.kent.gov.uk/highwayfaults](http://www.kent.gov.uk/highwayfaults)

From here can be viewed all known issues, any planned works, report multiple issues, upload photos as well as track any existing enquiries. Residents can still call to report any complex or urgent matters on 03000 418181 and speak to one of KCC's trained highway specialists.

### **KCC Combined Member Grant Scheme 2017/18**

As agreed at the Budget County Council meeting on 20 February 2018, KCC's Combined Member Grant scheme opened again on **1 April 2018 with £20,000** available to every County Councillor to fund both community and highway projects in their electoral division. Tonbridge and Malling County Councillors between them have a total of £140,000 to allocate in 2018/19.

For more information on the Combined Member Grant scheme, please contact your local County Councillor or Anne Charman, KCC Community Liaison Officer.

KCC also produces a monthly publication 'Inside Track' which provides information on funding opportunities at a county and national level. For a copy of Inside Track or information on other funding opportunities visit: Community grants and funding  
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-grants-and-funding>

## **Consultations - have your say, your views count**

You can view all KCC consultations online at:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti>

**Signed up to the KCC Consultation Directory yet?** It only takes a few minutes to register and gives a full list of closed, current and planned consultations and provides an opportunity to feedback on local services and policies. It enables KCC to contact residents when an activity is due to take place or to receive feedback for a particular consultation or involvement activity when it is published on KCC's website.

Please note:

- there are separate lists for **Traffic Regulation Orders** and **Start of Works Notices** and for **Public Rights of Way Notices**.)
- to view and comment on planning applications that the County Council determines please visit the **planning application site**.

### **Current consultations:**

#### **Privacy Notices for Public Consultation Participation – 25 May to 27 July 2018**

From 25 May 2018, new regulations came into force which help protect your personal information and make it easier to see how we use the information you give us.

To view KCC's updated policies, which relate to the information you give us when you register to KCC's Consultation directory visit:

[Consultation Questionnaire Participation Privacy Notice \(Word Version\)](#)  
[Consultation Registration Privacy Notice \(Word version\)](#)

You can register without taking part in any questionnaires. The two versions above cover the data you give us when you register with us, and the information you provide as part of a public consultation questionnaire. This information is kept separately, which is why KCC needs two privacy notices.

You can stop receiving emails from KCC at any time by logging in and amending your profile information. Alternatively, you can request to have your email address and profile information deleted in full. To do this please email KCC at [consultations@kent.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@kent.gov.uk). This will not stop you from taking part in any consultations in the future, but you may need to re-register first.

## **KCC Media**

To view the latest news and releases from KCC visit KCC's Media Hub at <https://kccmediahub.net/>

### **Recent media releases**

#### ***KCC continues to work on £7.5 million pothole blitz (25 May 2018)***

Since March 1, KCC has filled in 21,519 potholes and carried out 38,795sqm of resurfacing where multiple potholes were found.

The issue remains the number one priority for Highways and dedicated teams have been assigned their own district to focus the work.

KCC has contracted the work out to local companies in the districts to ensure quicker response times to reports of problems. The companies are O'Rourke Contracting in Dartford and Gravesham; SCG Kent Ltd in Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells; Dukes Contractors Ltd in Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone; Amey LG in Swale and Canterbury; Steadline Ltd in Ashford and Folkestone and Hythe; and A R Cook Contracting in Thanet and Dover.

Since 1 March 2018, KCC has filled 1,091 potholes in Tonbridge & Malling and patched 2,924 square metres of road.

KCC, which has drawn part of the funding from its reserves, will be reviewing progress in June and will find more money if it is needed. Additional funding has also been invested into drainage works across the county.

#### ***Young Person's Travel Pass price rise to offset fare increases (24 May 2018)***

The cost of the Young Person's Travel Pass is to go up £10 to offset an increase in bus fare price rises.



The scheme, introduced by Kent County Council in 2014, offers free use of bus services Monday to Friday between 6am and 7pm.

It was announced last month that young people using Arriva buses would also be able to use the pass outside of these hours and at the weekends and during the school holidays from 6 May. Stagecoach bus users can also make use of the extended hours.

### ***New funding for suicide prevention across Kent and Medway (16 May 2018)***

NHS England and Public Health England have today announced £667,000 of new funding for suicide prevention across Kent and Medway.

The investment, announced today by Department for Health and Social Care, Public Health England (PHE), and NHS England, marks the start of a three-year programme worth £25 million that will reach the whole country by 2021.

It forms part of the government's commitment to reduce England's overall suicide rate by 10% by 2021 and will support the zero-suicide ambition for mental health inpatients announced by Secretary of State Jeremy Hunt in January of this year.

The money has been awarded to the Kent and Medway Sustainability and Transformation Partnership which is a collaboration between Kent County Council, Medway Council, Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust and all the NHS organisations across Kent and Medway.

### ***HeadStart Kent – Big Conversation for Young People (28 March)***

More than 100 secondary school pupils from schools and colleges across Kent met together to join the 'Big Conversation' about mental health in young people on Wednesday, 21 March.

The event, organised by Big Lottery Fund-supported HeadStart Kent, gave students information on improving their mental health, with workshops leading up to a big debate. Workshops with a practical element gave an opportunity to try proven techniques to lessen anxiety. These included recognising how to build resilience, healthy relationships, the use of social media and yoga.

HeadStart Kent is funded by the Big Lottery Fund to support 10 to 16 year-olds to build resilience; which is defined by young people as the ability to be mentally strong enough to bounce back from the problems in life.

The programme is currently active in Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone and Hythe, Gravesham and Swale and rolls out to Maidstone and Thanet later this year and to Dover and Tonbridge and Malling next year.

There is a **Kent-wide Resilience Hub** available at [www.headstartkent.org.uk](http://www.headstartkent.org.uk) offering information, videos and tools for everyone to use, as well as activities and services for young people.

Young people can be involved with the design and delivery of the programme by joining local youth forums known as Speak Out groups. Anyone interested should email [HeadStart@kent.gov.uk](mailto:HeadStart@kent.gov.uk)

### ***KCC drastically reduces bus savings (12 March)***

Proposed reductions to subsidised bus routes in Kent have been drastically scaled back following positive talks with bus companies and the decision by KCC to reduce the required savings from £2.25 million to £455,000 in this coming financial year.

Subsidised bus services represent just 3% of the network in Kent. The remaining 97% of services are run by commercial or community operators.

Following discussions with bus companies Stagecoach and Go Coach, proposals to move a small number of services from public subsidy to commercially-operated routes, are expected to go out to public consultation in April.

These changes are designed to protect school services and ensure communities currently served by a subsidised route will not lose out, while providing necessary budget savings

Go Coach has proposed revisions to service 404 from Edenbridge to Sevenoaks/Plaxtol to Borough Green. The proposal would take the current mainstream home to school transport contract and convert it to a school-focused commercial service.

The second element is refocusing the current 404 on Edenbridge to Sevenoaks, dropping the Plaxtol to Borough Green which is already covered by another service.

The council is clear that no further changes to the subsidised bus network are proposed. More than £40 million of bus-related business is commissioned by Kent County Council.

KCC's aim in holding **the Big Conversation**, is to maintain services, potentially improve rural access and deliver this at a lower cost. Discussions will be held with parish councils, commercial and community transport providers, technology providers and ultimately culminate in a Rural Bus Summit in the summer which will bring everyone together to discuss the way forward.

For more information on any of these subjects please contact:  
**Anne Charman**, KCC Community Liaison Officer  
[anne.charman@kent.gov.uk](mailto:anne.charman@kent.gov.uk) or 07717 665893

*KCC's Community Liaison Team covers all 12 supporting local County Councillors in their role administering their grants. The team works closely with public, private and voluntary sectors to help*