

# **Tonbridge and Malling Tonbridge Forum**

**Monday, 27 February 2017**

## **Kent County Council Services Update**

### **Key points from the Report by Paul Carter, Leader of the Council to Full Council on 8 December 2016 (presented by Mr Simmonds, Deputy Leader)**

- The annual settlement was awaited from the Government. In the Autumn Budget Statement from the Chancellor a significant omission was any mention of help for Adult Social Care and in particular, meeting the pressures Local Authorities were facing in providing care for the elderly. KCC is lobbying hard and has spoken with Kent MPs regarding the scope of the problem in meeting the demands of adult social care. These are inextricably linked to the problems in the Health Service relating to bed occupancy and ensuring there is a support infrastructure for those in hospital and needing continuing care. KCC's approach to this is fully supported by the Local Government Association.
- Sajid Javid MP (Minister for Communities and Local Government) and Chris Grayling MP were lobbied strongly when they attended the County Council's Network (CCN) Conference. CCN (Chaired by Paul Carter) has fully endorsed the request to Government to look again at providing this essential support.
- Reference was made to the very real budgetary problems that many Local Authorities had experienced which have been triggered by the need to prop up their adult social service budget. One of the options mentioned was that Government might allow an additional County Tax precept. An additional 1% Council Tax precept for Kent would produce roughly £5.6m which would help but would not meet entirely the pressures KCC was facing. The CCN has made it clear to Government that although this 1% would only be an additional £10 per annum for a band C taxpayer, which did not sound unreasonable, it would be in addition to the 1.9% council tax rise which KCC would be seeking and the 2% social care levy.
- There is a huge difference in care available between East and West Kent. In West Kent despite active recruitment there are simply not enough carers to meet demand despite premium payments from self-funders in the wealthier districts. As the aging population increases the situation will get worse. It is hoped the financial strain will begin to ease with the monies from the new Better Care Fund in 2018/19, but there may be additional obligations placed on local authorities with this additional money.
- Reference was made to the change over to the business rate. The Government is being lobbied to ensure the balancing formula for those local authorities who could not generate sufficient business rates was sensible and did not only favour the London Boroughs who did so much better than the shire countries.
- KCC is lobbying for restraint on London Boroughs, particularly those that are seeking to solve their housing problems by acquiring Kentish accommodation, which was so badly needed for its own Council Tax payers.

## **Apprenticeships for All**

KCC wants to offer more people than ever the opportunity to find rewarding jobs and careers through its apprenticeships. So it's making it easier for everyone to take their first steps, no matter what experience or qualifications they have.

If you think you or someone you know is ready to take up an apprenticeship right now, you can read about and apply for apprenticeships in all areas of work through [Apprentice Kent](#).

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/college-sixth-form-employment-and-training/options-at-16-and-beyond/apprenticeships-for-all>

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

KCC urgently needs people to provide children and young people with loving homes, particularly for:

- older children aged 13 to 18
- siblings
- disabled children
- unaccompanied asylum seeking young people.

Find out about the benefits, payments and all the support Kent County Council can provide you. For more information please contact 03000 420 002.

Fostering events are also a great way to find out more about what's involved. The next event in West Kent will be at 7.00pm on Thursday, 23 February at Broadmead Church, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5RF

## **Keep well, keep warm this winter**

For advice on how to keep well, including how to protect yourself from flu, keep yourself warm, how to book a Winter Home Safety Visit, and find out what health services are open in your local area visit:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/healthy-living/winter-health>

## **Options after 16**

Find out about the options available to young people once they turn 16, including education, employment and training:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/college-sixth-form-employment-and-training>

## **Volunteer Support Warden Scheme**

This scheme was piloted as part of the Kent Community Warden Service in seven areas across Kent. As a result of the success of the pilot, it is planned to offer a full scheme to all local councils from April 2017, with costs shared between participating councils and KCC.

## **Kent and Medway Business Fund**

The fund offers 0% loans between £50,000 and £500,000 to small and medium sized businesses in Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Gravesham, Maidstone, Medway, Sevenoaks, Shepway, Swale, Thanet, Tonbridge & Malling, and Tunbridge Wells.

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/business/business-loans-and-funding/kent-and-medway-business-fund>

## **Sign up to KCC's new mailing list and receive the latest council news in your mailbox**

By subscribing to KCC's free emailing service residents can receive important Kent County Council information and news as it becomes available. A valid email address is required and will be used only to provide information on topic preferences subscribed to. For more information visit: [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

## **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. KCC no longer offers a generic email service as the improved online fault reporting tool has been designed to ensure all of the information is captured so that faults are responded to quickly. 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 2016/17**

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: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-grants-and-funding>.

## **KCC Members agree a 3.99% council tax rise**

KCC Members agreed the budget for 2017/2018 at a meeting on Thursday, 9 February at County Hall, Maidstone. Councillors approved a 3.99% increase in council tax after a six-hour debate on spending plans for the coming financial year. The decision was made against the backdrop of falling central government funding and increasing social care costs

## 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 past, 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**.)

### Active consultations:

#### **Mental Health Service: Promoting Independence – 10 February to 24 March**

KCC is consulting on a proposal to combine contracts for Housing Related Support and Supporting Independence into one integrated Mental Health Service - Promoting Independence when the existing contracts expire in October 2017.

The Housing Related Support and Supporting Independence Service both work to enable people with mental health issues to live independent lives in the community. The proposal is to join up these services to allow for more flexible support, a more person focused system which is easier to access and promotes independence.

Bringing these services together and working differently with KCC's service providers, enabling them to meet people's needs in a person centred and more responsive way, will mean that people receive the support they need, when they need it and will enable KCC to deliver the efficiencies required.

KCC would like to hear your views on how the new service should work to best meet the needs of the people of Kent. For more information please visit:

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

#### **Freight Action Plan for Kent – 16 January to 12 March 2017**

Kent is unique in its strategic location in the country as a gateway to mainland Europe. Despite the positive economic benefits road freight brings to the county and UK, the negative implications are felt across the county. The Freight Action Plan for Kent includes nationally and locally important priorities such as Operation Stack and the provision of overnight lorry parking as well as looking into HGV routing and the powers that KCC can use to reduce the negative impacts of road freight. The plan incorporates a refresh of the original Freight Action Plan but brings it up to date with what we have already achieved and what we will plan and continue to do to mitigate the negative impacts of road freight in Kent.

The Freight Action Plan sets out what KCC has already achieved, the roles and responsibilities of the major stakeholders of freight traffic in Kent and outlines five key actions to help mitigate the negative impacts of road freight to the county which are as follows:

- to tackle the problem of overnight lorry parking in Kent,
- to find a long term solution to Operation Stack,
- to effectively manage the routing of HGV traffic to ensure that such movements remain on the strategic road network for as much of its journey as possible,
- to take steps to address the problems caused by freight traffic to communities,
- to ensure that KCC continues to make effective use of planning and development control powers to reduce the impact of freight traffic.

This consultation is an opportunity for people and organisations within Kent to express their views, including the extent to which they agree with our actions and approach to freight issues.

For more information:

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

## KCC news

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

### Recent media releases

#### *New seeds of growth for Kent Sheds project*

Kent residents are being encouraged to take up funding for new Kent Sheds projects, tackling mental health and wellbeing by encouraging people to make friends, share skills and support their local community through shed-based venues.

The Kent Sheds project started in 2014, jointly funded by Libor, building on the success of the international Men's Sheds movement, in a bid to tackle issues such as loneliness, social isolation and mental health problems.

Almost 30 sheds in Kent have so far received Kent County Council support to develop their projects in a range of locations including boats, lakes, shopping centres and community venues. Each Shed is unique to reflect local interest and skills of those attending. Very few are actual 'sheds', with most have fun and engaging themes and venues such as fishing lakes and allotments.

For more information about Kent Sheds, go to [www.kentsheds.org.uk](http://www.kentsheds.org.uk) and for funding details go to <http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-grants-and-funding/kent-sheds-grant>

### ***KCC Leader welcomes flood defences funding***

Kent County Council has welcomed news that multi-million pound funding has been given to the Leigh, Hildenborough and East Peckham flood defences.

The £4.6 million will go towards the flood defence schemes and joins the committed £2.5m for the Leigh from KCC. It comes after extensive work between Kent County Council, the Environment Agency, Maidstone, and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils on the schemes.

The EA identified improvements to the Leigh and Hildenborough Flood Storage Areas, and a new flood alleviation scheme in East Peckham, as the best way to reduce the risk of flooding to as many people as possible.

Funding for this six year programme will see improvements to the Leigh Flood Storage Areas and new embankment in Hildenborough and will cost an estimated £17.1 million.

This will be funded by central government, Kent County Council and Tonbridge Malling Borough Council, together with other contributions.

A separate flood alleviation scheme in East Peckham is estimated at £7.5 million and is reliant upon a successful application for funding from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

The funding is part of £34.2m of government cash announced recently to help create jobs, support businesses and create new growth opportunities.

### ***Kent County Council plans to stop illegal lorry parking on Kent's roads.***

Kent County Council is looking into the feasibility of a number of small lorry parks across the county to help alleviate the blight of illegal lorry parking.

The new parks would be run as a private and public partnership and KCC will work closely with the private sector to identify what funding options exist to deliver the sites.

### ***Strengthening Community Organisations in Kent.***

More than £1 million is being pumped into developing and strengthening community organisations. Following the publication of Kent County Council's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) policy in September last year, a new service is being introduced to provide support to voluntary sector organisations in the county.

The service is being funded by KCC, and will be delivered by Stronger Kent Communities, a consortium of organisations, starting on January 1 covering the whole county.

Stronger Kent Communities is made up of a number of partners including Funding for All, Kent CAN, Action with Communities in Rural Kent and a number of the Volunteer Centres from across

Kent. It is funded for at least three years, although it is intended to create a sustainable model of support for the VCS in Kent in the longer term.

For more information: <http://www.kentcan.org/welcome-to-the-temporary-landing-page-for/>

### ***Award for Britain's most improved road***

Kent County Council has been awarded a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award for Britain's most improved road.

The award was presented for the council's highway safety improvements on the A227 between Tonbridge High Street and Borough Green. Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards are presented to organisations in recognition of their outstanding contribution to improving road safety.

KCC was nominated by iRAP, a registered charity dedicated to preventing the more than 3,500 road deaths that occur every day worldwide.

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 district council areas in Kent supporting local County Councillors in their role as community leaders and administering their grants. The team works closely with partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors, to help ensure Kent's residents and local community groups are kept well informed about KCC's services and are given the opportunity to influence decisions.*

