

# Tonbridge Forum

Monday, 4 December 2017

## Kent County Council Services Update

### Key points from the Report by Paul Carter, Leader of the Council to Full Council on 19 October 2017

Mr Carter's report focussed on the autumn budget statement:

- There had been continuous improvements to the delivery of services and progress had been made towards achieving the three strategic outcomes: children and young people in Kent getting the best start in life, older and vulnerable residents being safe and supported with choices to live independently and Kent communities feeling the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life.
- Reference was made to unfairness in the current methodology used by the Department for Communities and Local Government and central government in distributing grants to support local government, particularly to county councils such as Kent. Mr Carter reported that he had been lobbying for additional help, in the form of a two-year transitional fund, prior to the introduction of a new funding methodology for local government in 2020/21 and the full repatriation of business rates.
- The existing two-year transitional grant, which had provided an additional £6 million of funding a year, would conclude at the end of the financial year; in addition to other grant reductions including the Revenue Support Grant. Good progress had been made in terms of the authority's submission, in conjunction with the borough and district councils, to become one of the 100% business rate retention pilot areas; the pilot would bring £6m – £7m of additional funding over the next two years.
- Figures were provided to highlight the variation in reductions to the Revenue Support Grant. Mr Carter noted that the average council tax paid per head of population was £185 in Inner London, £241 in Outer London, £260 in metropolitan areas, £290 in unitary areas and £360 in county council areas; £360.09 per head was paid in Kent. Estimated Revenue Support Grant per head in 2018/19: £109 in Inner London, £58 in Outer London, £87 in metropolitan areas, £54 in unitary areas and £24.31 in county council areas; it was estimated that Kent would receive £24.69 per head. There had been a 58.6% reduction to the Revenue Support Grant in Inner London over the past four years, in contrast to county councils, in particular Kent whose grant had reduced to 94.4%. Further, county councils did not fully benefit from the New Homes Bonus, like unitary authorities did, as the bonus was split 80:20 between district and county councils.
- Despite grant reductions, Kent had modernised and transformed through commissioning and procurement and provided a range of non-statutory services, for example the £80m Freedom Pass, £6m subsidised bus routes and £16m enablement service to help and support people as they come out of hospital.
- As part of the proposal to reduce subsidies for uneconomic bus routes, the authority was looking to develop community provision through the potential use of an Uber type technology to allow taxi sharing in rural areas.

## Primary School Places

Applications for children due to start primary and junior school in September 2018 open at 9am on **6 November 2017 and close on 15 January 2018**.

You can apply online or by post.

For more information read KCC's [guide to primary school applications \(PDF, 2.5 MB\)](#). Or for advice please call 03000 41 21 21 or email [primaryadmissions@kent.gov.uk](mailto:primaryadmissions@kent.gov.uk).

## Lorry Watch

KCC works to mitigate the impact of freight in Kent and has introduced a scheme called Lorry Watch to tackle the issue of lorries using inappropriate rural routes in Kent. The scheme aims to support and empower local residents in areas where issues persist with the through traffic of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

In addition, KCC has completely overhauled Kent's lorry-route map and conducted many reviews of lorry directional and regulatory signs as well as updating mapping companies to ensure that the maps on sat navs are accurate.

The Lorry Watch scheme is run by local residents. Community volunteers record details of lorries that are suspected of using unsuitable roads or not sticking to the limits and restrictions.

Once the information is collected, it is passed to Kent Police who can find the vehicle's registered keeper. If the vehicle is ignoring the legal limits and restrictions, the police contact the company and warn them that if they continue, it may result in formal action.

If there is no limit or restriction but the road is thought unsuitable, Kent County Council will contact the company and advise them to use the [Kent Freight Gateway journey planner](#).

**Setting up a Lorry Watch.** Anyone can set up a Lorry Watch. To do this, follow these steps:

1. You will need at least two volunteers for your Lorry Watch team. They must be aged 18 or over. Parish Councils or other community groups can be good places to find volunteers.
2. Contact Lorry Watch by emailing [freight@kent.gov.uk](mailto:freight@kent.gov.uk) or on 03000 41 81 81 to discuss the idea, after which the necessary equipment will be delivered to you together with safety information and instructions on how the scheme works.

## Guide to apprenticeships

For careers advice and information about different types of jobs visit: <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.

For example:

- start a career and start earning at 16 – the currently weekly wage is £100 at 16 and £170 for 18 and over,
- choose from more than 250 careers - from health and social care to management, construction and engineering to banking and media, leisure and tourism,
- choose from three levels of qualification - from GCSE and A-Level equivalent up to degree level,
- boost career prospects - 85% of former apprentices remain in employment and 32% are promoted within 12 months,
- boost earning potential - former apprentices can earn on average £100,000 more than other employees during their lifetime,
- get the same benefits and discounts as college or university students but avoid the costs of further education.

The 'Made in Kent' campaign continues to encourage employers to register vacancies as numbers of young people registering for apprenticeships still exceeds placements. As part of KCC's 'Made in Kent' apprenticeship campaign, '1,000 Interviews' was launched at Oakwood House recently to give young people the opportunity to experience mock interviews.

## **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>

## **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>

## **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 all working;

- in public health in Kent and Medway
- in social care in Kent County Council
- in Kent County Council

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: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent>

## **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. 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**

KCC's Combined Member Grant scheme has now opened with £22,000 available to every County Councillor to fund both community and highway projects in their electoral division. Tonbridge & Malling County Councillors between them have a total of £154,000 to allocate in 2017/18.

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>.

## 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:

#### Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment – 15 November to 22 January 2018

How often do you use your local pharmacy? Does your town need more? These are some of the questions being put to Kent residents in a new consultation.

- On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, statutory responsibility for publishing and updating a statement of the need for pharmaceutical services passed to Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments are used by the NHS to decide whether to approve applications for new pharmacies in an area and by commissioners to identify local health needs that could be addressed by pharmacy services.
- It is now time to refresh the PNA and publish a revised version for April 2018. The Health and Wellbeing Board is therefore consulting with Health and Social care professionals, organisations and people that use pharmacy services

(NB: The important role that pharmacists can play is highlighted in the NHS England 'Stay Well This Winter' campaign which KCC supports, urging people feeling under the weather this winter to avoid A&E, and to instead consider visiting their local pharmacy for quick, early advice. This is especially important over the winter months – when people are more likely to become ill or feel poorly.)

#### Gypsy & Traveller Site Allocation Policy – 14 November to 20 December 2017

KCC is consulting on proposed changes to its site Allocation Policy, including the introduction of a service charge for site residents and improvements to the application forms.

- **New Service Charge** - the proposed service charge will involve a flat service charge of £25 per week, per pitch, to be introduced from April 2018 (each plot/cost averaged out across all KCC sites).
- **Deposit Scheme** - a new deposit scheme is proposed for all new applicants when they sign the rental agreement. Deposits will be refunded when an applicant leaves or moves on, subject to the pitch being left in the same condition it was at the start of the rental period. The proposed deposit is £500. This amount will be subject to annual review.

- **Application Process** - the application process is being updated to make sure pitches are allocated to gypsy and travellers who meet KCC's policy on eligibility and who are deemed most in need at the time of their application.

## **Draft Budget Strategy 2018/19 – 12 October to 3 December 2017**

KCC is consulting on its draft budget strategy for 2018/19 and the associated council tax proposals.

KCC prioritises spending on services that:

- make sure children and young people get the best start in life
- communities feel the benefit of economic growth
- vulnerable residents are supported to live independently.

As the funding from government decreases and demand for services increase, savings need to be made through prioritisation of services and transformation efficiencies. To date £589m savings have been made over the past seven years but there still remains a significant funding gap that KCC wishes to consult on.

For full information on KCC's budget strategy and for information on how to take part in this consultation, please visit: [www.kent.gov.uk/budget](http://www.kent.gov.uk/budget)

## **KCC news**

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

### **Recent media releases**

#### ***KCC 'disappointed' at delay of planned Thameslink service to Maidstone East***

Kent County Council is extremely disappointed at the announcement this week by Govia Thameslink Railway of their decision to delay even further the start of the planned new Thameslink service to Maidstone East.

Once again Maidstone has been put to the back of the queue, with a delay of a further year from December 2018 to December 2019.

Kent County Council has been determined to have a branch of Thameslink services terminating at Maidstone East, and has campaigned over several years, with other councils and rail travellers' associations, to get the planned terminus for Thameslink services transferred from Tunbridge Wells to Maidstone East.

Kent County Council has always regarded this new service as a critical enhancement in the overall capacity in Kent's rail network, with the stops at West Malling (for Kings Hill), Borough Green & Wrotham, and Otford (for passengers from the wider Sevenoaks area) being essential to re-balance the travel flows between mid-Kent and the City of London

Furthermore, even the existing Thameslink service from Sevenoaks via Bat & Ball will now be truncated at Blackfriars for the period May 2018 to May 2019, further reducing the availability of through rail services between Kent and areas north of London.

Kent County Council will be writing to the rail minister to express our frustration at these further delays by the Department for Transport.

### ***UK first to clamp down on illegally parked HGVs***

Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council have joined forces in a UK-first to clamp down on illegally parked HGVs.

The scheme, which allows the authorities to clamp and fine drivers, has been developed by working with the Department for Transport (DfT).

The DfT agreed to change the current clamping policy for HGV's so that a clamp can be fitted for first time offences.

## **Supplementary information provided to the Tonbridge Forum – 4 December 2017**

### ***Kent County Council Bus Funding Review***

A report to the [Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee](#) on Thursday (November 30) included a proposal for members of the committee to agree to go out to consultation on Socially Necessary Bus Service funding.

It was agreed that in January, a consultation will be launched to assess the future level of subsidy and the timetable alongside possible withdrawals of subsidies which may impact on the delivery of some bus services.

The contracts under discussion could refer to the whole service, some evening journeys, weekend journeys, diversions off of the route or journeys at specific times. The specific journeys affected will only be those subsidised by Kent County Council and will be detailed in the consultation documents.

At present it is proposed to reduce the budget for Socially Necessary Bus Services (SNBS) by £4 million over the coming two years at a time when budgets are extremely tight.

The proposal has identified bus contracts, supported by KCC, which, subject to the consultation, could be withdrawn – it does not necessarily mean the whole service will go. KCC for instance, may fund a late-night service or Sunday journeys. It is also possible that well-used services will now be considered commercially-viable and be taken over by bus companies.

Supporting SNBS – which make up 3% of Kent's buses – is a discretionary activity by the county council – there is no statutory requirement to provide the funds for these bus services to run.

However, KCC recognises the significant importance of these bus contracts affected by the proposals which account for 1.6 million journeys.

We would encourage anyone affected by these proposals to take part in the consultation to ensure your views are known before a final decision is made later next year.

The meeting can be watched again [here](#).

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.*

