

Tonbridge Forum

Monday, 10 September 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 12 July 2018 (minutes not yet published).

- Mr Carter focused on KCC's medium, three-year capital programme which currently amounts to around £790m of 'traditional' investment, including maintaining schools, expanding schools, maintaining roads and building new roads alongside office and library estate needed to ensure the effective delivery of a complex array of services.
- Mr Carter stated the challenge now for KCC is to be more ambitious in its future capital programmes while remaining prudent. This new approach has been made possible through significant opportunities using the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) to borrow long term at very reasonable rates.
- By taking advantage of these preferential rates KCC can now focus part of its building programme on enablement strategies/projects that create income, add to social value and have the potential to provide significant capital gains for the authority. The County Library and Archives Centre is a perfect example of an enabling development where a new County Library and Archive Centre was needed and by building significant residential accommodation around it, this substantially brought down the costs of building.
- Regarding other income generating opportunities, there is a need to deliver another 1000 extra care homes across the county and demand is rising. Mr Carter asked if KCC should consider a bolder approach and take advantage of PWLB preferential interest rates to meet this demand, borrowing a bit more against the rental income stream that will flow from this capital build rather than relying on others. This would meet the rising demand for good quality accommodation as well as adding social value by keeping people behind their own front doors, following Ashford Borough Council's example of the housing delivered at its Farrow Court development.
- Mr Carter asked also whether KCC should consider investing in another Kings Hill development. In June 2018 Dominic Raab, the then Housing Minister, announced new powers to allow local councils to launch new towns and new villages through development corporations, subject to government approval. When the detail is published it will give local authorities the power to determine the locations of new communities with the potential to harvest a significant proportion of land value capital. (Obviously there will be a need to satisfy the 151 officer that rigorous and robust business plans will be in place to ensure where money is spent and that income will flow resulting in capital growth.)

- In conclusion, Mr Carter believes all these options should be explored to increase the social value of capital investments, income streams and maximum capital receipts and capital growth to help support delivering some of the essential infrastructure needed against the massive housing growth taking place across the county.

To view the whole meeting visit:

https://kent.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/348503

Kent and Medway Business Fund

The Kent and Medway Business Fund **will re-open to new pre-applications on 1 September 2018.**

This scheme aims to deliver investment to small and medium sized businesses in Kent and Medway, offering 0% loans between £50,000 and £500,000.

It is funded by loan repayments from previous Regional Growth Fund schemes (Expansion East Kent, Tiger and Escalate).

To register your interest please visit:

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

Click on the link for information on other [business funding and loan opportunities](#).

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.

Sign up to One You Kent

See what small changes you can make to your health and wellbeing by following this [link](#) and filling in a short questionnaire about yourself to help KCC determine what support is available based on your preferences.

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's 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

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 2018/19

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 & Malling County Councillors between them have a total of £140,000 to allocate in 2018/19.

Please contact your [local County Councillor](#) for more information.

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)
<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:

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028 – 20 June to 12 September 2018

The vision of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is to provide a high quality, well maintained Public Rights of Way network that will support the Kent economy, encourage active lifestyles and sustainable travel choices and contribute to making Kent a great place to live, work and visit.

The plan sets out in KCC's vision for the Rights of Way network and how it will work towards delivering this over the next 10 years.

KCC would like your views on the rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028 to ensure that it meets the needs and expectations of Kent residents.

To respond to the consultation please visit:

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/rightsofWayImprovementPlan2017/consultationHome>

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 work on £7.5 million pothole blitz (17 August 18)

Since March 1, KCC has filled in 48,635 potholes and carried out 165,429sqm of resurfacing where multiple potholes were found.

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

Kent County Council is responsible for most of the roads in Kent except motorways and trunk roads.

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.

KCC launches new select committee on loneliness and social isolation (2 August 18)

Kent County Council's (KCC) Scrutiny Committee has established a Loneliness and Social Isolation Select Committee to identify ways it can support the county's older residents.

The committee will investigate the current services available and identify initiatives and strategies to prevent or reduce the impact on residents.

The committee is cross-party and independent from the council's executive. It will gather information via several hearing sessions with relevant witnesses, off-site visits and the collection of written submissions from experts and interested stakeholders.

You can find out more information about the select committee and [read the published agendas here](#).

Gold award for KCC's support for the military (2 August 2018)

Kent County Council's support for ex-service personnel and Reservists was recognized on 2 August with the Ministry of Defence Employers Recognition Gold Award – just one year after receiving the Silver Award.

KCC's close relationship with the Military was cemented by the re-signing of the Kent Armed Forces Community Covenant in 2017 to enable the armed forces community to access public services without fear of disadvantage.

The council says it is firmly committed to addressing countywide issues relating to the Armed Forces Covenant including school admissions, employment, housing, health and welfare issues as it widens the understanding of the needs of the military and veterans including the above relating to families of current or ex-servicemen and women

KCC backs commuters over threat to high-speed trains (26 July 2018)

KCC has put its weight behind a campaign by Maidstone commuters who are mounting a last-ditch attempt to save high-speed train services to London.

More than 2,200 people have delivered a petition to the Department for Transport opposing plans to scrap the early-morning journeys from Maidstone West to St Pancras International.

Commuters say the proposed changes will add at least 20 minutes to their journeys every morning and evening.

KCC Leader Paul Carter said in a statement:

"I fully support the cause for the retention, and indeed the enhancement, of high-speed services to Snodland and Maidstone West. Kent County Council's response to the Department for Transport's public consultation in May 2017 included the case for retaining peak high-speed services at Maidstone West and adding an hourly off-peak service.

This latter proposal was not taken up by the DfT, which I expressed my huge disappointment over."

In even stronger terms, I have made it very clear to the DfT that the reduction of high-speed services or the proposed replacement of these services with a connecting service between Maidstone West and Abbey Wood would be unacceptable, as it would represent a circuitous journey with dubious benefit, and that elected members at both KCC and Maidstone Borough Council want the retention of high-speed services at Maidstone West.

"While demand at Maidstone West and Snodland will continue to grow with the delivery of substantial amounts of new housing, the benefit of running more frequent and higher capacity (12-car) trains on this service is that it would also provide the capacity required to meet the substantial demand at Strood and Gravesend, and therefore offer relief to the already overcrowded high-speed service via Medway.

"Given the substantial growth across Kent and Medway, more frequent and higher capacity high-speed services are required, and it is essential that the DfT and the operator of the new rail franchise, which is due to commence in April 2019, recognise this and provide the level of service that Kent commuters need. Work/life decisions have been made based on this service operating for a number of years now and it must continue to do so.

"KCC will continue to make this case to the DfT and the new franchise operator, whom we will meet for discussions once the award has been announced."

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



[Follow Kent County Council on Twitter @Kent_cc](#)

