

# KCT Arrangements – Consultation Document July/Aug 2011

By: Marisa White, Lead Officer for the KCT strategic review

To: KCT County Board Members, LCT Chairs and key stakeholders

Date: 18 July 2011

Subject: **Kent Children’s Trust (KCT) Strategic Review 2011** – key findings and proposed options for the future structure and operation of Kent’s Strategic partnership arrangements for Children and Young People.

Classification: Confidential  Unrestricted

## Supporting Papers:

Appendix 1 - Summary and survey of Children’s Trust arrangements in other Local Authorities.  
Appendix 2 - Summary of results of interviews with Children’s Trust Members.  
Appendix 3 - Key partnerships and the Children’s Agenda.  
Appendix 4 - Purpose and key areas of focus for a revised Kent Children’s Trust  
Appendix 5 – Proposed new structure

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**Summary:** This report sets out key findings from the 2011 KCT strategic review and puts forward options and recommendations for decisions on Kent’s strategic partnership arrangements for children and young people within the context of:

**Kent’s new overall partnership arrangements (Kent Forum), the development of the Health and Wellbeing Board and action required as a result of the inspection of Kent’s safeguarding and looked after children’s services.**

**KCT County Board members, LCT chairs and key stakeholders are invited to comment on these options and recommendations by Monday 8 August. Responses should be sent Marisa White, lead officer for the review [Marisa.white@kent.co.uk](mailto:Marisa.white@kent.co.uk)**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Kent Safeguarding Improvement Plan (priority 4) required a thorough review of the KCT strategic partnership. The aim of the review was:

*To recommend and gain agreement to a streamlined strategic partnership with the purpose of driving forward improved decision making, service integration, and joint commissioning around prevention, early and targeted intervention services for vulnerable children and young people at a time of organisational change. The effectiveness of the revised Kent Children’s Trust will be measured in terms of the outcomes experienced by the children and young people of Kent.*

Review specification March 2011

- 1.2 In conducting this review, the views of current KCT partners have been sought and information on Children's Trust arrangements in other Local Authorities has been gathered (Appendix 1). The review also builds on recommendations from the National Commissioning Support programme which reviewed the KCT in 2009.

## 2. National and Kent Context

### 2.1 Statutory requirements and legislation

Children's Trust arrangements were introduced through The Children Act 2004 which placed a statutory duty to cooperate on key agencies.

Through the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009, the previous government introduced additional requirements to make the Children's Trust Board a statutory body responsible for agreeing a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The previous government also introduced highly prescriptive guidance on the development of the CYPP. These additional requirements are being repealed, however the original statutory duty to cooperate remains as does the requirement for a Director of Children's Services and a Lead Member with accountability for the partnership arrangements. The government has been very clear that it expects local authorities to develop highly effective partnership arrangements to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. Removing the requirements of the ACSL Act was intended to give more freedom to design local partnerships and not to undermine the fundamental principle of working in partnership. This principle is underlined in Professor Munro's Review of Child Protection 2011 which highlights the importance of effective and co-ordinated multi-agency working through the Children's Trust to secure better outcomes for children and young people.

### 2.2 Kent partnership arrangements

A table setting out our key partnership arrangements as they relate to the children and young people's agenda is attached as Appendix 3. We have reviewed our Kent Partnership arrangements and these are now delivered through the Kent Forum and three Ambition Boards, focused on delivering improved outcomes against our three ambitions:

- to help the Kent economy grow
- to tackle disadvantage
- to put citizens in control

In addition, we have established an "early implementer" county-wide Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB). The HWBB is in shadow form and working within the sphere of influence of the Kent Forum and Ambition Board 2. The shadow board is testing the most appropriate approach and forms of governance in order to carry out its responsibility to oversee the production of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and to develop and oversee a high level joint health and well-being strategy for Kent. As part of this, we need to consider how to ensure partnership arrangements for children's services work effectively given the significant shared interests between child health services, public health, children's social care and the broader prevention and early intervention agenda around children, young people and their families.

In addition we are in the process of agreeing the establishment of a Kent Association of Schools which will influence how we engage with Kent schools both as a local authority and as part of strategic partnership arrangements.

## 3. Key Findings

### 3.1 Desk top review of other Local Authority approaches

As a result of national changes 24 local authorities approached through our survey are reviewing or refreshing their Children's Trust partnerships. Across these authorities, there is a general move to streamline and ensure a tighter focus on prevention and early intervention for vulnerable children, although the approach to membership ranges from the very broad and all encompassing to a clear focus on commissioners and a commissioning agenda. Where revised partnerships have taken action to reduce their membership, they have at the same time set out their intention to meet with a wider stakeholder group once or twice a year to involve them in joint planning and review. It should be noted, however, that no authority is planning to remove its strategic partnership arrangements for children, young people and families completely and the majority have an active Children and Young People's Plan. (Appendix 1). **Many of these authorities are targeting the work of their revised partnerships around strategic oversight of jointly commissioned programmes against agreed joint priority areas.**

### 3.2 Feedback from KCT Partners

KCT Board and Executive Members were invited to share their views through questionnaires and interviews under 7 themes identified by Ofsted as central to effective Children's Trust arrangements, these are:

- leadership
- partners roles and responsibilities
- governance and accountability
- strategy and planning
- joint commissioning and resources
- performance management
- workforce development
- communications and connectivity

A summary of the responses is attached as Appendix 2. There was recognition from the majority of interviewees that the current Board was too large to carry out its business effectively and that its role and remit had been too wide – making it difficult to ensure that it focused on the right things at the right time. Board members were often confused as to what should be the business of the Board and what should be the business of one agency or two agencies working in partnership. This led to very full agendas and insufficient time to focus and take the necessary decisions. The overall messages were that any revised arrangements need to have:

- Stronger leadership and links to Kent Forum and other key partnerships- the benefits of an independent chairperson were emphasised;
- Clearer accountability, rigorous performance management and scrutiny processes;
- Streamlined membership with a clear sense of purpose;
- More openness and transparency;
- Clearer processes to enable aligning of resources to deliver outcomes;
- Improved communications and connections between all stakeholders strategically and locally.

### 3.3 Analysis of the role and remit of other key strategic partnerships

An analysis of Kent's strategic partnerships that impact or have the capacity to impact on the delivery of improved outcomes for children, young people and families was carried out and is attached as Appendix 3. This was undertaken in order to identify whether another Board or multi-agency strategic partnership could take on the role and remit of the Kent Children's Trust. It is clear that although there is a mutual interest in improving outcomes for children and young people, the role and remit of these partnerships is very specific, focusing on particular priorities and outcomes. Expanding their remit to take on a broader agenda including the development, oversight and performance management of Kent's Children and Young People's Plan and the delivery of early intervention and prevention would pose a considerable risk. Both the evolving Health and wellbeing Board and the Ambition Boards of the Kent Forum are at a very early stage of development and would not have the capacity at this point in time to take on the business of Kent Children's Trust without compromising their own focus. **The unique contribution of a revised Kent Children's Trust would be to agree and ensure appropriate commissioning around the three or four (maximum) top priority areas around our vulnerable children and young people in Kent where the joint action and focus of three or more agencies is required to tackle the issues and improve outcomes in a sustained way.**

#### 4. What have we learnt from this review?

##### 4.1 Principles for any revised arrangements

**a)** The intention is that any new arrangements will be streamlined and build upon the ones that they replace. The principal purpose of our revised strategic partnership arrangements for children and young people is to better coordinate our joint working to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children, young people and families and to focus on early intervention and prevention. See Appendix 4. This does not mean that the partnership will not have an interest in universal services, but **its purpose has to be to improve outcomes for those children, young people and families who most need our joint efforts to prevent escalation of their needs.**

**b)** For the greater part, agencies' partnership working and commissioning will be through bilateral arrangements, for example KCC and Health may choose to commission services for disabled children, or schools and Police may work together to improve community safety in a specific locality. For some areas of work, for example safeguarding, it will be important that all agencies come together to work to a single approach. Our revised partnership arrangements will **focus on those areas that need a coordinated approach from three or more partners.**

**c)** **Not all of the business of the revised strategic partnership needs to be carried out through meetings.** The partnership will meet quarterly and will execute its business through time limited "task and finish" groups with a specific purpose. Some of its business can be carried out through use of technology to enable discussion and decision making.

**d)** Strong leadership is fundamental to the success of the new partnership arrangements. **An independent chairperson** would aid continuity and enable clarity of focus on the business of the Trust without being compromised by having to balance this with service delivery. **All members should also take a lead on agreed areas of action within the CYPP work programme and chairing of "task and finish" groups.** Partnership members will provide nominees, as appropriate, for task and finish groups in order to ensure the work of the partnership is delivered and is owned by all members. *It is essential that being a member of the revised partnership involves commitment and activity and not only attendance at meetings.*

**e) The revised Board will consist of commissioners. Providers will form a stakeholder advisory group.** Stakeholders will be brought together with commissioners at least once a year to input into development of priorities and agreement of required action, review of performance and to raise issues around practice. All stakeholders will receive key information and will have the opportunity to feedback and raise issues with the Board. **Local Children’s Trust Boards will continue to comprise of both commissioners and providers.**

**f) The key relationships with other boards and strategic groups e.g Health and wellbeing Board, KSCB, the Kent Forum (through Ambition Board 2), the Kent Association of Schools, will be reflected within a revised terms of reference for the Children’s Trust.**

**g) Decisions that affect major policy or joint resources (beyond the remit of Board members) of all or any combination of key partners on the revised Trust will be signed off through each partner agency’s own governance and decision making processes, following discussion and agreement on recommended action by the revised Children’s Trust Board. Reports on the business of the revised Trust and on the progress of LCTBs will be taken through relevant agency structures in order to ensure continued support, understanding and scrutiny of the Trust business.** (for KCC this would mean reporting where relevant to CMT, POSC and Cabinet).

### 4.2 Purpose and focus of a revised Children’s Trust:

Learning from the feedback we received and the necessity of ensuring that a revised trust would have clarity around its role and remit and that it would have the capacity to meet and deliver on its core purpose, it is recommended that a revised Children’s Trust would:

- Set the direction for joint action to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in Kent, ensure implementation and to scrutinise progress and outcomes.
- Oversee integrated workforce development to support the delivery of the agreed priority areas.
- Ensure participation of vulnerable children, young people and their families in agreeing and shaping of priorities for joint action and in reviewing the effectiveness of jointly commissioned programmes.
- Set the planning, delivery and outcomes framework for the Local Children’s Trust Boards and ensure that LCTBs have what they require to fulfil their role and remit (building on their current work). *(More detail is set out in appendix 4)*

### 4.3 Proposed Membership

Working on the premise that the revised Children’s Trust is to be a joint strategic commissioning board, bringing together increasingly limited resources across the system to tackle shared priorities and supporting the DCS and Lead member in carrying out their statutory roles of securing better outcomes for children and young people in Kent, the recommendation is that the revised board should be streamlined, comprise of commissioners and have the ability and authority to carry out the business as set out above and in appendix 4 with a membership as follows:

- Lead Member for children’s services
- The statutory Director for Children’s Services (Corporate Director of Families and Social Care).

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- Independent Chair of KSCB
- Director of Child Health Commissioning.
- Representative of Borough and District council Chief Executives.
- Police.
- Representative Independent Chair from the Local Children's Trust Boards

As and when the agenda dictates the involvement of another key agency, or a particular individual they can be invited to contribute to the work of the partnership.

Members of the revised partnership will be senior officers (or members) of their respective bodies. As such, they will have existing mechanisms for reporting back and securing formal approvals when necessary.

Statutory accountability for the Board will be through the Director of FSC (DCS) and Lead Member, reporting through to Cabinet. The Board will ensure productive relations with other key partnerships to secure improving outcomes for children and young people. A key relationship will be with the Kent Safeguarding Children Board and the current working protocol will be strengthened to ensure effective links. The Board will also develop a working relationship with the Health and Wellbeing Board and with Ambition Board 2 as they develop.

Involvement of schools will be through the establishment of a protocol with the Executive of the Kent Association of Schools, ensuring that schools are able to contribute their voice to the work of the partnership and that the partnership is able to communicate with schools. Schools will also remain as key partners on the Local Children's Trust Boards.

Board members will be expected to report back to the bodies or partners they represent e.g Chairs of LCTBs, Kent's district, borough and city councils etc , and to represent back to the Trust the views of those bodies they represent.

Prior to the review of the Children's Trust Board, the current Board members had agreed to move to appoint an independent chairperson, reflecting the approach that has been taken with local boards and to secure a strong voice for children and young people's issues at a county level. In the interviews undertaken with Trust Board members as part of this review, there was still a strong view that an independent chair would strengthen the Trust and help to provide the leadership required independent from the constraints of ensuring service delivery. With the re-focusing of the Board's business on joint strategic commissioning of services for vulnerable children and young people and away from the Board's previous wider and more championing and representational role, the need and benefit of having an independent chairperson diminishes and therefore it is not proposed that the revised board will appoint an independent chair. It is proposed that the revised Children's Trust Board will agree it's own chairing arrangements at it's first meeting.

### 4.4 Risks

Changing the size of the KCT board alone will not deliver a more effective partnership. The effectiveness of any new arrangements will rely on the commitment of all members, their ability to prioritise, the robustness of communication and engagement with key stakeholders and the ability to commit resources to delivery of the work programme.

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There is a risk that we could lose the “buy in” of key agencies that we need to work with if we are unable to gain their support for any new arrangements.

Insufficient management support and resource for executing the work of the Board and for engaging the LCTBs and Locality Boards with the strategic priorities would impact on the effectiveness of the revised partnership.

### 5. Resource implications

All Members of the new Children’s Trust Board must commit time, energy and financial resources where necessary to ensure the effective implementation of these new arrangements and the associated work plan, either through utilisation of their own agency’s resources or through commissioning of specific work.

As the lead agency, KCC currently provides management and facilitation support through a small central team (3 FTE plus 1 administrator) and budget of £32k in 2011/12. Since April 2011 this central team and budget has been managed within the Customer and Communities Directorate. The current restructure of the Communication, Consultation and Community Engagement division will result in removal of the staffing resource. This will have an impact on the future operation of any new arrangements.

### 6. Next Steps

This report is available for consultation following agreement by Families and Social Care Directorate Management Team, the Lead member for Children’s Services and an informal consultation with KCT Executive Group members. County Board members, Local Children’s Trust Chairs and key stakeholders are invited to comment on the recommendations and proposals in this report.

In forming a response members are asked to share the recommendations via their own communication and decision making channels.

For information this report will also go to KCC Corporate Management Team on the 2 August and KCC Cabinet in early September.

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| Name of Author      | <i>Marisa White</i>  |
| Job Title of Author | <i>Strategy Manager, Children’s Services - BSS</i>                     |
| Telephone Number    | 01622 696583   |
| E-mail              | <a href="mailto:marisa.white@kent.gov.uk">marisa.white@kent.gov.uk</a> |