

## Briefing for Kent & Medway Chief Executives

### News

- **New Chairman of Kent Connects** – Maidstone's Dave Lindsay has handed over to Robin Daly as Chair of Kent Connects. Robin, Assistant Director (Transformation & Finance) at Gravesham, has a two year appointment to the role.



### Results

- **Government Connect.** Kent and Medway authorities were the first to achieve an aggregated connection to GCSX through Kent Public Service Network (KPSN). DWP should be ready to exchange benefits data from June. Other government services preparing to use GCSx include: Crime, Community Safety & Child Protection; Health, Children & Adult Services; Youth Justice; and Trading Standards.
- **NLPG.** Kent Connects partners now have access to the new central National Land & Property Gazetteer (England & Wales) address database. A number of functions will benefit, including call centre systems, crime prevention and community safety, and planning and design. The database is managed by KCC on Kent Connects' behalf and accessed via the web or a 'look-up' service. Other authorities nationally have expressed interest in accessing the database in the future.
- **KUDOS.** An initial exercise and consultation to assess the need and feasibility for KUDOS – a facility for sharing and using data relating to crime, ASB and drug abuse – has been completed. £25K has now approved from the Government Connect Benefits Realisation Fund, managed by IDeA, to undertake an assessment of the technical options. A potential further £75K is then on offer to pilot at Dartford Community Safety Unit.
- **Harnessing Free and Open Source Software in Local Government.** Strategic Director Debbie Wisdom presented a Kent Connects case study to this recent Public Sector Forum conference. Together with specialist supplier Netsight, Debbie explained how the partnership has deployed free, open source software to develop the network of partnership portals at minimal cost.
- **Regional Data Centre.** Work has started at Medway to construct the data centre, the first of two sites, which will host Medway, KCC and potentially other partners' servers. Currently unique within local government, governance and funding models are being developed from scratch, and the project team are due to review proposals shortly. Costings may vary depending on the range of services offered. The centre may have potential to meet wider public and private demand in time.
- **KPSN update.** All Kent Connects partners plus 260 KCC sites, 9 Thanet DC sites, and nearly 100% of Kent schools are now connected to the Kent Public Service Network which has also received 'aggregator' status for Government Connect services. Three new partners have signed up and a number of risks previously identified have been resolved. Approximately 90 sites may not be migrated by the May deadline but plans are in place to mitigate this.



Results continued over...

- **Awards.** KPSN and Kent Connects have been jointly shortlisted for the Guardian's 2009 Government Computing (Shared Services) Award. The winner is due to be announced on May 20th. Public announcements about the shortlisting are embargoed until publication later in May.
- **Customer Profiling.** Kent Connects is part-funding an Interreg project to provide all authorities with customer profiling information relevant to their area. The objective is to develop a set of tools to enable partners to identify the different customer groups and characteristics in order to better tailor local services. The Partnership Agreement is due to be signed
- **Kent Connects Portal.** Twenty Seven portals are now being used to support collaborative working by Kent and Medway officer networks and on partnership initiatives. Kent and Medway Improvement Partnership are one of the most recent to sign up, having grant funded its initial development. There are now approximately 1200 registered users of the portals, accessible via [www.kentconnects.gov.uk](http://www.kentconnects.gov.uk).



## Opportunities

- **Service Improvement Fund (SIF).** Kent Connects is inviting bids for its £80K SIF. Improvement and efficiency bids must have a technology dimension and benefit more than one partner. On-line applications, supported by the relevant Heads of Service and IT, can be made on the Partnership Portal at [www.kentconnects.gov.uk](http://www.kentconnects.gov.uk).
- **Community Information Portal.** A reminder that Kent Connects partners contributed to the development of a community information portal to promote the third sector and help fulfil NI 7. The portal piloted very successfully by Thanet DC, with take-up by over half the voluntary organisations and excellent feedback received. However it is yet to be taken up elsewhere. Visit <http://communityportal.thanet.gov.uk/home/> and contact the partnership office if you are interested.
- **Unified Communications.** KCC has allocated funding to procure a unified communications service to be delivered over KPSN. Partners will be offered a catalogue of services including a range of telephony, infrastructure, integration and reporting options. At this stage partners are being asked to indicate services of potential interest. The contract will be awarded in 2010/11.
- **Employee Authentication Service (EAS).** Kent Connects partners have all agreed to sign a letter of intent for EAS. EAS will enable staff and trusted partners to access sensitive central government information using a two-stage security process: a password or PIN, plus a token or card. DCFS, the lead Government department, will write to Chief Executives in June to state implications for Local Authorities.



## Issues

- **Challenging Times Ahead.** Robin Daly, Kent Connects' new Chairman foresees challenging times for the partnership as technology is expected to solve the pressures on public sector finances: 'The partnership will play a vital role ensuring technology is effectively deployed across Kent and exploiting opportunities for collaboration'. Early priorities are an updated IT Strategy, work in support of Access Kent and completing the KPSN. Robin identifies a further challenge for the partnership as Debbie Wisdom, Strategic Director, leaves her post for a role at City of Westminster. Debbie was appointed in 2006, successfully steering the partnership in a new direction after central government funding ceased.

