

Equality Impact Assessment



Date of initial assessment	01/12/2016 – Initial EIA screening		
Service	Thanet District Council Canterbury City Council Shepway District Council Dover District Council		
Proposal to be assessed	A business case for the potential creation of a single East Kent council		
New or existing policy or function?	New		
External (i.e. public-facing) or internal?	External		
Lead officer	Madeline Homer Colin Carmichael Alistair Stewart Nadeem Aziz	Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive Chief Executive	Thanet District Council Canterbury City Council Shepway District Council Dover District Council

<p>Please outline your proposal, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how • How many people will be 	<p>Summary:</p> <p>The Leaders of Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet District Councils have undertaken a series of discussions to examine options for closer collaboration, leading to a shared view that a merger of the five East Kent districts merits further serious consideration. The Statement of Intent confirmed the Leaders' thinking on the purpose of a merger and the principles that would underpin evaluation of the business case. The creation of a new unitary council for East Kent is not under consideration.</p> <p>In response to financial challenges facing local government and the opportunity to drive improvements and growth in the East Kent area, during the summer of 2016 the five East Kent councils gave approval, based on the Statement of Intent,</p>
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<p>affected</p>	<p>to explore the advantages and disadvantages of a merger of the five East Kent District Councils of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashford; • Canterbury; • Dover; • Shepway; • Thanet; • and to also examine how a single district council could operate. <p>Ashford Borough Council has since announced that it no longer intends to pursue discussions on the proposed creation of a single East Kent district council. A formal report will be considered by Ashford Borough's Cabinet on 9 February 2017, followed by Ashford Borough's Full Council on 16 February 2017.</p> <p>Following Ashford Borough Council's decision to exit the discussions, an independent 'Four Way Business Case' was commissioned by the remaining four councils.</p> <p>The East Kent districts already have a well-established track record of collaboration and sharing services, which reflects a similar approach to delivery; for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Kent Services (EKS) provides 'back-office' functions (such as HR and payroll) as well as customer contact and revenues and benefits (Canterbury, Dover and Thanet). Add level of savings delivered to date as an example, once received. • East Kent Housing (EKH), an arm's length organisation, provides services to Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet. • East Kent Audit Partnership, which is an in house shared service, supports Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet. • The East Kent Engineering Partnership involving Canterbury City Council, Thanet DC, Dover DC and Shepway DC. • East Kent Spatial Development Company (EKSDC), which was set up as an infrastructure, delivery and regeneration organisation to bring forward employment land where viability was an issue and/or there was a lack of private sector interest. <p>Aims and Objectives:</p> <p>There is provisional evidence to suggest that creating a single East Kent district council could deliver savings as well as reinforcing the ability of local Government to provide better outcomes for the residents, businesses and visitors to the area. Historically, East Kent has worked well collaboratively on such issues and the work sought to build on these relationships for the benefits of our communities.</p> <p>With the aim to deliver:</p>
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- A more effective local government that is lean and commercial in its approach;
- A reduction in the numbers of different management structures;
- Clarification of governance for clear decision for each level of powers;
- Upwards and downwards devolution of services in order to achieve best fit and most logical and effective outcomes.

The proposal aims to explore the benefits and savings that could be achieved through the establishment of a single East Kent district council.

Expected Outcomes:

To be confirmed after public engagement commencing in March 2017

Who will be affected and how?

At this stage very high level information is known, for example:

- All residents living in the four districts
- All staff employed by the four councils
- All staff employed by organisations commissioned to carry out services/functions on their behalf by one (or more) of the four councils.
- All Elected Members in the four districts

Impacts against the relevant protected characteristics are not known at this stage.

How many people will be affected?

The total population of the East Kent districts (four councils) was 523,000 in 2015 and expected to rise to 553,100 by 2021. The impacts could possibly be further reaching than this.

The [council tax support scheme](#) changes were the subject of an extensive [Equalities Impact Assessment](#) . Dover District Council and Canterbury City Council have very similar schemes to Thanet District Council, but Shepway District Council is different. If the schemes need to be merged (as well as any possible harmonisation of council tax itself), there could be an uneven effect on some of the (working age) population. Details at this stage are unknown, pending a decision regarding council tax and council tax support scheme harmonisation.

What relevant data or information is currently available about the

Demographic data:

	Population mid-year estimates, 2015	KCC Population forecast 2021
Canterbury	160,000	171,200

<p>customers who may use this service or could be affected? Please give details; for example “x% of customers are female” or “x% of customers are aged over 60”</p>	Dover	113,200	121,400
	Shepway	110,000	113,700
	Thanet	139,800	146,800
	Total East Kent population	523,000	553,100
	<p>All East Kent districts have identified significant common demographical challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ageing population: for example, in Canterbury, compared to the rest of England, the district has fewer people in their 30s, 40s, and 50s but a higher proportion of people over the age of 65. In 2013 about one in five residents were over 65; this is estimated to increase to one in four by 2031. All four districts face similar challenges. • Areas of multiple deprivation: for example, Thanet remains Kent’s most deprived local authority district in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015. Nationally, Thanet is ranked at 21 out of 326 authorities, placing it within England’s 10% most deprived authorities. There are similar issues in other coastal towns such as Folkestone and Dover, and Canterbury district has ten areas that rank in the top 20% most deprived areas in England. <p>Overall, the East Kent economy has performed relatively well compared to the rest of Kent and the South East, with particularly strong performance in Canterbury and Dover showing the least strong.</p> <p>Overall, in common with much of the rest of the South East, East Kent has seen population growth, particularly of working age people. East Kent exports significant labour outside the region, particularly to London. Notably, there is also a relatively high degree of ‘self-containment’, with Canterbury providing employment to the coastal districts. The types of employment currently available across the four districts are slightly different and complementary.</p> <p>In terms of housing, completion rates have started to recover after the 2008 credit crunch, with particular pressure points in Canterbury in terms of affordability.</p>		

<p>Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which are listed below? Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC’s PSED Technical Guidance</p>		
Aim	Yes/No	Explanation
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	Should the Single District go ahead there could be opportunities to achieve this aim that should not be missed. Staff

		<p>The Business Case covers the workforce for each of the East Kent Councils which will, by the nature of the organisations, include individuals who are covered by one or more of the full range of protected characteristics, as defined within the Equalities Act 2010.</p> <p>Currently no significant detrimental impacts have been identified which cannot be readily mitigated through existing HR policies, enhancements to existing policies and protocols. If the decision outcome is to proceed with the creation of a new single East Kent district council, there could be some potential inequalities which may stem from the proposals if not proactively addressed.</p>
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	Should the Single District go ahead the potential for consistency across the district and therefore advancement of equality of opportunity should be enhanced.
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	Should the Single District go ahead the potential for consistency across the district and therefore there could be opportunities to foster good relations which should not be missed

Assess the relevance of the proposal to people with different protected characteristics, and assess the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics.			
Protected characteristic	Relevance to proposal High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of proposal Positive/Neutral/Negative	Explanation
Age			Unknown at this stage
Disability			Unknown at this stage
Gender reassignment			Unknown at this stage
Marriage and civil partnership			Unknown at this stage
Pregnancy and maternity			Unknown at this stage
Race			Unknown at this stage
Religion or belief			Unknown at this stage
Sex			Unknown at this stage
Sexual orientation			Unknown at this stage

<p>Other groups: for example – low income/ people living in rural areas/ single parents/ carers and the cared for/ past offenders/ long-term unemployed/ housebound/ history of domestic abuse/ people who don't speak English as a first language/ People without computer access etc.</p>			<p>Unknown at this stage</p>
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<p>Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified?</p>	<p>Following a period of public engagement more information about how a potential Single East Kent District council will affect people with or without a protected characteristic will be collected and the Equality Impact Assessment will be updated with new information.</p>
<p>Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified?</p>	<p>None identified at this stage. This will be reviewed following a period of public engagement</p>

<p>What additional information would increase your understanding about the potential impact of this proposal?</p>	<p>Separate conversations have continued to take place across the whole of Kent on the possibility of making a bid to Government for the devolution of powers and funding from Government to the public sector in Kent.</p> <p>The East Kent district councils, whilst being party to these discussions are also keen to build on the economic and social cohesion of the area of East Kent. In response to this, the districts have been engaging in further complimentary activity with the county, to explore devolution options around; Highways, Public Health and Community Safety. Strategically, a single East Kent district could enable the development of strong, strategic leadership at all levels throughout East Kent, offering economies of scale, greater resilience and the capacity and capability to further enhance and</p>
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	<p>improve the value for money and quality of the services delivered, placing East Kent in a stronger position as the discussions progress.</p> <p>Information regarding the potential impact on people during a period of public engagement will also inform the EIA.</p>
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Next stage:

Date of revised assessment	Click here to enter a date.
Have you made any changes to your initial assessment?	
Did you undertake consultation? – if yes, give date and the consultation results:	If a decision is taken to progress, the councils will carry out a programme of public and stakeholder engagement.
Do you have new information which reveals any difference in views across the protected characteristics?	
Can any new conclusions be drawn as to how the proposal will affect people with different protected characteristics?	
Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified?	
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified?	