

Kent Partnership Bulletin



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Consultation papers

The DoH has published a **[consultation on the Health Care and Associated Professions Order 2008](#)**

The *Health Care and Associated Professions Order* is the first in a series of Orders that will take forward the reforms identified in the White Paper *[Trust, Assurance and Safety – The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century](#)*.

Open until 22 February 2008.

Streamlining Local Development Frameworks: Consultation

This consultation paper includes a draft amendment to the Local Development Regulations and a draft replacement for Planning Policy Statement 12.

Open until 19 February 2008.

The DoH have published a [Consultation on guidance on 'Finding a shared vision of how people's mental health problems should be understood'](#)

The Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) has developed draft guidance for consultation on 'Finding a shared vision of how people's mental health problems should be understood'.

Open until 5 March 2008.

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Local Government

The management of the Supporting People programme has been judged as 'good' and has 'promising' prospects for improvement', say the Audit Commission

The Report - [Supporting People Kent County Council](#)

Local Area Agreements: a resource guide

This LGA/IDeA publication sets out a programme to support the implementation of new Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

The Government should merge the Audit Commission and National Audit Office (NAO) to create a "super audit agency" according to a new report from the New Local Government Network (NLGN).

The Report - [Expecting more from Inspectors? How integration of the Audit Commission and National Audit office can help increase public faith in Government](#)

(Also see:

Business sense 'still lacking' (Municipal Journal (MJ), 29.11.07, page 5)

House of Commons questions on Local Government Reorganisation

An Audit Commission Report - [Healthy competition](#) 'considers the potential for councils to use competition and contestability to generate cost savings and service improvements. The report gives practical examples of councils successfully using competition and contestability, and explores the pre-conditions that councils must have in place to make effective use of these mechanisms.

The DCLG have published a [*National Survey of English Local Authorities 2006: Long-term Evaluation of the Beacon Council Scheme*](#) along with a raft of other reports on the Beacon scheme

(Also see:

[*The Role of Frontline Staff in Service Innovation and Improvement: Local Authorities and their Engagement in the Beacon Scheme - Full Report*](#)

[*Predictors of Beaconicity: Which local authorities are most likely to apply to, be short listed and awarded through the Beacon Scheme*](#))

CSR Roundtable - the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) and KMPG present a supplement on CSR07 this week

Who'd be a councillor? - article (in New Start, 30.11.07, page 19) by the authors of last weeks report - [*Ward Councillors and Community Leadership: A Future Perspective*](#) .

[LG Alert Checklist 46/07: Monday 26 November 2007](#)

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Education

The [*Progress in International Reading Literacy Study \(Pirls\)*](#) study has put England at 19th in an international league table of children's literacy levels

(Also see:

[DCSF response](#)

[England plunges in rankings for reading](#)

[England slides down world literacy league](#)

[Computers blamed as reading standards slump](#)

[England falls in reading league](#))

While the chairman of the Specialist School and Academies Trust, Sir Cyril Taylor, has said that up to one hour of silent reading should be scheduled into the school day

(Also see:

[Call to make silent reading compulsory](#))

The [*Programme for International Student Assessment \(Pisa\)*](#) league table puts UK school children 14th in the world for science

(Also see:

[UK among school science leaders](#)

[UK teenagers fall in world science league](#)

[Education woes worsen as school science ranking plummets](#)

No longer world stars? England's secondaries expected to drop global rankings next after fall by primaries (Times Educational Supplement (TES), 30.11.07, front page)

In a speech to the [Specialist Schools and Academies Trust](#) annual conference, Christine Gilbert has criticised the specialist schools programme

(Also see:

[Specialist schools 'no guarantee'](#)

[Gilbert lambasts specialist schools programme](#))

[Profile of Christine Gilbert](#), the head of Ofsted

The [Education and Skills Bill](#) was published on Thursday

(Also see:

[Raising the participation age 'has potential economic benefits of £2.4bn per year group'](#)

[Raising school leaving age makes economic sense, says Balls](#)

[Staying on to 18 'boosts economy'](#))

A group of academics has criticised the forthcoming [Early-Years Foundation Stage Framework \(EYFS\)](#)

(Also see:

[Stealth curriculum is 'threat to all toddlers'](#))

The Statistical First Release '[National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE and equivalent attainment and Post- attainment by pupils characteristics, in England, 2006/07](#)' was widely reported this week to show that black pupils performance is improving

(Also see:

[Attainment gap for black pupils is closing – Adonis](#)

[Black children catching up at GCSE](#)

[Black pupils begin to close the gap at GCSE](#)

[Black pupils' attainment improves](#))

In evidence given to a House of Lords inquiry, head teachers have asked for more funding to take into account the amount of immigrants coming into schools and the issues this presents

(Also see:

[Heads seek more migrant funding](#))

[House of Commons questions on funding of children's and young adults' services](#)

[House of Lords question on regime of testing in primary schools in England](#)

[Challenging times](#) - Estelle Morris article on Phonics

The Independent Schools Council's annual universities survey concludes that Independent schools still have an advantage when it comes to applying to university

(Also see:

[Fee-paying schools strengthen hold on top universities](#)

[Private pupils grab top courses](#)

While Trevor Phillips has said that schools should be made up of children from a wide range of backgrounds and that intake could be from wide areas

[Poor children should be bussed to better schools](#))

The charity [Human Scale Education \(HSE\)](#) has said that some Primary schools are bigger than Secondaries

(Also see:

[Britain's primary schools are getting bigger](#))

The National Association of Head Teachers told Parliament this week that the number of immigrant children in schools is pushing them to breaking point

(Also see:

[Teachers: help us cope with migrants](#))

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is going to become more involved with drafting A- Level papers

(Also see:

[New A-levels face close scrutiny](#)

[A-Level Questions to become more Difficult](#))

A [new report](#) by the Royal Wanstead Children's Foundation, suggests that boarding schools can help improve the education of children from the most deprived homes

(Also see:

[*Vulnerable Pupils are Stars after Three Years at Boarding School*](#))

[*For the sake of the child*](#) - looks at the impact of the [*Education and Inspections Act 2006*](#) and specifically mentions Kent County Council (LGC, 2911.07, pages 22 - 23)

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Regeneration

The Government published the [*Thames Gateway Delivery Plan*](#) on Thursday

(Also see:

[House of Commons Statement](#)

[Government sets out Gateway Plans](#)

[The Investor's Guide to the Gateway](#)

[Brown sets out £9bn Thames Gateway plan](#))

The CPRE has published it's [second report on the Thames Gateway Project](#)

In a speech to the [Plunkett Foundation](#) annual conference on 'Rural Social Enterprise' Hazel Blears announced a new target of 80 areas for community asset transfer projects (The '[Opening the Transfer Window](#)' implementation plan).

She also gave support for Parish Councils - "What better example could there be of local democracy in action than the parish council?"

(Also see:

[Community ownership gains new momentum](#)

A booklet, *Fresh ideas rural social enterprise*, has been produced by the [Plunkett Foundation](#). It includes an interview with Hazel Blears and a range of short articles.)

House of Commons debate on Post Office Restructuring

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Environment, Highways & Waste **Environment**

In his outgoing speech as chief scientific adviser, Sir David King has said that GM crops should be pursued by the Government

(Also see:

[*Brown must embrace GM crops to head off food crisis - chief scientist*](#)
[*Chief scientist says atomic power and GM crops are the future*](#))

[House of Lords Second Reading of the Climate Change Bill](#)

A new Report, [*Climate Change: Everyone's Business*](#), was launched at the CBI Annual Conference on Monday

The House of Commons Environmental Audit Select Committee is to look at [Climate change and local, regional and devolved government](#)

The Committee is also to hold a [one-off oral evidence session](#) with the Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the subject of The Challenge of Climate Change on Wednesday 4th December, The Wilson Room, Portcullis House at 2.30pm

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee will hold the [following oral evidence session in relation to its inquiry into Flooding on Wednesday 12 December 2007](#)

3.00pm MPs representing flooded areas

4.00pm Met Office, UK Climate Impacts Programme and Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

The Communities and Local Government Committee [will be hearing evidence for its inquiry into Existing Housing and Climate Change on Tuesday 11 December 2007 at 10.30 am](#)

Highways & Transport

A study, [*Roads and Reality*](#), by [Imperial College, London](#) for the [RAC Foundation](#) has said that more roads need to be built

(Also see:

[*The road map designed to keep congested Britain on the move*](#))

The [Local Transport Capital Settlement](#) was announced on Tuesday

(Also see:

[House of Commons Statement](#)

[Rosie Winterton confirms three-year £4billion investment in local transport](#)
[South East transport awarded £649m funding boost](#))

[House of Lords debate on the growth in passenger and freight traffic on Britain's railways](#)

Planning

The [Planning Reform Bill](#), published on Tuesday.

(Also see:

[Statement by Hazel Blears](#)

[Planning Reform Bill - LGA Response](#)

[Planning Bill - Impact Assessment](#)

[Planning White Paper Consultation Government Response to Consultation Replies](#)

[New legislation for major planning reforms](#)

[CPRE comment](#)

Planning reforms diluted (Local Government Chronicle (LGC), 29.11.07, page 2)

Progressive planning reform - or yet another quango? (Public Servant, December 2007, page 9)

Place-shaping warning over Bill, Municipal Journal (MJ), 29.11.07, page 3)

Planning Bill to hand councils power to levy infrastructure funding (New Start, 30.11.07, page 4)

Bid to let councils quash restrictive site clauses (Regeneration and Renewal, 30.11.07, front page))

[We build 3 million homes - or leave these families in Dickensian misery](#) - comment by George Monbiot

Rural

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) has published - [Monitoring Rural Proofing 2007](#)

The Report 'reviews the extent to which government has fulfilled its commitment to meet the needs of rural people, businesses and communities, by examining how policy development and delivery is taking account of rural needs and circumstances'.

Trevor Cherrett, head of Planning for the Commission for Rural Communities, [has written an article](#) for the most recent Municipal Journal (MJ)

Waste

The [Hazardous Waste Data Update 2006](#) has been published

(Also see:

[Less hazardous waste sent to landfill shows new report](#))

[House of Commons questions on Waste](#)

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Employment

The [2007 Local Government Workforce Strategy](#) was launched by the LGA, the IDeA and the LGE on Monday

(Also see:

[Workforce strategy 2007: checklist and best practice library](#)

[Local government workforce strategy: revised issue launched](#))

The [TUC](#) said this week that that long working hours are on the increase

(Also see:

[Long hours working on increase](#)

[Long-hours working on the rise again in UK](#)

[One in eight 'work 48-hour weeks'](#))

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Finance

[Local Government Finance Settlement 2008/09](#)

The Leader of the House of Commons announced on Thursday 29 November that the Minister for Local Government will make a statement on the provisional Local Government Finance Settlements for 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 on Thursday 6 December. This will form the start of the formal consultation period.

The House of Commons Treasury Select Committee have published a Report on the [2007 Pre-Budget Report](#)

The Commons Public Accounts Select Committee has published a critical report into PFI - [HM Treasury: Tendering and benchmarking in PFI](#).

Cases sighted include Darenth Valley hospital.

(Also see:

[PFI 'forcing public service cuts'](#)

[Spending watchdog points to PFI failings](#)

[Taxpayer may have to pay £170bn for PFI schemes, says Treasury](#))

[Evaluation of Corporate Capital and Asset Planning in Local Authorities](#)

Final evaluation report into corporate capital strategies and asset management planning in local government.

The Bank of England has given its [November Inflation Report](#)

(Also see:

[Threat of inflation remains, says King](#)

[Biggest drop in house prices for 12 years points to cooling market](#)

[Is the roof falling in on the housing market?](#)

[House price plunge heralds fears of 'double whammy' for investors](#)

[Biggest fall in house prices for 12 years](#))

The LGA has published a [Sustainable Procurement Strategy](#)

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[Law & Order/ Legal issues](#)

The proposed new legislation to prevent discrimination against people on the grounds of sexual orientation may be thrown out after the Attorney General expressed her feeling that it was not necessary

(Also see:

[Attorney General set to Scupper Plans to make Gay Hate a Crime](#))

Police

A [report published this week from Mind](#) recommends that the police should be trained in dealing with vulnerable people with mental health problems

(Also see:

[*Mind reveals alarming levels of disability hate crime*](#)

[*Train Police to Deal with Mentally Ill People, Charity Demands*](#))

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Children & Family

The [Second Reading of the Children and Young Persons Bill](#) was heard in the House of Lords this week

The [Bill](#) confirms the Children's Minister, Beverley Hughes' commitment that 'there will now be a requirement that all authorities retain looked-after children within their own boundaries unless clearly demonstrated that there are specific reasons in the best welfare of the child that they are placed externally.'

(Also see:

[*Children and Young Persons Bill - Second Reading LGA Briefing*](#)

[*Minister honours promise to children in care*](#))

ContactPoint, the new Children's database, is to be delayed

(Also see:

[House of Commons Statement](#)

[*Child database system postponed*](#))

A new 'family drug and alcohol' court was launched this week, which could help parents fight addictions and keep families together

(Also see:

[*New Court to Help Mothers at risk of losing their Children*](#))

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has released a study [The Housing Pathways of New Immigrants](#) which looks at what individuals face on arrival in the UK

Local Government Chronicle (LGC) looks at trafficked children - [Stopping human traffic](#) (29.11.07, pages 18 - 20)

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Adult Services

The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) have published their annual star ratings this week

The report - [Performance ratings for adult social services in England 2007](#)

[Council's ratings](#)

[LGA comment](#)

(Also see:

Social care improves for fifth year (Local Government Chronicle (LGC), 29.11.07, page 3)

[Councils praised for social care](#)

[Councils improve services for fifth year running](#))

A study, [Home From Home](#), published by the [Alzheimer's Society](#) criticises the way care homes look after those with Alzheimer's

(Also see:

[Charity calls for mandatory dementia training for all care home staff](#)

[Report puts spotlight on homes' failings in caring for people with dementia](#)

[Mandatory dementia training urged](#))

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Health – For further information on items in this selection please contact David Turner Tel: (01622) 694196, Freecall: 7000 4196 or email: david.turner@kent.gov.uk

The House of Commons Health Select Committee is to look at the [contribution of the NHS to reducing health inequalities](#)

The NHS is forecasting a financial surplus for this financial year with the vast majority of NHS trusts in balance, the Department of Health announced today

(Also see:

[House of Commons Statement](#)

[NHS on sound financial footing to plan for the future](#))

House of Lords questions on Obesity

A study published in the [Quality and Safety in Health Care](#) journal reports that accidents in hospital are common place

(Also see:

[Hospital blunders 'kill 90,000 patients'](#)
[One in 10 suffers 'hospital harm' \)](#)

It is reported that Marks and Spencer "Sleepsafe" pyjamas could help prevent MRSA

(Also see:

[M&S pyjamas' silver lining helps stop MRSA \)](#)

The [Think Tank Civitas](#) says that the NHS is not giving parity of service

(Also see:

[The 'middle-class voice' drowns out the groans of the sick poor in the NHS](#)
[NHS care 'favours middle classes' \)](#)

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Nice) has published [guidelines to reduce alcohol abuse in children and young people](#)

(Also see:

[New NICE guidance for schools published to prevent and reduce alcohol use in children and young people](#)
[Ban teenagers from drink, says health watchdog \)](#)

It is reported that in America a version of MRSA is infecting those who should have good immune systems

(Also see:

[Deadly MRSA bug spreads to healthy adults\)](#)

While evidence given at the Federation of Infections Societies Conference in Cardiff suggest that infectious bugs are spreading outside hospitals

(Also see:

[Hospital bugs 'hit communities' \)](#)

The Health Care Commission has published a [survey on maternity services](#)

(Also see:

[Mums say NHS Maternity services are good in biggest ever survey \)](#)

The Health and Social Care Bill [was read a second time](#) this week in the House of Commons

[LGA Briefing](#)

A Research Paper on the [Health and Social Care Bill](#) has also been published

A new scanner has been created that can produce 3D images of the body

(Also see:

[New CT Scan allows a 3D Look inside Body](#))

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Government

PMO's on Wednesday

Office for National (ONS) statistics [published new population projections](#) on Tuesday

(Also see:

[Forecasters say UK population may grow to 108m by 2081](#)
[UK population 'to double in one lifetime'](#))

At the CBI and Employers' Organisation annual conference this week Gordon Brown gave a speech that included welfare reform and private sector involvement in public services

David Cameron also [spoke](#)

(Also see:

[David Cameron: I'll stop wasteful mandarins](#)
[Cameron attacks tax increase plan](#))

As did the [Chancellor of the Exchequer](#), [Chris Huhne](#) and [Nick Clegg](#).

(Also see:

[Private sector role will grow, says PM](#)
[Unemployed face losing benefits if they refuse training](#)
[More unemployed will lose benefits if they refuse work](#)
[Jobless told they have duty to train](#)
[Gordon Brown to push unemployed into work](#)
[Brown to endorse new Generation of Nuclear Power](#))

The Government this week published - [Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work](#)

[House of Commons Statement by John Denham, the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills](#)

[Statement by Peter Hain, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions](#)

(Also see:

[Hain to force unskilled benefits claimants into training](#))

[CBI response](#)

House of Commons [debate on Welfare Reform](#)

Working neighbourhoods fund to offer incentives to encourage local skills and jobs innovators (New Start, 30.11.07, page 2)

Mandatory training plan for jobless (Regeneration and Renewal, 30.11.07, page 4)

Labour and the sick note (New Statesman, 3.12.07, page 13))

[The Treasury has published terms of reference for the Poynter Review](#), which will investigate security processes and procedures for data handling in Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs

(Also see:

Conservatives tabled [debate on HM Revenue and Customs](#))

A cross-party group, the [Better Government Initiative](#), looking at how the country is and could be run, is to publish a series of reports shortly

(Also see:

[Experts say billions wasted on services](#)

[Christopher Foster: Why Britain is run badly](#))

It is reported that the chairman of SEEDA has spent more on taxis than the combined costs from the heads of the other regional agencies

(Also see:

[Quango chief runs up £50,000 taxi bill](#)

How to waste £2.3 billion of public money (New Statesman, 30.11.07, page 26))

Liberal Democrat Leadership -

Winning power to give it away (Local Government Chronicle (LGC), 29.11.07, page 13) - article by Chris Huhne.

The National Audit Office has published a Report on [Improving corporate functions using shared services](#) - which relates to Government departments

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Communities

Libraries & Museums

The Children's Book Group of the Publishers' Association has produced [a number of research studies](#) on the need for age guidance on book covers

The Local Government Chronicle (LGC) has a special this week on the changing face of public library services - *Rewriting the book* (29.11.07, pages 28 - 29)

Arts

The Arts Council has published [Public Value and the Arts in England](#)

[House of Lords Questions on the impact of 2012 London Olympic Games on arts spending](#)

Sport

James Purnell, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, [has in a speech outlined the Government's plan to create 'world-class community sport' in the UK](#)

A review of Sport England's strategy will begin the process, highlighting the importance of the sporting bodies.

The London 2012 Sustainability Plan, [Towards a One Planet 2012](#), was published this week, by the Olympic board.

[House of Commons Statement](#)

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Forthcoming Parliamentary Business

Monday 3 December

Commons: Healthcare provisions.

Lords: Progress made in implementing the Charities Act 2006; Design for the main 2012 Olympics stadium; Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill (Committee stage).

Tuesday 4 December

Commons: Transport (Oral Questions); Opposition Day debates on i) Politicalisation of the Civil Service; ii) Performance of the Defra.

Westminster Hall: Promotion of women and girls' football.

Lords: Adult education; Council of Europe Convention on Human Trafficking; New housing; Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill (Committee stage).

Wednesday 5 December

Commons: PMQs; Annual benefit uprating; Debate on Standards of conduct in public life; Debate on Benefits simplification.

Westminster Hall: Impact of Christian phobia on communities; Crime related to identity and internet fraud; Public service broadcasting obligations and regional programming.

Lords: Loss of data by HM Revenue and Customs.

Thursday 6 December

Commons: Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Oral Questions); Annual uprating of Local Authorities Allocations.

Lords: Promoting women's football; National motto; Promoting the farming industry; School standards and increasing the number of good school places; Local Transport Bill (Committee stage).

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