

Directorate Involvement Group Communication Note for circulation

The purpose of the DIG has been to actively promote the public involvement agenda within the Directorate and make a reality of meaningful involvement with people who currently use services or who may do so in the future.

The DIG has been in place since 2001/2, latterly meeting on a quarterly basis. Although the desire to involve people in its business has been the topic of many discussions, it has never before been achieved until now.

Following an open workshop held in September 2009, a report was presented to the Strategic Management Team, with options on how involving people in the DIG could be achieved. It was agreed that there should be two Area Groups (East and West of the County) and specialist groups, e.g. Learning Disability & Sensory Services. These groups are to consist of mainly service users, carers and members of the public and would meet regularly, e.g. every three months, with an agreed work plan and agenda, jointly chaired by an officer and member of the public. These Area groups would feed directly into the County Directorate Involvement Group.

The County DIG is to be jointly chaired by a member of the public and an SMT Member (Pat Huntingford) and will report to SMT. A diagram is attached which illustrates how the Area and County Groups fit within the structure.

A further workshop was held in early February 2010 to discuss how to take this model forward. As a result a working party was formed and was tasked with turning this into a reality. The working party met on 26 February 2010 and the immediate work plan is to put into place the Governance arrangements for the County Group and support the development of the Area Groups. Membership of the County DIG will be:

- 10 members of the public including one person representing sensory services and one person from the LD Partnership Board. Two interim public chairs were elected – Vicci Chittenden and Penny Graham. Vicci will sit on the West Kent group and Penny will sit on the East Kent group.
- Staff members –Chairs of East and West Kent groups, the Head of Planning & Public Involvement, the Policy Manager of Public Involvement & Customer Care, the Development Manager of Valuing People Now, the Transforming Social Care Lead Officer, the KASS Communications Team Manager and the Project Manager of Sensory Services
- Chair (staff) will hold a pre- meeting agenda meeting with joint public Chair. This pre meeting will also provide an opportunity to discuss issues of concern.

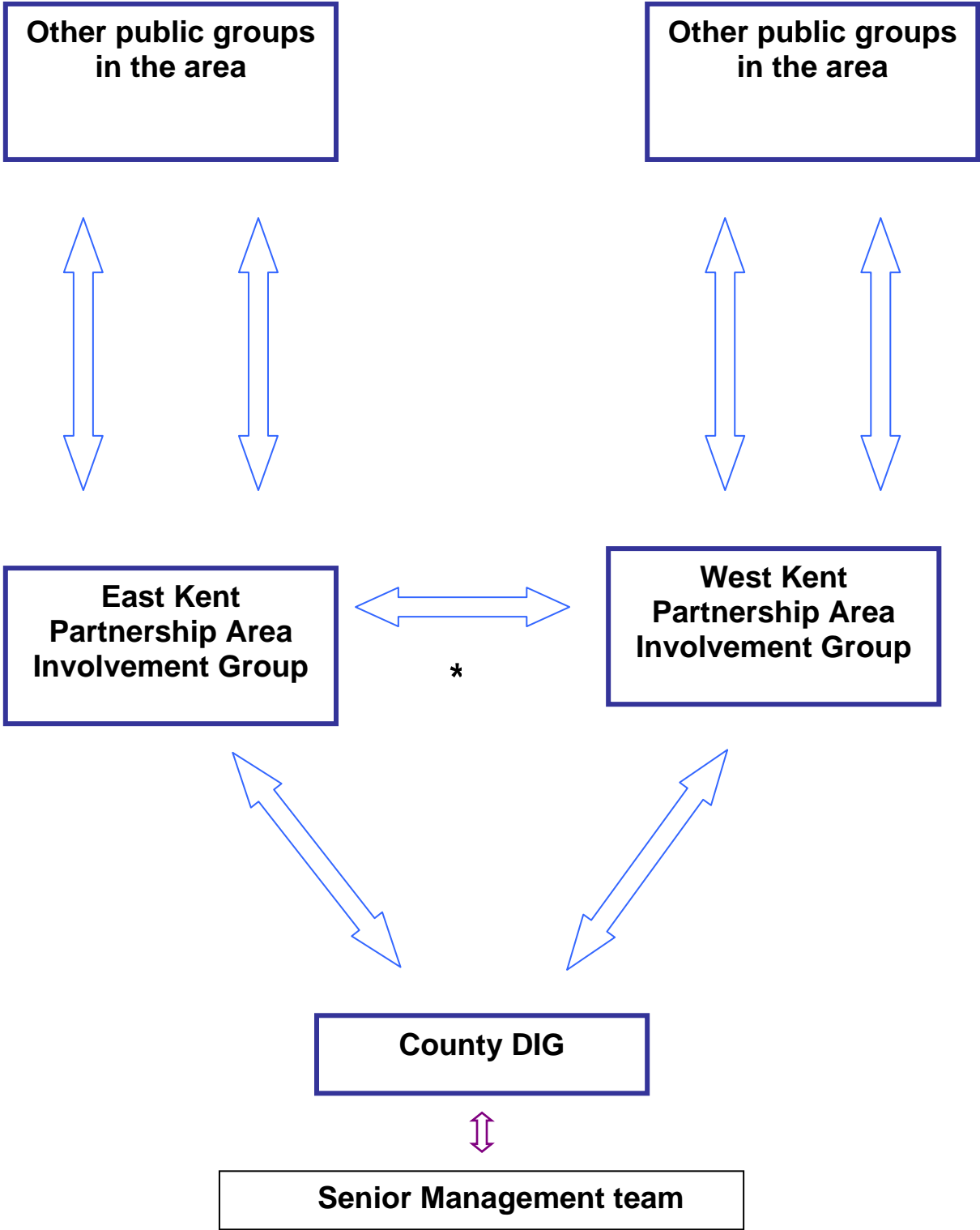
A pre-meeting with the SMT chair and the public chairs has taken place and the agenda for the first meeting has been planned. Work has begun to the develop the Area Groups and discussions have taken place to ensure that existing groups, e.g. District Occupational Therapy Bureau (OTB) and Self Directed Support (SDS), are part of the structure.

The Local Involvement Network, LINKs, have been involved and further discussions are to take place about their possible role in the future development of DIG.

Outstanding Tasks

These include the following:

- a) Developing the Area Partnership Groups; Although work has already begun on this, both of the County Group public chairs have offered to work with the Areas to develop the Area groups
- b) The development of the governance arrangements including terms of reference of the group; Work on this will start in earnest at the first meeting of the County group, which is in May. These will be disseminated to the Area Groups to help their development
- c) Working with LINKs and Area groups to ensure that an equitable process is in place to nominate representatives for both the Area and County group
- d) Begin working with existing groups including OTB groups, Older People Forums, Sensory impairments and Disability groups, Valuing People Now Groups and Mental Health groups.



* Area groups to meet at least once per year to share good practice and workplans