



To: Kent Council Leaders
(via email)

Linden Kemkaran
Leader's Office
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

Email: linden.kemkaran@kent.gov.uk

10 September 2025

Dear Kent Leaders,

Re: KCC position and next step on Local Government Reorganisation

Further to the special Kent Leaders meeting last Wednesday (03.09.25), I wanted to outline my position regarding KCC's next step on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

As you will recall, KCC's preferred option of a single unitary council for Kent and Medway with three areas assemblies (Option 1A), was not successful in gaining sufficient support to be included in the joint process for full business case development with KPMG as our strategic partner.

Whilst I naturally do not agree with the outcome, it was a decision made based on the rules for the use of the government grant and instructing KPMG that were collectively agreed by all of us at the outset, and it is therefore a decision that I both respect and accept.

As I have outlined on numerous occasions, I remain of the view that the cost implications and risk to service quality of disaggregating significant and complex KCC services into smaller unitary councils is of very high risk and therefore unacceptable. I remain unconvinced that the full cost of LGR has been explored or understood in any detail by anyone involved in this process and that the cost will ultimately be borne by the Kent taxpayer. I believe that this scenario should be avoided at all costs.

As such, I feel it is my responsibility to instruct KCC officers to prepare a business case for KCC's preferred option with the intention of submitting that to the Ministers by the 28th November deadline. I remain convinced that the KCC option is the only one that will not cost the taxpayer millions of pounds or disrupt vital core services from being delivered to our most vulnerable people in Kent.

KCC is in the fortunate position of having the officer capacity in-house to develop and draft that business case limiting the additional cost to the public purse. However, I am very mindful of the government's expectation for all councils to use a shared evidence base, and I remain acutely aware that the strength of other business cases in this process, namely Option 3A and 4B (both of which argue for disaggregation) are

critically dependent on a full understanding of the financial and service-specific matters relating to KCC countywide services.

I want to reassure you all that KCC remains fully committed to engaging with KPMG as our strategic partner in support of that shared evidence base and will continue to positively engage with the governance arrangements Kent Council Leaders have put in place through Kent Chief Executives to oversee and support the development of LGR businesses cases. I have agreed that KCC officers will engage with KPMG directly to confirm the necessary arrangements, and I am sure this will be reported to you through your Chief Executives in due course.

I continue to believe that the entire LGR process is a huge and unnecessary distraction from the important business of delivering better and more financially sustainable services for the residents and ratepayers of Kent and Medway now, not at some future point many years into the future. I hope that the new ministerial team in MHCLG will take the opportunity to pause and reflect on the significant risks and financial burdens the LGR process will have in Kent.

In the meantime, I hope the above sets out my position as Leader of KCC and provides reassurance that, despite our differences of opinion, KCC will continue to act in good faith through the LGR process.

Finally, given my commitment to full transparency, I wanted to make you aware of my intention to place this letter in the public domain to clearly and accurately set out KCC's position with Kent residents, our partners and our staff.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linden Kemkaran". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linden Kemkaran
Leader of Kent County Council