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**By:** Paul Carter, Leader of the Council  
Katherine Kerswell, Group Managing Director

**To:** Cabinet - 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010

**Subject:** **Bold Steps for Kent**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** Asks Cabinet to endorse of the latest draft of *Bold Steps for Kent* and make a recommendation to County Council to approve the final version at its meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

## Introduction

1. *Bold Steps for Kent* will replace *Towards 2010* as the new four year medium term plan for Kent County Council (KCC). As the strategic statement it is required to go before County Council for 'approval and debate' under Appendix 3 (Policy Framework) of the KCC Constitution. This report seeks Cabinet's endorsement of the latest draft of *Bold Steps for Kent* and for Cabinet to recommend to County Council approval of the final version *Bold Steps for Kent*.

## Relevant priority outcomes

2. As the new four year plan and strategic statement for Kent County Council, *Bold Steps for Kent* sets out the administrations ambitions and priorities for the next four years, centred around three aims of 'helping the Kent economy to grow', 'putting the citizen in control' and 'tackling disadvantage'. However, in response to the financial and policy environment facing local government and the wider public sector over the medium term, *Bold Steps for Kent* is necessarily very different from the previous four/five year plans and strategic statements approved by the County Council. Underpinning *Bold Steps for Kent* is a desire to move to a new way of working which places joint service delivery with public service partners across Kent at its heart; which embeds the principle of subsidiarity in Kent by putting localism into action; and which creates a more dynamic, productive and cost efficient mixed economy of service provision which seeks to increase the role of the voluntary and social enterprise sector in the delivery of public services. As part of this agenda it is important to consider *Bold Steps for Kent* alongside the report of the Group Managing Director, *Change to Keep Succeeding*, and the restructure proposals within that report to re-shape the organisation so that it is able to deliver the ambitious agenda set out in *Bold Steps for Kent*.

## Financial Implications

3. Central to *Bold Steps for Kent* is the need to respond to the challenging financial climate faced by local government and the need to save an expected £340million from KCC budget over the next four years. Therefore there will be

financial implications resulting from this new approach to service delivery which aims to reduce cost, but also resulting from some specific commitments which will require some funding, such as the proposal to establish a Big Society Fund. It is too early to judge the exact financial implications arising from *Bold Steps for Kent*, but these financial implications will be considered by Cabinet, County Council and its Committees through the authority's decision making framework as specific policy/services changes resulting from the Bold Steps are developed and proposed.

### **Legal Implications**

4. There are no identifiable legal implications arising directly from the publication of *Bold Steps for Kent*.

### **Main body and purpose of report**

5. As has been noted by the Leader previously, *Bold Steps for Kent* is being prepared at a time of significant change in public policy as a result of the new Government and actions taken through the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) to reduce the national deficit over the next four years, as well as a radical new policy framework being created through the publication of a series of White Papers and subsequent legislation. Therefore there is a need to ensure *Bold Steps for Kent* reflects these policy changes as far as possible before the final version is published for consideration by County Council.

6. The latest draft of *Bold Steps for Kent* will be circulated separately to Cabinet Members, the Chairman and spokesmen of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Chief Officers during the course of next week. This will allow time for further editorial changes to be made to the document following the close of the consultation and any Government announcements before it is considered by Cabinet. A copy of the document will also be placed in the Members Lounge with other copies being available on request by contacting the Corporate Policy Unit ([corporate.policy@kent.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.policy@kent.gov.uk)).

7. One of the critical and time sensitive areas for change in the document will be firming up the exact size of the financial savings required by KCC over the next four years. Whilst the CSR 2010 may have given broad indication of the level of savings expected nationally, it will not be until the release of the Local Government Financial Settlement (expected on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December) and subsequent grant details that the exact savings requirement, and the sequencing of those savings, will be known. This will therefore require the document to go through some changes to reflect these financial details as they emerge from the settlement after Cabinet has considered the document but before it is debated at County Council on the 16<sup>th</sup> December.

8. The intention is to embed *Bold Steps for Kent* into the day-to-day working of the organisation. As such, delivery will be built into directorate and team business plans and monitoring and reporting will be through existing reporting arrangements such as the Core Monitoring Report and the Annual Report. There will of course be a requirement to develop both quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure the progress against the priorities and actions

that are set out in *Bold Steps for Kent* not currently covered by any monitoring/reporting arrangements.

9. Recommendation 3 from the Cabinet Scrutiny committee meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> October was for the “*Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services and Performance Management to ensure that members are fully involved in the formulation of the targets that will comprise Bold Steps for Kent*”. It is intended to take a separate paper to POSCs following approval of *Bold Steps for Kent* by County Council to engage all Members in developing appropriate measures and indicators to be used in monitoring and managing delivery of *Bold Steps for Kent*, following a similar process as was used for *Towards 2010*.

## **Consultation and Communication**

10. Emerging key themes and priorities for *Bold Steps for Kent* were considered by each Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee (POSCs) pre-publication of the consultation draft in September round of meetings. Appendix A sets the issues raised by Members and a response to each, including where the consultation draft of *Bold Steps for Kent* changed as a result of Member comment or where the issue raised is dealt with in the content.

11. *Bold Steps for Kent* was open for public and partner consultation from the 18 October 2010 until Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November (4 weeks). A total of 101 consultation responses were received and a list of those who provided a response is set out at Appendix B. 23% of the responses were from residents, 22% from voluntary and community organisations, 9% from other public authorities, 21% from Parish/Town Councils and 1% from private enterprises. All comments are being analysed and key issues factored into the ongoing development of the final version of *Bold Steps for Kent*.

12. Overall, the vast majority of the comments demonstrated support for the priorities, themes and approach set out in *Bold Steps for Kent*, and a clear understanding as to ‘why’ KCC was adopting such an approach at this time. A full analysis of all consultation responses is still being undertaken, but some broad issues are already identifiable:

- Concern about ‘how’ the agenda set out in *Bold Steps* will be delivered in practice.
- More explicit mention of the important role of Parish/Town Councils in the future public service delivery mix.
- Concern that KCC should not seek wholesale off-shoring/contracting out of services in place of directly provided services.
- Concern that the ambition to see the voluntary and community sector, including new forms of staff ownership/enterprise, should not lead to unfair competition or preferential treatment in the commissioning and procurement of KCC services.

These issues are currently being considered and are likely to lead to further changes being made to the document ahead of it being considered by Cabinet and County Council.

13. Given the nature of the document one of key piece of feedback from both elected Members and through the consultation has been a request for a

shorter summary version of the document to be made available and this is currently being developed.

### **Risk and Business Continuity Management**

**14.** There are no identifiable business continuity issues directly arising from *Bold Steps for Kent*. There is some residual reputational risk in regard to limited period made available for consultation, but was partly mitigated through direct mailing of hard copy versions of the consultation draft to all County Councillors, MPs, Kent Partnership stakeholders (inc. District Leaders and Chief Executives) and Parish Councils for their consideration and the consideration of consultation responses after the formal closing date of the consultation wherever possible.

### **Customer Impact Assessment**

**15.** A customer impact assessment (CIA) has been prepared for *Bold Steps for Kent* has and has been approved by the Directorate Equality Lead officers and the Corporate Diversity Team.

### **Conclusion**

**16.** *Bold Steps for Kent* sets out the clear strategic direction for residents, partners and staff alike as to how KCC will meet the strategic challenges it faces over the next four years. Under the KCC Constitution it must be considered by County Council for approval and debate, and whilst possible to take it to a later County Council meeting than 16<sup>th</sup> December, given that February is the County Council meeting dedicated to approving the budget, seeking approval for *Bold Steps for Kent* at the March 2011 meeting or beyond is considered too late. It is imperative to get *Bold Steps for Kent* approved as soon as possible, so the organisation can focus on delivering the agenda set out for it. Given this, seeking approval from County Council on 16<sup>th</sup> December is vital despite the ongoing uncertainties in public policy and financial landscape noted in the report.

### **Recommendations:**

- 17.** That Cabinet:
- (a) Note the report.
  - (b) Endorse *Bold Steps for Kent: The Medium Term Plan to 2014/15*.
  - (c) Recommend to County Council approval of the final version of *Bold Steps for Kent*, to be considered at its meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

**Appendices:**

*Appendix A: Bold Steps for Kent: Emerging Themes and Priorities – Response to Member comments raised through September POSC Meetings*

*Appendix B: List of those who provided a response to the consultation draft of Bold Steps for Kent*

**Background Documents:**

*Change to keep succeeding: The transformation of the Council's operating framework, Report of Group Managing Director to KCC Cabinet, 11 October 2010*

*Bold Steps for Kent: Medium Term Plan to 2014/15 – Consultation Draft*

*Bold Steps for Kent: Customer Impact Assessment*

*Bold Steps for Kent: Consultation Responses*

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**Bold Steps for Kent: Emerging Themes and Priorities**  
**Response to Member comments raised through September POSC Meetings**

Issue raised by Members through POSC:	Response:
<p>Concern about commitment to Free Schools in emerging priorities and themes.</p>	<p>The explicit commitment of supporting parents who wish to establish Free Schools is now a broader commitment to “<i>support quality and choice from a diverse range of providers</i>”. This may well include Free Schools where there is a desire to create them and approval is granted by the Secretary of State, but now reflects that education provision will be provided by a mixed economy of providers, of which Free Schools may be one education provider amongst many, that KCC must maintain effective working relationships with.</p>
<p>Focus on commissioning/downplaying service delivery role.</p>	<p>Bold Steps for Kent envisages a greater mixed economy of providers delivering public services, including increased use of the voluntary and social enterprise sector. The document is explicit in stating that KCC will be focused on commissioning services from providers who can best deliver the greatest value for money on behalf of Kent taxpayers, irrespective of whether providers are from the public - including in-house - voluntary or the private sectors (p.12).</p>
<p>Examine whether Children Social Services and Adult Social Services should be structured to work better as a means to support all vulnerable people.</p>	<p>Bold Steps for Kent makes a specific commitment to restructure adult and children social services so that it provides a more integrated and resilient service – and it is in a better position to serve the interests of vulnerable adults and children in Kent.</p>

<p>Need to define what the Big Society is and what it means.</p>	<p>Two specific sections defining the Big Society have been included in Bold Steps for Kent. P.30 attempts to define the Big Society as it has been interpreted by KCC going forward in the short-medium term – together with examples of how the Big Society agenda is already in operation in Kent (p.32). As the Government begins to firm up its Big Society agenda - including through policies, projects and services approaches (starting with the Big Society Green Paper due before the end of the year) the definition of Big Society approach may develop further, but in the meantime the statements made in Bold Steps for Kent represent a foundation for delivering the Big Society in Kent.</p>
<p>Assessment speed and thoroughness where assessments overlap or are dependent on other assessment processes – including those of other public service agencies.</p>	<p>Bold Steps for Kent now makes an explicit commitment to move to a single initial assessment framework in order to reduce duplication and speed up assessment and access to specialist assessment for Kent residents. It also makes a specific commitment to simplify and rationalise assessment processes shared with other public bodies to reduce delay and provide a more integrated and seamless service (p.39).</p>
<p>Specific focus on climate change needs to be included in the document.</p>	<p>By embedding the Regeneration Framework as the delivery mechanism of Bold Steps for Kent – the Kent Environment Strategy becomes a key delivery mechanism for the document. Bold Steps for Kent explicitly reflects this under the section ‘Meeting the Climate Challenge’ (pp.20-21).</p>

## **Appendix B**

### **List of those who provided a response to the consultation draft of Bold Steps for Kent**

<b><u>Resident/Organisation</u></b>	<b><u>Contact Name Provided</u></b>
Connexions Kent and Medway	Andrew Dennis
North West Kent Carers Support Service	Peter Webber
Kent Police Authority	Mark Gilmartin
Carers First	Ron Alexander
Resident	Stanley West
Resident	Richard Boden
Community Action South & East Kent	Ms Jan Perfect
The Kent CYP VCS Forum	Richard Eason
Resident	Stephen Bell
Pembury Parish Council	Barbara Russell
Kent Arts Development Unit	N/A
Coxheath Parish Council	Terry Ketley
Maidstone and Malling Carers Project	Barbara Hagan
Gypsy and Traveller Unit & Kent Supported Employment	Bill Forrester
Kent LINK	Graham Hills
Kent Libraries & Archives	Gill Bromley
Regeneration & Economy Division	N/A
Action with Communities in Rural Kent	Keith Harrison
CFE, Learning Group	Alex Gamby
Headcorn Parish Council	Martin Round
Resident	John Davies
Mereworth Parish Council	Jon Regan
Kent Community Care Association	Brigitte Grutzmackher
Sustainability Actions	Vera Elliot
Environment Agency	Andrew Pearce
Quality and Standards Team, KCC	
Community Safety and Regulatory Services	N/A
Kent Downs AONB	Chris Reynolds / Nick Johannsen
Kent Community Action Network (CAN)	Keith Morris
Natural England	Claudia Chambers
Langdon Parish Council	Janine Hyde
Seal Parish Council	Lorna Talbot
Hadlow Parish Council	Melanie Stepkowski
KCC Staff	Katherine Stephens
Kent Partnership Team, KCC	Graeme Brown
Addington Parish Council	Mrs L Goldsmith
Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)	Lynsey Brooks
Resident	Dan Pyke
Resident	Miss Chris Owlett
Resident	Dennis Brown
West Malling Parish Council	Carole D'Sliva

Every Family Matters - CIC	Alan Wilson
Volunteer Centre Thanet	Alastiar James
Kent Supporting People Team, KCC	Claire Martin
Swale Council for Voluntary Service & Volunteer Centre	
KASS System Support & Projects Team, KCC	Sarah Williams
KCC Staff	Christina Thomas
Maidstone Volunteer Centre	Jo Frazer
Enterprising Opportunities CIC	Charlotte Osborn-Forde
Eastern and Coastal Kent NHS	John Bland
Kent Volunteers, KCC	Dr Jonathan Sexton
Leybourne Parish Council	Carole Kincaid
Voluntary Action Maidstone	Julie Pibeam
Resident	Sue Towns Okorodudu
Hugh Lowe Farms	Mr T Barton
KCC Staff	Jon Regan
Sellindge Parish Council	Lydia Jackson
Benenden Parish Council	Colin Abbott
Gravesham Borough Council	Bonny Sullivan
Queenborough Town Council	Cllr Michael Snelling
Epilepsy HERE	Lionel Robbins
Wingham Parish Council	Laurence Ward & Melinda Barker
Canterbury City Council	N/A
New Romney Town Council	N/A
Thanet District Council	Mrs V Tully
Swale Borough Council	Cllr Robert Bayford
Resident	Cllr Andrew Boles
Resident	Julie Segwick
Resident	Priscilla McBean
Resident	Ray Featherstone MBE
Ditton Parish Council	Hugh Stirk
Resident	Mrs Sue Kavanagh
Minister-on-Sea Parish Council	William Leetham
Resident	Trish Codrington
KCC Staff	Mike Taylor
KCC Staff	Paul Withington
Sturry Parish Council	Mark Bucknall
KCC Staff	N/A
Resident	Catherine Brady
Chevening Parish Council	Stephen Shires
Resident	Howard Dilley
Resident	Laura Probert
Resident	Vanessa Fielding
Resident	Parker Jones
Cruse Bereavement Care	Chirs Walker
Resident	Mrs S E Leslie
Maidstone Deaf Pub	N/A
Resident	Zoe Tugwell
Resident	J Shoer
Community Action South East - Shepway & Dover	Mrs J Blackburn
Resident	
	Tony Hamlin
	Zoe Morgan

KCC Staff  
KCC Staff  
KCC Staff  
KCC Staff  
Kent & Medway Citizens Advice  
Whitfield Parish Council  
Aylesham Parish Council  
KCC Staff  
KCC Staff  
KCC Staff

Chris Cummins  
Chris Cordrey  
Bob White  
Kate Philips  
Pi Townsend  
Michelle Cooper  
Linda Keen  
Chirs Hespe  
Frances Rehal MBE  
Gerry Hunt