

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 8th December, 2010

9.00 am

**Medway Room, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone**

**PLEASE NOTE THE EARLIER THAN USUAL START
TIME FOR THIS MEETING**





AGENDA

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 8th December, 2010, at 9.00 am
Medway Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: **Peter Sass**
Telephone: **01622 694002**

Membership

Liberal Democrat (1): Mrs T Dean (Chairman)

Conservative (11): Mr A R Chell, Mr R Brookbank, Mr E E C Hotson, Mr R F Manning, Mr M J Jarvis, Mr R E King, Mrs J P Law, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mrs J A Rook, Mr J E Scholes and Mr M J Whiting

Labour (1) Mr L Christie

Independent (1) Mr R J Lees

Church The Reverend N Genders, Dr D Wadman and one vacancy

Representatives (3):

Parent Governor (2): Mr B Critchley and Mr P Myers

Refreshments will be available 15 minutes before the start of the meeting

Timing of items as shown below is approximate and subject to change.

County Councillors who are not Members of the Committee but who wish to ask questions at the meeting are asked to notify the Chairman of their questions in advance.

Webcasting Notice

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured then you should make the Clerk of the meeting aware.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

A. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- A1 Introduction/Webcasting
- A2 Substitutes
- A3 Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- A4 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2010 (Pages 1 - 10)
- A5 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010 (Pages 11 - 24)
- A6 Follow-up Items from Cabinet Scrutiny Committee (Pages 25 - 40)
- A7 Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on 8 October 2010 (Pages 41 - 46)
- A8 Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on 26 November 2010 (to follow)

B. INFORMATION ITEMS

- B1 Briefing note on Gully Emptying Schedules (Pages 47 - 48)
A briefing note has been provided by the Director of Kent Highway Services for Members' information
- B2 Briefing on the Identification and Recording of Risks
Mr A Wood, Head of Financial Management, and Mr D Tonks, Head of Audit and Risk have been invited to attend the meeting from 9.10am to give a briefing to Members on how risks are identified and recorded.

C. CABINET/CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS AT VARIANCE TO APPROVED BUDGET OR POLICY FRAMEWORK

There are no items for consideration

D. CABINET DECISIONS

- D1 Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services (Pages 49 - 118)
Mrs S Hohler, Cabinet Member, Children, Families and Education, and Ms R Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education have been invited to attend the meeting between 9.40am and 10.25am to answer Members' questions on this item.

At the request of the Chairman and Spokesmen, Mr A Wood and Mr D Tonks have been asked to stay for consideration of this item, in relation to the risk aspects.

D2 Bold Steps for Kent - The Medium Term Plan to 2014 (Pages 119 - 178)

Mr P Carter, Leader of the Council, Ms K Kerswell, Group Managing Director, and Mr D Whittle, Policy Manager, have been invited to attend the meeting between 10.25am and 11.10am to answer Members' question on this item.

At the request of the Chairman and Spokesmen, Mr A Wood and Mr D Tonks have been asked to stay for consideration of this item, in relation to the risk aspects.

E. CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

There are no items for consideration

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
(01622) 694002

Tuesday, 30 November 2010

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held in the Medway Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 15 October 2010.

PRESENT: Mrs T Dean (Chairman), Mr A R Chell, Mr R Brookbank, Mr G A Horne MBE, Mr R F Manning, Mr M J Jarvis, Mr R E King, Mrs J P Law, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mrs J A Rook and Mr J E Scholes

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P B Carter

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms K Kerswell (Group Managing Director), Mr J Hawkins (Project Manager, Transformation), Mrs A Beer (Director of Personnel & Development), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership) and Mr A Webb (Research Officer To The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

71. "Change to keep succeeding" The transformation of the Council's operating framework

(Item C1)

(1) The Chairman explained that an extraordinary meeting of the Committee had been arranged to give Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Cabinet's decision to endorse the Group Managing Director's proposals in advance of the formal consultation that was due to commence on 18 October 2010. The consultation was due to finish on 3 December 2010, and the proposals would then be brought before the County Council in December.

(2) Before Ms Kerswell gave a presentation to the Committee, the Leader informed Members that the Conservative Group had made minor amendments to the draft structure proposals since they were presented to Cabinet on 11 October. During the presentation, Ms Kerswell explained the proposed structure of the council, including the five new directorates – Education, Learning and Skills; Families, Health and Social Care (FHSC); Customer and Communities; Enterprise; and Business Strategy and Support.

(3) Some key features of the new structure were outlined, including Customer and Communities which as the 'Directorate of the front line' housed the gateway model, including libraries, registrars and web and telephone access; and Business Strategy and Support which consisted of business support to the whole council (Human Resources (HR), Information Technology (IT), Finance and Law services) and Business Strategy, which brought together business intelligence, performance management and business strategy to work in a client / corporate fashion with each of the Corporate Directors and Cabinet Members.

(4) The Committee was informed that the new structure was intended not only to facilitate the required savings but also to build capacity where it would be required and where opportunities to transform services existed. It reflected the policy direction

of the new Government (for example the relationship between education and social services reflected the renewed focus on education), the impact of the impending Comprehensive Spending Review and the ambitions of Bold Steps for Kent.

(5) Ms Kerswell explained the membership of the Corporate Management Team (CMT), which would consist of the five new Corporate Directors as well as the Section 151 Officer and the Corporate Director of Human Resources. The title Group Managing Director would also become Managing Director under the proposals. Members' attention was drawn to the specific section on Corporate Directors in the appendix report which offered a full explanation of their role. Later in the meeting, Mr King also referred to this section of the report and suggested that the new role of CMT was key, and that in the past Managing Directors had ring-fenced their own budgets because they were not thinking in terms of the whole organisation. Mr King suggested that it would be useful to have a further schematic showing the overarching role of CMT.

(6) Ms Kerswell went on to inform Members of the changes featured in the alternative proposals, which were circulated at the meeting. These changes included: Within FHCS, the Transition Director post would be a Head of Service, rather than at Director level and the job title and functions of the Director of Supporting People had been changed to instead cover strategic commissioning of health and social care, quality assurance, supporting people and back office support for Safeguarding; Feedback suggesting that youth offending and youth services should be together had resulted in youth offending moving to the Customer and Communities directorate, along with Kent Drug and Alcohol Team and community safety; Within the Enterprise directorate, Emergency planning had been moved into the division of Planning and Environment and the Director of Waste had been merged with the Director of Kent Highways post; Changes to Business Strategy and Support comprised the merging of the Corporate Director of HR and Director of IT posts and the Director of Procurement becoming a Head of Service under the Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement.

(7) Ms Kerswell rounded off the presentation by explaining what the new structure would deliver, including Bold Steps for Kent, a focus on the 'Three Ambitions', locality boards and additional capacity to deliver new service models and communication and community engagement.

(8) The Leader explained that, although there were a number of permutations, the proposals before the Committee represented a structure of the organisation that was fit for purpose and he wholeheartedly endorsed the structure. A slightly larger corporate support function was proposed but overall the new structure represented from a shift from 'silos', where each Directorate had its own duplicated support functions, to an integrated organisation, which would lead to substantial savings in the medium term. Further savings would be made below the top tier structures, since there would be less people on the payroll (as with the rest of the public sector) but the Council was setting an example by proposing a leaner top tier while growing capacity for significant change, such as the ambitions set out in Bold Steps for Kent.

(9) There was discussion about the status of the Cabinet report. Mr Sass confirmed that the report set out the Group Managing Director's proposals, and that the Constitution was clear that the approval of the structure down to the third tier was a decision for County Council on the recommendation of the Group Managing Director

and Leader. In response to a question from Mr Horne, Ms Kerswell confirmed that, as Head of Paid Service, she had the ultimate responsibility for implementation of any restructure in law, but the Constitution required proposals to be brought before full Council. Ms Kerswell felt there should be close involvement of Members and Officers in the process, which is why she had chosen the approach of bringing the proposals before Cabinet, Scrutiny Board and the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

(10) A query was raised around the fact that the alternative proposals had been presented after the discussion at Scrutiny Board. It was agreed that the Chairman of Scrutiny Board should be notified of the changes to the proposals and may want to call another meeting on that basis, but that a further discussion on the proposals would be taking place at Scrutiny Board on 3 November in any case.

(11) A range of questions were put to the witnesses, and the Chairman chose to divide these into three broad categories – process, costs and changes to service departments. There were also questions around CMT and the roles of the first tier posts, the nature of silos and the culture change that would be required.

Process

(12) A question was raised about who was consulted before the formulation of the proposals. Ms Kerswell responded that she had met with 219 managers and sought their views about the efficiency of the organisation; she had met with every member of CMT several times and asked them, based on the design principles endorsed by Cabinet, what they would do with their services and the rest of the Council; she had sought the views of the Chief Executive of Eastern and Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust in relation the Health White Paper and how the FHSC Directorate should be structured; and had two sub-group meetings and a full meeting of CMT.

(13) In response to a question about how the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation had been analysed, Ms Kerswell stated that she had spent a month taking in information about the organisation when she first arrived, had met with Cabinet Members and CMT on a number of occasions and then come to the Leader with a Force Field Analysis to inform the debate from which they had then arrived at the proposals.

(14) Mr Manning made the point that care would need to be taken to ensure the structure was not constructed from the top down, and asked if any workload analysis workload had been carried out. Ms Kerswell explained that it was an iterative process and that if the analysis had been carried out before the proposals were brought before Cabinet, this work could have potentially been wasted, but that it was possible to make professional judgements about capacity. The proposals were to make senior jobs larger in their spans of control, but this was necessary given the circumstances as well as the need to challenge what the council can continue to provide. Ms Beer added that the proposals looked at drawing together functions that in some cases had senior managers who would manage the delivery of these services. The synergy between these functions, the number of staff and the budget responsibilities was examined, in order to assess the feasibility of the responsibilities of each Director role.

(15) Responding to a query about what had been done to flatten the organisation, Ms Kerswell referred to the design principles and the ideal five tiers between CMT and

the front line, and the fact that there were currently too many one-to-one or one-to-two line management arrangements, and consequently too many managers. The improved effectiveness of the Oracle human resources system would enable the number of managers to be challenged.

(16) Following up a question asked at County Council on 14 October, the Chairman asked if reports by the directors of Finance, Law and Governance and Audit had been provided to the Committee on the respective risks of the restructure proposals. The Leader and Ms Kerswell stated that, although extensive discussions with officers had taken place, including with the Director of Law and Governance on the legal implications of the consultation, there were no formal reports by officers but that the risks, assessed on the basis of these officer discussions, were captured in the risk register, which was authored by Ms Kerswell.

(17) On the number of staff involved in the design and implementation of the proposals, it was stated that the programme management team had been drawn from across the organisation with back office support from HR, and approximately 17 staff had been involved in scoping the task of transition, including staff from Communications, Finance, IT and Resource Directors. Mr Hawkins anticipated there would be a team in each Directorate managing the transition, a small central programme team and project teams working on the finance, governance and IT structures and accommodation, as well as involvement from the Communications team. Mr Hawkins was confident that these roles could be fulfilled by existing staff.

(18) A question was raised about Mr Hawkins' role, and whether he had been brought in to advise or implement, to which he replied that he had been employed to implement the new structure as a project manager within the implementation team, and had no preconceived idea of the management structure. Regarding how progress of the implementation would be measured, Mr Hawkins responded that his deliverables would be a management structure that was fit for purpose and approved at County Council on 16 December and to get as many tier 1 and 2 posts filled as possible by the end of January 2011, so there could be a detailed transition before the 4 April 2011 with no disruption to services.

(19) A question was posed about how staff were notified of the proposals that were published on 8 October. Ms Kerswell stated had met with CMT on 7 October and shared the proposals that had been discussed with the Leader and Cabinet, and discussed ways in which the next tier of management could be informed. At this point the decision was taken to brief those affected on the morning of 11 October before Cabinet. Furthermore, all the affected staff were notified during September of the date when the proposals would be published.

(20) A Member asked whether the 311 responses to the informal consultation constituted a meaningful response rate. Ms Kerswell pointed out that opinion polls designed to explore the views of the entire population use relatively small samples and that, if one were to apply the same methodology, the standard error would be comparable. Furthermore, the responses received had been largely positive despite the fact that those against a proposal are usually the most vociferous, and this should therefore be seen as encouraging. Mr Hawkins stated that most of the 311 comments were anonymous, but he would estimate the vast majority were from non-management staff. There were also multiple comments received from the 219

managers that had been asked for their views and these further added to the pool of responses.

(21) A Member speculated that those who did not respond to the informal consultation may have thought Trade Unions would be representing their interests, and went on to ask about what work had already been done with Unions around the restructure. Ms Beer informed Members that there had been three informal meetings with Unions, a letter later that day would give them formal notification of the consultation and a formal meeting would be taking place the following week. Although Unions had not yet had the opportunity to make formal comments, an initial response was that they were grateful for being involved early on in the process.

(22) On the question of what measures were in place to ensure further involvement in the coming weeks, it was stated that there was a series of workshops, two SharePoint communities set up for staff directly impacted and their direct reports, the use of discussion forums was being explored and there were also ongoing dialogues with the respondents to the informal consultation who had opted to be involved in further discussions.

(23) Members raised questions about why proposals had been unveiled at that particular time, particularly in advance of the Comprehensive Spending Review on 20 October, and whether the proposed structure would be flexible enough to cope with further policy changes from Government. Ms Kerswell stated that if the Council did not begin looking at reducing costs it would end up examining what it delivered rather than how. A 30-34% reduction in funding from Government was anticipated, a clear policy agenda had already been set out in 'The Coalition: our programme for government', which the proposed structure would help to deliver, and the consultation process would be sufficiently open and flexible to enable the Council to respond to the implications of the forthcoming Localism Bill, Education Bill or White Paper, and the Health White Paper. The Leader added that the Council would be looking to restructure regardless of who was in Government, since substantial savings would still have to be made and the move from 'silos' was long overdue.

(24) The Chairman asked whether the Managing Directors' individual views on the restructure proposals would be fed back to Members, notwithstanding the fact that they should be viewed through the corporate lens. Ms Kerswell envisaged that they would form part of the final reports to County Council in December.

(25) Regarding the timeframe and process for appointments to the senior management posts, Ms Beer stated that the internal recruitment process would take place during January, with unfilled posts being advertised externally thereafter.

(26) In response to a question about the timescale over which the Hay panels would be operating, it was clarified that there were currently no Hay panels taking place but the Hay Group would be engaged to look at salaries of senior staff in order to provide external advice and validation and give an initial view of the appropriateness of the proposed structure and salaries. Ms Beer explained that the Hay job evaluation process was a methodology which was designed to ensure a consistent approach to grading jobs in both the public and private sector, and that Hay panels consisted of managers who came together and graded jobs based on their job descriptions in accordance with the process.

(27) Mr Scholes, as chair of the Superannuation Fund Committee, inquired whether the true pension costs of the proposals would be taken into account, particularly in relation to the changes further down the new structure. Ms Kerswell suggested a formal meeting be held with Mr Scholes to discuss the issue.

(28) A Member commented that the proposals before the Committee represented the 'bones' of a structure and a strategic direction, and that to get into detail and the supporting evidence would be a mistaken approach, as this was a live process.

Costs

(29) There was a discussion around the expected savings from the new top tier structure and the reduction from 29 to 24 posts. The savings were of the order of 18% comparing like with like and excluding additional costs such as severance pay, pensions or the termination of the bonus scheme. The Leader pointed out that the cost of senior director appointments had fallen markedly since 1994, when they were of the order of £4-5M per year to approximately £2.6M under the proposed structure

Silos

(30) There was an in-depth discussion around the nature of 'silos', Mr Hawkins defined silo working as being characterised by different parts of the organisation not sharing learning and good practice, and duplication of functions across the organisation. The Chairman asked how the silos had been created and ingrained, to which the Leader replied that they came about from people pulling in different directions and not assessing what would be in the interests of the whole organisation.

(31) Ms Kerswell noted that care would need to be taken to ensure that the old silos were not replaced with new ones and that the structure would be only one aspect of the new organisation. Other important features included the way that business support would serve the whole organisation, discipline around the use of systems (for example ensuring systems such as Oracle were fully utilised) and the redefined role of CMT in advising members on how to balance competing interests and ensuring coherent managerial leadership. A Member also made the point that care would need to be taken that silos did not develop within Departments themselves, particularly as a result of any division between professionals and other officers or administration staff.

(32) It was asked how other Kent organisations would be asked to look at how they operated, to which the Leader replied that the new structure was designed to deliver the localism agenda, but another aspect would be bringing people together to deliver joined-up services in each locality, and there would be a need to work with district Chief Executives so they can take on a greater responsibility for joined-up working at a local level. In addition, the draft job descriptions of the Corporate Directors included the task of building and promoting successful partnership working.

CMT and First Tier Posts

(33) There was a discussion around the five statutory officers and their access to the Managing Director post in the new structure. Ms Kerswell confirmed that the statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS), Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), Section 151 (s151) Officer would sit on CMT, which would meet weekly but felt it was

not necessary to have the Monitoring Officer (MO) on CMT or reporting directly to the Managing Director, provided that the post-holder and Managing Director felt satisfactory access arrangements were in place. The Committee were of the view that the Group Managing Director should consider that the Director post that includes the role of Monitoring Officer should also be part of CMT, in order to ensure that timely and appropriate legal advice was available to assist decision making at the highest level.

(34) A Member suggested that consideration should be given to whether the Director of Finance and Procurement (s151) should be a more senior post, rather than being managed by the Deputy Managing Director. Ms Kerswell pointed out that it was a first tier post and part of CMT and would have an open door relationship with the Managing Director. This was also in accordance with the code created by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), which suggested a direct reporting line to the Chief Executive or reporting arrangements that achieve a similar outcome. Ms Kerswell explained further that the rationale for the s151 officer sitting within the Directorate of Business Strategy and Support was because of the operational delivery of financial services to the whole organisation

(35) The Chairman asked whether the statutory role of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) could adequately cover all its responsibilities, when the care elements would be passed to FHSC. Ms Kerswell informed Members that the nature of this role was being explored, but that the existing statutory guidance made clear that responsibility for discharge of the functions of the DCS could lie elsewhere in the authority. The statutory guidance would have to change in any case since Government had changed the law on two requirements (to have a Children's Plan and Children's Trust) and were consulting on the role of a local authority in education services.

(36) A suggestion was made that, since the Managing Director would be running the day to day business of the organisation, consideration should be given to appointing a Director of Transformation, who would be responsible for driving down the new culture through the different levels of the organisation.

(37) The Leader endorsed the establishment of the Deputy Managing Director post and the rationalisation of the direct lines of management to the Managing Director, and added that the structure below the top tiers may need external challenge to ensure the best outcome.

Changes to service departments

(38) The Leader had resisted pressures to move to three service directorates and a support function, and believed the permutation of four service directorates would be the most suitable.

(39) On the point about the reintegration of Children's Services with FHSC, the Leader reflected on discussions with the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Education about the disaggregation of education from children and families nationally and the fact that he had concerns expressed to him by governors and head teachers on a number of occasions about the adverse effects on education of the amalgamation with children's social services.

(40) Ms Kerswell stated that there was a debate around the reporting and delivery relationships of children's social care which was designed to provide an education focus and additional capacity for the education agenda. The move was about statutory responsibilities and reporting arrangements as distinct from ensuring the delivery of quality Children's services, and there had been a desire in the informal consultation to strengthen the education element of the organisation. The formal consultation process would provide an opportunity to explore whether this was the right approach, and as it became clearer what the Government's intentions were, this would ensure a good outcome. Similarly with the Director of Public Health, there may be a future need to re-examine the role when the Government's intentions became clearer.

(41) The Chairman expressed concerns about the additional responsibilities being placed within the FHSC directorate at a time of significant change. In particular, Children's Services being reintegrated, the additional responsibilities that would be passed across from Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), the role that FHSC would be expected to play in Healthwatch (the Government proposal for public and patient involvement) and the reintegration of Supporting People.

(42) Ms Kerswell commented that FHSC was designed to take on the health agenda, and provide joint commissioning and delivery of health and social care, building on existing good practice in this area. There was a new resource to look at working with the new GP consortia, and a joint transition board was already working with the two PCTs to plan and merge activity together, but Older People & Physical Disability, Learning Disability & Mental Health, Supporting People and Specialist Children Services were all existing functions that were being realigned. In doing this, there was the opportunity to draw together the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for adults and the Needs Assessment of the Children's Plan to see what strategic commissioning could deliver across the piece.

(43) Mr Horne asked where the scrutiny of Kent health services would feature in the new structure. Referring to the current role of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) in looking at the equality of provision across Kent and its ability to refer decisions to the Secretary of State, Mr Horne questioned whether this power would be retained and suggested that councils still had a role in monitoring the standard of services provided through hospitals and acute care, as well as GP consortia. Ms Kerswell agreed this was an important issue and there was uncertainty about the scrutiny function and councils' involvement, but that this had been reflected in the Kent response to the Health White Paper. The Department of Health had also recognised the significant role councils had played in scrutiny of health services, but were not yet clear on what involvement they wanted from councils on the oversight and scrutiny of GP commissioning.

(44) There was a discussion around whether the Director of Business Strategy should sit within the Enterprise directorate, particularly considering that the post had responsibility for the Enterprise Fund. Ms Kerswell stated that re-titling of the Enterprise directorate was already being considered, and it was important to make the distinction between functions being put in place to support Kent business and those to support the agenda of the whole business that is Kent County Council. Members welcomed the assurance that an alternative title for the Enterprise

Directorate was being considered and Mr King also suggested 'Environment and Enterprise' as a potential alternative.

(45) A Member suggested that the Group Managing Director might want to reconsider whether public rights of way and country parks should sit under the Director of Customer Services. Ms Kerswell responded that the rationale for this was that they were services people chose to access, but that she had discussed with the Director of Personnel and Development whether they should sit under Planning and Environment. The Leader added that there was potential for social enterprises to get involved in the running of these services, and that moving to a different part of the organisation may encourage innovation, but that due to the specialised nature of the statutory roles relating to these services it could be discussed outside of the meeting.

(46) There was a discussion about the rationale for the proposal to explore the possibility to form an arms-length trading organisation out of the legal department. Having an in-house legal department meant that if incorrect advice was given internally the Council would have no recourse, yet taxpayers bear the financial risk of any incorrect advice given to external customers. Furthermore, it was felt that legal services would be able to augment the £1.2 million it currently brought into the Council each year if it was given more freedom.

(47) On the centralisation of the policy function, the Chairman asked how policy would be commissioned, whether all the expertise would be expected to be in a central policy function and whether there would be a continuing dialogue between policy and the delivery arms of the respective departments, since those involved in the delivery often have specific expertise. Ms Kerswell responded that there was a 'continuum' from operational policy to the overarching strategic view and there was a need to see the horizon as well as the detail. To have separate functions would be creating silos while a central policy function would be the driver that would link all parts of the Council as a professional organisation.

Culture

(48) The Leader made the point that the top tier would need to be signed up to the behaviours and design principles and be part of the Council's journey, and this culture would need to be propagated throughout the organisation.

(49) In response to a question about how the necessary culture change would happen in order to achieve integrated working, Ms Kerswell responded that it was about getting the right people in the right roles, being honest about what needed to be done and then very disciplined about doing it. The assessment centres would be a two way process that would also be an opportunity for people to explore whether they would like to work in the organisation and way of identifying strengths and weaknesses to help support their development.

(50) A Member asked what tools would be employed to ensure that the centralisation of support functions was successful, given that others had tried this in the past and failed. Ms Kerswell responded by pointing to her track record of achieving this elsewhere, and by stating that the way to achieve this was by having staff who wanted to work in this way and take the tough decisions necessary to make it successful. The Leader added that it was important to articulate to staff that this was

a more efficient model to save public money, and have a dialogue that enabled staff to give their feedback on how this could be achieved.

(51) Ms Kerswell thanked the Committee for the useful input that she had received during the discussion.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee:

(52) Thank Mr Carter, Ms Kerswell, Ms Beer and Mr Hawkins for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions.

(53) Note the general approach set out in the Group Managing Director's proposals (*Note: Mr Chell voted against this resolution, on the basis that he thought the Committee should approve, rather than note the proposals*)

(54) Agree the formal consultation process can commence

(55) Welcome the assurances given by the Group Managing Director that the points raised by the Committee will be taken into account and responded to.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held in the Medway Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 20 October 2010.

PRESENT: Mrs T Dean (Chairman), Mr R Brookbank, Mr L Christie, Mr E E C Hotson, Mr R F Manning, Mr R E King, Mrs J P Law, Mr R J Lees, Mr R L H Long, TD, Mrs J A Rook, Mr J E Scholes and Mr S Manion (Substitute for Mr M J Jarvis)

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs S V Hohler, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr R W Gough and Mr S Kearns

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs J Wainwright (Director Commissioning (Specialist Services)), Mr M Ayre (Senior Policy Manager), Mrs S Garton (Head of County Performance and Evaluation Manager), Ms K Kerswell (Group Managing Director), Mr R Fitzgerald (Performance Monitoring Manager), Mr O Mills (Managing Director - Adult Social Services), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership) and Mr A Webb (Research Officer To The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

73. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting
(Item A2)

(1) Mr Manion declared an interest in item D1 – “Equity and excellence: liberating the NHS” since he worked for his wife who was a General Practitioner, and may be affected by the proposals to create GP consortia.

74. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2010
(Item A3)

(1) Regarding Item C2, Core Monitoring, paragraph 6 it was clarified that it should read ‘feed-in’ tariff instead of ‘feeding’.

Matters arising:

(2) Regarding Item C1, the Transparency Programme, paragraph 2, the need for a meeting to devise a protocol for invited witnesses was reiterated, and it was asked that this take place in the following weeks.

RESOLVED: that subject to the amendment of Item C2 paragraph 6, the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2010 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

75. Follow-up Items from Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(Item A4)

(1) The Chairman noted that some information about gully emptying schedules had been circulated to Members and Mr Long commented that this information was incomplete. The Chairman stated that the desire was to know which gulleys would be emptied on a more regular basis to avoid flooding, and this information had still not been received. It was agreed that Mr Sass would draft a letter from the Chairman and Spokesmen to Mr Chard requesting that the information be provided.

(2) Regarding the Interim Guidance Note on Residential Parking, the Committee were informed that a meeting had taken place between the Head of Transport and Development and the Chairman and Spokesmen of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee. At this meeting, there had been acceptance by the Head of Transport and Development that the consultation on the proposals could have been better executed, particularly in relation to the database used to contact consultees. It was noted that a report would be going to the Kent Planning Officers Group (KPOG) on this issue, and that the Committee would look forward to hearing the outcome of the discussions.

(3) Regarding comparative information on Ofsted's assessment of safeguarding in other councils being supplied at the next meeting of the Vulnerable Children and Partnerships Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (POSC), it was noted that this was not on the agenda for the meeting of that Committee on 21 October. A Member sought assurances that this information would be provided to the POSC and be circulated to Members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee:

(4) Note the follow up items report and the responses to previous recommendations.

(5) Welcome the assurance given by Mr Sass that a letter would be sent to Mr Chard requesting the gully emptying schedules.

(6) Await the outcome of the discussions at KPOG regarding in the Interim Guidance Note on Residential Parking.

(7) Request that comparative information on Ofsted's assessment of safeguarding on other councils be supplied to the Vulnerable Children and Partnerships POSC and to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Members.

76. Notes of the Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on 8 October 2010 (to follow)

(Item A5)

(1) The Chairman decided that the notes from Budget IMG of 8 October would be considered at the next meeting, due to concerns that Members had not had sufficient time to read them.

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee consider the notes of the Budget IMG on 8 October at its next meeting.

77. Kent Connexions and Work Related Learning Services Contract 2010-2013: Budget Saving Options
(Item C1)

Mrs S Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, Ms J Wainwright, Director, Commissioning & Partnerships and Mr S Kearns, Chief Executive, Connexions Kent and Medway were present for this item.

(1) Mr Christie explained that his concern was that at a time when some of the most vulnerable young people were at risk, a reduction of £5 million to the Connexions budget over two years (which constituted 20% of the budget) would have a major impact on those who use Connexions services, particularly those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs).

(2) Mr Kearns informed the Committee of Connexions' focus on vulnerable young people and NEETs, and how it carried out preventative work in conjunction with schools and colleges. Discussions had already demonstrated the impact on non-teaching staff in schools, and there was the possibility that Connexions would be asked to do more direct work with young people who did not attend school or college.

(3) Mrs Hohler made the point that other councils had to make similar savings, as had other local Connexions services. Connexions Kent and Medway were doing a valuable and effective job and rates of NEETs in Kent were lower than most other council areas. Later on in the discussion, Members' attention was drawn to page 26 of the agenda, which contained a table showing percentages of young people who were NEET in Kent, England and the South East. Kent's lower percentages demonstrated it was performing well against comparator authorities. Mr Kearns explained that Connexions were acutely aware of the funding situation and had been expecting to have to negotiate funding for future years, since other Connexions services around the country had experienced significant funding pressures

(4) Mr Christie pointed out that Kent, unlike some other councils, had allocated the full amount of available funding to Connexions and this perhaps explained its excellent relative performance with NEETs. He expressed a concern that reducing funding would have a negative impact on this performance. Mr Christie asked if, in the same way Government protects certain budgets, whether the work done by Connexions in helping young people into employment could be protected, and whether this was considered during discussions to identify savings. Mrs Hohler responded that the Council's priorities were for children to go through school and into gainful employment, and to reduce the attainment gap of disadvantaged children, and she believed Connexions would still be able to deliver services that would achieve this within a reduced budget.

(5) The Government had not taken the decision to reduce the Connexions budget, but rather had reduced the Area Based Grant (ABG) which was not ring-fenced. Mr Christie asked whether reducing funding to other less frontline services, Value for Money or Invest to Save schemes had been considered. He made the point that a NEET who has regular contact with Connexions would cost around £8,000 per year, yet a young offender could cost up to £60,000 per year and asked whether consideration had been given to the money that could be saved by maintaining existing funding.

(6) There was a discussion around the exact detail of the decision. Mrs Hohler clarified that the decision taken was to give permission to consult with Connexions about identifying how to make the £5 million savings from the budget which had already been agreed. She explained that the decision had been taken as urgent because there was a meeting of the Connexions Kent and Medway Board on 9 September, and there was a desire to be completely open about the possible savings. Mr Christie made the point that when Members were originally consulted about the decision it was exempt and urgent, yet the non-exempt version contained in the agenda pack in front of the Committee had been bowdlerised

(7) In response to a question about whether the consultation had been delayed by the call-in, Mr Kearns stated that formal consultation with stakeholders, young people and staff had not begun because negotiations about the outcomes framework were still in progress, but that consultation would begin in due course. The Chairman also clarified that the decision was taken under urgency procedures and as such she and the Vice-Chairmen were consulted and the proposal was not delayed.

(8) The Chairman asked when and where the outcomes of the consultation on savings would be provided, and also whether a new contract would be made available before the next financial year. Mr Kearns explained that the consultation would need to begin before the end of 2010 in order for any proposals to be implemented before the start of the next financial year. He went on to explain that there were other voluntary sector providers funded either by Connexions or directly, which provided advisory services, and these would be impacted. For this reason it would be necessary for them to be included in the consultation process. Ms Wainwright anticipated that reports on the outcome of discussions about the contract for 2012/13 and 2013/14 would be presented to Cabinet, subject to confirmation.

(9) Mrs Hohler explained that the Council had been very thorough in looking at ways of making reductions and had been discussing with Connexions ways of cutting costs, such as using advisors based in schools rather than in town centre offices. Negotiations were proceeding well, with both parties having a greater insight about the impact of potential cuts and some of the difficulties in making savings, such as vacating premises with a longer lease. In these cases, KCC and Connexions would have to look at other ways of making the savings, targeting proposals in a way that continued to work with the most vulnerable young people and those most likely to be NEET. Mr Kearns envisaged that there would be reductions to universal and preventative services.

(10) In response to a question from Mr Manning about how proposals for savings would be identified and how Connexions were involved in this process, Ms Wainwright explained that they would be identified as part of the negotiations and that the Chair of the Kent and Medway Connexions Board and the Chief Executive were working very closely with KCC. The process involved looking at elements of how the Connexions budget was spent and examining whether those initiatives should continue, be reduced or cease, based on a needs analysis of which areas have higher proportions of NEETs than others. This enabled a differentiated approach across the county. When the contract was set up, the outcomes to be delivered by Connexions were agreed, in some cases district by district. For the current year, a price and performance targets were set out by KCC for Connexions to meet presenting need. As a result of reductions to the budget, they would be looking at which areas of presenting need could not be met.

(11) Mr Christie asked whether, if 70% of Personal Assistant (PA) time was spent in schools as set out in the contract, Connexions would be able to continue doing this with reduced funding. Mr Kearns clarified that the contract that Connexions had with the Council was outcomes-based and 70% of time being spent in schools was an input target, rather than a requirement to spend 70% of time in all schools. He added that it had featured as part of the discussions that looked at delivering the outcomes while working in a different way, and he expected the percentage of NEETs to increase as a result of the level of reductions. Connexions were in the process of agreeing with Kent what the consequences of a reduced contract would be.

(12) In response to a query about whether there would be a new contract between KCC and Connexions before the start of the next financial year, Ms Wainwright explained that the current three year contract meant that there could be no cuts during the first year, but that the following two years could be negotiated. KCC had chosen to indicate the scale of cuts that would be anticipated during years two and three to provide Connexions with a greater opportunity for planning.

(13) Since Connexions was a social enterprise, part of the discussions had focussed on which elements could be delivered under this model, in line with the Government agenda of public provision within the charitable sector. Mrs Law stated that in Herne Bay the idea of creating a social enterprise scheme through which NEETs could challenge themselves was being explored, and asked if this was being considered as part of the options for cost savings within Connexions. Mr Kearns responded that Connexions would be looking at other avenues of delivery for those who are vulnerable, NEET and long term NEET.

(14) Responding to a request for comparative data for other providers of the type of services provided by Connexions, Ms Wainwright explained that the data was commercially sensitive and difficult to obtain. She did however state that KCC had some idea of this information as a result of the tendering process, but due to its sensitivity could not share it.

(15) Mr Christie asked whether there were further plans for cuts to the Connexions budget in addition to the £5 million already identified. Mrs Hohler responded that the Council was looking at making savings while affecting the Connexions service as little as possible, and there was no intention to increase the extent of the savings above the amount already identified, although this was dependent on further announcements from Government.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee:

(16) Thank Mrs Hohler, Ms Wainwright and Mr Kearns for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions.

(17) Ask the Cabinet Member, Children, Families and Education to ensure that the proposed revisions to the Connexions Budget and services would be brought back to the Cabinet for consideration prior to implementation in April 2011, so the Committee can consider whether to call-in the proposals for examination.

(18) Ask the Cabinet Member, Children, Families and Education to ensure that any decision taken about further reductions to the Connexions budget beyond the £5m already identified will also be taken by the Cabinet.

(19) Ask that the Managing Director, Children, Families and Education provide comparative information on the performance of other organisations in helping NEETs into employment.

78. “Equity and excellence: liberating the NHS”

(Item D1)

Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services And Performance Management, Ms K Kerswell, Group Managing Director, Mr O Mills, Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services and Mr M Ayre Senior Policy Manager were present for this item.

(1) In response to a request from the Chairman for an overview of what local authority responsibilities would be expected to be, Mr Mills set out the details and implications of the proposals in the White Paper, ‘Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS’. These included:

- The proposals were in line with the Government’s approach to localism, which is a different way of approaching how local services support local communities.
- There would be a much stronger role for Councils than currently within the NHS.
- The creation of GP Consortia, which would commission most health services, and the NHS commissioning board
- Local Health and Wellbeing Boards, which would mean that Councils would be overseeing the health improvement agenda.
- A closer alignment of Health and Social Care
- The role of Local Improvement Networks (LINKs) being undertaken by Healthwatch (inspired by an existing model in Kent) which would present opportunities for user voice to be brought together at the local level and for Healthwatch to be shaped beyond the way LINKs was operating.
- A change to the role of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was not clear what the scrutiny arrangements would be, but Councils would be likely to have a role.

(2) Mr Christie raised the point that the outline of the response was discussed at the Adult Social Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Members were told that it would be presented at County Council on 14 October. He went on to ask why this had not happened, given the importance of the subject, and Mr Manning asked if there would be another opportunity for Members to comment on the Government proposals. Mr Gough responded that County Council was after the submission and the agenda was extremely full, but given the importance of the topic there would be a Member seminar on 8 November which would provide an opportunity to debate the issues. There were still significant uncertainties, and the publication of the Bill would present additional opportunities for the Council to feed back on the proposals. Mr Ayre added that there would be a Government response to the feedback received during the formal consultation process, and that when the Bill

was presented the Council would be briefing whichever organisation had the ear of those debating the issues (for example the Local Government Association, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives or the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services). This would be particularly important at the committee stage, when most changes that may be required to legislation were carried out.

(3) Assurances were sought that a subject of paramount importance to the people of Kent was being dealt with appropriately, rather than as part of another agenda, with input from the best people from across the Council. Mr Gough reassured the Committee that this was already being done, and that he was drawing together the work at Cabinet level, with involvement from the Cabinet Members for Public Health, Children, Families and Education and Adult Social Services, and a bespoke event had been put together as the start of that process. His role was also to ensure the subject had an agenda of its own, since it was the biggest change to the NHS since it had been created. Ms Kerswell added that at officer level the subject also cut across multiple directorates, and that Mr Mills was leading on behalf of CMT to bring together colleagues across the piece. It was not being tucked into a box under another label, but instead was a significant agenda, as evidenced by the work of the Joint Transition Board, which would be comprised of people across the directorates and PCTs. In the same way that the NHS would have internal transition arrangements, conversations would need to take place about how this would be managed within the Council.

(4) Referring to previous Council responses to Government consultations, the Chairman accepted that the consultations were being released rapidly and might not fit with the timetable of committees, but expressed a view that there should always be an opportunity for Members to access and have input into responses before they were submitted. Mr Gough acknowledged this and made clear that he was conscious of the collective expertise of Members, many of who had worked within PCTs or served on HOSC, and stated that he would be trying to make use of the expertise of Members in working on the NHS proposals.

(5) The Chairman asked how the public would be able to keep up with the changes to the NHS if Members were having difficulty doing so. In particular, if the proposals were too complicated and jargonistic to understand this would be at odds with Government aspirations for there to be a louder patient voice. She asked if there would be a role for KCC to engage with the people of Kent as interpreter, to ensure there was a reasoned public debate, rather than it being driven by headlines. Mr Gough responded that this was an interesting point that he would take on board. Mr Ayre added that the need for a communications strategy had been acknowledged in the draft transition plan, and that everything henceforth would need to have an outward facing aspect to ensure the public remained engaged.

(6) Mr Mills stated that there was always a tension between putting momentum behind far-reaching changes without overtaking where the legislation lies; there was not yet a statutory basis for GP consortia or other elements of the proposals. He agreed that there was a need for the right kind of communication to ensure that the public would have the opportunity to be engaged and shape and influence the NHS, but it would be important not to second guess the legislation.

(7) In response to a question why, since the consultation response repeatedly spoke of lack of clarity, it did not suggest that the Government's proposals be presented in a

Green Paper, Mr Gough responded that Green Papers are options papers, whereas the NHS White Paper sets out a clear policy direction. Although there were areas in the White Paper that were not clear, it was common for certain aspects of White Papers and Bills to lack detail. Mr Ayre added, on the subject of lack of clarity, that measuring outcomes in Health was a very technical area, and in his opinion the supplementary paper on Outcomes showed signs of being rushed and that although there had been a sea change in the performance management regime, the NHS were uncertain what it would be replaced with.

(8) In relation to a question in the consultation about the role of statute, Kent responded that it would be happy with a degree of statutory obligation, but would want flexibility about how they operated within it. However, it also stated that legislation should cover the role of scrutiny and referral. The Chairman asked what the thinking was behind a request for legislation around scrutiny but less legislation about the pattern that the organisation should take. Mr Ayre stated that the response asked that the Bill set out some minimum standards in terms of powers of referral about meeting in public, but that the process for the Health and Wellbeing Board and scrutiny function be left to local determination, and that the Bill set out minimum standards around this.

(9) There were a number of questions about the role of scrutiny, external audit, and how those with new responsibilities would be held to account, particularly as Councils would have new scrutiny and commissioning responsibilities and this might cause a conflict of interest. In response to a question from the Chairman about whether there was an emerging view about how scrutiny would be managed, Mr Gough agreed it was an emerging topic and drew the Committee's attention to the Council response to question 14 of the consultation. Whilst it was clear that Health and Wellbeing Boards would take on specific roles, HOSC, or its local equivalent, would need to fulfil a robust, independent scrutiny role and there would also need to be measures to carry out public engagement, which might be fulfilled by Healthwatch. The response had highlighted that there was an issue about independent scrutiny outside the Health and Wellbeing Board, since it would be implicated in many of the key decisions. Mr Ayre added that there was no consensus about the future role of scrutiny, but he thought it inevitable that scrutiny would have to be done internally and commissioned externally.

(10) Mr Christie asked why, since the number of PCTs had caused a variation in service across the country and the move from five to two PCTs locally had been welcomed because of improvements in consistency and working relationships, the response appeared to welcome the number of organisations Kent would have to deal with in future. He also made the point that the central administration of the NHS was due to the need to standardise services, and that many people were concerned about the potential for a 'postcode lottery' within the NHS. It was his view that this was a direct result of localism, and that the creation of multiple consortia with various flexibilities and freedoms would exacerbate this. Mr Ayre responded that there was likely to be an evolving number of consortia and that there would be provisions for consortia to federate, in order to act as lead commissioners on behalf of each other. Mr Gough added that GP commissioning fitted the overall Government philosophy of localism and that significant elements of the support structure might be on a wider scale than individual consortia, but agreed that there was a tension because one person's localism was another person's postcode lottery.

(11) Members expressed a range of views about public perception of the NHS, perceived inefficiencies and the adequacy of access arrangements, but there was consensus that the services were universally valued. Concern was expressed about the potential for disparity between the services provided by different consortia, and there was a feeling that disparity already existed between East and West Kent PCTs. Mr Mills responded that concerns about disparity echoed those expressed by LINKs, and those of patients more generally. The Chairman suggested that there would be benefits to working with the consortia to ensure a degree of coterminosity with Council boundaries, and that other Councils were looking into this, and went on to ask whether Kent were doing the same. Mr Gough responded that he agreed in principle and would be keen to ensure that this happened as much as possible, particularly given the agenda of localism and area based commissioning and the role of District Councils in the public health agenda, although it might not be wholly within the Council's gift.

(12) Mr Christie asked that if the intention was to extend Direct Payments from social care to health, whether this would mean that the needs of an individual would be evaluated, money allocated to those needs and then the individual would be expected to purchase the required services from the market. Mr Mills responded that there was a Personal Health Budgets (PHB) pilot taking place with East Kent and Coastal PCT, where 18 people were using the Kent Card to purchase services. He commented that PHBs could not be used to purchase acute care, but they were a step towards personalisation and an excellent way of pulling together health and social care. The Government were behind extending personalisation into health in a gradual manner, and would be evaluating the 15 PHB pilots across the country. The Kent Card put KCC in a strong position to extend this further.

(13) Mr Christie questioned where in the Kent response the potential weaknesses of GP commissioning were addressed and made reference to the response of LINKs. Their response suggested there was strong opposition to the GP commissioning of health care services, with concerns that patient care would suffer from GPs taking on work outside of their expertise. Mr Ayre responded that there were already 14 Practice Based Commissioning (PBC) groups operating in Kent. Not every GP would need to be involved in commissioning; instead it was important to establish whether there was a sufficient critical mass of GPs with the commitment to achieve it, and until discussions had taken place with GPs in Kent it would be difficult to know whether the capacity or ability was there. He added that if the Government were intending to put GP commissioning at the heart of the NHS, they were likely to ensure it was sufficiently resourced and able to happen. It would also be important to ascertain the legal status of GPs and their liabilities once the Bill had been introduced. The Chairman asked if there was any feedback from patients with experience of the PBC pilots, to which Mr Ayre responded that there was no formal feedback but he would make inquiries.

(14) Referring to the Council responses to questions 1 and 20 in the Regulating Health Care Providers paper, Mr Christie raised concerns about the removal of a cap of what private patients could be charged and the abolition of central targets to treat patients within a certain time. He asked why the response did not comment about the possible consequence that without targets for treatment, Trusts might allow private patients to be treated ahead of those without the means to pay and that this may prevent the aspiration of care free at the point of use. Mr Ayre responded that the current cap is arbitrary, and if it was removed there would need to be checks and

balances, which would be best fulfilled by local scrutiny functions. In relation to the waiting times, he responded that whether or not there were national targets, it would be likely that local contracts would address such things as waiting times and lengths of stay, although this had not been covered in the Kent response. Mr Gough stated that, although it was not clear how the commissioning relationship between GP consortia and Councils would work, since both parties would be locally accountable they would have reason to be responsive.

(15) The response to a question in the consultation about whether proposals should include provisions to prevent anti-competitive behaviour suggested that Kent did not support this. Mr Christie expressed a concern that in the Cabinet debate, the free market approach within the NHS was mentioned on a number of occasions. Mr Gough explained that the response did in fact cover the subject of others who might play a role in policing anti-competitive behaviour (e.g. the Office of Fair Trading), but the specific point made by Kent was about the potential for mission creep of Monitor and that the policing of anti-competitive behaviour could be addressed without the need for Monitor to expand and take on that role. He said that diversity of provision would be a positive, but that was a different issue from universal care, free at the point of use. Mr Ayre added that the question of anti-competitive behaviour had never arisen in relation to the NHS but that regulation of competition could be more efficiently handled within the Care Quality Commission.

(16) Responding to a question about the role of Councils in managing cost pressures on Health budgets, Mr Ayre stated that the consultation documents made it clear that it would be the ultimate responsibility of GP consortia to manage any pressures on NHS funds and that there was no clear expectation for Councils to do this. However, there might be opportunities for Councils and consortia to identify efficiencies, such as redesigning care pathways. However, the situation would become clearer when the Bill was presented to Parliament. Ms Kerswell stated that the demographic predictions for Kent, of a growing population of older people, and the associated increase in care costs would need to be managed. Referring to a meeting between herself, the Leader and the Chief Executive of the NHS, Sir David Nicholson, Ms Kerswell stated that there was acknowledgment that both the Council and NHS would need to look at how increased demands and costs could be jointly managed. She suggested that there might be a role for Members in overseeing how those pressures would be handled, due the Council's future commissioning responsibilities.

(17) Concern was also expressed about the risks associated with the transition, access to services and understanding patient needs in the future and it was asked whether a risk register was being formulated, or whether this would happen when the Government had responded to the feedback. Mr Mills stated that Kent had been working very closely with the three Kent PCTs and Kent and Medway Partnership Trust (KMPT) to develop a transition plan which would ensure all responsibilities would be passed over to the consortia, the NHS commissioning body and the Council before 2013. There was a myriad of risks both countywide and more locally, including the transfer of existing arrangements such as Section 75 agreements, and these would be contained in the transition plan, which would include a risk register.

(18) Mr Mills also commented that in the past the Government had put in place a framework for delivery of services, but the proposals set forth outcomes that would be delivered. The role of Healthwatch would be pivotal to ensure this happened, and other authorities were looking to Kent to see how this would be implemented, since

Kent were in a strong position, having already made a good start through their local Healthwatch. The Council would be looking at reducing its expenditure as much as possible and although the NHS budget was protected, there was increasing demand and the rising costs of drugs and technology presented further pressures.

(19) A question was posed about the possibility of staff being transferred from the NHS to the Council under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations. Mr Ayre stated that this had been considered by the Council, and although no formal legal advice had been sought, he and Mr Mills would be discussing the matter when they met with the Chief Executives of the Primary Care Trusts that evening. Mr Gough added that PCTs would be expected to reduce their management costs by 50%, and that the number of staff who were involved in commissioning were surprisingly small. Instead, there had been an increase in the number of NHS staff as a result of fulfilling reporting requirements and targets set by Government, and these requirements would soon be removed.

(20) Responding to a comment that the NHS was often seen as a top heavy, process-driven bureaucracy, Mr Gough made the point that the White Paper proposals would rectify this, by inverting the existing direction of travel from the centre, through Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) to PCTs. Mr Manning expressed concerns that Kent's response had not been sufficiently robust, particularly in relation to the general comments which had been made by the Council. Mr Gough responded that the executive summary set out the Council's wider thinking and that it supported the policy direction of the White Paper but that the response also made clear where the Council disagreed, such as the role of Monitor. He also reassured the Committee that terminology such as 'unclear' would be perceived by civil servants as quite forceful.

(21) The Chairman asked if the proposals would produce a more understandable process and set of managerial responsibilities within the NHS than existed currently, and a Member also asked about how NHS management would be slimmed down. Mr Gough responded that he hoped that the proposals would result in a simpler and more embedded Health organisation, but it would remain to be seen if it would be more comprehensible. Mr Ayre commented that the task had been set to extract £15-20 billion in efficiencies over the following four years. The White Paper referred to a fixed management fee from which GP consortia would purchase all their support and ancillary services.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee:

(22) Thank Mr Gough, Ms Kerswell, Mr Mills and Mr Ayre for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions.

(23) Ask the Group Managing Director to ensure that the protocol for responding to consultation documents is either amended or (if considered satisfactory) adhered to, so that responses to Government consultations are made available before submission to enable Members to have the opportunity to have input into the final response.

(24) Ask that the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance Management ensure the concerns of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee are

incorporated into the discussions scheduled to take place on 10 November and responded to in full in due course, as follows:

- a) The lack of clarity of proposals made responding to the consultation very difficult.
- b) That there is no funding identified for any staff subject to Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)
- c) It is not clear how scrutiny may work, particularly as there may be a conflict of interest between the scrutiny and commissioning functions.
- d) Behaviour of the Council in relation to some of its potential functions under the proposals might be construed as anti-competitive.
- e) That the feedback from the 14 Personal Health Budgets pilots be taken into account during the move to the personalisation model in health.
- f) That there needs to be an assessment and mitigation of risks of the proposals.
- g) That there needs to be a clear transition plan.
- h) That there should be a clear approach to ensure the patient voice is better heard.
- i) That there needs to be an attempt to facilitate coterminosity between GP consortia and Local Authorities where possible.

79. Towards 2010 Closedown Report *(Item D2)*

Mr A King, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Policy Localism and Partnerships, Ms K Kerswell, Group Managing Director, Mrs S Garton, County Performance And Evaluation Manager and Mr R Fitzgerald, Performance Monitoring Officer, were present for this item.

(1) The Chairman explained that the item had been called in because the discussion at County Council regarded the Towards 2010 targets, but she wanted the opportunity to discuss what the next steps would be. Specifically, if the Council was preparing a new set of targets, where would they be reported and would Members have an opportunity for input. She also had concerns with qualitative targets, because she felt that the Council could not be a reasonable judge of its own performance.

(2) Mr King acknowledged that there had been many debates over the years about qualitative and quantitative targets for the medium term, but that it was sometimes necessary to have aspirational targets for Members and officers that were not entirely measurable. This was because the ethos of the organisation included a desire to achieve new things and explore new opportunities.

(3) On the preceding Monday, Bold Steps for Kent was released, and it comprised a different form of targets, setting out the direction that the Council wanted to take. This included three priorities:

- Protecting people who cannot help themselves
- Strengthening the Kent economy
- Encouraging people to take responsibility for their own lives.

Mr King explained that this was in recognition of the move to a different society in which people would need to take responsibility for themselves and those around them.

(4) Bold Steps for Kent was published the preceding Monday to separate it from the end of Towards 2010. Having been released for consultation, Mr King hoped it would be debated properly and as many views as possible would be sought before it was debated at County Council, which would hopefully happen in December.

(5) In response to a question about whether the Core Monitoring Report would be a successor to the Towards 2010 targets, Mr King explained that the context was different because the Core Monitoring process was about ensuring that the organisation continued to perform in its core business. He added that the Council would have to avoid self congratulation and that future years would be difficult and also that the Councils would have to continue to strive to improve.

(6) Ms Kerswell added that as part of the Change to Keep Succeeding proposals, the Business Strategy Division would bring together performance management functions from across the whole authority. She explained that this was a response to the changes happening in Whitehall and a different approach in performance management reporting to Government. Learning from Towards 2010 and the Core Monitoring report, the Council's commitments for the future and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) initiative to make data from Councils more comparable would all come together to shape what the Council would report.

(7) Mrs Garton explained that having been through the Towards 2010 and Next Four Years processes, there were things that could be done differently in future reporting. She had picked up two particular issues from the debate at County Council, namely: The need to move to having four different outcome statuses instead of three, as had been used in Towards 2010 and the Next Four Years; and a better focus on outcomes and not outputs in the reports.

(8) Mr Christie explained that he did not share the Deputy Leader's view of self-sufficiency. In relation to Bold Steps for Kent, he expressed a concern about how practical it would be for the POSCs and Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to call the Executive to account on the three objectives that it set out. He explained that with the previous targets it was possible to monitor progress against them, but it would be much easier for the administration to have three broad principles which are difficult to measure.

(9) Mr King explained that in the consultation period Members would need to be asked what they would like to see in the new set of targets. The three noble goals were an essential part of the thinking of the organisation and during the following three months, thought would need to be given to how they could be taken forward and what mechanisms would support them. Mr King stated that a different approach was now needed and he hoped that the debates at the POSCs, Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Board would explore how this would be taken forward before the discussion at County Council.

(10) On the subject of Target 24: 'Find new and innovative ways of communicating with the public, including trialling webcast TV', a number of questions were raised by the Committee. Regarding Open Kent, the Chairman stated that she was confused as to what it was and whether it was operating, since the report suggested it was being piloted. There was also a question about where the intentions for Digital Kent set out on page 150 would be reported. The Deputy Leader confirmed that, subject to

the permission of the Chairman, a full report would be taken to the Corporate POSC on the proposals relating to Open Kent and Digital Kent.

(11) Responding to a query about the Kent and Medway Citizens' Panel, whether Medway Council had withdrawn funding, and whether the Panel was still in operation, Mrs Garton clarified that it was the Kent Messenger who had withdrawn from the initiative, but that support was still available from MORI as and when it was needed. The Chairman raised a query about community engagement initiatives that had been piloted by KCC, as referred to on page 159 of the report. She stated that the Parish Partnership Panel in Tonbridge and Malling had been in existence for a number of years, but had not changed over the last four years and there was no public engagement. Similarly, the Tonbridge forum followed the same format as it always had done. In both cases, the Chairman did not see what was being claimed as community engagement.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee:

(12) Thank Mr King, Ms Kerswell, Mrs Garton and Mr Fitzgerald for attending the meeting and answering Members' questions.

(13) Ask that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Localism and Partnerships provide a report to the Committee detailing the current status of Open Kent.

(14) Welcome the assurance from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Localism and Partnerships that he will ensure a full report is made to the Corporate Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposals relating to Open Kent and Digital Kent.

(15) Ask that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Localism and Partnerships ensures that members are fully involved in the formulation of the targets that will comprise Bold Steps for Kent.

By: Peter Sass - Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership

To: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 8 December 2010

Subject: Follow up items and Decisions from Cabinet Scrutiny Committee –
15 & 20 October 2010

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the decisions from the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and items which the Committee has raised previously for follow up

Introduction

1. This is a rolling schedule of information requested previously by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.
2. If the information supplied is satisfactory it will be removed following the meeting, but if the Committee should find the information to be unsatisfactory it will remain on the schedule with a request for further information.
3. The decisions from the meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 15 and October 2010 are set out below along with the response of the relevant Cabinet Member.

Recommendation

4. That the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee notes the responses to the issues raised previously.

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Background Information: *Nil*

Highways Business Plan IMG

Cabinet portfolio: Mr N Chard

Synopsis: The report to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee consisted of the minutes of the Highways Business Plan IMG held on 2 December 2008. During that meeting, it was resolved that gulley emptying schedules would be provided to Members after the County Council elections.

Reason for call-in: The minutes of the Highways Business Plan IMG of 2 December 2008 formed an item on the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee agenda of 10 December 2008. The Chairman asked that the request from the IMG be actioned.

Date of consideration by Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: 10 December 2008

Recommendations and responses:

1. Highways Business Plan IMG 02.12.08:

That a list of gulley schedules be supplied to all Members after the elections

The gulley emptying schedules would be issued to Members in the next few weeks.

Date of response: 21 July 2010

Date actioned: Not applicable

Members have received a map showing gulley emptying routes and schedule information would be available in the next few weeks

Date of response: 15 September 2010

Date actioned: 15 September 2010

Members will begin to be provided with the gulley emptying schedules from 18 October onwards

Date of response: 11 October 2010

Date actioned: 19 October 2010

Note:

A spreadsheet detailing the number of gulleys in each parish and when they had been or were due to be emptied was circulated to Members on 19 October 2010. At the meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 20 October 2010, the Chairman expressed concern that the information requested by the Committee had still not been received. The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen will be meeting with officers to discuss a way forward

Following a meeting between the Chairman and the Director of Highway Services, a briefing note has been provided to the Committee on this issue, and further information is expected to be provided to Members before the meeting of Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 8 December.

Kent Design Guide: Parking Consultation

Cabinet portfolio: Mr N Chard

Synopsis: The report to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee consisted of the decision notice which was signed by the Cabinet Members in May 2009; the report which recommended that the Quality Audit and Residential Parking Interim Guidance Notes be approved for adoption by Kent County Council and by Kent's District Councils; the report to the Kent Planning Officers' Group in October 2008 on the consultation responses to the Kent Design Guide Review; and the full list of consultees.

Reason for call-in: The Chairman explained that this call in was as a result of her being approached as Chairman of the Committee and that it was a decision made by two Cabinet Members in May 2009. The meeting was not to discuss the decision relating to the guidance, but to consider whether the consultation process in this instance was satisfactory.

Date of consideration by Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: 9 December 2009

Recommendations and responses:

3. Ask that the KCC consultation protocol be circulated to all Members, as the Committee was concerned that the protocol might not have been properly applied in this instance and that the Scrutiny Board and/or Corporate POSC be asked to examine whether the Consultation Protocol needed to be amended, in the light of the concerns expressed about this particular consultation, i.e. whether the list of consultees was full and appropriate; whether the method of consultation was appropriate; and whether steps should have been taken to chase up non-respondents.

A report was presented to Environment Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this issue at its meeting on 29 July 2010.

The following recommendations were agreed:

- a) Endorse the testing of the robustness of IGN3 described in Section 4 and receive a report on the outcomes when they are available.*
- b) Acknowledge the concerns of the Kent Developers' Group, and the work that is being undertaken to address these concerns, and encourage further dialogue at appropriate levels to understand the actual implications of and opportunities presented by IGN3, and its interpretation at local level.*
- c) Note that public consultation on Ashford Borough Council's draft Residential Parking SPD offers developers and designers an opportunity to make further representations on the implications of 'IGN3 based guidance', having regard for the need to address the problems of some past approaches.*
- d) Acknowledge the widespread concern among residents concerning parking in recent residential developments, and the social and cost implications arising from the problems caused, and welcome collaborative working approaches that are seeking to avoid replication of these problems in future developments.*

Date of response: 29 July 2010

Date actioned: 29 July 2010

Notes:

15.09.10 – The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee are due to discuss this issue with the Director of Environment, Highways and Waste

08.10.10 - The Head of Transport & Development has met with the Chairman and Spokespersons of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee. Concerns have been raised by several development companies and Members and officers of KCC about the discounting of garages and tandem parking from the minimum guidance levels for certain areas. In particular, it has been argued that this will have the 'unintended consequences' of reducing densities of development and degrading the quality of the streets. As a consequence, there has been some pressure for IGN3 to be amended. Because the Kent Planning Officers Group (KPOG) owns IGN3, any review would only be meaningful if it was commissioned by KPOG. After all, IGN3 was endorsed for interpretation at LPA level. A report to address these issues will be taken to KPOG on 29 October, and the Chairman and Spokesmen have been asked to be kept informed of the results of the discussion.

Review of SEN Units – Outcome of the Evaluation of the Lead School Pilot

Cabinet portfolio: Mrs S Hohler

Synopsis: The report set the context for the SEN Unit Review, presented the findings of the Lead School Pilot evaluation and made recommendations and proposals for the development of a new SEN Strategy to meet the special educational needs of Kent children and young people.

Reason for call-in: This item was called in to enable Members to ask questions about the outcome of the Lead School Pilot, the consultation process and the future funding of SEN Units.

Date of consideration by Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: 15 September 2010

Recommendations and responses:

1. Ask the Managing Director, Children, Families and Education to ensure that the CFE (Vulnerable Children and Partnerships) Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee is given a formal opportunity to monitor progress of the SEN review at all appropriate stages.

A report will be taken to the CFE (Vulnerable Children and Partnerships) Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Date of response: 30 September 2010

Date actioned: awaiting date

2. Ask the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education to ensure that during the formal consultation process, consultees are made aware of the budgetary implications associated with the proposals as well as the policy implications, and that all headteachers are engaged in the consultation process.

Full consultation on budgetary issues will be undertaken through the Schools Forum

Date of response: 30 September 2010

Date actioned: Ongoing to be determined by March 2011

3. Welcome the assurance given by the Managing Director, Children, Families and Education, that KCC will continue to lobby central Government to ensure that, where there are SEN units in mainstream schools, exam results of SEN pupils are disaggregated. This is to avoid these results affecting league table positions and disincentivising mainstream schools admitting SEN pupils.

A letter will be sent to the new Secretary of State, and this issue will be picked up in our response to the SEN and disability green paper.

Date of response: 30 September 2010

Date actioned: 17 October 2010

“Change to keep succeeding” The transformation of the Council’s operating framework

Cabinet portfolio: Mr P Carter

Synopsis: This report outlined the work to date on a programme to ensure that the Council continues to deliver successfully in the face of the most significant changes facing local government in the external financial and policy context. It needs to be read in conjunction with the draft medium term plan which is being launched for consultation - “Bold Steps for Kent” as this is proposing the draft new strategic vision for the Council which the organisational framework of the Council needs to be able to support and deliver upon.

Reason for call-in: The Group Managing Director asked that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee be given the opportunity to discuss the proposals that had been endorsed at Cabinet and make comments and ask questions about the proposals at an early stage, before the formal consultation commenced.

Date of consideration by Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: 15 October 2010

Recommendations and responses:

1. Note the general approach to the transformation of the Council’s operating framework set out in the report and appendices.
2. Agree that formal consultation on the proposals for the transformation of the Council’s operating framework can commence.
3. Welcome the assurances given by the Group Managing Director that all the points made during the discussion at Cabinet Scrutiny Committee be examined and responded to. These are as follows:
 - a) Welcome the assurances given by the Group Managing Director that there will be plenty of opportunities for staff to have input into the detail of the proposals before the discussion at full County Council on 16 December.
 - b) The first stages of the process should look at a skeleton structure and strategic direction rather than get into detail, and that there should be a ‘live process’ going forward.
 - c) The Group Managing Director should consider retitling the Enterprise Directorate to better reflect the activities it will deliver and to avoid any confusion with the functions of the Director of Business Strategy post and the Enterprise Fund that sit in the Directorate for Business Strategy and Support.
 - d) Statutory officers should report directly to the Group Managing Director, and the Group Managing Director should consider that the Director post that includes the role of Monitoring Officer be part of the Corporate Management Team, in order to ensure that timely and appropriate legal advice is available to assist decision making at the highest level.
 - e) Another structure chart or other representation should be produced to show the collective role of the Corporate Management Team.
 - f) The Group Managing Director should consider the appointment of a Director of Transformation, since the Group Managing Director should be running the day to day business of the organisation.
 - g) The Committee has concerns about the large amount of responsibility placed on the Families, Health and Social Care Directorate, particularly at a time of great change including the proposed shift of responsibilities from Primary Care Trusts.

- h) Consideration should be given to how the new scrutiny responsibilities arising from the NHS White Paper are reflected in the proposed structure chart as these are currently not present.
- i) Consideration should be given to how support functions should be centralised, since in the past Directorates have felt that centralised functions have not been responsive or competitive enough.
- j) Further thought should be given to where responsibilities for public rights of way and country parks should sit. Currently it is proposed that they are within the Customer and Communities Directorate but a suggestion was made that they might be better served under the Director for Planning and Environment.
- k) Seek assurance that true future costs of pensions are realised when final decisions are taken about the reorganisation and welcome the Group Managing Director's suggestion that a formal meeting will take place between the Chairman of the Superannuation Committee, the Head of Personnel and Development and the Group Managing Director to discuss this issue.
- l) The Committee expects that the report to County Council on 16 December will include detailed written advice and comments from the Director of Finance, the Director of Law and Governance and the Head of Audit and Risk on the totality of the restructuring proposals, so that Members are fully appraised of the financial, legal and risk-related implications of the proposals.

The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee's comments are all very much welcomed and will be incorporated as part of the consultation received during this process

Specific responses:

<i>3(a)</i>	<i>Noted and agreed.</i>
<i>3(b)</i>	<i>Noted.</i>
<i>3(c)</i>	<i>A number of comments are being received on the title of the 'Enterprise' Directorate and it seems very likely there will be a recommendation to change it.</i>
<i>3(d)</i>	<i>The point about the monitoring officer post is noted and will be considered.</i>
<i>3(e)</i>	<i>A chart exists to show the structure of the corporate management team.</i>
<i>3(f)</i>	<i>Noted.</i>
<i>3(g)</i>	<i>The FHSC directorate will have additional capacity within it to deal with the transition work with Health.</i>
<i>3(h)</i>	<i>This structure process does not deal with any member issues arising from the Health White paper but this is a very important point that is being picked up in other work streams.</i>
<i>3(i)</i>	<i>The role of business support being provided to all directorates rather than within each directorate is a critical tool to help shift the "siloes" culture of the council. It is absolutely essential that all support services do support all the services of the council. It also has to be noted that the way in which support is currently provided has to change and much more manager self service and use of corporate systems to reduce duplication and cost will be required.</i>
<i>3(j)</i>	<i>This point has been made in other feedback and it is very likely this will change.</i>
<i>3(k)</i>	<i>Arrangements will be made for a meeting as soon as is practicable.</i>
<i>3(l)</i>	<p><i>The report to members on 16 December will include the detailed written advice of the Group Managing Director the statutory Head of Paid Service.</i></p> <p><i>Cabinet Scrutiny can be assured that the report to Council will follow the Council's internal Governance Statement's requirements. The financial and legal implications of the report will be cleared with the relevant senior officers.</i></p> <p><i>The detailed written advice from the GMD will fully appraise members of the financial, legal and risk implications of the final proposals.</i></p>

Date of response: 8 November 2010

Date actioned: TBC

Kent Connexions and Work Related Learning Services Contract 2010-2013: Budget Saving Options

Cabinet portfolio: Mrs S Hohler

Synopsis: The original paper outlined the proposed budget saving options for the Kent Connexions and Work Related Learning Services Contract 2010-2013.

Reason for call-in: Members wanted more information on the basis of the decision that was taken under urgency procedures to reduce Connexions funding by £5 million over the final two years of the contract.

Date of consideration by Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: 20 October 2010

Recommendations and responses:

1. Ask the Cabinet Member, Children Families and Education to ensure that the proposed revisions to the Connexions Budget and services would be brought back to the Cabinet for consideration prior to implementation in April 2011, so that this Committee can consider whether to call-in the proposals for examination.

Final decisions on all KCC budgets for implementation in the next financial year, including that of Connexions will be achieved through KCC's budget setting process in the New Year.

Date of response: 11 November 2010

Date actioned: TBC

2. Ask the Cabinet Member, Children, Families and Education to ensure that any decision taken about further reductions to the Connexions budget beyond the £5m already identified will also be taken by the Cabinet.

No further reductions have been identified beyond the £5m already identified. However, should national or local developments change this funding position, Members will be informed.

Date of response: 11 November 2010

Date actioned: Not applicable

3. Ask that the Managing Director, Children Families and Education provide comparative information on the performance of other organisations in helping NEETs into employment.

As explained at the Committee, the only comparative information that can be relied upon is that from other Local Authorities in respect of comparison of the percentage of NEETs. This is because "comparative information on the performance of other organisations in helping NEETs into employment" is often held by private sector contractors who would deem this information to be "commercial in confidence" and would not agree therefore to make it publicly available. Consequently there is no consistent comparative national data on this specific topic.

However, Kent's favourable position on NEETs is shown on the table below

Latest available (2010) Comparison to Statistical Neighbours

	<i>July</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>Average</i>
<i>Nottinghamshire</i>	5.0%	5.4%	4.5%	4.9%
Kent	5.2%	5.2%	5.6%	5.4%
<i>Staffordshire</i>	5.5%	5.8%	6.9%	6.1%
<i>Worcestershire</i>	6.3%	6.6%	5.9%	6.2%
<i>Warwickshire</i>	5.8%	6.3%	6.4%	6.2%
<i>West Sussex</i>	5.9%	6.3%	7.2%	6.5%
<i>Swindon</i>	7.7%	8.2%	5.2%	6.8%
<i>East Sussex</i>	7.3%	7.6%	6.8%	7.2%
<i>Essex</i>	7.5%	8.1%	8.6%	8.1%
<i>Northamptonshire</i>	6.9%	7.6%	9.9%	8.3%

Date of response: 11 November 2010

Date actioned: 11 November 2010

Equity and excellence: liberating the NHS

Cabinet portfolio: Mr R Gough

Synopsis: Cabinet were asked to agree the commentaries appended to the Cabinet report as representing the views of Kent County Council in respect of the Coalition Government's White Paper "Equity and excellence: liberating the NHS" and its associated consultation reports.

Reason for call-in: The consultation documents were brought to the Committee at the request of the Chairman and two of the Spokesmen of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee in order that the Cabinet Member and Officers could guide Members through the consultation documents and answer any questions they had.

Date of consideration by Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: 20 October 2010

Recommendations and responses:

1. Ask the Group Managing Director to ensure that the protocol for responding to consultation documents is either amended or (if considered satisfactory) adhered to, so that responses to Government consultations are made available before submission to enable Members to have the opportunity to have input into the final response.

Given the number of consultations, and the tightness of some of the deadlines, it would be impractical to require draft responses to be available before submission in all cases so I do not propose to amend the procedure for responding to consultation documents. The procedure requires Members to be notified (via the Member Information Bulletin, and it is also on KNet) of all consultations, who the lead officer responsible for responding is, and the deadline for response. On KNet there is an up-to-date list of current consultations. If Members have views that they wish to be recorded as part of the response to a consultation, they can contact the lead officer directly and also inform the lead officer that they would like to see the response before it is submitted.

Date of response: 10 November 2010

Date actioned: 10 November 2010

2. Ask that the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance Management ensure the concerns of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee are incorporated into the discussions scheduled to take place on 10 November and responded to in full in due course, as follows:

- a) The lack of clarity of proposals made responding to the consultation very difficult.
- b) That there is no funding identified for any staff subject to Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)
- c) It is not clear how scrutiny may work, particularly as there may be a conflict of interest between the scrutiny and commissioning functions.
- d) Behaviour of the Council in relation to some of its potential functions under the proposals might be construed as anti-competitive.
- e) That the feedback from the 14 Personal Health Budgets pilots be taken into account during the move to the personalisation model in health.
- f) That there needs to be an assessment and mitigation of risks of the proposals.
- g) That there needs to be a clear transition plan.
- h) That there should be a clear approach to ensure the patient voice is better heard.

- i) That there needs to be an attempt to facilitate coterminosity between GP consortia and Local Authorities where possible.

The concerns of the Committee were incorporated into the discussions which took place at the KCC member briefing on health reform on the 10th November.

Detailed below are the responses to individual questions:

- a) *The lack of clarity of proposals made responding to the consultation very difficult. **Unfortunately the timeframe for responses gave us little influence over this.***
- b) *That there is no funding identified for any staff subject to Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) **There is currently no identified funding for any staff subject to TUPE. This will be watched carefully and old-to-new financial flows will be tracked.. As soon as we have the DH workforce guidance paper (promised for early December) we will get a detailed legal view on TUPE implications.***
- c) *It is not clear how scrutiny may work, particularly as there may be a conflict of interest between the scrutiny and commissioning functions. **The White Papers are not entirely clear about how this will work and we need to think in terms of the various new/additional functions before deciding on form or structure and to also think about a tiered approach.***
- d) *Behaviour of the Council in relation to some of its potential functions under the proposals might be construed as anti-competitive. **The White Paper response did cover the subject of others who would play a role in policing anticompetitive behaviour e.g Office of Fair Trading. The policing of anti-competitive behaviour could be addressed, without the need for Monitor to expand and take on that role. The need for diversity of provision would be a positive, but that is quite different from universal access free of charge.***
- The issue about regulation of competition - the power to ensure equality of opportunity for all providers existing or otherwise to be providing to NHS patients, could be more efficiently handled within the CQC. The roles of quality regulator in CQC and economic regulator of Monitor are not mutually exclusive. The amount of to-ing and fro-ing that would need to take place between CQC and Monitor would be duplication. If the CQC is going to be sufficiently robust to host an independent organisation called Healthwatch England it should be sufficiently robust to host a unit on anticompetitive behaviour without issues about quality intruding upon that set of judgements.***
- e) *That the feedback from the 14 Personal Health Budgets pilots be taken into account during the move to the personalisation model in health. **The government is behind extending personalised services to health care and there will be an overall evaluation of the pilots which will be taken into account during the move to the personalisation model. This will also feed into discussions with GP consortia.***
- f) *That there needs to be an assessment and mitigation of risks of the proposals. **This will form part of the work supporting our KCC input on QIPP***

- g) *That there needs to be a clear transition plan*
We are working very closely with all 3 PCTs and are well on the way to developing a detailed transition plan setting out which responsibilities will be passed over to new organisations. These will be primarily GP consortia as well as the National Commissioning Body and Local Government. It is recognised that there will be a myriad of risks at a local and strategic level and these will be incorporated into a risk register.
- h) *That there should be a clear approach to ensure the patient voice is better heard.*
We will be influencing the debate on the Bill when published to make sure HealthWatch can deliver its potential
- i) *That there needs to be an attempt to facilitate coterminosity between GP consortia and Local Authorities where possible.*
We are already engaging with GP consortia and if you look at where the Practice Based Commissioners are at present, broadly speaking it is easier to see something like this happening in many parts of east Kent rather than the west. However, we are keen to ensure this happens as much as possible and it clearly fits with our aims regarding localism and area based commissioning. Districts Councils also have a key part to play in public health and we recognise that.

Date of response: 11 November 2010

Date actioned: 10 November 2010 (and ongoing)

3. Express regret that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee was not able to have any input into the response before the consultation period closed.

Towards 2010 Closedown Report

Cabinet portfolio: Mr R Gough

Synopsis: In September 2006, KCC set itself 63 challenging and ambitious targets in the Towards 2010 plans for Kent. The four year term has now ended and the report to Cabinet attached the draft of the Towards 2010 Closedown Report for comment and consideration by Cabinet prior to its submission to County Council for approval on 14 October.

Reason for call-in: The Leader and Officers were invited to the meeting to guide Members through the report and answer any questions they had.

Date of consideration by Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: 20 October 2010

Recommendations and responses:

1. Ask that the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services and Performance Management provide a report to the Committee detailing the current status of Open Kent.

A report has been drafted and will be circulated on 12 November.

Date of response: 11 November 2010 Date actioned: 12 November 2010

2. Welcomes the assurance from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services and Performance Management that he will ensure a full report is made to the Corporate Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposals relating to Open Kent and Digital Kent

A full report on the proposals relating to Open Kent and Digital Kent will be made to Corporate POSC at the meeting on the 13th January 2011.

Date of response: 11 November 2010 Date actioned: expected 13 Jan 2011

3. Ask that the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services and Performance Management ensures that members are fully involved in the formulation of the targets that will comprise Bold Steps for Kent

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.

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.

Date of response: 11 November 2010 Date actioned: TBC

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

INFORMAL MEMBER GROUP ON BUDGETARY ISSUES

MINUTES of a meeting of the Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 8 October 2010.

PRESENT: Mrs T Dean (Chairman), Mr L Christie and Mr R F Manning

ALSO PRESENT: Miss S J Carey and Mr N J D Chard

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms L McMullan (Director of Finance), Mr A Wood (Head of Financial Management), Mr D Shipton (Finance Strategy Manager), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership), Mr A Webb (Research Officer To The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee), Mr P Bole (Head Of I C T Commissioning), Mr R Hallett (Directorate Finance Manager - EHW) and Mr D Thomas (Business Improvement Manager - EHW)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

6. Notes of Previous Meeting on 12 July 2010

(Item 1)

RESOLVED that the notes of the Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues held on 12 July 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising from the minutes:

(1) On paragraph 3, regarding schools becoming academies, it was explained that the Council did not yet have an official stance on this issue but the Managing Director for Children Families, and Education had been meeting with schools before formulating a position. There had also been an exchange of correspondence between Kent and Government, in which options were being explored, including around whether negotiations should take place on an individual school or whole Council basis.

(2) On paragraph 11, it was queried whether the briefing note on the current position comparing the cost of home to school transport before and after the roll out of the Freedom Pass had been circulated. This had been circulated in late July in the form of an extended email but would be re-circulated by Mr Wood.

(3) On paragraph 12, regarding the £0.083M contingency, a query was raised whether when this money had been exhausted, i.e. there was no more for contingencies. Ms McMullan admitted that, when looking at demographic increases for example, that it was difficult to allocate this money to the right place at the start of the financial year and that perhaps 'contingency' was not the most suitable term.

(4) On paragraph 13, In Year Capital Grant Reductions, it was explained that the briefing note had been circulated.

(5) On paragraph 16, in response to a question around there being a possible future Cabinet Member decision on Edenbridge Community Centre and whether the situation was sufficiently different to warrant a decision, it was stated that it was not yet possible to say what the new scheme would be

(6) On paragraph 17, regarding the Find and Fix project, there was a query raised about whether an update on current overhead costs had been received. Richard Hallett would ensure that this note was circulated.

(7) On the Report on the Disclosure of Payment Transactions, an update was requested on the disclosure. The response was that there had been about 20 queries to date but that only Environment, Highways and Waste invoices were in the public domain and there would be a need to monitor this as the public became more aware of the information being made available.

(8) On the 2010-11 Reporting Timetable and Proposals for Activity Monitoring, in response to a question around the 16 June 2011 date for Budget IMG it was confirmed that this date would be suitable for considering the final accounts before they went to Government.

7. Recording of Establishment - Oracle Systems *(Item 2)*

(1) In response to a question as to when the first report from Oracle would be made available, it was stated that this would be early in 2011 since the underlying system was being upgraded in November and December.

(2) It was reported that all parties were generally happy with the proposed output but would need to see the details before drawing conclusions. There were initially concerns that 'Establishment' in terms of Oracle was different to what was desired by the group, but there was agreement at resource management group that the work programme would be deliverable.

(3) Mr Bole explained that as part of the capital programme, suppliers were upgrading the software and that existing data would be migrated using Post and for this reason the Establishment figures would follow soon after. Mr Bole was confident that the system changes could be made, but there would be disruption to the management structure.

(4) In terms of timescales, it was stated that the data that would be provided would be as at a date in January 2011 and that by the end of January the Council would be in a position to begin responding to Establishment figure queries.

(5) In response to a question about how data was changed within a department, it was stated that personnel do this as and when needed. It was thought that this was a positive tool in the process that the organisation was facing up to (the proposed restructure) and the fact that managers were welcoming its introduction would help the implementation be a success.

(6) A major advantage of the system was that it would overcome the issue of the payroll and organisation headcount, but it did not show contractors including staff employed through Kent Top Temps. The Chairman stated that she had asked for a

quarterly snapshot from Kent Top Temps; along with the Oracle system that would be up and running by the end of January 2011, this would then provide a complete picture.

8. Activity Indicator for a Measurement of the Condition of Roads (Discussion)

(Item 3)

(1) The Chairman made the Group aware that she asked for measurement of the condition of roads to go into the Core Monitoring report. There was an in-depth discussion around how this data was presented, since there were many different ways of doing so and these needed to be narrowed down to the most appropriate. The Chairman suggested that the public could be kept informed of the situation and work being undertaken via the Council website.

(2) It was confirmed there were many methods of reporting road condition, such as the technical survey which fed into National Indicators on a yearly basis, and statutory safety inspections. A concern was raised that monitoring something that was already known had become an industry and that priorities were driven by public perception (e.g. complaints). There was an acknowledgement that if money was put where it most needed the public would not be happy. It was suggested that there should be a system in place which shows forward progress, driven by the Council rather than the public.

(3) It was thought that the National Indicators gave a sense of direction and the ability to compare with other Councils as well as monitoring calls and complaints. There was a need to look at both asset management and public perception and this was why both were reflected in the Core Monitoring report.

(4) Mr Chard agreed that there was a need to devise an evidence-based indicator, but this was difficult because road condition was very subjective. He also reminded Members that some roads were accorded a higher priority according to a hierarchy (which could be made available to Members to aid their understanding of the Council's policy). Ms McMullan stated that the annual condition survey, which fed into the Medium Term Plan the current position, the money available and projected position, was the best indicator currently available.

(5) Mr Chard suggested the data could be presented as a matrix showing what was spent and the outcomes achieved and offered to go away and work something up. The Chairman stated that this should show that money was being used most effectively to get the best results, and Mr Manning stated that the Council should be in control of its business case. The solution should be something which was useful to officers as well as the Informal Member Group on Budgetary Issues.

9. Revenue & Capital Budgets Monitoring Exception Report (Cabinet report attached)

(Item 4)

Children, Families and Education portfolio:

(1) In response to a question about paragraph 2.5.1 regarding the assumption of a reduction of £0.2m from the previous forecast had been realised, Ms McMullan said it was too early to tell, but that this was under monthly review.

(2) On paragraph 2.5.2, about the 18 schools due to achieve academy status, a query was raised about the volume of services which these academies would buy back from the Council. Ms McMullan stated that these academies were likely to make use of the Council's financial services, and many of them were surprised at how much the Council provided in the way of support services from the base budget. However, it would not be clear how much funding for academies would be coming from Government until after the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Kent Adult Social Services portfolio:

(3) On the reduction in payments to voluntary organisations in paragraph 2.6.3, a question was raised as to whether the position of voluntary organisation funding was being monitored more generally. There was a concern that if their funding was being cut they would not be able to pick up the extra slack as expected by the Government under its Big Society plans.

(4) A Member asked if the underspend on Learning Disability in 2.6.3 was due to underperformance or greater efficiency by the Directorate. It was explained that variances were usually because the demand was different to the budget assumptions. On the suggestion that the underspend had arisen because of officers being guarded about the budget, Ms McMullan agreed with that assessment. The Council was in the same position as the Government, with contractual obligations and uncertainties around the restructure and so there was a need to manage all these conditions.

(5) On the increasing pressures set out in paragraphs 2.6.1 and 2.6.4 relating to Direct Payments, a query was raised why there had been an increase in the pressure due to an increase in clients when the last Quarterly Monitoring Report had stated that the activity was within an affordable level. Ms McMullan stated she would come back to the Group on this issue.

Impact of Recent Government Funding Announcements on KCC:

(6) A question was raised whether the £2 Million reduction in Connexions funding formed part of the £6.9 Million reduction in the Area Based Grant (ABG) for Children, Families and Education. Ms McMullan explained that the £2 Million was tied up with the ABG reduction but that the ABG was not ring-fenced and if KCC had spare funds it would have been able to meet the shortfall.

(7) Regarding the Building Schools for the Future announcement, it was asked when a figure for the reduction would be provided. Ms McMullan informed the Group that Waves 4, 5 and 6 had been halted but she would not expect to hear the detail until 2011. For this reason, a number of Freedom of Information requests had been submitted to try and obtain further detail. Mr Christie asked if there were any associated costs due to contractual obligations. Ms McMullan responded that the detail was in the Cabinet report and that risks were of the order of £6 - 7 Million but risks were capped through the contracts. Although there was the possibility of legal

action to reclaim the uncapped portions of any contractual liabilities, legal advice already sought suggested that this would be unlikely to be successful.

(8) In relation to the possible reduction to the Council grant of between 25 – 40%, a question was raised what this represented in terms of the Council's total budget. In terms of the Formula Grant and ABG, this represented £340 Million out of a net spend of £900 Million (which equated to approximately a third). This figure was worked up from a 5% reduction in cash terms, a 10% reduction in the Formula Grant and ABG over four years and a 0% Council Tax increase over the same period. It would also be necessary to look at building in additional pressures due to demographics.

(9) In response to a question asking if financial modelling of a 2.5% increase in Council Tax had been undertaken, Ms McMullan responded that due to the uncertainty the debate had hitherto been focussed on the size of the challenge, namely the £340 Million grant reduction.

10. Quarterly Monitoring report format

(Item 5)

(1) This item was deferred until the next meeting of the Informal Group on Budgetary issues, to which Dave Shipton would be invited to discuss changes to the budget book.

11. Government Consultations

(Item)

(1) On Local referendums to veto excessive council tax increases, it was stated that the Council responded to this consultation by welcoming the removal of universal capping powers. It was explained that the outcome of any local referendum would be binding on the Council, which would need to propose a shadow budget within the Secretary of State level of Council Tax and adopt it if the referendum voted against a local rise.

(2) The cost of such a local referendum was estimated to be £1.6 Million, but this cost would be reduced if District Council or County Council elections were taking place in the same year. There was also a discussion around whether a referendum would be covered by Government guidelines which limit the number of ballots permitted to be held in one day,

(3) Members raised questions about the process of responding to consultations. It was explained that responses were in the form of a formal letter from the Council to the appropriate Government department answering the specific consultation questions but that the Council often also made broader comments about the subject in the letter.

(4) Mr Sass stated that it was up to the relevant Cabinet member to decide the process that would be undertaken in formulating a response, and this did not constitute a formal decision. Concerns were raised that there was no consistency of approach in responding consultations across the piece, and the protocol for responding to consultations was in need of examination and possible amendment. It

was however stated that finance related consultations would always be brought to Budget IMG.

(5) There was a brief discussion about Kent's response to the Comprehensive Spending Review, and it was not certain if a letter that had been sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a formal response on behalf of the Council. Ms McMullan offered to follow this up.

12. Budget IMG Meeting Dates for 2010

(Item 6)

(1) These dates were agreed.

By: Mr J Burr, Director Of Kent Highway Services
To: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 8 December 2010
Subject: Gully Emptying Schedules – Briefing Note

(1) As part of the ongoing efficiency and savings review within Kent Highway Services and a specific focus on ensuring that Members receive the information they require, I have met with the Chairman of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and agreed a different approach to the long standing gully emptying schedule action.

(2) With immediate effect gully emptying will be undertaken on a planned basis, and not as a purely reactive service. As part of this planned approach we will be collecting information as to the required future cleansing frequency, but this will be of secondary importance to the main priority of ensuring that the maximum number of gullies are cleaned each day, thus reducing future drainage problems and increasing value for money.

(3) A reactive capability will be retained to respond to emergency situations. This will also ensure that we are tackling priority customer calls. This capability will be dynamic with crews taken as necessary from planned work and returned as soon as possible when the issues are resolved.

(4) KHS has been compiling a list of local drainage 'hot spots' that require 'special' attention and increased priority. Many of these locations have already had system jetting or necessary repair works undertaken with about 1500 localised flooding problems resolved in 2009/10 and 650 done so far this year. These hotspots are now being monitored to ensure that the problems do not reoccur and are now on the planned gully schedules with priorities as necessary. It has been agreed with the Chairman that the list of known 'hot spots' would be sent to Members so that they can review them and highlight any other areas within their respective wards that they are aware of that need to have a specific focus.

(5) The list of known locations will be sent to members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee before the December meeting so that this approach can be discussed before the rest of the KCC members are contacted with the information for their respective areas.

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By: Peter Sass: Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
To: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 8 December 2010
Subject: Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services
(Cabinet Decision)

Background

(1) Members would like more information on the Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services, including why the risk of the judgement had not been identified earlier.

(2) The Cabinet report and appendix are attached for Members' information, along with a copy of the Ofsted report and the Ofsted grade criteria and inspection framework. Comparative data on the Ofsted judgements of other councils is being collated and will follow shortly.

Guests

(1) Mrs S Hohler, Cabinet Member, Children, Families and Education, and Ms R Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education have been invited to attend the meeting between 9.40am and 10.25am to answer Members' questions on this item.

Options for the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(1) The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee may:

(a) make no comments

(b) express comments but not require reconsideration of the decision

(c) require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending reconsideration of the matter in the light of the Committee's comments by whoever took the decision or

(d) require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending consideration of the matter by the full Council.

Contact: Adam Webb Tel: 01622 694764

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By: Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member, Children, Families and Education
Rosalind Turner, Managing Director for Children, Families and Education

To: Cabinet – 29 November 2010

Subject: Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report summaries the outcome of the OFSTED Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services in Kent

Introduction

1. (1) An announced inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in Kent took place between 11-22 October 2010.

(2) The inspection concluded that the overall effectiveness of safeguarding services is inadequate and that capacity for improvement is inadequate. It concluded that the overall effectiveness of services for looked after children is also inadequate, while the capacity for improvement is adequate.

(3) This is of concern for the County Council and its partners in health and other key agencies. We are determined to put right the failings identified in the report, and to return the service to good standards, providing robust, quality driven and outcome based support for children, young people and families.

Actions taken in response to the inspection

2. (1) Following the unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in August, an action plan was put in place to address the findings of the inspection. The plan has been monitored by an Improvement and Development Steering Group, led by the Cabinet Member and Managing Director for CFE. The inspection acknowledged that these actions were in place, but that it is too early to see evidence of sustained improvement.

(2) The main actions have been

- Development programmes for all the duty and assessment teams to improve safeguarding practice
- Reduction in social worker vacancies to 11% by October, compared with 26% in January 2010

- Introduction of a new staff supervision policy, combined with a training programme for all supervisors
- Work with partner agencies to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals to Children's Social Services
- Establishing 12 preventative services managers (1 in each district) from 1 September to ensure that services intervene earlier and in a more integrated way

(3) In response to this full inspection, immediate action has been taken to safeguard the children identified to be at risk and actions are in place to address the areas for improvement. A full recovery / improvement plan to follow at next Cabinet meeting on 10 January 2011.

(4) The improvement plan will deliver the recommendations of the Ofsted inspection within the required timescale, which will include:

- Solutions to the Integrated Children's System (ICS)
- Streamlining of business processes minimising replication of forms
- A revised staff retention policy, particularly focussing on retention of experienced social workers
- Strengthened performance management framework with clarity about responsibilities of managers at all levels in the service
- A more robust quality assurance process, redressing the balance between audit undertaken routinely by frontline managers and offline audits by the Safeguarding Unit. The aim is to ensure that frontline managers embed audit into their practice
- A comprehensive workforce development programme for all staff, combining training in their teams with more traditional training courses
- A rigorous strategy to improving the education of looked after children, addressing attainment, attendance and inclusion
- Actions to reduce social workers' caseloads
- Redefinitions of the roles of the social worker assistants and administrative staff
- Proposals for the restructuring of the social work service

(5) Since the inspection report was published on 19 November, the Director of Specialist Children's Services has been visiting the 12 district offices to discuss with staff the implications of the inspection. Although very disappointed by the inspection outcome, staff are generally positive and

committed to improving social work practice. Many are relieved that they can now talk openly about the failings in the service and feel energised by clarity of purpose provided by their district improvement plans. There is a virtually unanimous view across districts that the actions in paragraph 2 (4) need to be addressed.

(6) In immediate response to the areas of improvement required by the inspectors, the following actions have been taken.

- A review, led by ISG and involving front line social work teams, of the operation of the electronic case management and recording system, benchmarked against operating systems in successful social care authorities, with recommendations on improvements or recommissioning within 3 months.
- All principal social workers and team leaders are reviewing the caseloads for which they are accountable to ensure the assessments and plans are sufficiently robust to safeguard children and ensure good outcomes. There are approximately 7,000 live cases in the system currently. This will be completed by 23 December 2010. The district managers will audit a sample of the cases to quality assure the review. For looked after children, the teams are addressing reviews of assessments and plans, starting with the children who became looked after in the past 6 months. This will be completed by 1 December 2010; they will then move to the cohort looked after 6-12 months, gradually ensuring that all assessments have been reviewed by the end of January
- Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) met on 18 November and all partners signed up to ensuring that their staff are conversant with social care eligibility criteria and to providing appropriate levels of referral information. Implementation will be driven by the KSCB coordinating groups in each area and the Board agreed to establish a quality assurance process for referrals which will be in place from 1 December 2010. Revised eligibility criteria were agreed by the Board in September. Kent police is the largest referrer to children's social services, most referrals being about children affected by domestic abuse. A new referral process has recently been agreed between the police and social services, whereby the police will screen more rigorously which domestic abuse incidents need to be formal referrals and which should be notifications. The new process is welcomed and will be implemented from December
- Development programmes have been in place since 8 November 2010 to improve the quality and timeliness of initial and core assessments in duty and assessment teams. In addition, a nationally recognised development

manager has been engaged to work with all the duty teams to drive improvement, especially improvement in quality

- The NHS Director of Commissioning, Child Health is addressing as a matter of urgency commissioning of appropriate CAMHS for 16-17 year olds. The CAMHS National Support Team reviewed CAMHS services in Kent in September and made a number of recommendations for significant improvement. A CAMHS improvement plan is being developed, which will have close linkage with the improvement plan for Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services. A letter of support and commitment on behalf of the PCTs is attached as appendix 1.
- Case planning for looked after children requires urgent attention. The permanence policy has been refreshed and a strategy for its implementation will be produced in December, due for implementation in January. This will result in a renewed focus on proactive care planning for our looked after children, along with improved health care and education overseen by the Headteacher for Looked After Children.
- Consideration is being given to developing dedicated social work teams for Looked After Children.

(7) In addition to the above actions, the recruitment policy continues to deliver results:

- All district manager posts are now filled, with the last recruit taking up his post in January 2011
- Only 2 team leader posts are vacant, and they are filled by 'acting' arrangements pending permanent recruitment
- There remain difficulties in recruiting principal social workers, and a new strategy of recruiting in Ireland, combined with a development programme for existing staff, will begin in the new year
- Social worker vacancies have reduced to 11% at the end of October, compared to 26% in February. In addition, 50 new social workers have recently been recruited from Europe, many of whom are experienced practitioners. They will join the service in 2 phases – half in January and half in March, so that a comprehensive induction programme can be put in place for them
- 33 social work students due to qualify in summer 2011 have already been recruited
- Interviews are underway for graduate trainee social workers; there are 36 shortlisted applicants for 22 places. The successful applicants will join the service in January

and will begin their 2 year postgraduate qualifying course in September 2011

- 20 social work assistants already working in social work teams will be sponsored on the open university social work qualifying course, starting in February 2011
- The administrative capacity of social work teams has been increased – 1 admin to 3 social workers in duty teams and 1 to 4 in children and family teams
- The social work assistant (SWA) ratio has been confirmed as 1 social work assistant/trainee social worker to 3 social workers
- A number of new administrative staff and social work assistants have been recruited in the past 2 months, and all will be in post in the new year

The absolute top priority is improving the quality of social work practice and the quality of child protection practice. This will be achieved by reducing social worker caseloads so that they have time for sound professional practice (a maximum caseload of 30 children was defined in November, with the aim of reducing caseloads further in the new year, once the new recruits are in post). The other top priority is increasing the complement of principal social workers (still 20% vacancies) to enable reflective supervision to take place.

(8) An Improvement Board will be established, overseen by the Leader, and reporting quarterly to Cabinet. The work of the current Improvement Steering Group will be integrated into the overall improvement plan. All agencies will be involved as appropriate, both on the Improvement Board and through the Kent Safeguarding Board. Additional capacity and external support will be brought in to assist the recovery plan

Conclusion

3. (1) The findings of the inspection reveal significant weaknesses and a transformation of children's social services is required, focussing on sound social work practice and effective management oversight and supervision.

(2) Other agencies and partners will have their own part to play in ensuring good practice and assisting with the multi-agency aspects of the improvement.

Recommendations

4. Members are requested:

to note the issues arising from the inspection and actions to address them

Background Documents:

OFSTED Report – 19 November 2010: Saeguarding and Looked After Children Services. [www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_view/\(leaid\)/886](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_view/(leaid)/886)

Unannounced inspection letter August 2010

Ofsted grade criteria and inspection framework

ADCS report on national safeguarding pressures

Interim report of the Munro review of safeguarding

Report to County Council on 1 April 2010 - Safeguarding Children in Kent: Defending and Developing the Service

Reports to County Council on 14 October 2010;

Progress Report in response to Safeguarding Children in Kent: Defending and Developing the Service

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Rosalind Turner
 Managing Director
 Children, Families & Education Directorate
 Kent County Council
 Room 2.39
 Sessions House
 Maidstone
 Kent ME14 1XQ

25 November 2010

Dear Rosalind,

Joint Ofsted/CQC Inspection in relation to Safeguarding and Looked after Children

Further to the publication of the Ofsted report and the impending final CQC report in relation to the above, we are writing to give our absolute commitment to addressing the concerns highlighted within the areas identified for improvement.

As previously communicated, the report is of grave concern to all of us and we are strongly committed to a programme of work with you to achieve sustainable and continuous improvement in those areas identified for joint improvement by the inspection process, in particular partnership arrangements, quality assurance and performance management.


In particular, we will seek to address the deficiencies identified within CAMHS services for looked after children, and you will be aware that work has already commenced to improve outcomes for children and young people up to 18 years across the emotional wellbeing and mental health agenda. This is a whole systems challenge, as identified in the recent visit by the CAMHS National Support Team and is being addressed by a dedicated multi-agency project group, via Lorraine Goodsell.

In relation to the health element of the inspection process, we have now received draft CQC inspection reports for East and West Kent and anticipate final reports being received by w/e Friday 03 December. The draft CQC report reinforced the health areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted report as well as further recommendations for health services.

We understand that KCC have set up an Improvement Board to implement the required actions from the Ofsted inspection. The NHS are establishing a process to address specific health recommendations. However, it would seem sensible that where recommendations require partnership collaboration, this is led through the KCC Board. We would therefore recommend that Lorraine Goodsell and another nominated colleague (to be confirmed shortly) become members of this Board.

We trust this letter provides you with the assurance you seek in our commitment to delivering the required improvements across the system.

Yours sincerely,



Marion Dinwoodie
 Chief Executive
 NHS West Kent



Ann Sutton
 Chief Executive
 NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent

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Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services

Kent

Inspection dates 11-22 October 2010

Reporting inspector Stephen Hart HMI

Age group: All

Published: 19 November 2010

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Contents

About this inspection	2
The inspection judgements and what they mean	2
Service information	3
The inspection outcomes: safeguarding services	6
1. Overall effectiveness	6
2. Capacity for improvement	6
3. Areas for improvement	7
4. Outcomes for children and young people	8
a. The effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure children and young people are safe	8
b. The effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people feel safe	8
5. The quality of provision	9
6. Leadership and management	11
The inspection outcomes: services for looked after children	16
1. Overall effectiveness	16
2. Capacity for improvement	17
3. Areas for improvement	17
4. Outcomes for children and young people	18
5. The quality of provision	22
6. Leadership and management	24
Record of main findings	30

About this inspection

1. The purpose of the inspection is to evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in the local area towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. The inspection team consisted of three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), two additional social care inspectors and three inspectors from the Care Quality Commission. The inspection was carried out under the Children Act 2004.
2. The evidence evaluated by inspectors included:
 - discussions with children and young people receiving services, front line managers, senior officers including the Managing Director, Children, families and Education (the statutory Director of Children's Services) and the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, elected members and a range of community representatives.
 - analysing and evaluating reports from a variety of sources including a review of the Children and Young People's Plan, performance data, information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day care provision and the evaluations of serious case reviews undertaken by Ofsted in accordance with 'Working Together To Safeguard Children', 2006.
 - a structured review of 20 case files for children and young people with a range of need complemented by detailed examination of key aspects of a further 24 cases that were selected at random. This provided a view of services provided over time and the quality of reporting, recording and decision making undertaken.
 - the outcomes of the most recent annual unannounced inspection of local authority contact, assessment and referral centres undertaken in August 2010.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

3. All inspection judgements are made using the following four point scale.

Outstanding (Grade 1)	A service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
Good (Grade 2)	A service that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate (Grade 3)	A service that only meets minimum requirements
Inadequate (Grade 4)	A service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

4. Kent is a shire county located in the south east of England. Within the county boundary are 12 district councils and one unitary authority (Medway Council). Parts of Kent share the affluence of the south east England region and, overall, Kent ranks as the 48th least deprived local authority. However some areas of the county are amongst the most deprived in the country.
5. Some 17.3% of Kent's children were living in poverty in 2007, the majority in lone parent households claiming income support and job seekers allowances, although poverty among those in low paid employment is an increasing concern. The districts of Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham and Dover have the highest percentage of children living in these categories.
6. With a population in excess of 1.4million, Kent is the largest county council in England, with a population growth rate significantly in excess of regional and national averages. While almost three-quarters of the county is rural, most people live in the main 26 towns, the largest of which is the county town, Maidstone. In 2009, just under a quarter of Kent's population (348,200 people) was aged 0–19 years.
7. Kent's population is largely of white ethnic origin. In 2007, 6.3% of Kent's population was estimated to be of minority ethnic origin with people of Indian origin representing the largest minority ethnic group (1.4% of the total population). This compares with 8% for the south east England average and 11.8% for the England average. Of Kent's minority ethnic population, 25.3% are aged 0–15 years and the majority of minority ethnic residents are located in the districts of Gravesham, Dartford and Canterbury. This number includes 850 asylum-seeking children.
8. Children, families and education (CFE) services in Kent have recently been reorganised, with the new structure built around a 12 district model operational from 1 September 2010. The CFE districts are coterminous with 12 district and borough council areas located within the Kent county boundary.
9. The CFE Directorate comprises two operational and three support groups:
 - The specialist children's services group which provides a full range of children's social care services and some specialist education services

- The learning group which provides universal and some specialist education services and workforce development opportunities for all staff
 - The commissioning and partnerships group which supports the Kent Children's Trust, the Kent Safeguarding Children Board, independent reviewing officers and the policy overview and scrutiny committees. It also provides a range of management information reports about key aspects of the children's service which are intended to inform strategic and practice development.
 - The resources and planning and capital programmes and infrastructure groups which both provide support services to the directorate.
10. At the end of August 2010, Kent had 1362 children subject to child protection plans. In addition 1568 children, including 248 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), were looked after by the council. Kent has 680 foster carers and two specialist fostering schemes; treatment foster care for teenagers and therapeutic foster care for primary age children. There are 83 children currently placed in children's homes, including 34 UASC, with 192 children, including 100 UASC, currently in independent fostering agency placements. Care leavers receive services from the 16+ leaving care service, which is a commissioned service between Kent County Council and Catch 22, a national charitable organisation. Approximately 1500 children who are in care are placed within the Kent boundary by other local authorities
11. Education for children and young people under 16 years is provided to approximately 230,000 children in the following settings:
- one local authority maintained nursery and a further 776 early education settings (childminders, playgroups, full day care and nursery units in independent schools)
 - 97 designated children's centres
 - 447 primary schools
 - 81 secondary schools (including 32 grammar schools)
 - 22 academies (19 secondary, 2 primary and one 'all through')
 - 24 special schools, 51 schools with special units within mainstream provision and 18 pupil referral units (including alternative curriculum provision units).

12. Post-16 education and training is provided by:
 - 75 mainstream schools with sixth forms educating approximately 15,500 pupils (approximately 67% of pupils attending year 11 in a Kent maintained school stay on to a school sixth form)
 - 16 academies with sixth forms educating approximately 2,800 pupils
 - seven colleges within Kent and a number of other colleges in the area, for example in Medway.
13. Youth services, youth offending services, Kent drugs action team and the supporting people team are within the communities directorate of Kent County Council. The Children's Trust works very closely with colleagues in these services from policy and planning, through to local delivery.
14. Health services for children and young people in Kent are commissioned by two primary care trusts (PCTs); NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent and NHS West Kent. Community services are mostly provided by Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services and West Kent Community Health. Acute hospital services including maternity and accident and emergency care are provided by Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust, East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and Medway NHS Foundation Trust. Specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in West Kent are provided by Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (which also provides adult mental health services across the County) and in East Kent by East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, which also provides some specialist therapies and community paediatric services.
15. A large number of statutory and voluntary sector partners are engaged in the work of the Kent Children Trust Board and the Kent Safeguarding Children Board and are crucial to the delivery of a whole range of services for children, young people and families and the universal services that support them.

The inspection outcomes: Safeguarding services

Overall effectiveness

Grade 4 (inadequate)

16. The overall effectiveness of services in Kent to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded and protected is inadequate. While there are areas of adequate and better practice across the partnership, including the voluntary sector, serious deficiencies in the social care fieldwork service result in too many children being left without sufficient safeguards or adequate protection arrangements. Partner agencies are failing to consistently raise concerns in these circumstances, although there has been an increase in the number of cases raised as part of the escalation protocol by health professionals over the last twelve months. In approximately half of cases seen by inspectors, there were significant concerns about the quality of practice and management; in the worst of these cases, children were left unprotected and were at risk of significant harm. The council and its partners have not yet sufficiently addressed areas for action identified through their own audits or the unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements which took place in August 2010. This leaves children at continued risk. The Improvement and Development Steering Group, chaired by the lead member for children, has been created to oversee the improvement plan produced in response to the findings of the unannounced inspection, but it is too early to see evidence of sustained improvement.
17. The council and its partners have also been ineffective in ensuring that quality assurance and performance management arrangements are used to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded or to effect improvements in policies and systems to support improved practice. Despite a wealth of performance information from audits, the impact of performance management in ensuring improved management and practice as well as compliance with policies, procedures and guidance is limited. Overall, line managers do not provide sufficiently robust scrutiny of, or challenge to, the quality of child protection and children in need assessments and plans.

Capacity for improvement

Grade 4 (inadequate)

18. The capacity for further improvement is inadequate. The council and its partners have had considerable evidence of poor management and front line practices for some time. Despite this, very little impact has been made on achieving continuous improvement in key areas of service provision. Quality assurance and performance management have been ineffective in achieving consistently good standards. Despite successful recruitment of committed and enthusiastic social workers, staff and management capacity and capability are still insufficient to drive the urgent and

necessary changes required. Leadership by the Children's Trust and the Kent Safeguarding Children Board has not been sufficiently evident although work is now in hand to strengthen both partnerships.

Areas for improvement

19. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for safeguarding children and young people in Kent, the local authority and its partners should take the following action:

Immediately:

- Review the current childcare caseload and ensure that all children in need of safeguarding and protection are identified and receive appropriate services.
- Ensure that all partners are fully conversant with the threshold for accessing social care services and provide the appropriate levels of referral information
- Improve the quality and timeliness of initial and core assessments
- Establish clear arrangements for the referral and treatment of young people aged 16-18 requiring a CAMHS service

Within three months:

- Establish systematic performance management processes at all levels to improve the quality of practice and management across the partnership.
- Improve the child protection conference process to ensure that professionals are properly prepared and service user confidence is restored.
- Ensure that each child protection plan sets out measurable recommendations
- Review the effectiveness and value for money of the Kent contact and assessment centre
- Ensure that ethnicity data are entered in each child and young person's electronic and paper file
- Ensure that health services subscribe to a suitably independent interpreter service

Within six months:

- Review the workforce and take the necessary steps to address capacity and capability shortfalls.
- Review the effectiveness and value for money provided by the current computer based recording systems.
- Take steps to align training and development opportunities with service priorities

Outcomes for children and young people**The effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe. Grade 4 (inadequate)**

20. The council and its partners have had access to a large amount of information that, over the last two years, has strongly and consistently indicated significant weaknesses and workload pressures in child protection and safeguarding services. Despite this information there is little evidence of sustainable change in practice and until recently the Kent Safeguarding Children Board has not been proactive in establishing a fully effective leadership role in relation to practice standards. During the course of this inspection, 22 of the current cases selected for scrutiny raised serious concerns about practice and management. In a significant proportion of these cases children were judged to be vulnerable with their safeguarding needs either unrecognised or not responded to. In the worst cases, children and young people were unprotected from the likelihood of significant harm, a finding which necessitated immediate action to ensure their safety. Wider safeguarding arrangements in some universal services and in settings are adequate or better with some examples of strong and well established practice in one area of the county. However the accident and emergency facilities for children at the Maidstone hospital site are inadequate. There are no children's nurses, the children's area is insufficiently separate or secure from adult care and adults' and children's major injury cases are seen together. Plans are in place to improve the quality of services through recruitment and relocation to a more suitable environment.

The effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people feel safe Grade 3 (adequate)

21. The Kent Children's Trust second annual review for 2009-2010 summarises the feelings of children and young people in a number of key areas. The proportion of 7 to 16 year olds who feel safe at school has increased. In addition the concerns of 11 to 16 year olds in relation to issues such as use of drugs, knife crime and safety on public transport have decreased. This is further supported by the reduction in the number of children and young people who have been a victim of crime, (from 27.9

per 1,000 of the population to 20.0 per 1,000 of the population in 2008-09).

22. There is a clear acknowledgement within the council of the need to continue to strengthen the children and families workforce. A specific consultation with children and carers has identified the key qualities that these important groups feel professionals should have in order to effectively work with children and young people. The outcomes of this work have informed recruitment processes and have led to young people being involved in staff interviews.
23. There is a commitment to involve children and young people in the processes that affect them and some successful work has been undertaken to improve children and young people's contribution to case conferences, reviews and planning meetings. Conference chairpersons encourage children to contribute to these meetings although wider issues about the structure of child protection conferences have prevented the realisation of the full effects of this initiative.

The quality of provision

Grade 4 (inadequate)

24. The responsiveness of services is inadequate. There are significant differences in the quality of the service being provided across the eleven duty access points, and all are experiencing a significant increase in the number of referrals. Thresholds are being applied differently in different parts of the county. Not all agencies appear to understand or exercise their safeguarding responsibilities by ensuring that their referrals contain accurate and sufficient information to enable informed responses to be made. Some partners do not have a shared understanding or consensus about the issues. This is preventing progress although some work is taking place in one area to try to achieve a common understanding of requirements and the newly appointed preventive service managers have this issue as a key area to address. It is as yet too early to evidence sustained improvement. Some teams have very high thresholds for access to assessment services which are reflected in high re-referral rates. In too many cases the quality of initial decision making by managers is poor, typified by a lack of understanding of the significance of family history and significant risk factors such as parental mental health and substance misuse. These findings were mirrored in a recent Kent Safeguarding Children Board audit (July 2010) which found significant weakness in the referral process and that 23% of cases that had been closed required either children in need or safeguarding and child protection services.
25. Assessment and direct work with children and families are inadequate. The quality of assessments and direct work with children and young people is variable, although there are secure arrangements for the provision of out of hours services to children and young people. The current arrangements for screening and prioritising contacts and referrals

are duplicative and not cost effective. All children's social care contacts and referrals, totalling on average 2000 each month, are made through the Kent contact and assessment centre, where they are screened by unqualified staff who are supported by one qualified social worker. Child protection concerns, which have increased significantly over the last two years, are forwarded immediately to the duty team. Those contacts and referrals about children who are currently or historically known to social care services are entered into the ICS system. In respect of the remaining cases, the staff team gathers relevant information and, within 24 hours, forwards those classified as referrals for action or, in respect of the remainder, provide information or signpost to other services. All referrals and contacts about children who are known are then screened and reviewed again by the duty team manager. Currently between 10 and 12% of contacts are returned to the contact centre for re-classification as a referral. There is widespread acceptance by managers and staff that this practice is neither an effective use of time nor good use of a significant resource.

26. Although the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was launched during 2007–08 it is not yet established in any of the universal services with the exception of one locality. This is recognised and acknowledged by the council and partners. Consequently, a key strand of the partnership's preventative agenda is ineffective. A clear plan is in place to re-launch the CAF and the necessary resources have been secured at both managerial and operational levels.
27. Some assessments of risk at the initial stages of case work are satisfactory or better and reports to child protection conferences are usually informed by good analysis and recommendations. However, too often, this standard is not achieved and initial assessments are inadequate overall. In some cases there are significant delays in seeing the child, key information is overlooked or discounted, and decision making is based upon assumption rather than fact, for example the view that anonymous referrals are malicious. Health professionals confirm these weaknesses and have experience of cases being closed prematurely without reference back to them as referrers although it is not clear what action was taken as a result.
28. Core assessments are not completed as required in significant numbers of cases or, where they are completed, are often of poor quality. In one office, 23 of the 65 currently allocated core assessments have not been completed within required timescales with some dating back to July 2010. Case files selected for inspection and followed up in interviews with staff demonstrate a lack of skill in completing evidence based assessments in longer term casework, a view echoed by CAFCASS officers who were involved in court proceedings.

29. Case planning, case reviews and case recording are inadequate. As a result of poor assessment practice and poor identification of risk, inter-agency child protection plans are inadequate and too often comprise a list of actions that are not explicitly linked to assessed need or intended outcomes and timescales. As a consequence the core group is often unable to manage risk effectively and in some cases meetings are irregular or participants miss opportunities to put in place a detailed protection plan. This reflects reflecting poor levels of understanding across partner agencies of the purpose of core groups and the frequency at which they should be held. These inadequacies are also linked to poor arrangements underpinning the child protection conference and review processes, which are not sufficiently sensitive to those services and professionals who are unable to change existing commitments, for example doctors. Professional reports are shared shortly before the conference, which does not permit sufficient opportunity to understand what is commonly a highly complex situation. Clarifications about report content are frequently sought in front of the parents and carers giving them the impression that professionals are poorly prepared for highly significant discussions. This diminishes service users' confidence in the plan and in those charged with its delivery.
30. The templates for recording interventions, case planning and reviewing work in the computer based integrated children's system (ICS) are not well used or of good quality. The ICS system is recognised as being ineffective in supporting the business processes of the organisation. Three disconnected systems, including ICS, are used in tandem to compensate. This results in generally poor recording and difficulties in obtaining and understanding case histories exacerbated by missing or poorly completed case chronologies which are only required to be compiled in cases that are proceeding to court. The current templates and reports produced by the system are not in a format which can be easily shared with service users. Managers and staff are consequently not motivated to use the system and are frustrated and demoralised by its inadequacies. One social worker described how he spent "many futile hours servicing the beast (the ICS system) which offers nothing in return, except frustration and inaccuracy".
31. Social workers in long term children and families teams hold a mixture of cases including children who are subject to child protection plans, looked after children and cases involved in care proceedings. By their very nature, some caseloads contained cases that at the time of the inspection were very active and requiring significant attention. This meant that other cases that were not obviously in crisis were left without a service or significantly reduced contact, sometimes contrary to statutory requirements. There was little evidence of contingency planning in this circumstance or consideration at a strategic level about whether staff deployment in mixed teams resulted in the most efficient and safest service.

Leadership and management**Grade 4 (inadequate)**

32. Although leadership and management are overall inadequate, the council's ambition and prioritisation of safeguarding services are adequate. The Kent Safeguarding Children Board has identified appropriate priority actions to improve safeguarding and the effectiveness of monitoring, for example the development of a partnership approach to domestic abuse by working with the police service on notifications and planning the introduction of a neglect toolkit. Within the county's PCTs and acute trusts there is a strong strategic awareness of the importance of safeguarding.
33. There are now clear connections between KSCB, the Children's Trust and the Children and Young People's Plan although work is continuing to improve currently underdeveloped governance arrangements and to further align policy and practice. This will ensure that practice developments take place against a well understood and prioritised policy framework. Well articulated ambitions for locally led commissioning and service provisions are at early stages of implementation although there are inconsistencies across the county in terms of the clarity of planning and resource availability. However, there are already some good examples of what can be achieved. For example, work has been undertaken in Dartford to implement effective multi-disciplinary teams in children's centres and to commission an innovative YMCA service which will combine health, education, teenage conception, drug and alcohol services and family breakdown prevention services.
34. The council is committed to improving social work practice, investing a significant sum (£5.6 million) and making a commitment to maintain expenditure on priority actions to improve the quality of service which it recognizes as deficient. For example, the social work fieldwork establishment has been increased to cope with additional demands, including a significant increase in the number of children with child protection plans. However, many of the newly recruited staff are from overseas or are recently qualified which has an impact on overall competence and capacity of the workforce at a time when the service has lost considerable professional experience through turnover and retirement.
35. The newly appointed independent chair of the KSCB is beginning to provide effective professional leadership. Board members have confidence in his ability and acknowledge that he has brought a more outcome focussed approach to the board's work. However not all agencies are represented on the KSCB, in accordance with the requirements of statutory guidance. PCTs and health provider services are appropriately represented on the KSCB and sub committees, but senior managers have expressed concerns that the KSCB has become very large. This has resulted in difficulties in the decision making process with much of the work being carried out through email exchange outside of the meetings and limited resolution of issues. This is acknowledged by the partnership

and, together with the issue of membership, is being addressed as part of a review of the structure of the board and its sub-groups.

Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development **Grade 4 (inadequate)**

36. Performance management arrangements are inadequate within children's social care. This is exacerbated by the inadequacies of the ICS system which cannot produce comprehensive and accurate management reports. The KSCB does not currently have an effective quality assurance framework although work is currently underway to address this. Similar deficiencies exist within the health services also as a result of inadequate information technology systems. However, in social care services, there has been an appropriate drive to gather information through activities such as audits of referral and assessment activity. Consequently senior managers are very clear about serious weaknesses in safeguarding services, the need to improve practice and address the capability of managers and staff. However planned actions in response to audit findings are inadequately focussed and despite the introduction of some performance measures such as the case tracking spreadsheet, there is little evidence of sustained improvements having been made. As a result of these major deficiencies some children are not protected.
37. Independent reviewing officers and child protection conference chairs have a specified quality assurance role and, in some individual cases, they have a significant influence on the quality of plans and in bringing shortcomings in practice to the attention of managers. District managers also have prescribed responsibilities for quality assurance but the requirement on them to audit cases on a monthly basis has not been achieved for some time.
38. Workforce planning, linked to a proactive recruitment campaign, resulted in an intake of 115 qualified social workers over the last two years, a significant number being recruited from America and mainland Europe. Good induction and mostly protected caseloads have led to good retention among these groups. There is an expectation that caseloads of newly qualified staff are protected until they have been in post for several months and, when they are ready to begin to undertake child protection and court work, they work alongside experienced colleagues. However in some parts of the county this expectation cannot be realised due to significant capacity challenges. Despite the commendable efforts to increase staff numbers at the front lines of service, vacancy levels at 13% have remained high as a result of more experienced workers leaving the service. Some of the vacancies are in management posts, which has depleted the capacity to support inexperienced or newly qualified social workers.

39. There is very high awareness across all health staff of the need for safeguarding training and supervision, with the latter process being implemented effectively across all health partners where retention is comparatively high. This results in health staff feeling well supported by named and designated professionals in carrying out their safeguarding responsibilities. However the impact and outcome of the teams are not formally measured and their effectiveness is not evaluated or monitored.
40. Supervision in social care services is inconsistent in terms of frequency and its quality, although the recent introduction of a supervision policy accompanied by a training programme for supervisors is intended to address these issues. Capacity challenges are evident and some supervisors have caseloads as well as significant supervisory responsibilities. However workload pressures do not provide the full explanation for poor supervision practice. The limited examples of good supervision demonstrated good reflective qualities as well as understanding of practice and law and a thorough comprehension of the complexities of the case. Conversely there are too many case examples where this level of expertise is missing which results in poor planning for the child and missed developmental opportunities for the practitioner.
41. Access to training is reported by managers and staff to be good, and the council has reinstated professional training packages to enable untrained social care staff to qualify. However there is a shortage of advanced training for experienced practitioners and managers in need of development opportunities. The existing training programmes within children's social care services and across the wider partnership are not aligned to current developmental needs of the workforce, although this is now planned. Some health partners report satisfactory dissemination of learning from serious case reviews. However the experience of front line social care staff is that current arrangements for dissemination of learning and improving practice are inadequate.
42. User engagement is adequate. Arrangements to involve service users in service development and their individual case plans are adequate and the Kent Children's Trust are able to identify how children, young people, their parents and carers have contributed. For example there is a very high participation rate in family group conferences (FGC) and children and parents contribute significantly to training and recruitment. Some early work in local district arrangements is proving effective in engaging service users in strategic developments. Regular surveys are undertaken by prevention services in Dartford to seek user views and to enable more effective targeting and engagement of hard to reach groups. There are also examples of service users being enabled to become volunteers. In some children in need cases children's wishes and feelings had influenced case management and planning. In contrast, child and family involvement in formal child protection processes is poor and is impeded by the current

practice of sharing report information shortly before conferences or planning meetings.

43. User involvement within health services is variable with some areas of good practice, particularly around sexual health outreach where feedback from surveys has resulted in changes to drop-in clinic times and venues. Young people are involved in staff recruitment in drug and alcohol services and as 'mystery shoppers' in clinics to evaluate responses to requests for services.

Partnerships

Grade 4 (inadequate)

44. Partnership arrangements across the county are inadequate overall although there are some examples of good working relationships which are developing. The Children's Trust has developed its role and function but its relationship with the local safeguarding children board is not established and neither body has effectively addressed the inadequacies of the safeguarding and child protection service.
45. The quality of serious case reviews has improved, and since 2008, nine of the 10 undertaken have been evaluated as good by Ofsted, with the exception being adequate. The safeguarding board is beginning to use the outcomes to prioritise its activity but it is too early for this work to have had any sustainable impact. Strategic responses to identified need have been slow in a number of cases. For example there has been a long standing failure to implement fully the CAF process to provide a responsive preventative service and until the launch of a recent initiative by KSCB, there has been a serious lack of concerted action by the partnership to address the disjointed working arrangements between child protection services and other key services such as adult mental health, learning disability services, general practitioners (GPs) and CAMHS. This is a major failing given the findings of previous serious case reviews.
46. At an operational level there are some examples of positive partnership working, for example with the police in relation to child protection and more recently on the pilot work in respect of domestic abuse. However these good examples of inter-agency practice are not the norm. In too many cases, quality work is dependent upon the good practice of individuals rather than as a result of a managed and systematic approach established throughout the service.
47. Health partners communicate well in relation to child protection matters despite the deficiencies of the IT system. However, in cases of apparently lower priority, such as children in need, communication and professional links between different clinical disciplines are less evident. There are missed opportunities for more effective exchange of ideas, information and initiatives between the community teams with evidence of duplication and some resentment over historical budget differences. Consequently

agreement has not been reached on a shared IT system for children's health services.

Equality and diversity

Grade 3 (adequate)

48. Equality and diversity issues are adequately addressed. The recording of basic data on ethnicity, religion and language is variable and the ICS system does not require this information to be recorded. This shortcoming is understood by senior managers and, although action has been taken, its impact has not been effective in ensuring that these key data are recorded in respect of all cases. This lack of information prevents managers from assessing on a county wide basis whether services are reaching the full range of vulnerable groups in the community or whether any groups are over represented so that the necessary plans and actions can be put in place. However at a local level, a small number of district based partnership arrangements are beginning to demonstrate the ability to collate detailed demographic information thereby enabling services to reach groups that are not easily engaged. Some of this work has led to outstanding outcomes for children and young people. For example, in Dartford pupils have been able to undertake GCSE examinations set in their first languages with very good success rates. Across community health teams there are a number of positive and focussed initiatives to enable access to mainstream services by minority communities. However minority ethnic service users remain under-represented within children's and adults' mental health services. .
49. At an operational level there is some good recognition of the needs of individual children and young people in respect of their race, culture, religion and language although this is not reflected in supervision records which make little reference to equality and diversity. Practitioners working with asylum seeking children, children with disabilities and the Romany communities demonstrate clear commitment to effective communication using trained professional interpreters, although not all of those used by health professionals are considered to be suitably independent.

Value for money

Grade 4 (inadequate)

50. The management of resources to support the safeguarding and child protection service is inadequate. The ICS recording system is ineffective and inefficient in supporting the council's business processes and is incapable of producing validated performance information without cross checking against alternative data sources. The work of the extensively staffed contact and assessment centre is duplicated in some respects by the duty and assessment teams and the absence of a functional CAF process denies children and families the benefits of an important strand of the early intervention and prevention service. Initial assessments too often fail to identify and respond to need which means that children are sometimes left unprotected. Core assessments which should underpin

effective safeguarding practice and child protection planning are too often incomplete. Necessary improvements to partnership working arrangements are beginning to be addressed and much is planned but at this stage there is little evidence of sustainable impact upon service improvement.

The inspection outcomes: services for looked after children

Overall effectiveness

Grade 4 (inadequate)

51. The overall effectiveness of services for looked after children is inadequate overall. Despite this, increased numbers of looked after children and young people (including care leavers and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people) benefit from good adoption and fostering services, and none are placed in settings where there are concerns about safeguarding. They are also supported well in contributing to decisions about their lives and towards achieving future economic well being. However these positive attributes are fundamentally undermined by poor quality assessments and care planning together with widespread failures in systems and practices which should ensure that children and young people remain healthy and achieve educationally. Although these significant deficits are understood, the absence of effective and systematic performance management has meant that partners across the Children's Trust have taken little action to achieve continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people.

Capacity for improvement

Grade 3 (adequate)

52. The capacity of the council and its partners to improve services for looked after children and young people is adequate. There have been sustained improvements in some services which have had beneficial impacts upon outcomes for looked after children. Improved and outcome focussed commissioning and the development of the county's own fostering service has significantly increased choice of placement and enabled skilled, specialist resources to become available to children and young people. Placement stability has increased and young people themselves report very positively about some of the help and assistance they have received from services such as the post-16 team. Inter-agency working to achieve good outcomes for looked after children is not yet well developed but some co-located services have now been established which are resulting in improved outcomes.
53. Children and young people are contributing directly to service development and a strong partnership is being forged with the county council as the corporate parent which has produced good outcomes particularly in relation to housing for care leavers.

Areas for improvement

54. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for looked after children and care leavers in Kent, the local authority and its partners should take the following action:

Immediately:

- Ensure that all assessments of looked after children are completed to the standards required by statutory guidance, contain the necessary health and educational information and are included on the child's record.
- Improve the quality of case planning and ensure that all relevant professionals are able to participate and contribute to the process.

Within three months:

- Establish a functional performance management system and ensure that the integrated children's system is fit for purpose
- Ensure that all looked after children can access CAMHS up until 18 years of age
- Ensure that missing from care and missing from school policies are aligned for looked after children
- Reduce the numbers of looked after children who are excluded from school and ensure that policies and practices relating to excluded children are consistent across the county

Within six months:

- Review the effectiveness of generic social care teams for looked after children and their impact upon the quality of service that is provided
- Develop a multi-disciplinary looked after children strategy and clarify management and leadership roles and accountabilities
- Develop a screening tool for substance misuse for use with looked after children and young people
- Strengthen the arrangements for the contribution of the voluntary sector to enable their full contribution to good outcomes for young people and care leavers

Outcomes for children and young people

Being Healthy

Grade 4 (inadequate)

55. Services to promote the health of looked after children are inadequate. Initial health assessments for looked after children are carried out by dedicated doctors, although a vacant post in the west Kent area is creating pressures. In addition, delays in the notification process and pressure on medical staff meant that a significant (but unrecorded) number of children failed to have a health assessment within four weeks of becoming looked after. Only 78% of looked after children had assessments in the last year which is below comparator authorities (82.4%) and England averages (85.4%). It is reported by the PCT that information from health assessments is shared with carers, social workers and IROs. However, health information does not sufficiently inform core assessments or looked after children plans nor is it available on children's files. Where health assessments are undertaken for unaccompanied asylum seeker children interpreters are available and referrals are reported to have good timely responses. Follow up health reviews are conducted by the looked after children nurses and dental and optical checks are conducted alongside the initial health assessments. All looked after children are reported by health trusts to have a GP, although one trust is unable to confirm this from its records. Rates of immunisation at 92% exceed comparator and England averages and 86% of children have had dental checks in the last year, a figure in line with comparators and England averages. The latest statutory annual health report in relation to looked after children has not been produced by either PCT.
56. CAMHS support for looked after children is inadequate, with excessive waiting times for services, inconsistent community provision for young people between 16 and 18 years and no fast track access to services. The service that has been recently commissioned to provide specialist support and advice to professionals working with children with significant mental health problems is providing a responsive service but its impact on the overall demand across the county is limited.
57. The profile of Kent's looked after children reveals that more than half have birth families where substance misuse is prevalent. However young people are not screened and there is an acceptance that the 3% or 30 young people (compared to 5% nationally) who have been identified with a substance misuse problem of their own reflects significant under-detection. There is no clarity about whether the newly launched 'Hidden Harm' strategy targeted at substance misusing parents will be developed or adapted to the needs of looked after children and young people.

Staying Safe

Grade 3 (adequate)

58. Children and young people who are looked after are adequately safeguarded. The majority of children's homes inspected are safeguarding

children well. There is an effective annual process for monitoring the effectiveness of arrangements in all local and external placements where a wide range of evidence, including the outcome of regulation 33 visits and inspections, is actively collated and assessed. Both the fostering and adoption services were judged by Ofsted to achieve good standards of safeguarding practice in their last inspections. However IROs and social workers experience difficulty in supporting children and young people placed out of the local authority area and acknowledge that caseload pressures reduce their capacity to spend sufficient time with children in their placements. In other cases unqualified social workers are effectively the key worker in the absence of sufficient suitably qualified and experienced social workers. In many of these cases good visiting frequencies are achieved but the required level of managerial oversight and scrutiny is not always present.

59. The policy for children missing from care is well understood but 'return interviews' once children have returned are not always carried out as required. The professional responsible for children missing from education is located in another division of the children's service and there is a lack of consistent practice which brings together these two inter-related safeguarding issues.
60. Too many looked after children are excluded from education and there is not a common approach to ensuring that they are appropriately safeguarded by the provision of an alternative resource. In some areas of the county those who are excluded are immediately placed on the roll of the pupil referral unit and any alternative provision is quality assured and monitored to ensure that they are kept safe. Elsewhere, however, young people are given individual tuition for which there is no central record and no robust monitoring of its appropriateness or effectiveness. The local authority is also not always able to secure next day provision following exclusion and for some young people there is a significant delay in securing an alternative placement.
61. The work of the local authority designated officer (LADO) is well developed with clear protocols and evidence of systematic training and support to relevant staff groups across CFE. However the service is experiencing increasing pressure as additional responsibilities have not been matched with resources. The commissioning service works closely with the LADO to ensure that any complaints against staff members are actively considered as part of the contracting process.

Enjoying and achieving

Grade 4 (inadequate)

62. The impact of services in enabling looked after children and young people to enjoy and achieve is inadequate. Partnership working is not yet helping to raise the aspirations and standards of looked after children and young people. Achievement, attendance and progress are inadequate. The

headteacher of the virtual school is a very recent appointment and the team of looked after children (education) advisors has been restructured to ensure sufficient challenge to improve outcomes. It is too soon to see the impact of this newly established team although the plans to improve outcomes are based on a clear analysis of current performance and refocused, appropriate priorities.

63. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved since 2009 and achievement is in line with local authority targets although below the standards achieved by all children and young people. In 2009, educational attainment at Key Stage 4 for looked after children in Kent was slightly worse than the England average for this group which is in contrast to the general population where attainment is very slightly better. The analysis of 2010 performance indicates that standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are below national averages for looked after children. Just over half of young people achieved any GCSE passes at A*-G and only 8 out of 147 achieved 5 A*-C including English and Maths.
64. The number of fixed term exclusions is too high and 19 % of looked after children experience some time excluded from school. Those who are looked after are much more likely to be excluded from school than all young people. There is no local authority protocol with schools to prevent permanent exclusion and in 2009/10 there were 9 looked after young people permanently excluded. This represents a decrease over the previous two years but demonstrates a failure in corporate parenting. Attendance is inadequate overall and a target for improvement has been incorporated into the children and young people's plan. The number of unauthorised absences is significantly higher than the rates for all children and also higher than the national average for looked after children.
65. The monitoring and tracking of individual progress are inadequate and unsupported by a central database which keeps the relevant information in one place. As a consequence it is not possible to establish the starting points for children and young people and it is therefore impossible to measure progress, particularly for the large cohort who have special educational needs and account for over 50% of the total looked after population. In addition, the targets on statements of special educational needs do not routinely inform planning on personal education plans (PEP). Where data do exist there has been insufficient analysis to plan actions designed to secure improvements.
66. The large majority of looked after children reviews are held on time and designated teachers have received training on their roles and responsibilities but the quality of the PEPs is inconsistent. There are some plans where progress is recorded and targets are meaningful and helpful to the child or young person. Too often, however, the PEP process is inadequate and fails to record the educational history and provides no evaluative comment on progress. Schools report that they are given clear

advice on the use of personal educational allowances and that individual tuition is well used. However some young people report delays in actually receiving the support once the funds have been allocated.

Making a positive contribution.

Grade 3 (adequate)

67. Looked after children and young people are adequately supported to make a positive contribution. The partnership provides adequate support to ensure that children and young people's views are heard. Agencies consult regularly with looked after children and there are examples where service delivery is influenced by their views. The children in care council is regularly consulted both by members and services in regular meetings where views are shared and challenged. For example, the 16+ service is currently seeking views and taking action on accommodation. This has directly led to the decommissioning of bed and breakfast placements and improvements in the remaining provision. Of the 10 places still used the majority are effectively supported lodgings though still formally classified as bed and breakfast places. Two apprenticeship posts within the council offer opportunities for young people to develop their skills in participation and young people are regularly invited onto interview panels for the appointment of social workers. They speak positively about the difference this has made. It has led directly to an ambitious change of career plan and both care leavers are now determined to go to university. There is a formal pledge which sets out the commitment of the council to all children and young people in its care. It is being implemented currently and having impact on young people. However not all young people are able to articulate its content and therefore they are not able to see its benefits.

Economic well-being

Grade 2 (good)

68. The support to promote the economic well being of looked after young people is good. Looked after young people were consistently very positive about the quality of service provided by the 16+ service. Good outcomes, particularly in raising ambition and aspiration, have been consistently achieved and one young man reported that, '... (the 16+ service) has changed my life.' Three quarters of young people are in education, employment or training and 20 apprenticeship places have been commissioned from the partnership for care leavers. Funding is allocated to provide two internal apprenticeships in youth participation and both are now set on following university courses.
69. All young people have a pathway plan but their quality is variable. Members of the care leaver team attend 15+ reviews to ensure a smooth transition. There is then a relentless focus on sustaining young people in their college placements and as a result the drop out rate has decreased and the numbers not in education, employment or training has dropped to approximately 25%. There are also examples of young people who had disengaged from education but through targeted intervention they are

now achieving at entry level 2. The proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training was higher than the statistical neighbour average in 2009 and around the same as the England average. Further progress has been made in 2010 and the proportion is now higher than the England average.

The quality of provision **Grade 4 (inadequate)**

Service responsiveness, including complaints **Grade 3 (adequate)**

70. There is some evidence that the needs of the looked after population are reviewed and that this leads to changes in the services provided. The very recent appointment of a headteacher for the virtual school is in response to recognition that outcomes are not good enough. There are some good and effective services providing support to looked after children and young people. These include Catch 22, the fostering service (including the treatment and multi-disciplinary team fostering), the service to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people, and the advocacy and support services provided by Action for Children. Despite these good features weaknesses in the capacity and capability of frontline children and family services mean that the service is adequate overall.
71. The quality of service provided to looked after children is compromised by the generic nature of long term teams. There is evidence that settled children and young people sometimes fail to receive an appropriately prioritised service because other urgent demands divert social workers. However, the service is generally child focussed and there is some evidence that it contributes to a range of positive interventions with children including asylum seekers.
72. Thresholds for accessing social care services are not well understood across the partnership. For example, schools express some concern at the effectiveness of local authority support and intervention to prevent children entering the care system and there is a general lack of clarity about thresholds. CAF has not been properly or systematically implemented therefore effectively closing down an alternative route to follow rather than making a direct referral for children in need services.
73. The customer care service which manages complaints is good and provides effective reporting. Feedback is given routinely to managers and staff and the analysis of complaints is thorough and effective, lending itself to informing service development and management. Learning is integrated into training programmes including induction and managers are responsive to complaint feedback. Looked after children and young people know how to complain and have access to effective advocacy. A national charity, Action for Children, effectively undertakes independent investigation of stage 2 complaints.

Assessment and direct work with children and families**Grade 4 (inadequate)**

74. Assessment and direct work are inadequate. Initial and core assessments of the needs of looked after children are of poor quality overall. Too often they are incomplete and lack analysis. Therefore they do not support focused, effective care planning or the necessary legal interventions and are not compliant with statutory requirements in some cases. The assessment process is not helped by the frequent absence of relevant health and educational information and as a result decisions are insecure.
75. Nevertheless there are some examples of good direct work with children and families by some social workers and commissioned services. For example the therapeutic re-parenting work with young children and the treatment work with young people who have behaviour problems (the multi treatment foster care scheme) are both particularly strong. In both services there are individual examples of improved outcomes as a result of these interventions. Foster carers are clear about how beneficial targeted support is for them but this learning has not been used to bring about improvements elsewhere. In the absence of a responsive CAMHS, a specialist service, comprising mental health clinicians, has been commissioned to provide support and consultancy to professionals working with children and young people but at this early stage of implementation it is not clear what impact the service is having or how many children are being assisted.

Case planning, case reviews and case recording Grade 4 (inadequate)

76. Case planning and recording are inadequate. Too many plans are poor and fail to meet the child's needs as a consequence of the deficiencies in their assessments. Although reviews are mostly carried out on time, in too many cases partner agencies do not make a sufficient contribution and intended outcomes of care plans are too often non specific and therefore not measurable. Case records are incomplete and insufficiently related to the case plan; weaknesses exacerbated by the inadequate ICT systems.
77. Supervision is ineffective in some cases and where managers are recording on case notes there is a lack of robust challenge to support improvement. This is particularly evident in complex cases where the lack of management oversight is a major concern. Actions are not timely and there is significant evidence of drift for example in the review process and where core assessments are incomplete or overdue. The recording of education interventions is inconsistent and it is not clear how observations feed in a systematic way into target setting. The impact of IROs in affecting drift and improving outcomes for looked after children is variable. However their role has recently been clarified and strengthened and as a result there is some evidence of increasing challenge.

Leadership and management**Grade 3 (adequate)****Ambition and prioritisation****Grade 3 (adequate)**

78. Ambition and prioritisation are adequate. Despite the looked after children service having no documented strategic policy to give it focus and clearly understandable purpose, there is evidence that standards in some services are at least adequate, and good in respect of fostering, adoption, post-16 and commissioned services. In addition a number of actions have been taken in parts of the service which have led to some improvement in outcomes for looked after children and young people.
79. Despite the recent appointments of a head of corporate parenting and a headteacher for looked after children, which is helping to provide some greater focus on priorities, the distributive leadership model, in which responsibility for the service is spread across a number of managers in the looked after children service, is confused and therefore not effective. This means that staff in front line services do not have a clear understanding of how the various strands of service fit together to form a whole. Consequently they are unsure of their roles in delivering the priorities and improvements in the quality of service, some of which are set out in the Children and Young Peoples Plan. Looked after children managers do not have an understanding of their individual and collective accountabilities. They are unclear about how the partnership is addressing key issues such as how increasing numbers of young people aged 13 or older entering the care system is to be tackled. Local authority council members are well informed and are ambitious to improve the outcomes for looked after children and young people. They demonstrate a good understanding of the pressure points in the system and understand the need for greater clarity and coherence in the service.
80. There is an increasingly coherent approach to the commissioning of services. Further improvements have been approved and are in the process of being implemented. Placement costs are being driven down by improved contracting arrangements with clearer placement specifications which are linked to outcomes for children and young people. Progress against these outcomes is beginning to be evaluated during the now formalised process of contract review. District panels decide on most placements but complex cases requiring joint funding are decided upon by a multi-disciplinary meeting attended by the four heads of service, although staff still experience these processes as being frequently delayed by funding and contractual discussions.

Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development**Grade 4 (inadequate)**

81. There is no effective performance management system in place which contributes to improving outcomes and as a result, performance management is inadequate overall in the looked after children service. The

social care management information unit produces significant volumes of data and the range of audit material produced over the last two financial years have pointed to areas of service which warranted significant attention. For example, improvements have been made to the arrangements for pathway planning and commissioning. The lack of an established performance management culture throughout the service has also meant that critical opportunities are being missed to affect service quality. In addition the lack of a functional integrated children's system means that the integrity of key data is compromised and is therefore undermining the ability of managers to make informed casework decisions. Healthcare professionals produce little hard evidence of impact or improved outcomes for looked after children and auditing and monitoring is not mature.

82. IROs are increasingly appropriately used to assure quality, to challenge casework decisions and to draw attention to unacceptable delays in statutory timescales. Social workers and team leaders report increased contact from IROs between reviews, which has in some cases resulted in appropriate changes being made to the looked after children plan. Foster carers also reported increased contact with progress on recommendations being actively monitored in some cases. The data collected by IROs in relation to individual case and team based performance have also enabled some key findings to be incorporated into their annual report which has been belatedly produced. Recent changes to the structure of district children's service plans is a development intended to improve the focus on local performance targets but it is too early to show any impact on outcomes.
83. Recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced social workers and social work managers has been a significant challenge over recent years. However a good and successful recruitment campaign in England as well as in the USA and mainland Europe has resulted in the appointment to 120 posts over the last two years. However staff retention problems in the wider workforce have meant that social worker vacancy levels are currently 13% although recent actions to incentivise staff to remain in Kent are beginning to show some signs of promise in relation to reducing turnover. The profile of the staff group has also significantly changed over the last four years with the current service needing to rely on enthusiastic but inexperienced and often newly qualified social workers (NQSW). The induction programme for NQSW is however highly valued by staff, particularly the time and support that is given for reflective practice throughout the first year of service, processes which are supported by ensuring that caseloads are manageable during the induction period.
84. There are significant workload pressures in the long-term children and family teams as a result of high levels of demand, and a significant proportion of caseloads are numerically high. The complexities of managing mixed caseloads of child protection, children in need and looked

after children caseloads mean that social workers are under significant pressure in trying to discharge their statutory requirements. Court work, complex child protection investigations and crisis interventions in current cases mean that there is inevitably reduced time spent with children and on their case planning. Management oversight and quality assurance by team leaders fails in too many cases to identify adequate responses to these pressures. Foster carers noted that social work visits are often hurried and one carer commented on a social worker who always starts their visit stating that they "cannot stay long"; an expression which serves to undermine the child's confidence in their worker.

User engagement

Grade 2 (good)

85. There is regular and systematic involvement of service users in service development and processes and user engagement is therefore good. Council members formally champion the rights of children and young people through the children's champion board. The board is well established and has recently developed a clear relationship with the children in care council. As a result young people and members meet regularly in a variety of settings, some of which are informal at the request of the young people concerned. Both groups speak positively about this process and the progress that is being made. The Kent pledge to looked after children and young people which details the council's commitment to each young person is adequate and has been distributed. Young people spoken to are as yet unfamiliar with its detail although there is evidence of it making a significant difference to the quality of services as a result of each commitment being aligned to resources. For example the council has a good record in supporting young people through further and higher education, which includes the provision of laptop computers. The council is also offering employment opportunities to care leavers. Two young people are currently employed on a youth participation scheme which is helping them to acquire good work habits. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities this is giving which include a meeting with a government minister.
86. Foster carers have been more engaged in supporting children and are helping them to become more involved in their reviews. In particular, specialist foster carers feel well supported and able to present their views on children's needs and report positively on the fact that their opinions are sought and listened to. IROs have developed a range of effective methods for involving and preparing children to attend and fully participate in their statutory reviews. This includes working with disabled children and asylum seekers and where necessary using alternative means of communication to ensure that their views are heard.
87. Users' views have also been gained within Eastern and Coastal Kent Community Services about the experiences of carers and looked after children and young people. This work, which is part of the trust's patient

experience survey annual programme, will be taken forward by the head of service and their looked after children team.

Partnerships

Grade 3 (adequate)

88. Partnership working to secure improved outcomes for looked after children and young people is adequate. The council has established some secure arrangements with local stakeholders, relevant community groups and commissioned services. In addition members of the Children's Trust are aware of the need to further improve their recently increased effectiveness so that they can properly hold the executive to account for decisions in relation to looked after children and ensure that the Trust board's relationship with the twelve district boards is functional.
89. Over the past year the Trust has strengthened its membership to include a greater number of partners but the representation of some agencies is not at a sufficiently senior level to ensure that decisions are implemented in accordance with intentions. Voluntary sector representation on the Children's Trust has increased but despite improvements in understanding the capability of the sector, its full capacity has yet to be realised. However it is the clear intention of the county's medium term plan to ensure that the size and impact of the voluntary sector is increased and in turn the sector itself is very clear about how it can increase its contribution. However the voluntary sector is not clear how the necessary dialogue will take place and still senses some doubt in the minds of statutory agency representatives about their capacity and capability to play a full role in children's services.
90. At an operational level there are examples of some good practice. For example, effective partnership working with the youth offending service has led to effective interventions with a number of young people. In addition, effective partnerships with 16+ providers and some case examples of good engagement with the adolescent resource centre result in improved educational outcomes. However across the partnership there is insufficient interdisciplinary collaboration to improve outcomes for looked after children or for those children who need early interventions to prevent their situations deteriorating. Professionals have lost confidence in CAF as a means of securing preventative services and there is unacceptably poor access to child and adolescent mental health services. Despite a priority action in the Children and Young People's Plan, those attending looked after children reviews and planning meetings too frequently fail to have before them the necessary and key social care, health and education reports to enable informed plans to be made.

Equality and diversity

Grade 3 (adequate)

91. The county's diversity and equality strategy and attendant policy and procedures are implemented effectively. In particular, the council and partners have responded well to the challenge of providing services to

high numbers of asylum seeking young people. Services provide good support for education and effective advice on housing and the IRO service has two posts dedicated to asylum seekers. The council and partners take their responsibilities seriously and have effectively discharged them in securing solutions to major difficulties. However, the partnership has limited impact in ensuring that young asylum seekers have easy and quick access to good quality legal advice. The customer service team has an effective relationship with the asylum seekers team and information on the complaints process is available in a range of languages online. Children and young people are mostly positive about the sensitivity of support.

92. The disabled children's team provides a good service. Effective use of Aiming High investment opportunities has led to improved outcomes such as increased availability of short breaks with foster carers for disabled children. However the circumstances of vulnerable care leavers such as those with learning disabilities or communication difficulties who do not meet the threshold for adult services continue to give cause for concern. Children and young people and their parents and carers report that they are treated with dignity and respect and there are fewer complaints on behalf of disabled children than in the recent past.

Value for money

Grade 3 (adequate)

93. The children's service has achieved adequate value for money with areas of substantial progress, which although recent, are showing signs of sustained impact on service quality. Improved commissioning arrangements and a significant increase in the numbers of Kent foster carers as a result of an effective recruitment campaign have reduced reliance on more costly, spot purchased placements in independent fostering agencies. A clear commitment to use family placement as the preferred resource for looked after children is also impacting upon costs and improving placement stability. The use of residential care has reduced but where justified placements continue to be made on the basis of a rigorous matching of resource to need.
94. There is evidence of reinvestment as a result of service decommissioning. For example the savings from the closure of a children's home have enabled the development of a targeted mental health service which is beginning to have some limited impact on the demand for the inadequately resourced CAMHS service.
95. The family group conferencing service (FGC) and the parenting capacity assessment service (PCAS) provide good quality services to children at risk of becoming looked after but waiting times are long and the absence of clear and robust commissioning strategies means that the full benefits of the skilled work of those involved is not realised.

Record of main findings: Kent

Safeguarding services	
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Capacity for improvement	Inadequate
Outcomes for children and young people	
Children and young people are safe: effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe	Inadequate
Children and young people feel safe: effectiveness of services in helping to ensure that children and young people feel safe	Inadequate
Quality of provision	
Service responsiveness including complaints	Inadequate
Assessment and direct work with children and families	Inadequate
Case planning, review and recording	Inadequate
Leadership and management	
Ambition and prioritisation	Adequate
Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development	Inadequate
User engagement	Adequate
Partnerships	Inadequate
Equality and diversity	Adequate
Value for money	Inadequate

Services for looked after children	
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Capacity for improvement	Adequate
Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers	
Being healthy	Inadequate
Staying safe	Adequate
Enjoying and achieving	Inadequate
Making a positive contribution	Adequate
Economic well-being	Good
Quality of provision	
Service responsiveness	Adequate
Assessment and direct work with children	Inadequate
Case planning, review and recording	Inadequate
Leadership and management	
Ambition and prioritisation	Adequate
Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development	Inadequate
User engagement	Good
Partnerships	Adequate
Equality and diversity	Adequate
Value for money	Adequate

96.

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Inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services

Framework for inspection and guidance for local authorities and partners

The framework and guidance set out in this document are for the inspections of outcomes and services for safeguarding children and young people and outcomes and services for looked after children and care leavers that are provided either singly or jointly by local authorities and their partners.

The new inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services take effect from 1 April 2009.

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The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects registered childcare and children's social care, including adoption and fostering agencies, residential schools, family centres and homes for children. It also inspects all state-maintained schools, non-association independent schools, pupil referral units, further education, initial teacher education, and publicly funded adult skills and employment-based training, the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), and the overall level of services for children in local authority areas.

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Contents

Introduction	4
Frequency of inspection	5
Notice given for inspection	5
Inspection teams	6
User and stakeholder views and surveys	6
Inspecting safeguarding and looked after children together	6
Scope of the inspection	7
Safeguarding element of the inspection	7
Looked after children element of the inspection	8
Evaluation schedules for inspection	8
Summary evaluation schedule for the safeguarding element of the inspection	9
Summary evaluation schedule for the looked after children element of the inspection	9
Grading inspection findings	10
Limiting judgements in the inspection	10
Inspection activity	11
Set-up meeting	13
Inspection activities for the safeguarding element of the inspection	13
Inspection activities for the looked after children element of the inspection	14
Case file identification, analysis and discussion for safeguarding and looked after children	15
Surveys	18
Reporting findings	18
Summary of the inspection timeline	20
Communication and feedback	21
Confidentiality	22
Quality assurance	22
Conduct during the inspection	23
Expectations of providers	23
Complaints	24
Further information	25

Introduction

1. This paper sets out the framework and guidance for the joint inspection of safeguarding and looked after children within the wider Comprehensive Area Assessment.¹ It should be read alongside the accompanying framework and guidance for the new unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children and young people in need and children and young people who may be in need of protection.²
2. Until December 2008, Ofsted assessed with other inspectorates how well local services work together to improve outcomes for children and young people through the joint area reviews of children's services. From 1 April 2009, these are replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessments and the new programme of inspections of outcomes and services for safeguarding and looked after children services.
3. These new inspections have a sharper focus on evaluating outcomes for children and young people and the impact that practice and services have on improving outcomes, including through managing risk and minimising incidence of child abuse and neglect. The new programme of inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services and outcomes will be carried out by suitably experienced inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. In some cases, inspectors from other inspectorates and commissions such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will assist in carrying out the inspections.
4. These inspections will contribute to Ofsted's annual reviews of the performance of each local authority's children's services functions and will be taken into account in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's statutory annual performance rating for each authority. They do not preclude other inspections of safeguarding and services for looked after children arising out of joint inspectorate Comprehensive Area Assessments, as set out in the Comprehensive Area Assessment joint inspection framework.
5. Regulatory inspections of local authority children's homes, fostering and adoption and private fostering arrangements will continue separately. Alongside other evidence such as that arising from serious case reviews, findings from these inspections will help determine the scope and timing of inspections of safeguarding and looked after children inspections.

¹ For further information, see: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=63FF7DFA-D1DB-46D0-B72E-39DA12AEF9E1>.

² *Unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment*, Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090026.

6. Pilot inspections in March 2009 helped to shape the final framework and guidance for these inspections. The framework and guidance have also been reviewed in light of the recently published report on the protection of children in England.³
7. This framework and guidance are subject to periodic review.

Ofsted inspects

8. Ofsted has published an overarching framework for inspection, which informs all of Ofsted's inspection and regulatory activity, including the new inspections of safeguarding and looked after children.⁴
9. This overarching framework guides the general scope and methods of all inspection, but it does not determine the specialist inspection activity necessary for the inspection of safeguarding and looked after children that is set out in this framework and guidance.

Frequency of inspection

10. All local authority areas will have at least one inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in the three-year period following 1 April 2009. Timing of inspections will be influenced by evidence from other inspection and regulation, including the annual unannounced inspection of contact, assessment and referral. Where the inspection judges overall effectiveness of safeguarding or looked after children to be inadequate a further inspection may follow.

Notice given for inspection

11. The maximum notice period for the full inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services is usually 10 working days. In some circumstances, for example where provision has been judged inadequate already or where serious concerns about safeguarding have been raised, a full inspection of safeguarding may be carried out without giving this period of notice.
12. Inspections will not normally be deferred because of staff absence or staff shortages in the local authority.

³ *The protection of children in England: a progress report*, The Lord Laming, March 2009.

⁴ *Ofsted inspects: a framework for all Ofsted inspection and regulation* (080121), Ofsted, 2009; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Ofsted-inspects>.

Inspection teams

13. Suitably experienced inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission will carry out the inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services. In some cases, they may be joined by inspectors from other inspectorates or commissions, in particular Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.
14. Inspection teams will normally consist of at least three Ofsted inspectors and a Care Quality Commission inspector. Inspectors will usually be on site for up to 10 working days.

User and stakeholder views and surveys

15. In this context, users are the children, young people and their families or carers who are supported by, or who make use of, services.
16. Inspectors will take account of the extent to which service providers have sought and acted on the views of children, young people and carers in reviewing and improving services and outcomes generally. They will also consider the views of those users and stakeholders they speak to during on-site evidence gathering.
17. For each inspection, surveys of children in the authority's care and recent care leavers will be carried out through the office of the Children's Rights Director at Ofsted. These will involve children aged eight years and over and will be web-based, with alternative paper completion as required.⁵ Inspectors will also take account of an annual Ofsted survey of the views of social workers and other safeguarding professionals and an annual survey of the third sector. Further details of these surveys will be published separately on Ofsted's website.

Inspecting safeguarding and looked after children together

18. In nearly all instances, the inspections of safeguarding and looked after children outcomes and services will be carried out as a single inspection event. Exceptionally, where provision for either safeguarding and looked after children has been judged inadequate previously or where serious concerns about safeguarding have been raised, a separate inspection of safeguarding or looked after children may be carried out.
19. The annual unannounced inspections of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children and young people in need and children and young

⁵ Ofsted is considering the use of a further survey for other children in need, including those who have child protection plans.

people who may be in need of protection support the new programme of inspections of wider safeguarding and looked after children. Any relevant findings or recommendations from one inspection will be followed up in subsequent inspections.

Scope of the inspection

Safeguarding element of the inspection

Definition of safeguarding

20. Ofsted adopts the definition of safeguarding used in the Children Act 2004,⁶ and in the government guidance document *Working together to safeguard children*.⁷ This can be summarised as:
- protecting children and young people from maltreatment
 - preventing impairment of children and young people's health or development
 - ensuring that children and young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
 - undertaking that role so as to enable those children and young people to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.
21. Ofsted will review the framework and guidance for these inspections in the light of any review of *Working together to safeguard children*.

Working together to safeguard children

22. Inspections of safeguarding will assess the effectiveness of children's trusts and local children's organisations and assess whether their policies comply with statutory requirements and guidance. In doing this, inspections will take a broad view of the following.
- How well agencies and professionals work together to identify, safeguard and promote the welfare of potentially vulnerable groups of children and young people that live in their area. These groups might include asylum-seeking children, children in secure settings, disabled children and children treated by health services.
 - How well practice is supported and underpinned by effective local policy-making and implementation.

⁶ The Children Act 2004: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040031_en_1.

⁷ *Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*, HM Government, 2006; <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00060>.

23. To do this, inspectors will evaluate the impact of safeguarding systems and frameworks across local public services on safeguarding and protecting children. This will include:
- outcomes for children and young people
 - how well safeguarding is prioritised
 - whether child welfare concerns are identified and responded to appropriately by the relevant agencies
 - the extent to which public agencies discharge their responsibility to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Looked after children element of the inspection

24. As set out in *Care matters*,⁸ inspection must contribute to improved and sustainable outcomes for looked after children and their families. The looked after children element of the inspection will focus on:
- outcomes achieved
 - impact of services
 - quality of risk management and decision-making in identifying which children need to be taken into care
 - quality of care planning, review and support for children in care and care leavers
 - placement stability
 - safeguarding of looked after children
 - access to, and attendance at, suitable schools
 - support for families and carers
 - the effectiveness of corporate parenting approaches
 - preparation for leaving care and adult life and the subsequent support.

Evaluation schedules for inspection

25. The evaluation schedules are set out in a separate document which outlines the main aspects of the services and outcomes against which inspectors will make judgements.
26. They are accompanied by another publication on the illustrative criteria that assist in grading by indicating the quality of service or outcomes expected for

⁸ *Care matters: time to deliver for children in care* (DCSF-00279-2008), HM Government, 2008; www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications.

each grade. The criteria are not exhaustive but serve to illustrate the level of service or outcome linked to particular grades.

Summary evaluation schedule for the safeguarding element of the inspection

27. The summary evaluation schedule for the safeguarding element of the inspection is set out below.

Section 1: Overall effectiveness

To be based on all available evidence and judgements made during the inspection.

- Capacity to improve
- Recommendations and required actions

Section 2: Meeting the need to safeguard and promote the welfare, development and life chances of children and young people

- Leadership and management
 - Ambition and prioritisation
 - Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development
 - User engagement
 - Partnerships
 - Equality and diversity
 - Value for money
- Quality of provision
 - Service responsiveness, including complaints
 - Assessment and direct work with children and families
 - Case planning, reviews and recording
- Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people
 - Children and young people are safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe
 - Children and young people feel safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people feel safe

Summary evaluation schedule for the looked after children element of the inspection

28. The summary evaluation schedule for the looked after children element of the inspection is set out below.

Section 1: Overall effectiveness

To be based on all available evidence and judgements made during the inspection.

- Capacity to improve
- Recommendations and required actions

Section 2: Meeting the needs of looked after children and young people

- Leadership and management
 - Ambition and prioritisation
 - Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development
 - User engagement
 - Partnerships
 - Equality and diversity
 - Value for money
 - Effectiveness in promoting safeguarding
- Quality of provision
 - Service responsiveness including complaints
 - Assessment and direct work with children and families
 - Case planning, reviews and recording
- Every Child Matters outcomes for looked after children and young people
 - Being healthy
 - Staying safe
 - Enjoying and achieving
 - Making a positive contribution
 - Achieving economic well-being

Grading inspection findings

29. Inspectors will make judgements against the evaluation schedules using a four-point scale.

Outstanding

Good

Adequate

Inadequate

Limiting judgements in the inspection

30. Inspectors will apply a number of considerations before arriving at judgements. These include considering the impact of limiting grades – that is, the impact of

individual grades awarded in one part of the evaluation schedule on another judgement, including the overall effectiveness judgement.

31. For the safeguarding element of the inspection, the limiting grades are:

- overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if either of the two safeguarding outcomes (children and young people are safe and children and young people feel safe)⁹ is judged as inadequate
- overall effectiveness is unlikely to be good or better if either of the two safeguarding outcomes (children and young people are safe and children and young people feel safe) is not judged as good
- leadership and management are unlikely to be adequate if the grade awarded for equality and diversity is inadequate.

32. For the looked after children element of inspection, the limiting grades are:

- overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if any outcome judgement is inadequate
- overall effectiveness is unlikely to be good or better if either staying safe or enjoying and achieving is not judged as good
- enjoying and achieving are unlikely to be good if looked after children and young people are not making at least good educational progress overall in relation to their starting points and capability
- leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if the grade awarded for equality and diversity is inadequate.

Inspection activity

33. Inspectors will undertake activities that focus on evaluating the outcomes for children and young people and the quality and impact of services in helping to improve outcomes.

34. In preparation for inspection, the following documents should be kept up to date by each local authority area. This will allow easy access after the letter announcing the inspection is received:

- minutes of last six Local Safeguarding Children Board meetings
- details of Children's Trust Board membership, and minutes of last six meetings

⁹ Children are safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe; children and young people feel safe: the effectiveness of services in taking reasonable to ensure that children and young people feel safe.

- Children and Young People’s Plan and the latest review of Children and Young People’s Plan, including any updates to the plan
- lists of existing groups of service users and their parents/carers
- summaries of the views of service users and other stakeholders, as collected by the council
- local performance management and quality assurance information, including case-related audit evidence, relating to safeguarding, child protection and looked after children services
- data relating to the common assessment framework
- workforce data and current pressures and priorities
- summaries of any management reviews of safeguarding and looked after children services conducted in last two years
- management reports of the independent reviewing officers
- details of placements in council, voluntary or private children’s homes, fostering or adoption agencies
- arrangements for identifying and responding to missing children and young people
- organisation charts for council and partner agencies.

35. In addition, inspectors will have access to information that Ofsted already holds such as:

- the Ofsted performance profile¹⁰
- findings from other relevant Ofsted inspection and regulatory activity, including notifications
- summary of judgements made in serious case review evaluations
- Ofsted’s fostering and adoption datasets (completed by providers)
- views of service users, social care staff and third sector organisations gathered through new questionnaires
- summary of substantiated complaints about the council and its partners made to Ofsted that relate to safeguarding and looked after children
- local area agreements.

¹⁰ *Comprehensive Area Assessment: annual rating of council children’s services for 2009*, Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090024.

Set-up meeting

36. A meeting will normally be held between the lead inspector and representative(s) of the council and its partners four days after notification of the inspection. It is for the council and its partners to determine who is present at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to provide further information about the scope of the inspection, agree practical arrangements, including survey arrangements, initial interviews and scrutiny of case files with appropriate workers, and provide other clarification as necessary. It will also provide opportunity for inspectors to discuss any issues or concerns which have arisen from the pre-inspection reading and to discuss how service users and their families can be directly engaged in the inspection. In some instances, at the request of the council and its partners, it may be possible for the set-up meeting to be conducted by telephone.

Inspection activities for the safeguarding element of the inspection

37. In addition to reviewing case files and evaluating the documentation already held by Ofsted and its partner inspectorates and commissions, and the evidence provided by the local authority and its partners in advance of the fieldwork element of the inspection, inspectors will conduct meetings and hold discussions with users, managers, health professionals and agencies, police, other staff and stakeholders. Typically, these may include:
- Chair and members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust Board
 - children, young people, their parents or carers receiving children in need services
 - any existing groups of users
 - lead manager(s) for safeguarding and common assessment framework
 - managers responsible for commissioning, planning and monitoring services
 - Director of Children's Services, Lead Member (and where appropriate support members) and Chief Executive
 - managers of Primary Care Trust and police responsible for reviewing points of referral and the quality of risk assessments, decision-making and multi-agency working
 - managers of the accident and emergency department of the local hospitals
 - strategic group responsible for tackling domestic violence
 - focus group of designated headteachers, teachers and support teachers
 - focus group of independent reviewing officers
 - focus group of social workers involved in safeguarding and protecting children

- focus group of social work team managers for child protection and children in need
 - multi-agency staff focus group for early intervention and prevention
 - health focus group for safeguarding, including general medical practitioners (GPs) and designated health professionals
 - focus group of staff responsible for the education of young people excluded from education or educated other than at school
 - representatives from the community and voluntary sectors
 - manager/staff of the independent advocacy service
38. The inspection will specifically evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Children’s Trust Board, including the impact the boards have on improving outcomes for children and young people. Any important weaknesses identified by inspectors during the inspection will be reflected in the judgements reached regarding the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Children’s Trust Board.
39. The outcomes of the most recent unannounced annual inspection of contact, assessment and referral will be taken into account by inspectors when evaluating evidence and arriving at judgements, particularly in relation to spreading any good or better practice identified and in tackling areas for development.
40. Where relevant, inspectors will evaluate the progress made in implementing any recommendations arising from serious case reviews.
41. During the inspection, inspectors will always speak with children and young people and seek views of their parents and carers.

Inspection activities for the looked after children element of the inspection

42. In addition to reviewing case files and evaluating documentation, inspectors will similarly conduct meetings and hold discussions with users, managers, health professionals and agencies, other staff and stakeholders. Typically, these may include:
- representatives of the Corporate Parenting Board
 - meetings with looked after children
 - meetings with care leavers
 - heads of service and lead manager(s) for looked after children, including for educational achievement

- managers responsible for commissioning, planning and monitoring placements
 - Director of Children’s Services, Lead Member (and where appropriate support members) for looked after children and Chief Executive
 - lead officers for attainment and attendance, to include the virtual headteacher
 - lead officers for the physical and mental health of looked after children, including a designated doctor and nurse
 - focus group of designated teachers and support teachers
 - focus group of independent reviewing officers
 - focus group of managers responsible for corporate parenting
 - focus group of parents, for example, where appropriate, parents of children included within the case-tracking sample, parents of children on care orders placed at home, or parents whose children have been accommodated
 - multi-agency staff group for looked after children and care leavers, which will comprise those staff involved in the cases selected for examination
 - hold discussions with focus group of social work team managers
 - meeting with manager/staff of the independent advocacy service
 - representatives from the community and voluntary sectors
 - visit a social care or multi-agency looked after children’s team, to include support for children on the edge of care
 - hold discussions with staff at the care leaving service
 - visit a targeted service for looked after children (this will depend on the particular services available in the area).
43. The inspection will consider outcomes for looked after children and follow up specific issues as required. The inspection will always scrutinise the work of the Children’s Trust Board and in particular the Corporate Parenting Board and its impact on improving the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.
44. Inspectors will always speak with children and young people and seek views of their parents and carers.

Case file identification, analysis and discussion for safeguarding and looked after children

45. At the set-up meeting the lead inspector will explain how inspectors will identify and analyse case records with and alongside key professionals who have oversight of the decision-making process. The main purpose of this activity is to assess how effectively children in need, including those looked after, are safeguarded and cared for.

46. Case file scrutiny and discussion will consider:
- the extent to which the welfare concerns of looked after children and other vulnerable groups are identified, assessed and responded to appropriately, including the effectiveness of referral, assessment, planning, intervention and review processes in practice
 - the extent to which agencies and professionals work together to safeguard and promote the welfare and development of children and young people
 - the quality of practice in relation to children and young people entering and leaving care
 - the quality of support and care received by looked after children, including placement stability
 - the outcomes achieved for looked after children as a result of these services, including health, attendance and progress at school, numbers in full-time education, employment and training and rates of offending
 - the provision and monitoring arrangements for children and young people who have been excluded from school.
47. In most instances, case file analysis will consist of three key elements.
- At least eight cases (four specifically safeguarding and four looked after children) selected by inspectors from the local authority case load before fieldwork begins. The local authority will be expected to carry out an audit of the eight or more selected and share this with inspectors as fieldwork begins (or share the outcomes of recent audits they have undertaken of the eight cases). The key worker, manager or a representative will be invited to assist inspectors in their analysis of the selected cases and the results of the audit during fieldwork.
 - At least a further 12 cases (six specifically safeguarding and six looked after children) will be selected by inspectors at the start of the fieldwork element of the inspection. Where needed, inspectors will consult with the local authority to ensure that they consider a balance of cases. Where available, managers and key workers will be invited to assist inspectors in their analysis of the selected cases.
 - Scrutiny of analysis and evaluation of case files undertaken by the local authority (and partners).
48. Following notification of the date of the inspection, the council will be required to provide the lead inspector with a list of the following cases:
- all children and young people currently subject to a child in need plan
 - all children and young people currently subject to child protection plans

- all looked after children and young people, including those in external placements and care leavers
 - any unallocated cases or cases awaiting transfer to another team.
49. For all children, councils will be asked to supply the following information, as recorded on the integrated children's system:
- child's unique identifier
 - date of initial referral
 - date of birth
 - gender
 - ethnicity
 - legal status
 - details of any disability.
50. For the safeguarding case files, councils will be asked to detail whether the child is:
- subject to child protection plan
 - previously subject to a child protection plan
 - subject to a child in need plan.
51. For looked after children, councils will be asked to clarify the current placement using the categories within the integrated children's system:
- placement with parent(s)
 - placement with relatives/friends
 - foster placement with relatives/friends
 - foster placement
 - placement with adopters
 - residential placement (children's home)
 - specialist residential placement (therapeutic)
 - specialist residential placement (residential school)
 - specialist residential placement (health, including child and adolescent mental health services)
 - secure accommodation
 - supported lodgings
 - other – please specify.

Surveys

52. Following notification of the date of the inspection, the council will be required to ensure that invitations and passwords (provided by Ofsted) to complete the following children’s surveys are given to the relevant children, unless they are likely to be unable to understand and complete a survey either on the web or on paper. The council should also ensure that children are as far as practicable encouraged and enabled to complete and submit their views through these surveys in confidence:
- all looked after children and young people aged eight and over (Care4Me survey)
 - all children and young people aged eight and over who have left the council’s care during the previous 12 months (AfterCare survey).
53. Anonymised findings of children’s surveys will be provided to the council. Findings will also be aggregated (without identifying children or the council) to form a national database of survey findings, which may be published.¹¹

Reporting findings

54. A single report will follow each inspection. It will contain separate sections and grades for safeguarding and looked after children.
55. The report will set out the inspection findings using text and grades, organised under the headings below.

Report contents

About this inspection	Information about the inspection, including evidence base
Service information	Brief contextual information about the services provided in the area
Safeguarding	
Overall effectiveness	Grade
Capacity for improvement	Grade
Areas for improvement	No grade
How good are outcomes for children and young people?	No grade

¹¹ As noted on page 7, Ofsted is considering extending these surveys to include children with a child in need or child protection plan.

Children and young people are safe: effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe Grade

Children and young people feel safe: effectiveness of services in helping to ensure that children and young people feel safe Grade

Quality of provision Grade

Service responsiveness Grade

Assessment and direct work with children and families Grade

Case planning, review and recording Grade

How effective are leadership and management? Grade

Ambition and prioritisation Grade

Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development Grade

User engagement Grade

Partnerships Grade

Equality and diversity Grade

Value for money Grade

Services for looked after children

Overall effectiveness Grade

Capacity for improvement Grade

Areas for improvement No grade

How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers? No grade

Being healthy Grade

Staying safe Grade

Enjoying and achieving Grade

Making a positive contribution Grade

Economic well-being Grade

Quality of provision Grade

Service responsiveness Grade

Assessment and direct work with children	Grade
Case planning, review and recording	Grade
How effective are leadership and management?	Grade
Ambition and prioritisation	Grade
Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development	Grade
User engagement	Grade
Partnerships	Grade
Equality and diversity	Grade
Value for money	Grade

56. The draft report will be sent within five working days after the end of the inspection to the Director of Children’s Services for a factual accuracy check.
57. The Director of Children’s Services or representatives must return the draft report with any comments on factual accuracy within five days (10 working days after the end of the inspection).
58. Following this, the final report setting out the inspection findings will be sent to the Director of Children’s Services within 15 working days of the end of the inspection, copied to the Lead Member for Children’s Services, the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Chief Executive of the local authority.
59. The final report will be published on the Ofsted website within 20 days of the end of the inspection (irrespective of appeals or complaints).

Summary of the inspection timeline

60. The timetable below gives an indicative overview of the inspection process for the full safeguarding and looked after children inspection.

Table 1: timetable overview

Day	Activity
1	Notification of the inspection and accompanying documentation sent by email to Director of Children’s Services, including arrangements for children’s surveys, social worker and community and voluntary sector questionnaires.
2	Lead inspector telephones office of Director of Children’s Services to agree date and time of set-up meeting. Council sends lead inspector copy of core set of documents as set out in paragraph 34.
3	Council sends Ofsted letter to looked after children and children who have left care in the past 12 months, which explains how their views are to be gathered and invites them to complete a children’s survey.
4	Council provides the lead inspector with a list of current cases, including any analysis.
5	Set-up meeting with the lead inspector includes outline of particular areas for enquiry. Inspector informs council of initial case files selected for audit and review (see paragraph 48).
6–10	Council prepares audit of initial case file selection.
11–19	Fieldwork starts and inspectors on site. Additional case files selected by inspectors. Case file audits received by inspectors.
20	Inspectors conclude fieldwork in the morning and provide feedback to council and its partners in the afternoon. Feedback of results of children’s surveys provided to council.
21–25	Drafting and quality assurance of report. Draft report sent to local authority copied to Local Safeguarding Children Board for factual accuracy check on day 25.
26–30	Local authority completes the factual accuracy check and inform lead inspector of any concerns.
35	Final report sent to local authority.
40	Report published on the Ofsted website.

Communication and feedback

- Inspectors will provide regular opportunities for dialogue and feedback during the inspection. Should any unresolved issues of significant risk of harm to a child be identified during the inspection, inspectors will immediately inform the Director of Children’s Services and confirm this in writing at the earliest opportunity. It is expected that any significant risk will be addressed immediately by those responsible.

62. Oral feedback about draft findings, including strengths and weaknesses in practice, will be given to the Director of Children's Services at the end of the inspection.

Confidentiality

63. Ofsted will take all appropriate steps to ensure that information provided to inspectors remains confidential, as required by statute. However, evidence gathered during inspections may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, although the identity of named individuals will not be disclosed. Where Ofsted considers that any information provided by children indicates the likelihood of harm, the necessary information will be passed to the council's child protection staff for action.

Quality assurance

64. Quality assurance is the action taken to ensure that an inspection is of the quality needed and expected by users, providers and Ofsted itself. As part of this, Ofsted will ensure inspectors are suitably experienced in the areas they are inspecting and ensure quality assurance managers are suitably experienced and skilled to undertake this aspect of work.
65. All inspectors are expected to undertake a quality assurance role during inspections. The lead inspector has overall responsibility for ensuring all evidence gathered is robust, reliable and secure. This approach ensures all judgements reached by the inspection team are fully supported by the available evidence.
66. To ensure national consistency, some inspections will be visited by an inspector from Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission to support the quality assurance processes undertaken by the inspection team. During these visits, the visiting inspector will speak to the lead inspector, inspection team members, managers and other staff, and where possible users and other stakeholders. They will also attend any inspection team meetings taking place during their visit. This inspector will always seek views from the council and/or partners on the conduct of the inspection and sample the way evidence is being gathered and used.
67. Ofsted will ask the council to complete a short evaluation form following each inspection, which will be used to improve the quality of inspections.
68. All inspection reports will be subject to quality assurance procedures.

Conduct during the inspection¹²

69. Inspectors must uphold the highest professional standards in their work, and ensure that everyone they encounter during inspections is treated fairly and with respect. The code of conduct set out in *Ofsted inspects* requires inspectors to:

- evaluate objectively, be impartial and inspect without fear or favour
- evaluate provision in line with frameworks, national standards or requirements
- base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence
- have no connection with the provider which could undermine their objectivity
- report honestly and clearly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
- endeavour to minimise the stress on those involved in the inspection
- act in the best interests and well-being of service users
- maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly
- respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
- respond appropriately to reasonable requests
- take prompt and appropriate action on any safeguarding or health and safety issues.

Expectations of providers

70. In order that inspection and regulation are productive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and providers establish and maintain a professional working environment based on courtesy and professional behaviour. Inspectors are expected to uphold the code of conduct but Ofsted also expects providers to:

- be courteous and professional
- apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors
- enable inspectors to conduct their visit in an open and honest way

¹² See *Ofsted inspects*, Ofsted, 2009; [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Ofsted-inspects/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Ofsted-inspects/(language)/eng-GB).

- enable inspectors to evaluate the provision objectively against the standards/framework
- provide evidence that will enable the inspector to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their provision
- work with inspectors to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
- ensure the health and safety of inspectors while on their premises
- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the inspector or the inspection team
- draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of inspectors promptly and in a suitable manner
- respect that inspectors will need to observe practice and talk to staff and users without the presence of a manager or registered person.

Complaints

71. We anticipate that the great majority of our work will be carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise during an inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector immediately so that they can be resolved while the inspection is taking place. Any concerns about the factual accuracy of the findings in the report may be raised with the inspector after the inspection as set out in paragraphs 56 and 57. If it has not been possible to resolve concerns through these means, a formal complaint may be lodged.
72. Normally, a complaint can be made at any stage during an inspection or up to 30 calendar days from the date of publication of any report or letter. Lodging a complaint will not normally delay publication of the report.
73. All complaints will be initially assessed by a designated Ofsted representative and early contact will be made in order to resolve any complaints without delay. Where this is not possible, complaints will be investigated in accordance with Ofsted's published complaints procedure. The complaints procedure, which sets out how providers or users can complain about their inspection and what will happen to their complaint, is available at:
www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070080.
74. Complaints should be made in writing (including by email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) to:

David Williams
Ofsted National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Further information

75. We hope that you find this document useful in helping you prepare for your inspection. If you have any queries about your inspection, please discuss them with your lead inspector when they contact you.
76. If you have any other general queries about the inspections of safeguarding or looked after children, please contact Sue Leaver on 020 7421 6666 or sue.leaver@ofsted.gov.uk.

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By: Peter Sass: Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
To: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 8 December 2010
Subject: Bold Steps for Kent – The Medium Term Plan to 2014 (Cabinet Decision)

Background

(1) Members would like more information on Bold Steps for Kent – The Medium Term Plan to 2014.

(2) The Cabinet report and appendix are attached for Members' information.

Guests

(1) Mr P Carter, Leader of the Council, Ms K Kerswell, Group Managing Director, and Mr D Whittle, Policy Manager, have been invited to attend the meeting between 10.25am and 11.10am to answer Members' question on this item.

Options for the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

(1) The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee may:

(a) make no comments

(b) express comments but not require reconsideration of the decision

(c) require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending reconsideration of the matter in the light of the Committee's comments by whoever took the decision or

(d) require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending consideration of the matter by the full Council.

Contact: Adam Webb Tel: 01622 694764

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

To: Cabinet - 29th November 2010

Subject: **Bold Steps for Kent**

Classification: Unrestricted

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 16th 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).

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 2nd 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 16th 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 20th 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 12th 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* 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 16th 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 16th 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 16th 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

Contact Officer:

David Whittle

Policy Manager,

Corporate Policy Unit – CED

Tel: 01622 696969

Email: david.whittle@kent.gov.uk

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

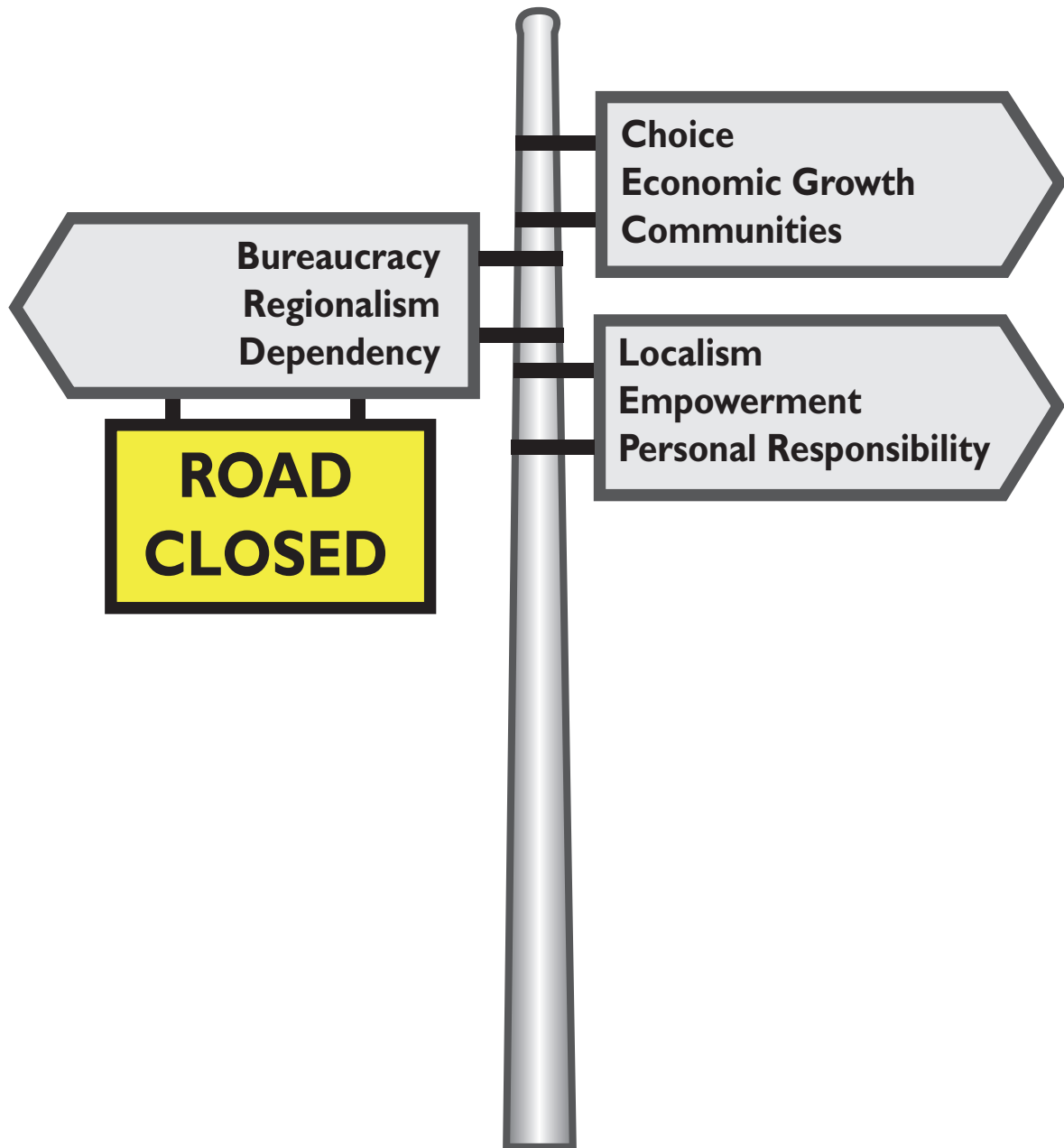
List of those who provided a response to the consultation draft of Bold Steps for Kent

<u>Resident/Organisation</u>	<u>Contact Name Provided</u>
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 Hesper
Frances Rehal MBE
Gerry Hunt



Bold Steps for Kent

The Medium Term Plan to 2014/15

November 2010
(Cabinet Version)

Page 131



Contents

Foreword: Paul Carter, Leader of Kent County Council	I
Executive Summary	5
Chapter 1: The need for a new approach	11
Chapter 2: Driving economic prosperity	15
Chapter 3: Building new partnerships	23
Chapter 4: Putting the citizen in control	31
Chapter 5: Tackling disadvantage	37
Appendix - Organisational Design Principles	41

Foreword



In 2006 KCC published its corporate plan for the next four years, *Towards 2010*.

We are proud of what we have achieved over

the last four years. This includes maintaining KCC as a four star authority; delivering one of the lowest council tax rates of any County Council; driving forward the transformation of the schools curriculum through an extensive range of pre-vocational provision; providing new 21st century facilities across much of our school estate; leading the personalisation agenda in social care and developing a single front line access to Kent public services through Gateways.

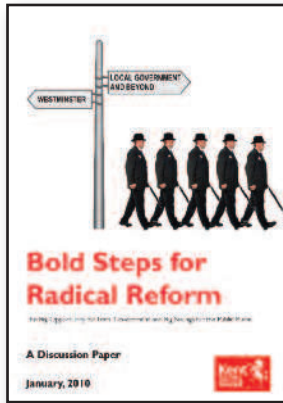
In January 2010, ahead of the General Election, we published *Bold Steps for Radical Reform*, a blueprint for the future of local government and local public service delivery. Recognising the need for the future government in Westminster to deliver unprecedented savings, we concluded that some £15-21 billion of savings could be achieved through radical devolution of public services to the local level, so they can be reshaped around local need, and reduce the national deficit through abolition of unnecessary regional bureaucracy and quangos.

Under the new coalition Government the centralised and bureaucratic Government machine is being rapidly dismantled. We now have the opportunity, and the responsibility, to deliver the new vision for public services as set out in *Bold Steps for Radical Reform*.

Bold Steps for Kent is therefore our new medium term plan to 2014/15, and it sets out how we will deliver this radical reform. It will not be easy. The challenges of today are fundamentally different to those faced when we published *Towards 2010* in 2006. Over the next four years, funding for public services will fall significantly as the Government seeks to tackle the massive hole in the UK's public finances. We expect to have to make budget savings of between 25-40% over the next four years.

At the same time, the relationship between the citizen and the state is changing. Access to information and the ability to mobilise people through the internet is empowering citizens and local communities like never before. The balance of power between citizen and state is shifting absolutely and irreversibly towards the citizen. Those public bodies that do not respond to this shift in power will be seen not just as outdated, but also as increasingly irrelevant.

To meet these huge challenges we cannot stay as we are. We need to take big, bold steps to rethink what we do as a County Council and how we do it. *Bold Steps for Kent* therefore outlines a very different approach from *Towards 2010*. It again sets out our ambitions and priorities for the next four years, but also our determination to transform how Kent County Council works and engages with the communities it serves and our partners in the public, private and voluntary sector.



Called for:



Delivered:

Abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)	➔	Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) abolished
A reduction in inspection & audit burden	➔	Audit Commission axed
Removal of the regional governance framework	➔	Government Offices for the Regions to be abolished - Regional Development Agencies abolished
Roll back of quangos	➔	192 quangos axed
Return of spatial planning powers to government	➔	Regional Housing Targets and Regional Spatial Strategies abolished - Infrastructure Planning Commission abolished
Move to area based budgets	➔	Place based budget to be introduced through the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010
Greater role for Local Government in commissioning public services	➔	Commissioning role for Local Government set out in Health White Paper

Running throughout *Bold Steps for Kent* are three clear aims:

- **To help the Kent economy to grow** - our role must be to support and facilitate new growth in the Kent economy and deliver against the key priorities set out in *Unlocking Kent's Potential*, our regeneration framework for Kent. We will focus on building strong relationships with key business sectors in the Kent economy, improving skills, delivering new housing and new infrastructure whilst ensuring we meet the challenge of a changing climate.
- **To put the citizen in control** - whether that is as individuals, local communities or through their democratic representatives, power and influence must be in the hands of local people so they are empowered to take responsibility for their own community and service needs - reducing the role of the state and encouraging the growth of the Big Society.
- **To tackle disadvantage** - by being a county of opportunity. Aspiration rather than dependency must be supported, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged or who struggle to help themselves and their families.

Hard and difficult choices lie ahead over the next four years. An absolute focus on the real priorities for Kent will be needed if we are to overcome the huge financial challenges we face. Not every issue will be a priority, not every concern can be funded, but this Administration is absolutely committed to making these difficult decisions in the best interests of Kent as a whole.

I am confident that Kent can successfully rise to meet the challenge.



Paul Carter,
Leader, Kent County Council

Executive Summary

Bold Steps for Kent sets out how KCC needs to change the way it work to reflect the changing shape of public services, as the Government has set out plans to fundamentally reform how key public services, such as education and health, will be provided in the future, underpinned by clear message that residents should have more influence on how services are provided locally.

Bold Steps for Residents

KCC wants to put power into the hands of residents so that they have the opportunity to shape how services are provided to them and their local communities.

- We will develop place based commissioning of local services through new Locality Boards, together with public service partners such as District Councils, Police, Health etc more decisions about local services will be taken at the local level, increasingly managing local Community Budgets.
- We will establish a 'right to bid' process to allow individuals, community groups and members of staff to develop new, innovative ways to provide services.
- We will move to a single initial assessment framework – reducing duplication in assessment processes residents that go through to access KCC services.
- We will further drive personalisation agenda and expand the use of the visa enabled Kent Card so service users can purchase services to suit their individual needs and requirements.
- We will expand our successful 'Gateway' programme to make it easier for

residents to access a wider range of public services online, by phone and through Gateway offices.

- We will publish senior officer salaries and expenses data, information about our performance and what we spend on providing your services so residents have the information needed to hold us to account.

Bold Steps for Education

Schools are being given more freedom to make decisions independent of the local authority. We will have to build a new relationship with schools to reflect this. KCC will still have an important role in ensuring that pupils and parents can access education provision, ensuring the overall quality of education in schools and improving outcomes for all pupils.

- We will establish a new Kent Schools Association to ensure KCC has strong working relationship with all schools and which helps develop the policies and practices to ensure all Kent schools succeed.
- We will work with all schools in Kent so that best practice and expertise in the highest performing schools is shared with schools who are struggling, so that all schools in Kent are helped to improve.
- We will work with schools to improve pupil attainment in Kent, with a particular focus at primary level and on closing the gap in attainment from those in disadvantaged backgrounds.
- We will agree a new financial deal with schools in Kent, devolving more grants where schools wish to use this money to purchase support services directly.

- We will continue to secure high quality education for all 3 to 4 year olds, and provide targeted provision for 2 year olds, to ensure that children enter at primary school at the appropriate level of development.
- We will create a vehicle to provide school support services, using our trading experience and expertise to offer a competitive package of services to schools in Kent and other areas of the country.

Bold Steps for Transport

KCC will focus on the strategic transport challenges facing Kent as a means to unlock new economic and housing growth, manage increasing traffic volumes and support a high quality of life for Kent residents.

- We will work to relieve pressure on the Channel Corridor by seeking to upgrade stretches of the A2 in East Kent and develop a lorry park between junctions 10 and 11 of the M20 to relieve the pressure when Operation Stack is in place.
- We will support the development of a third lower Thames crossing to ease traffic congestion and support new economic growth and development in the Thames Gateway.
- We will lobby Government for a greater role for Manston Airport to provide additional passenger runway capacity in the South East and support the wider regeneration of East Kent.
- We will work towards developing a Thanet parkway station linked to High Speed 1, through line speed improvements between Ashford and Ramsgate, bringing journey times to London to around an hour.
- We will work with Government to

develop innovative financial models to fund improvements to the transport infrastructure in Kent, exploring the use of vignette schemes, tolls and other charges that can leverage private sector investment into the delivery of new transport infrastructure.

Bold Steps for Health

The health reforms proposed by the Government will give greater power to GPs to choose the best services for their patients, with local government having strategic responsibility to ensure the County's health needs are met. We must use this opportunity to improve the quality of health service in Kent.

- We will help ensure that GP commissioning plans meet the health needs of all residents and communities in Kent.
- We will work with GP consortia to encourage new healthcare providers to enter the market for health services in Kent. This will drive up standards, provide competition, increase choice and drive greater value for money for GPs and patients.
- We will work to join up and integrate health and social care service provision to reduce costs and demand that could be avoided - for example, by joining up our assessment processes.
- We will focus on a preventative approach to public health, supporting people to make better lifestyle choices and consider their own future health needs – so expensive health services aren't required as frequently.

Bold Steps for Business and the Economy

We recognise the importance of working

closely with businesses to deliver economic growth and will support them by better matching education and training provision to the skills business need in the Kent economy.

- We will continue our sector-based approach to business engagement so we better understand the unique needs of different business sectors across the Kent economy and identify the key issues KCC can provide help and support so they continue to prosper.
- We will develop a new relationship with business community through the new East Sussex, Greater Essex and Kent Enterprise Partnership, which will become a strong voice both nationally and internationally in attracting substantial inward investment in the Kent economy.
- We will work to unlock development opportunities in the Thames Gateway to ensure the 200,000 jobs the Thames Gateway Programme can provide become a reality.
- We will use Tax Incremental Financing as a means to pay for new infrastructure that will generate new economic growth.

Bold Steps for Employment and Skills

Growing the Kent economy will be critical to the creation of new jobs for Kent residents and we recognise that Kent business needs a skilled and motivated workforce to prosper.

- We will continue to support the growth of apprenticeships, in particular promoting the benefits of apprenticeships to small and medium sized businesses in Kent.
- KCC will employ, through our Kent Success Apprenticeship scheme, at least

another 350 apprentices over the next four years.

- Through our economic development role, KCC will work with the business community to ensure the skills needed in the local Kent economy; make sure that school leavers and graduates have the skills that local businesses are seeking.
- We will help young people to develop career management skills, so that they can plan and manage their careers throughout life, and are better able to respond to new opportunities as the economy changes.
- We will increasingly focus adult education provision on the skills needed in the Kent economy and improve access to adult education provision.

Bold Steps to Tackle Disadvantage

The best way to tackle disadvantage is to provide strong economic growth and job opportunities so people can earn a salary to support themselves and their families. Our focus on tackling disadvantage will be on providing opportunity – not supporting dependency.

- We will focus on reducing the number of welfare claimants in Kent, through aligning our Supporting Independence Programme (SIP) with the Government's new Single Work Programme.
- We will help develop the role of social enterprises in reducing the number of benefit claimants, by exploring new ventures that can provide real work experience and placements for those on benefits.
- We will support the expansion of apprenticeships as means to help keep young people engaged in training and learning post 16 by offering a wage, on the job training and work relevant

qualifications, especially for those not suited to classroom based learning.

- We will reduce the number of disruptive moves for young people in foster care.
- We will move towards greater integration between the young service and young offending service to better target services at young people most at risk of offending.

Bold Steps to Support the Vulnerable

Following the tragic Baby Peter case, there has been an enormous increase in child protection referrals to children's social services in Kent, and across the country. We are absolutely determined to ensure our Child Protection Services are robust.

- We will implement, in full, all recommendations emanating from the November 2010 Ofsted inspection of Children's Social Services in Kent, and ensure that the issues flagged in the report are dealt with and the service improved.
- We will support our front line social workers with child protection responsibilities, who operate in what can be challenging, stressful and demanding circumstances.
- We will work to retain experienced social workers by ensuring they are incentivised to stay in the profession, attract new talent to consider social work, and ensure a culture of supportive supervision and continuing professional development.
- We will continue to help vulnerable families by supporting them before problems occur, and co-ordinating the support we provide between different public agencies for example by supporting parents with access to services such as community midwives

and health visitors, and by providing basic skills training that will help them gain employment.

- We will tackle high-cost disruptive families by taking a firm approach across public agencies, including sanctions where necessary, to require change in their behaviour.

Bold Steps for Housing

KCC recognises that choice and affordability of housing is a key issue for Kent residents and has a strong link with quality of life.

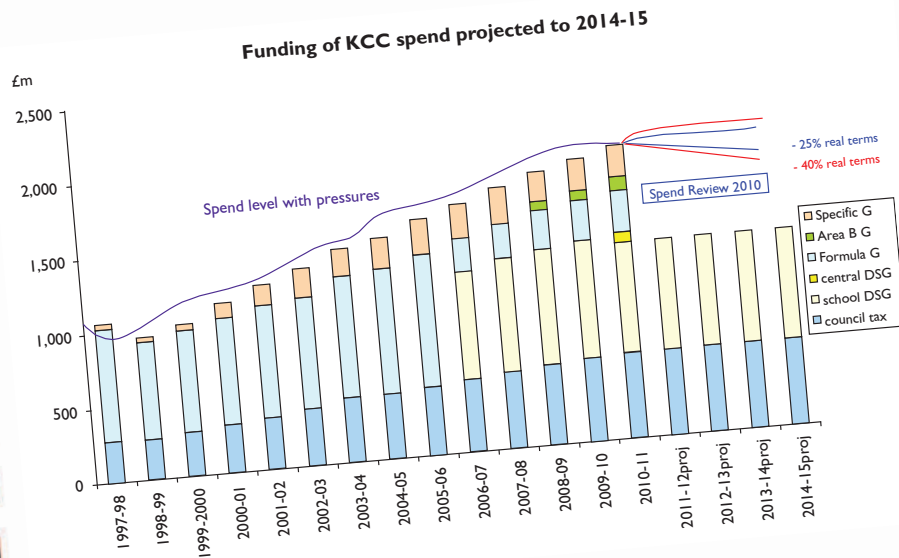
- We will ensure new housing is developed intelligently - building homes with a sense of place, that are connected to existing local communities, and are planned with the infrastructure and services new residents will need such as roads, health and education facilities.
- With our partners across Kent, we will deliver the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy which focuses on regeneration, providing high quality affordable housing, increasing tenure choice in housing supply and improving existing homes to make them fit for the future.
- We will work with partners and developers to help ensure new affordable housing is provided in Kent at a time when grant funding to the Homes & Communities Agency and resources for other housing providers are falling in real terms.
- We will support access to high speed broadband by working with the telecoms sector - access to high-speed broadband is an essential for residents and businesses (particularly in rural locations), offering opportunities for learning, socialising and communication.

Bold Steps for Social Enterprise, Community and Voluntary Groups

The voluntary and community sector has a significant and influential role to play in the future delivery of public service. We value their skills, expertise and commitment and want to make it easier for voluntary organisations and community groups to deliver our services.

- We will create a Big Society Fund for Kent to help establish, and provide project funding for, new social enterprises in Kent.
- We will support the voluntary and community sectors and social enterprises in becoming more efficient so they can provide better value for money and compete for contracts to run services.
- We will support local community groups to gain skills and knowledge that will allow them to develop sustainable solutions to local problems without the need for ongoing state support.
- We will develop a new approach to Community Asset Transfer so that community groups, the voluntary sector and social enterprises can take on the management of KCC buildings/facilities as part of new service delivery models.
- We will continue to support the use of the Sustainable Communities Act, which allows local residents, and communities to suggest changes in the law and government policy to deliver more sustainable communities.

The challenge we face



The graph above shows a breakdown of funding received since 1997-98 and projections for the next four years to 2014-15. As can be seen, we have struggled to keep up with demand for services highlighted by the pressures line on the graph. These pressures tend to be unavoidable, such as meeting the demands of an ageing population and supporting the costs of new school buildings. These will continue to rise throughout the next four years. The reduction in revenue funding will predominately be borne from the loss of central government grants (specific grant, Area Based Grant and formula grant).

Chapter 1:

The need for a new approach

The challenge we face:

The need for a radical new approach to public services has never been more urgent given the pressure currently on public finances.

As national government attempts to reduce the financial deficit, we are expecting to make savings on the KCC budget in the region of 25-40% over the next four financial years (2011/12 – 2014/15). Our expectation is that the savings requirement will be at the upper end of this scale.

The challenge we face as an Authority is how to bridge the significant gap between reduced revenue and the funding pressures that will grow over the next four years and beyond. To bridge this gap KCC must radically rethink its approach to the design and delivery of services. In short, the Council must choose to either 'make', 'buy' or 'sell' services. In other words, should we continue to provide the service in-house or is it more cost effective to buy in services from other bodies, and should we sell services to other organisations both within Kent and beyond?

So the financial challenge also provides a real opportunity to develop a new approach to public service delivery. The new government has already started to devolve powers by removing regional bureaucracy and some quangos and freeing up local government from the shackles of top-heavy performance inspection and monitoring. Their message to local government is clear: *"just get on with it"*.

Bold Steps for Kent is our plan to do just that.

We will meet the financial challenge head on and be organised to be more effective and productive:

One of our top priorities will be to ensure our finances are sound and that we live within our means. We must drive ever-greater value for money from our services, seeking more efficient provision where services are too expensive, changing providers if they aren't cost effective and ceasing provision altogether if there is little public need or value derived from the service.

We will restructure KCC so that it is fit to meet the challenges ahead over the next four years:

KCC must adapt to ensure it is fit for purpose to respond to the significant financial, policy and service challenges it faces over the next four year. In accordance with the design principles set out in the Appendix, we will restructure the organisation so that it is leaner; more focussed on key priorities, but also delivers a structure that supports an organisational culture centred on being a single organisation, delivering shared priorities for the people of Kent.

We must ensure Kent has equivalent powers and responsibilities of City Regions:

The importance of City Regions - such as Greater Manchester and Leeds City Region - as drivers of new economic growth is increasingly reflected in government policy,

with City Regions having been granted additional responsibilities over issues such as housing, skills and transport. Kent has the opportunity to deliver greater economic growth than many UK cities given our position as the Gateway to Europe as well as the opportunities that exist within the Thames Gateway and the regeneration of our coastal towns. We will call for any new additional powers and responsibilities for City Regions to be made available to Kent – either directly to the County Council or through our proposed Local Enterprise Partnership with Essex.

We must develop a new model for the delivery of public services in Kent:

The financial landscape and the push for greater localism and citizen empowerment will require public authorities across Kent to rethink how services are designed and delivered. We must remove duplication and inefficiency that exists not just within authorities, but also between different authorities, whilst at the same time finding ways to involve local residents more in the decisions that affect their local communities. The move to Locality Boards and local place-based commissioning of a range of services delivered by different public authorities - and developing a greater role for Parish and Town Councils - will be central to this new model.

Changes to the financial arrangements for local government will also require new thinking across the public sector. The development of Community Budgets (for which Kent is a first phase pilot) and the possibility of Government allowing local areas to keep the business rates generated by businesses in their local area will require local authorities to think radically about how such financial innovations can best be

delivered. We will ensure that the position of public authorities across Kent is fed into national Government thinking on this important issue, so that any national model works in the best interests of Kent, and Kent can be an early adopter of any new financial offer from central government.

We will gain maximum commercial value from our services:

KCC has some of the best services in local government. As provision across the public sector is increasingly opened up to competition, we will be in a position to offer our services to the wider public, private, voluntary and community sectors, both within Kent and beyond, to generate new revenue and reduce pressure on the council tax base. However, we will withdraw from markets where these commercial enterprises fail to compete, whether in Kent or beyond, and irrespective of the market they operate in.

We will drive efficiency through a new focus on competition and market testing:

The difference between in-house, voluntary and private sector provision will become irrelevant as we continually market test and challenge all of our services to drive greater value for money from them. We will focus on identifying services outcomes and then commission those providers best placed to deliver these outcomes at the lowest cost and highest quality.

We will utilise the opportunities from the expected general power of competence:

Local government has traditionally been constrained by what it was allowed to do rather than what it needed or wanted to do. Through the expected general power of

competence, the power of local authorities will be permissive, allowing local government to do whatever it believes is in the best interests of its local community. We will explore all opportunities to use this new power, whether that is in relation to the services we provide, how we might provide them or how we might structure them in the near future.

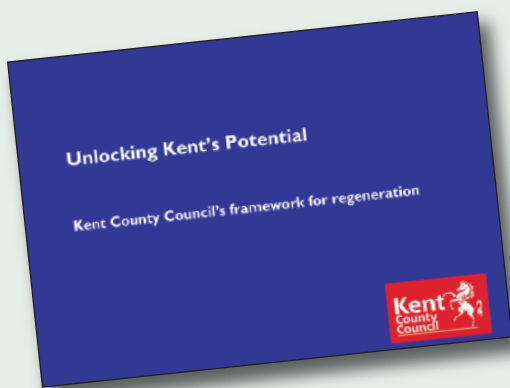
We will continue to be international in focus:

KCC has a unique strength in its strong international ties with regional and local government in the USA and Europe that have been important to learning and innovation in service delivery. KCC is also one of the leading local authorities in the UK at using its influence to maximise funding from EU programmes into Kent. We will remain international in focus, and will work towards increasing the amount of EU funding that the county has access to, and on maximising the added value EU funding can bring to public services in Kent.

We will continue to focus on supporting a high quality of life for Kent residents:

It is important to recognise that despite economic uncertainties day to day life goes on, and a high quality of life is not just derived from economic security but having access to a range of pastimes and activities that allow residents to enjoy life. This is one of the fundamental attractions to living in Kent. We will continue to support a range of projects which allow residents to enjoy all that Kent has to offer, from the Kent School Games to the support for the 2012 London Olympics, so that the quality of life in the County remains one of the most attractive places to live, as well as to work.

Delivering *Unlocking Kent's Potential*:



Sectors Strategy

Skills Strategy

Growth without Gridlock

Environment Strategy

Framework for Later Life

What Price Growth?

Kent & Medway Housing Strategy

Cultural Strategy

Connected Kent

In Kent, we recognise that regeneration is not simply about economic growth - vital though this is - it is also about transformation in education and skills, a cultural renaissance in the county and an efficient transport system that supports the economy, residents and the growth agenda. It is about improved housing conditions, particularly for the most vulnerable, young and old.

This is why our Regeneration Framework "*Unlocking Kent's Potential*" launched in January 2009 commissioned a suite of strategies that set out the policies and actions required to deliver the regeneration priorities it set out.

These strategies, listed above, ranging from how we engage with different business sectors to how we respond to and maximise opportunities from aging population, provide the backbone of how KCC will deliver services so that what we do, and how we provide, contributes to the economic development and regeneration of Kent.

Ensuring the delivery of the actions and approach set out within this suite of strategies will be absolutely central to the supporting our aim of helping the Kent economy to grow, and will be built into the delivery and monitoring arrangements for *Bold Steps for Kent*.

Chapter 2:

Driving economic prosperity

Kent has the greatest potential in South East England to deliver new economic growth and provide new jobs, new homes and a higher standard of living for Kent residents. Our role is to ensure the business community in Kent is able to lead the recovery from recession by helping to create the conditions in which new businesses and entrepreneurship flourishes. This is vital if we are to move to an economy that is balanced, sustainable and begins to close the gap in output between the Kent economy and that of the wider South East region.

In 2009 Kent County Council published *Unlocking Kent's Potential*, a framework for regeneration in the county. This looks ahead to the next 20-25 years, setting out the key cross-cutting challenges and the opportunities that Kent faces in delivering economic prosperity. It identified five key priorities:

- *Unlocking talent to support the Kent economy*
- *Building homes and communities, not estates*
- *Embracing a growing and changing population*
- *Building a new relationship with business*
- *Delivering growth without transport gridlock*

As well as two cross-cutting themes:

- *Recognising Kent's Diversity*
- *Meeting the climate challenge*

Delivery of these priorities and cross-cutting themes remains central to supporting economic growth and regeneration over the next four years.

Building a new relationship with business

Delivering a sector-based approach:

We recognise that it is the business community that delivers economic growth and prosperity, but that the Kent economy is diverse and changing rapidly to reflect new market realities. Our sector-led approach to engagement with the Kent business community aims to tailor the assistance we can provide to key business sectors in Kent so that it meets their needs.

One example of this sector-based approach is the Kent Cultural Strategy, commissioned by the regeneration framework and developed with partners within the cultural economy in Kent. The strategy sets out the support needed to facilitate growth across the cultural sector over the next five years by building critical mass to make Kent a cultural destination of national significance. Central to this is supporting the creative industries - the vast majority of which operate as small businesses or sole traders - to operate effectively through the development of flexible workspaces and supporting access to high speed broadband so they can interact with cultural networks both nationally and internationally.

A new relationship with business through the Local Enterprise Partnership:

With the abolition of Regional Development Agencies and the transfer of most economic development functions to new Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) the Government has indicated that they

want the business community to play an increasingly important leadership role in helping to set the strategic priorities and approaches needed to deliver new economic growth.

We are delighted that Government accepted proposals from Kent, Essex and East Sussex to form a joint Enterprise Partnership. Combined this will be England's largest LEP. We will use this scale to secure maximum private sector leverage, provide capacity for devolution of powers and public funding and generate real impetus for economic growth. In particular, we will focus on the Thames Gateway and Growth Areas, coastal regeneration and rural Essex, Kent and East Sussex to:

- Support job creation by developing new innovative solutions for infrastructure financing and physical development
- Support the critical transport links we need to support growth
- Promote investment in our cities, towns, Growth Areas and rural communities (including rural broadband), to deliver inward investment and job creation
- Ensure that businesses have the skilled workforces that they need to compete, building a new relationship between our seven universities, Further Education colleges, businesses and local authorities
- Set a new, streamlined framework for business support, together with a positive approach to business development

The Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex Enterprise Partnership will be larger than all City Regions except London, and will be a strong voice both nationally and internationally in attracting substantial inward investment and resources at a time when attracting such funding will become increasingly competitive.

Unblocking the Thames Gateway:

The Thames Gateway is the largest regeneration project in Europe with the potential to create 225,000 jobs over the next twenty years. The coalition Government remains committed to the successful delivery of the Thames Gateway programme and we will work with Ministers to design solutions that ensure the Thames Gateway ambition is delivered. Our aim is to move towards a single delivery vehicle for the Thames Gateway in Kent – owned by all local partners – to streamline decision making and the interface between developers, local authorities and central government.

Ultimately, delivery of the Thames Gateway vision is dependent on private sector developers committing resources to build there. The construction industry is recovering slowly from the recession, and we will work with developers to identify blockages preventing development. We will engage with other local authorities and central government to deliver the solutions necessary to get significant regeneration underway. Central to this will be ensuring that the importance of the Thames Gateway is reflected in the forthcoming National Planning Framework.

Unlocking talent to support the Kent economy

Linking skills to economic need:

Business needs a skilled and motivated workforce if it is to succeed, expand and generate growth, whilst individuals should have the means to skill and re-skill themselves to adapt to changing economic circumstances. Through our economic assessment duty we will help shape education and skills provision to ensure it

meets the need of the Kent and Medway economy, whether that is provided by KCC or by partners in the Further and Higher Education sectors. Adult education remains one of the key means to allow residents to re-skill themselves to succeed in a fast changing economy. We will increasingly focus this provision on the skills needed in the local Kent economy, and seek to co-locate provision in schools and other community buildings to both reduce cost and improve access.

Delivering a higher level skills base:

In order to remain competitive in a globalised economy, ensuring the workforce has high level technical skills is paramount. This is a gap that needs to be addressed with Kent lagging behind the wider south east in relation to the percentage of the population educated to degree level and a lower proportion of residents educated beyond GCSE standard. We must ensure that more Kent residents have high level technical and vocational skills. Not only do they increase lifetime earning capacity for individuals and their families, but they also generate a higher level of spending power in the Kent economy.

Apprenticeships remain central to providing a skilled workforce:

We will continue to support apprenticeship take up across Kent. Through the Kent Success Apprenticeship Scheme, KCC has directly employed over 340 apprentices over the last four years (against an original target of 200) and will provide at least another 350 apprenticeships over the next four years. Through our relationship with the Kent Association of Training Providers and through a KCC owned commercial training provider, we will continue to

provide and promote apprenticeships across the private and public sectors. We will continue to press the case for the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) role to be fully devolved to KCC, as we are in a better position to use our relationships with the business community of Kent to promote and support a significant increase in the take up of apprenticeships.

Shifting from careers advice to career management skills:

With economic markets more prone to rapid change and longer working lives, future generations will increasingly have multiple and varied careers. Our approach should be to develop young people's career management skills so they have the ability to understand employment markets and tailor their own training and development to emerging opportunities. This has real economic value; international research suggests that making the right career choices throughout life, with employees fully able to utilise their skills and being contented in the work they do, can add 1% to GDP. In Kent getting career choices right could add more than £230 million to our GDP.

Building homes and communities, not estates

Delivering the Kent & Medway Housing Strategy:

Local authorities and other public sector organisations in Kent and Medway have already recognised the need to work together on housing to find solutions for local housing need and to meet local growth and regeneration ambitions. The abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy represents a real opportunity for local control of local development and the

delivery of managed growth. Our ambition is to ensure that new housing is developed intelligently, building homes with a sense of place, rather than soulless estates disconnected from the wider community of which they must be a part.

The Kent and Medway Housing Strategy is the first of its kind in a two tier local government area in the country. It provides the over-arching strategic investment requirements for housing, infrastructure and managed growth in Kent and Medway, and a framework for the Local Investment Plans which Councils have developed with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). It recognises the diversity of housing need, quality and condition across the County and that what is appropriate for one neighbourhood may not be right in another. It does not propose a 'one size fits all' approach but provides a menu of solutions to assist authorities in achieving their local aims.

The Strategy is unique as it looks across a whole county area and brings District, Borough, Unitary and County Council ambitions together through a bottom-up approach. This is not about the County imposing targets or housing numbers on Districts and Borough Councils. This is about lower tier and unitary authorities identifying their own local housing needs and requirements, whilst recognising the added value that can be gained by adopting a common approach to meeting these where appropriate. The Housing Strategy sets out five key themes around which collective action will be focussed:

- **the continued delivery of key infrastructure to support managed growth and housing delivery across the County.**

- **the continued regeneration of our disadvantaged neighbourhoods to bring them in line with more affluent parts of the county.**
- **the provision of choice and affordability in housing for the citizens of Kent and Medway, including rural communities, which meets their needs and aspirations.**
- **the managed improvement and retrofit of existing homes to make them fit for now and in the future.**
- **to support vulnerable people to lead high quality lives through the provision of excellent housing and support services.**

We will make full use of tax increment financing (TIF) to unlock development opportunities.

A core ask of government in the Housing Strategy is the move to tax increment financing. Widely used in the United States, TIF essentially allows local authorities to borrow against future new tax revenue to fund infrastructure that would help unlock delivery of new businesses and homes that yields that additional tax income. We will press government to bring forward legislation to allow this model to be used by local authorities at their discretion.

Ensure new housing comes with the appropriate infrastructure:

As a major service provider and the local transport authority in Kent, KCC will work closely with our District Council partners to ensure that new housing identified in Local Development Frameworks is supported with the right infrastructure such as roads, education and health facilities rather than placing further strain on services often already operating at capacity. We will continue to press the case for

infrastructure costs to be met by appropriate central government grant, so that prescriptive developer contributions do not impede growth. As part of this, we will also explore new financial models that will encourage investors to support new housing development, offering a broader range of tenure types that would better meet people's housing aspirations.

Facilitate access to a high-speed broadband infrastructure:

Access to high-speed broadband is a business prerequisite, especially for small to medium sized enterprises for which it is vital to provide access to customers. It is also vital to delivering a high quality of life for Kent residents, as it opens up new opportunities for learning, communication and socialising across the world. KCC has committed to working with the telecoms sector to improve access to broadband - and this will be set out in our emerging ICT strategy, Connected Kent. We will work to ensure that isolated and rural communities have access to broadband provision, and ensure that there is well developed approach to allowing companies to develop the infrastructure necessary to support high speed broadband in Kent.

Delivering growth without transport gridlock

Delivering the priorities set out in our integrated transport strategy Growth without Gridlock:

Growth without Gridlock will set out the key strategic transport priorities to ensure that Kent's infrastructure can support economic growth. These will include:

- **Developing new innovative financial models to pay for strategic**

transport infrastructure: As an area that can provide high levels of new economic growth, we have a strong case to make to Government for continued investment in our transport infrastructure to support the national growth agenda. However, at a time when resources are falling in real terms, the reality is that we also need to think radically about how new transport infrastructure can be funded. We will work with Government to develop innovative financial models to fund improvements to the transport infrastructure in Kent, exploring the use of vignette schemes on foreign goods vehicles, the use of tolls and other charges that can leverage in private sector investment into the delivery of new transport infrastructure which limits the up-front cost to the public purse but delivers the new infrastructure vital to economic growth in Kent.

- **Delivering a lower Third Thames Crossing:** We will continue to press Government to support a third Thames Crossing to alleviate pressure on the Dartford Tunnel and Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, as well as the M25. This scheme is also central to support the bifurcation of traffic heading to the Port of Dover (see below). A new crossing is not only vital to delivery of new economic growth in the Thames Gateway and to keep Kent moving, but also to ensuring the continued prosperity of London and the greater South East.
- **Relieving pressure on the Channel Corridor:** As the Gateway to Europe, the Channel Corridor is under constant pressure from high volumes of traffic, which are expected to grow over the

next 20 years. Kent taxpayers bear the brunt of maintenance and capital costs of being the Gateway to Europe. Relieving this pressure is vital if Kent's lifeline to Europe and London is not to become choked by congestion. KCC has a long called for a 'vignette' or 'permit' scheme on foreign registered HGVs that use UK roads but who pay no tax and which places the UK haulage industry at a competitive disadvantage. Income raised from the scheme could be used to support the development of a solution to Operation Stack by funding a permanent lorry park between Junctions 10 and 11 of the M20, and support the upgrading of stretches of the A2 in East Kent to deliver the bifurcation of access into the Port of Dover.

- **Delivering radical transport solutions for East Kent:** Transport is vital to East Kent's regeneration and radical transport options are required to support this. We will explore the options for developing a Thanet Parkway station linked to the expansion of Kent International Airport at Manston in Thanet. Manston Airport remains one of the most underused strategic assets in the South East of England, at the very time when runway capacity is operating a maximum in the region's major passenger airports. Manston has the potential to create 7,500 jobs by 2033. We will lobby government to consider the use of Manston as additional runway capacity for the South East. We will also explore options to link Thanet Parkway to High Speed 1 through line speed enhancement between Ashford and Ramsgate. Initial studies suggest this could be done with relatively modest investment and provide a cost-benefit

ratio of £4 for every £1 of investment. This would bring the journey times to Thanet within touching distance of an hour from London – opening up a significant passenger market to the airport whilst offering huge regeneration opportunities to East Kent.

Embracing a growing and changing population

Embed the Framework for Later Life in service planning:

By 2026 the older population of Kent is expected to have increased by 30.7% on 2006 levels, whilst the ratio of traditional working age population compared to those of current state pension age will have fallen from 3:1 to 2:1. This demographic shift represents a significant challenge to public services, and the Framework for Later Life sets out our broad approach to:

- **ensuring that individuals increasingly plan for and take responsibility for preparing for later life themselves, so that they can continue to live comfortably, independently and securely.**
- **help develop the preventative agenda that will reduce future dependency and pressure on public services from an ageing population.**
- **harness the huge economic and social capital of this age group to benefit themselves and the wider economy of Kent.**

The later life agenda cuts across many service issues and the framework sets out how meeting this challenge will be embedded into planning service provision going forward. Of particular focus will be how, through supporting the Big Society

agenda, the experience and expertise of older people can be used - for example through volunteering and other community projects - to help reduce the financial burden on an decreasing working age population.

Meeting the climate challenge

Delivering the themes and priorities set out in the Kent Environment Strategy:

The Kent Environment Strategy focuses on making the most of the environmental opportunities we have in Kent such as offshore wind power, moving to low carbon buildings and construction – especially through our regeneration programmes - and clean technologies, tapping into a global market for low carbon goods and services that is now worth £3 trillion globally. Underpinning our approach is a commitment to delivering this agenda without placing ever-increasing burdens on Kent businesses.

The Environment Strategy sets out 10 priorities based around three key themes:

- **Living within our environmental limits, leading to Kent consuming resources more efficiently, eliminating waste and maximising opportunities from the green economy.** The priorities include focussing on making Kent more water efficient, ensuring new development is low carbon and resource efficient, turning waste into new resources, and reducing the ecological footprint of what we consume.
- **Meeting the climate change challenge and working towards a**

low carbon economy that is prepared for, and resilient to, climate change. Priorities are focussed on reducing future carbon emissions, managing the impacts of climate change and in particular, extreme weather events, and to support the development of green jobs and businesses in Kent.

- **Valuing our natural, historic and living environment.** The priorities within this theme are to ensure we utilise the full social and economic potential of the natural historic and living environment in Kent, conserving and enhancing the quality of Kent's natural heritage and ensuring residents have access to the benefits of Kent's coast, green spaces and cultural heritage.

Resisting unsuitable and unsustainable forms of development:

KCC will continue to actively oppose inappropriate development that harms the Kent environment and countryside and which is clearly against the wishes of local residents.

Recognising diversity

The demographic and geographic diversity of Kent is one of its most important strengths. Recognising that diversity and ensuring our priorities and services meet the needs of all Kent residents remains a key priority, and this can best be achieved through the localist focus we have set out in this paper and in particular the shift to local place-based commissioning of services - where local issues and the needs of the local population can best be addressed.

Moving to place-based commissioning

We will consult on which KCC services are suitable for place-based commissioning and indicative district based budgets will be calculated for those services and pooled into a single commissioning pot. KCC elected members for each district will then meet to decide which priorities should be funded for those services within their own district (without falling below a minimal service level) and how those priorities should be met by setting a local commissioning plan. Local Members will be responsible for public and partner consultation, priority setting, oversight and delivery of their local commissioning plan, holding local service managers directly to account for delivery. Over time, we expect more KCC services to be able to move into this model.

However, we think there is considerable opportunity for a more joined-up approach and greater efficiencies if there is a single district based commissioning plan that is shared by local KCC Members and District Councillors – for both local KCC services and District Council services. This integration would lead to more effective targeting of priorities, allowing for transfer of resources across organisational boundaries if priorities dictated, but also driving rationalisation of expensive and siloed partnership arrangements. For example it would be possible to merge Local Strategic Partnerships into these new arrangements, bringing in wider public service partners and merge the responsibilities of local Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships, Local Children's Trust Boards and GP commissioning into the model, thus moving towards a 'Locality Board' covering all public services in a district area.

The Locality Board would then be responsible for further engagement with other key local bodies – such as Parish and Town Councils - about local service needs and also the best way services might be delivered in their communities, with Parish and Town Councils potentially playing a more prominent role in the delivery of some services where there is an appetite from them to do so.

Chapter 3:

Building new partnerships

The new Government is introducing fundamental reform to local public services - in particular in health and education - focussed on empowering front line leaders such as head teachers and GPs. It also involves freeing up the market to encourage the formation of new service providers to support GPs and head teachers to innovate in service delivery. We will seize the opportunity this agenda provides to redesign the partnership landscape in Kent and reshape our relationship with our partners in Kent.

Partnership working should not exist for its own sake but must provide value and improved outcomes for the residents of Kent. That is why our partnership working will be based on three clear principles. Firstly, all our partnership arrangements must be focussed and not merely become 'talking shops'. Secondly, our partnerships will be primarily local in focus, wherever possible built around district and borough boundaries as the building blocks of public services in Kent. Finally, these partnerships will be time limited, with sunset clauses specifying the date on which partnerships will cease unless a clear evidence based decision is taken to renew the partnership.

Building new partnerships at the district level

Kent is a big and diverse county. The challenges faced in one area are often not the same as those faced in another. The economic and demographic make up of Kent varies on a district by district basis, and this often presents unique local challenges which require bespoke local

solutions - a "one size fits all" approach isn't always appropriate.

We need to find a way to tailor countywide services to local need whilst still maintaining economies of scale. However, localism isn't just about pushing decisions down to the lowest appropriate level. It also requires a local infrastructure to ensure priorities are identified, concerns listened to and decisions are acted upon so that services improve and problems are resolved. We believe that a shift to place-based commissioning can provide this infrastructure.

We realise that this is a huge change from how we work today, and it will require energy and drive to deliver. Therefore the scheme will be **piloted** in the first instance, and the model then rolled out so that there is a local KCC commissioning plan for every district area by 2014. The level of engagement of District and Borough Councils and wider partners is a matter for themselves, and we recognise that some may wish to engage more speedily and deeply than others in this agenda. We therefore expect the model to develop at variable speeds across the county.

Building a new partnership with the voluntary sector

The voluntary sector plays a hugely significant and successful role in the life of Kent, and the voluntary and community sector together will be fundamental to the Big Society agenda and what we can do to support it, as outlined in the Putting Citizens in Control section of this plan.

What is undoubtedly clear is that the voluntary sector will be asked to play an ever greater role in the delivery of public services in the future and this will require a new partnership to facilitate this new working relationship. It must be a mature relationship based on mutual understanding of the value each can offer the other.

A competitive sector:

We recognise that the voluntary sector is a significant and diverse part of the Kent economy, encompassing very different organisations, with differing aims, ambitions and levels of development ranging from the very local to countywide organisations with professional expertise. All add significantly to the quality of life in Kent. However, in an era of falling resources and a drive for ever greater value for money, the voluntary sector must accept that competition for services will increase and they must provide and evidence excellent value for money and quality if they are to win and retain contracts.

Understand voluntary sector capacity and capability in Kent:

The voluntary sector is not the private sector. Very rarely do voluntary organisations have the finances needed to sell themselves or to develop highly detailed bids for service contracts, and we do not want to unnecessarily add to their costs when every pound possible should be going on front line services. We will work with the voluntary sector to better understand its capabilities, and shape our commissioning approach so that is accessible and transparent. Where the voluntary sector does provide services for KCC, we will ensure that the performance management of those contracts is fair and proportionate, based on outcomes and value for money.

We will explore a range of contract models for the voluntary sector:

These might take the form of developing framework contracts for voluntary sector organisations allowing KCC to use “call off” type arrangements, to potentially allowing larger voluntary organisations or voluntary sector consortia to take on contracts in the role of ‘prime providers’ which then subcontract out packages of work to smaller local voluntary bodies. Nothing will be off the agenda and we will work with the voluntary sector to develop and design contract models which work both for KCC and the voluntary sector.

Building a new partnership with schools

The aim of the new Government’s policy on schools is to transform the education sector by introducing new provision, in the form of more new academies and free schools, to increase competition and parental choice and improve standards. Central to this transformation is the empowerment of head teachers and school governors so that they have greater financial control and decision making over how their school is run.

KCC recognised long ago that it is not local authorities that run schools but head teachers and school governors. The best role KCC can play is to provide and facilitate the support necessary so that schools can get on with the job of providing excellent teaching and learning for the children and young people of Kent.

We will respond positively to the changing role for local authorities in education:

Schools will always be at the very heart of

the local communities irrespective of their legal status, who runs them or who funds them. KCC will continue to work with all school providers in Kent to help them meet the aspirations of parents and pupils. We will work with head teachers to create a new Kent Schools Association consisting of all schools in Kent - both maintained and non-maintained (academies). We want the Association working in partnership with KCC, and as a community of schools working closely together, to develop the policies and practices necessary to ensure that Kent schools continue to succeed and have a collective strategic voice at County and national level.

Further improve primary attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to close the gap in attainment for disadvantaged children:

Success at primary school is the foundation upon which learning at secondary school and throughout life is built. Yet attainment at primary level in Kent remains below the national average. We will work with primary schools to support improvements in attainment, particularly in regard to literacy and numeracy, and will monitor progress across all Kent primary schools. Children should be up to the appropriate standard in reading, writing and maths before they enter secondary school. This is vital if we are to begin to close the gap in attainment between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who are more advantaged. Our role in securing and quality assuring early years' education for all 3 and 4 year olds, and providing some targeted provision for 2 year olds, also supports this agenda, ensuring that children are at an appropriate level of development as they enter primary school.

Discuss with the primary and secondary sector options for further devolution of funding:

KCC already devolves the majority of Dedicated Schools Grant to schools, retaining just 8.7% for those services undertaken centrally or which schools have asked us to provide on their behalf. This 'top slice' is low compared to most local authorities, where in some areas it is as much as 16-17%. We are ready to devolve more of this grant to schools if they wish, where it is possible and makes sense to do so, but there must be an open and honest dialogue between schools and KCC about which services KCC should continue to offer centrally and which services might be better procured by schools through commercial arrangements, either from KCC or other market providers.

We understand that schools in Kent are hugely diverse, not just between the primary, secondary and special school sectors, but also within each sector. Whilst secondary schools might be of a scale that can procure services at reasonable cost from the market, many primary schools are too small to be able to procure efficiently from the market. In those circumstances devolution of grant will simply increase their costs. We will work across and within each sector to arrive at a financial deal that is in the interests of all schools and pupils in Kent.

KCC will shape its school support provision so that it is competitive and attractive:

As the education landscape changes with more schools likely to take increasing responsibility for more of their own budget, the market for school support services (from back office management such

Transformation of the health economy



“...probably the most significant new statement in the White Paper— is not that we are going to have general practice-led commissioning, which we were always clear about, but that we are going to ally

it to a strategic role for local authorities,

which is not just about meshing together public health and social care, although that is important, it is not just about integrating health and social care services, although it will allow that to happen to a greater extent, it is also about the local authority explicitly having a responsibility, together with the consortia, to agree on what the Health Service commissioning strategy looks like..... Proactively, local authorities will be participants in creating a strategic assessment of need in their area and how the commissioning plan should meet it.....”

Rt. Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP, Secretary of State for Health, oral evidence to the House of Commons Health Select Committee. July 2010

as HR and payroll to front line activities such as specialist teaching support) will grow, with an increasing number of commercial providers offering these services.

Our support services to schools will be cost efficient and of high quality. We believe we can make a strong, broad and competitive offer to schools in covering the full range of support functions that most other providers would struggle to match, both within Kent and in other local authority areas.

KCC will establish a vehicle offering education support services within this emerging market. We are open to the form that such a vehicle will take - whether as a KCC company or some other form of partnership or co-operative body jointly owned by schools, or as one vehicle or several to reflect the differing needs across the primary, secondary and specialist school sectors. The shape of the vehicle and the services it provides will be determined by the need of schools themselves. We will work with head teachers to help identify and design an offer that would best meet their needs.

Support quality and choice from a diverse range of providers:

KCC believes in choice and diversity in education provision and has a track record of providing some of the most diverse provision in the country, from grammar schools to specialist vocational skills centres. We welcome further diversity in the education sector in Kent, but diversity must not become an excuse for poor quality provision or competition which harms other local schools. We will ensure

high quality provision is available to all pupils and parents, and will challenge any school where attainment falls or where their policies materially harm the wider family of schools in the local area.

Establish a support framework based on a sector-led approach and sharing best practice:

Kent needs successful schools and we have some of the most successful schools in the country. We want to harness that expertise and understanding and transform our support model for schools so that schools themselves lead it. This sector-led approach will focus on sharing best practice and new innovation in the classroom, and on the continuing professional development of teachers, the very people who make schools a success. Our role will be on facilitating this sector-led approach, rather than managing it directly.

Building a new partnership with GPs

Like schools, the aim of government policy on the NHS is to empower the front line. The new white paper *Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS*, signals the new Government's commitment to empower General Practitioners to take responsibility for commissioning primary care for their patients. Local authorities will play a key role in this process, working with GP consortia to ensure their commissioning plans meet the needs of patients and the local community. We must support GP consortia, through their commissioning plans, to open up the primary care market in Kent to new and innovative providers. For example, through the development of

mutual trusts or co-operates across a range of services - such as district nurse and mental health provision - we can increase choice and drive up standards.

Without this increased choice, GPs will be forced to simply re-commission existing provision, and we will miss the opportunity to improve the quality of health services to the people of Kent.

Develop an attractive offer to support GPs in their new commissioning role:

The focus of the new Government's health reforms is to empower GPs and add value to the service they provide to patients, not burden them with additional bureaucracy and paperwork. KCC has a strong track record in commissioning a broad range of services for local residents and that expertise - combined with our understanding of community need and the economies of scale we can provide - means we are in a strong position to help GPs undertake their new commissioning responsibilities.

KCC will establish vehicle that can provide an attractive support offer to GP consortia. We will work with GP consortia across Kent to develop a broad based offer to support their new role, whether that is in effective back office support or professional advice in commissioning processes, undertaking joint commissioning or GP consortia fully delegating their commissioning responsibilities to KCC on individual care pathways. Our support offer to GPs in Kent will be designed to meet needs of individual GP consortia.

The form that these vehicles will take is a matter for discussion and agreement, whether as a company, some form of

mutual trust between KCC and GP consortia (and possibly other local bodies), or more than one enterprise to reflect the differing needs of GP consortia in Kent or a single countywide body. The landscape of the new health economy will develop and mature over time, but we are very clear that the best approach is to design our offer with GP consortia so that the relationship between KCC and the new health economy in Kent is dynamic and built on strong foundations.

Better integrate health and social care services:

Through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment we will identify where health and social services can better integrate to deliver a more responsive service, reduce duplication and deliver greater value for money for both KCC and the NHS, e.g. through a single assessment model or through joint commissioning of services. We will jointly work with GP consortia to develop the most appropriate model that best fits the needs of Kent. We will also work with the emerging Community Health Service Trusts to identify opportunities where delivery of health service and social services can be better integrated or rationalised to improve services and be delivered more cost effectively, including opening up opportunities for new service providers to enter the market.

Reduce avoidable demand on health and social care services:

Through KCC's new role in public health and our new partnership with the health economy we want to focus on a preventative approach. The pressure on acute health and social care services from poor lifestyle choices is as significant as the demographic pressure from an increasingly ageing

population. Better public health can help reduce this future pressure, and as part of our broader preventative approach, we will use our new responsibilities as part of the national Public Health Service to identify and tackle the major public health issues in the county, supporting people to make better lifestyle choices and consider their own future health – so expensive health provision becomes less frequently required.

Build a leaner more effective countywide partnership

Whilst we remain absolutely committed to local partnership architecture, there will remain a need for countywide groups that can take a strategic overview, providing a Kent wide perspective of the key issues and policy questions affecting the county. Unlike the form of partnership arrangements that have encouraged by the previous government, these will be slimmed down and focused on delivering the principles set out in the Kent Re-Commitment. This new agreement between KCC and District and Borough Councils to work more closely together in the best interests of our residents is the foundation stone upon which County-District Council relationship will be based going forward. The new countywide bodies will be focussed on joining up priorities and coordinating the delivery of front line services across the county.

We will establish the Kent Forum:

Comprised principally of democratically elected public service leaders in Kent, the Forum will be the countywide body that agrees shared priorities and targets across authorities, endorses countywide strategies and considers the County's strategic response to emerging challenges. It will also oversee the move towards local place-

based commissioning. The Forum will maintain strong relationships with other public service agencies in Kent, bringing them into the decision making process when necessary and will develop a strong strategic relationship with the voluntary and community sectors. We will also invite Kent MPs to join meetings of the Kent Forum to build better understanding of decision-making and improve accountability across the full range of public services in Kent.

Through the Kent Forum we will review the Kent Public Service Board(PSB):

Our aim is to transform the Public Service Board (PSB) into the body responsible for the delivery of the joint priorities agreed by the Kent Forum, and as such the Kent Forum and the PSB will have the tight working relationship, with the Forum setting out the PSB work programme and the PSB providing professional advice and guidance to the Kent Forum. We will review the membership and terms of reference of the PSB ensure it is fit for purpose to deliver this role, with the expectation that Chief Executives and equivalent officers in other public agencies will form the basis of its membership.

A task-force approach to shared front line services:

The Kent PSB will focus on delivering more shared front line services, through co-location and single tasking arrangements for multi-disciplinary teams. Not only will this deliver efficiencies, but also provide a more responsive service for local residents. The Margate Task Force is already a model for this type of targeted approach. We want to see similar opportunities rolled out across other areas of the county – commissioned and managed by the PSB.

The Big Society in Kent

The Big Society is the new government's focus on reshaping the relationship between the state, the individual citizen and local communities. The core analysis running through the Big Society agenda is that the growth in what is termed Big Government over recent years has transferred too much power from individuals to the State, to the extent that it has encouraged a dependency culture in which individuals now turn to the State for help and support in the first instance rather than as a last resort, no matter how minor or trivial the problem. Yet State support is expensive and often far less effective than individual initiative and community activism. This dependency culture is no longer affordable, in both financial terms and in the impact it has on individuals and communities.

At the heart of the Big Society is a twofold approach to tackling this dependency culture and empowering citizens and local communities. The first is to increase volunteering and civic activism, getting individuals and local communities to help themselves to tackle local problems. The second is a desire to see the voluntary and community sectors to take on more responsibility for running some local public services, rather than have them delivered by the State.

By definition, KCC should not lead on the Big Society agenda, as to truly take hold it must organically develop in local communities themselves, becoming embedded as more individuals and communities begin to see the opportunities provided by this agenda. We do, however, believe we have a role in facilitating and encouraging the growth of the Big Society in Kent. We think there are three distinct areas where we can do more to support the Big Society.

Firstly, we can seek to further liberalise the market for our own goods and services, doing more to open up our procurement and commissioning frameworks so that the voluntary and community sectors, especially social enterprises, are encouraged and in a position to deliver more KCC services.

Secondly, we can support the development and growth of the voluntary and community sectors in Kent. In particular, providing the relatively small cash injections needed to facilitate new social enterprises and working capital for existing social enterprises to compete for contracts from local public services. We can also support these voluntary and community enterprises by helping them to become more efficient, providing back office support so that they can effectively compete with private companies.

Thirdly, we can support community development. Not all local communities and groups will have the knowledge and understanding to simply take the reins from government, and we understand that they will need some support to help them build confidence and the skills required.

These three broad themes will be the basis on which KCC embraces and contributes to the Big Society in Kent.

Chapter 4:

Putting the citizen in control

Individuals, families and local communities, not the state, are best placed to decide their own choices - local authorities and other public services exist to serve the people, not to dictate how they should live their lives or restrict their choices. The role of public authorities going forward should be facilitative - supporting and empowering individuals and communities to make their own choices - with power and influence in the hands of local people, thus encouraging the growth of the Big Society.

Transparency and access

We will be an open and transparent organisation, giving residents the information they need to hold us to account:

We will publish salary and expenses data online of our senior officers bringing them into line with the existing arrangements for publishing Member allowances and expenses online. Organisational performance and the financial cost of services will also be published online. This will be updated regularly, with our ambition to move to real time reporting wherever possible. Raw data will be available but we will also provide an interactive website so that residents and businesses can understand and interpret this data and better hold us to account for delivery of services and value for money.

Expand the 'Gateway' programme to cover multi-channel access to services through the internet and telephone:

The Kent public service Gateway(s) have been hugely popular with residents,

creating a single point of access to a wide range of public services in convenient town centre locations. This model will be rolled out further to extend coverage, but will also include the development of a single Gateway website and single Gateway telephone number, so residents can access services they wish. Our aim will be to make all KCC services accessible online, so residents can use them at a time and place to suit them. Such services include applying for school places, social care support, transport to schools and college and other payments of fees and charges. This will include moving towards online self-assessment for KCC services.

Always through the right door:

The Gateway concept has been hugely successful. However, KCC has a significant number of public facing facilities in local communities, in particular libraries, used by many residents on frequent basis which can also be in a position to offer similar 'gateway' approach solutions, providing the full range of access, information and guidance around services provided by the dedicated Gateway offices. We want the gateway approach to be embedded across the range of KCC front facing facilities so whichever door the customer walks through, it is always a gateway to KCC being able to help them meet their needs.

Driving personalisation of services

Further drive personalisation across our services:

Entitlement to services shouldn't mean the state monopolising the design and delivery

What does the Big Society mean for KCC?

The 'Big Society' is not new to KCC. We have always valued the expertise and commitment that the voluntary and community sector can offer, and already work with them to deliver a range of services to Kent residents. The principles of citizen and community led service development have driven our approach to public service delivery:

Member Grants, such as community grants of up to £10,000 each year, enable each of our 84 county councillors to provide financial support for small scale projects that benefit the local communities they represent. This funding has supported youth groups, environmental projects and facilities for older people. For example the Member Highway Fund was used by three members to fund a minibus service that runs 4 days a week to replace the Wormshill-Sittingbourne Postbus service that was withdrawn by Royal Mail in November 2009. This eight seater vehicle is well utilised by residents of Wormshill and Frinsted; without this service, many elderly people in particular would be effectively stranded in their villages.

Bulk Buying project: In 2009, the Social Innovation Lab for Kent (SILK) facilitated a community-led project in Parkwood, Maidstone aimed at reducing child poverty. Local residents decided to focus the project on bulk-buying commodities (such as nappies and washing powder) for the neighbourhood and setting up a shop to trade these at an affordable rate. With support from the SILK team, 'R' shop was opened in May 2010 from a community room in a local school and the space is being used for a range of community functions. After supporting local residents to initiate this project, SILK will withdraw so that the project can continue independently.

Kent Savers Credit Union was established following recognition of the need for access to affordable credit and savings facilities for those on low incomes. KCC assisted the establishment of a Kent-wide Credit Union; however Kent Savers is now set up as a mutual co-operative with its own board of directors. The development of the Union should increase the financial resilience of vulnerable individuals in Kent, and foster a sense of community through its members' shared ownership of the co-operative. As the ability of the Union to lend to its members relies on savings invested by other members, its success will lie in the commitment of Kent communities to support each other.

Clean Kent Watch is a volunteering project which has established a network of neighbourhood volunteers to provide grass roots information on fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and rubbish fires. Volunteers make reports to KCC's Contact Centre which operates 24 hours a day.

We are now looking at innovative ways of using social enterprise to deliver areas such as community health, social care and helping people back into work.

of services, especially when individuals and families are better placed to understand their own needs and who can best provide for them. Not only does this empower service users to design services around their own needs - leading to better quality provision - but because services are focussed on actual need rather than on standardised provision they can often be more cost-effective.

KCC has been at the forefront of the personalisation agenda - particularly in adult social care - over the last ten years and we will continue to drive personalisation across our entire service offer. Our aim is for residents to be able to choose how they receive their entitlement to services. For example, this could mean offering parents of children entitled to SEN transport a cash alternative rather than KCC choosing how that transport entitlement will be provided.

We will expand the use of the Kent Card:

The visa enabled Kent Card - pre-loaded with an individual's personal budget or cash alternative to KCC service delivery - is a unique way of allowing service users the freedom and choice to pay for their service in the same way as millions of consumer transactions occur on the high street everyday. The possibilities for the Kent Card far exceed social service users, and through the drive for greater personalisation and choice, we will expand the number of KCC services that offer the Kent Card, and want to see take up of the Kent Card significantly expanded.

Support the voluntary & community sector

Establish a Big Society Fund for Kent:

This will invite applications for capital start-up and project based funding for social enterprises, social entrepreneurs and other not-for-profit groups that provide employment opportunities which support social inclusion in Kent. The Funds principal aim will be to facilitate new social enterprise in Kent, and we will explore a range of options to provide income to the fund, using both existing resources but also potentially recycling monies from the disposal of assets into the Fund so that resource continues to be used for community benefit. One of the central aims of the Fund will be to leverage in further resources from Government and philanthropic bodies and individuals to maximise the resources available to social enterprises.

Support the voluntary and community sector in accessing contracts to run services - especially those operating payment by results - which limits voluntary and community sectors opportunities:

The liberalisation of the market for public services presents a huge opportunity for the voluntary and community sectors, as well as social enterprises, to be able to take responsibility for running a range of public services. However, where public authorities are operating contracting systems where payment by results is a condition of the contract, then this presents a real problem for social enterprises that don't have access to working capital to fund the delivery of services, or don't feel that they can take on the risk associated with payment by results contracts.

We want to explore a variety of options that would support the voluntary and community sectors in such circumstances. For example, the Big Society Fund could loan the working capital to organisations that have the skills and expertise to deliver such contracts but can't access the capital, or we could facilitate a commercial loan through, for example, Kent Savers - the Kent Credit Union.

Where appropriate and where it is felt that it might be mutually beneficial, we would consider taking equity in some social enterprises so that they can take on greater risk on contracts based on payment by results, but where reward payments are more significant, and the social enterprise could benefit from our engagement and expertise. Any returns from holding equity stakes would be recycled back into the Big Society Fund.

Support the voluntary and community sectors and social enterprises in becoming more efficient so they can better provide value for money:

Social enterprises and the VCS have a real opportunity to help transform the way public services are provided. However, at a time of very tight public finances, the reality is that they must be able to compete with other providers from the public and private sector on costs. We will work with the voluntary sector to identify areas where KCC could provide help and assistance in making the social enterprises and the voluntary and community bodies more efficient by, for example, taking on responsibilities for their payroll function, providing flexible workspaces or other back office support. In short, all areas where the scale of economies a

countywide organisation such as KCC can provide at lower cost than individual bodies could procure themselves.

Supporting community development

We will help local communities build capacity and capability:

Through our Social Innovation Lab for Kent (SILK) we will help local community groups build capacity and capability to design models of service provision which are self-sustaining and do not require ongoing state support. As part of this agenda, we will further promote volunteering in the local community by our own staff, and actively encourage them to work in community based projects that can transfer their skills and knowledge to build community capacity. We will change employee terms and conditions to allow more dedicated annual personal and development days' for staff to be used for volunteering instead of staff training.

Continue to fully support and use the Sustainable Communities Act (SCA):

The SCA allows local communities and councils to seek changes in law and government policy that would facilitate the development of more sustainable communities. KCC will continue to fully support the use of the Act, and will work closely with our partners at District and our Parish level to ensure use of the SCA is effective and joined up.

Develop a new approach to Community Asset Transfer to support new service delivery:

We will develop a new approach to Community Asset Transfer so that community groups, the voluntary sector

and social enterprises can take on the management and ownership of KCC assets. This will be linked to those assets where they take responsibility for delivering public services from those assets, and where the case for asset transfer provides value for money.

Further liberalise the market

Encourage the voluntary sector and social enterprises to bid for contracts to supply KCC goods and services:

It is in KCC interests to ensure that there is as much competition for KCC goods and services as possible to drive greater choice and value for money. Through our 'Backing Kent Business' scheme KCC has already done much to ensure that the small and medium sized businesses in Kent understand how KCC procures goods and services so that they can better compete for KCC contracts. We will extend this approach to the voluntary and community sector, helping them understand the public procurement process, what issues need to be addressed as part of tenders, so that they can better compete with the private and public sector for KCC contracts.

Maximise the social and community benefits from our procurement of goods and services:

Even after delivering significant financial savings, KCC will still be one of the largest procurers of goods and services in the Kent economy. We will become better at using our significant spending power to leverage wider social and community benefits from contracts where it makes sense to do so. For example, under the first Building School for the Future agreement KCC required some 400 new apprenticeships to be provided by the

contractor. We will ensure our procurement system maximises the opportunities for social and community benefits within the legal rules governing procurement, so maximum public value is derived from each and every pound KCC spends.

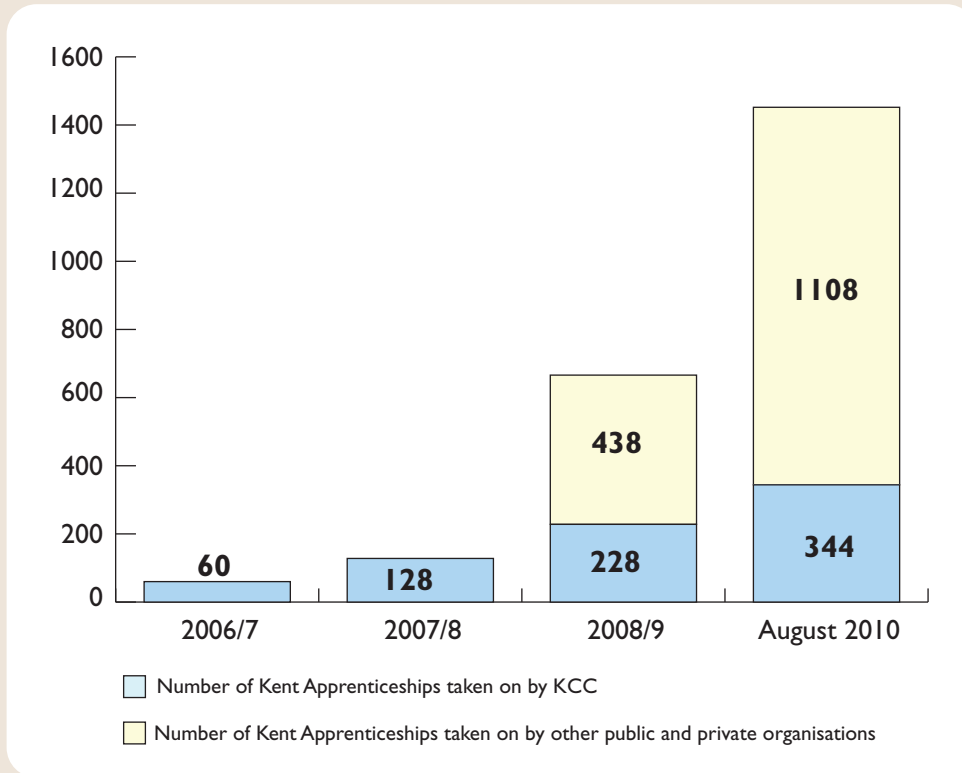
Introduce a standing 'Right to Bid' process:

KCC is not the sole purveyor of ideas and solutions. We want to harness the potential for innovation and new ways of thinking about future service provision in Kent. If individuals or groups from the private, public or voluntary sector think they have ideas about how services can be provided in a better way then we want to hear from them. Where a right to bid process is successful limited pump-prime funding to research and develop proposals will be made available.

Allow KCC employees to utilise the 'right to bid' process to encourage further diversity of supply:

KCC managers and employees who have a business case that their area of service could be delivered as efficiently or effectively through arms length arrangements from the County Council – i.e. management buyout or public service cooperatives or mutual trust can use the 'right to bid' process to have their business case considered, and then bid for services through the procurement process competing alongside other providers from the private and voluntary sector.

Kent Success – Tackling Disengagement



In Towards 2010 KCC committed to developing a Kent apprenticeship scheme with the aim of offering at least 1,000 apprenticeship opportunities across the private and public sector. Well over 1,400 apprentices have been taken on since the start of autumn 2006 through Kent Success, KCC's innovative apprenticeship programme. 344 young people have started a Kent Success Apprenticeship within KCC itself, and of the 187 young people who have completed their apprenticeship within KCC, 73% have gone on to gain full time, permanent employment within KCC or the wider public sector. A further 25% of those who have completed their apprenticeship have moved into employment within the private sector.

KCC is now undertaking a pilot scheme to increase the employment potential of vulnerable young people by supporting them into apprenticeships. Four groups (teenage parents, young offenders, care leavers and young people with learning, physical or mental disabilities) have been chosen due to the high possibility that they will become, or already are, NEET (not in education, employment or training). They are potentially disengaged from learning and skills and are currently finding it difficult to access apprenticeship opportunities. The development of this scheme will link to KCC's Employment Strategy for Socially Excluded Adults.

Chapter 5:

Tackling disadvantage

The best way to tackle disadvantage is to provide strong economic growth and job opportunities so people can earn a salary to support themselves and their families. As a country we can no longer afford to support a dependency culture which places an ever greater burden on those willing to work, drains resources from those who need them most and which erodes community confidence and cohesion.

Our focus in tackling disadvantage will be on providing opportunity - not supporting dependency. However, for those who struggle to help themselves and the most vulnerable in our society, KCC will continue to ensure it provides protection, support and opportunity to enjoy a high quality of life.

Opportunity not dependency

We must reduce the welfare bill in Kent:

We will focus our Supporting Independence Programme (SIP) on reducing the welfare bill in Kent by aligning it to the new single work programme being developed by the Department for Work and Pensions. Building on the work of the Margate Task Force, we will forge strong relationships with primary welfare-to-work providers in Kent to deliver tailored support for local communities that have high levels of worklessness and welfare dependency.

In particular, although not exclusively, we want to ensure that those 16-24 year olds on benefits receive the support need, whether through mentoring, training or work experience, so they have the skills

and confidence needed to enter the job market. By targeting this age group we can begin to break down inter-generational dependency on benefits found in some of our most deprived areas.

Develop social enterprise role in reducing the number of welfare claimants:

Providing real work opportunities for those on benefits will be crucial if we are to reduce the welfare bill but also ensure that as a country we receive something back from individuals for the benefit payments they receive. The private sector isn't geared up to do this, but as the voluntary and community sector takes on responsibility for public services, we want to explore the opportunity of working with them to develop new ventures which can provide real work experience and placements for those currently on welfare. We have already identified our wish to support social enterprises through the Big Society Fund and we will support those enterprises who help us achieve our goal of reducing the number of benefit claimants in Kent.

We must prevent disengagement:

One of the reasons why young people fall into the benefits trap is because they become disengaged from education and learning. Through our pioneering vocational and applied learning approach, KCC has done much to keep students engaged through pre-vocational and applied learning. We will continue to support schools with this approach in the future. However, whilst engagement is strong up to age 16, to many young people either don't

enter further education or drop out before they complete their course. This often leads them into a cycle of benefits and low value, low paid work due to poor skills. We need to keep all young people in Kent engaged in education and training, especially as the mandatory age for education and training increases to 18.

Focus on apprenticeships:

We have already noted that apprenticeships offer a key route to providing a work ready workforce to the Kent economy, but we believe they also offer the best way to help keep young people engaged in training and learning post 16 - especially for those young people not attracted to continued classroom based learning - by offering a wage, on the job training and work relevant qualifications. We need a significant increase in the take up apprenticeships, from both young people and business alike. Critical to this is engaging with small to medium sized enterprises who make up the bulk of Kent economy to sell the benefits of apprentices, and working towards creating a demand led system whereby businesses can choose the qualifications and training their apprentices work towards.

Supporting the most vulnerable

Ensure the provision of the most robust public protection arrangements:

Following the tragic Baby Peter case, there has been an enormous increase in child protection referrals to children's social services in both Kent and across the country. We are absolutely determined to ensure our public protection arrangements are robust, in particularly our arrangements for child protection.

In November 2010 an Ofsted inspection of Children's Social Services in Kent found our safeguarding services to be inadequate. No service is more important to this administration. KCC will implement, in full, all the recommendations emanating from the inspection and ensure that all issues flagged in the report are dealt with and the service improved.

Front line social workers with child protection responsibilities operate in what can be challenging, stressful and demanding circumstances. We are grateful for their professionalism and personal commitment that they show. That is why our role will be to support them as best we can, so they can continue to do the difficult job we ask of them.

Like other local authorities, Kent has a high social worker vacancy rate. We have undertaken a major recruitment drive both in the UK and overseas, but recruitment isn't the real problem, it is retention. The best safeguard for keeping vulnerable children safe in Kent is to ensure experienced social workers are incentivised to stay in the profession, attract new talent to consider a career in social work and ensure a culture of supportive supervision and continuing professional development. This is at the core of how we want children's social services in Kent to operate.

We will also challenge perversities in the system. Social workers complain of spending too much time inputting data onto computer systems and dealing with administration because government rules state that only qualified social workers can input this data. Our aim will be to move to a system whereby support staff can remove this administrative burden, thus

freeing social workers to concentrate on front line social work.

We will restructure our social services so that the service they provide is more integrated and resilient, and in a better position to serve the interests of both vulnerable adults and children in Kent, but also provide the wider support to families which is critical to supporting the broader needs of Kent children.

We will continue to support the some of the most vulnerable groups through:

- Improving transitions for young people leaving care or moving into Adult Social Services provision.
- Continuing to challenge the placement of looked after children into private care arrangements in east Kent by non-Kent local authorities.
- Reducing the number of disruptive moves for young people in foster care arrangements.
- Exploring different models of support for young people in care that promotes greater choice and independence in their care arrangements.
- Improving outcomes for young people in care, in particular better educational outcomes at all levels, and a reduction in looked after children entering the criminal justice system.
- Improving our support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), by focussing on preparing them for return to their country of origin. This is the outcome in most asylum applications.

We will move to a single initial assessment framework:

Too much time and money is spent on

different services duplicating basic assessment processes. This duplication increases costs, adds delay to decision making and frustrates those seeking our help. We will move to a single initial assessment model that will enable customers to understand quickly their entitlement, can signpost them to further advice and guidance, and speed up access to specialist assessment if required. We will also simplify and rationalise assessment processes shared and linked to other public bodies to reduce delay and provide a more integrated and seamless service.

Targeted intervention

Continued early intervention to help vulnerable families and save money over the long term:

We want to support vulnerable families across Kent, enabling parents to better access joined up services including community midwives, health visitors and provision of basic skills training that will help them gain employment. That is why we have invested in nearly 100 Children's Centres across the county that provide such services under one roof. Children's Centres also provide "outreach" services to the most vulnerable families with the early identification, and provision of, special needs services such as speech and language therapy, so that these needs can be tackled at an early stage.

Our focus will be on better coordinating the support of the public agencies including the Police, social workers, housing and health services to support vulnerable families in Kent. This ensures that the agencies speak with "one voice" and will remove the need for families to undergo different assessments from different

agencies. Targeted early intervention for vulnerable parents also helps to provide them with the skills to look after their children and will save significant public expenditure by reducing or removing the need to intervene later on.

We will tackle high-cost disruptive families:

Whilst our strategy over the longer term is to deliver early intervention to support families falling into chaotic and disruptive lifestyles, there are families - often fuelled by drug and alcohol dependency - who do become disruptive and cause nuisance blighting local neighbourhoods. With our partners we will take a robust approach to tackling these disruptive families through in depth intervention – including sanctions where necessary – to require change in their behaviour.

Greater integration between Youth Service and Youth Offending Services:

There is a broad range of provision for young people delivered by the public and voluntary sector which engages them in a range of positive activities. For this reason we will move towards greater integration between the Kent Youth Service and Youth Offending Service so as to better target youth service provision at those young people at risk of falling into offending behaviour, which invariably leads into a cycle which increases offending and chaotic lifestyle, and costs Kent public services more money over the longer term. Our focus will be to work with partners across voluntary youth services and the criminal justice system to prevent young people entering into offending behaviour in the first place.

Improve trading standards and community safety's role in prevention:

By shifting resources to more targeted and effective information, advice and guidance campaigns for those residents most at risk, so they are better informed and able to avoid harm. Enforcement activity will be focussed against those who pose the very highest risk of harm to individuals and communities.

Appendix -

Organisational design principles

KCC recognises that it must continue to change to succeed, and that to deliver the agenda set out in *Bold Steps for Kent* there must be a new organisational structure and culture. The organisation must be leaner, with less duplication and more responsive decision making.

These organisational design principles are the basis on which the new KCC structure and approach to service delivery will be established.

Our organisational design principles are:

1. We will enhance our role as the strategic authority for the county and support the development of a new radical public service offer jointly owned by all tiers of local government and public services in Kent. This new model will cost the taxpayer less, by drawing down and integrating functions from quangos, regional and national government into an agreed delivery model.
2. Elected Members will have confidence that the organisation will deliver for them - allowing the political leadership to focus effort on strategic rather than operational issues. The chief officer team will be one team - collectively responsible for advising, responding and delivering Cabinet's agreed priorities effectively and efficiently to build member confidence across all service areas.
3. Overall resident satisfaction with KCC and all public services in Kent is as important to us as user/client satisfaction for key services. It is the critical measurement of our success both as an organisation and as a county.
4. KCC is a single organisation delivering a cohesive service offer. Organisational silos which increase replication, duplication and undermine our 'one council' approach will be changed to deliver as one organisation. We will put the customer first at all times by understanding the customer journey and design services around individual, family and community need rather than organisational or professional interests.
5. KCC is an organisation that is hungry for continuous improvement and welcomes challenge - both internally or externally. Our organisational culture will promote this from all quarters of the business and won't be held to artificial service standards and processes from inspectors and regulators that add cost but little value. We will develop a new relationship between Kent and Whitehall that is of true benefit to both KCC and Kent residents.
6. We will deliver on subsidiarity through a new area based governance model which will commission appropriate locality based services according to

local need and demand. Decisions will increasingly be taken locally and jointly with district councils and public service partners. Devolution of services to the local level will become the norm.

7. We will move to integrated initial assessment framework across all services for individuals and families sat behind a single front line (the multi channel Gateway programme - physical, web, telephone access) which solves the majority of customer issues at the first point of contact. Our services will be re-engineered to deliver these savings as quickly as possible.
8. We will seek to build relations with partners based on trust and being the 'partner of choice' in Kent. Partnerships will add value and those that don't won't be maintained. Partners will actively seek to use our strategic capacity to build partnerships and transform services locally - seeing it as adding value to their own business model rather than a risk to their own existence.
9. Our service offer will reflect the changing relationship between citizen and state - one where we don't just support entitlement and dependency but help people meet their responsibilities. Services will be designed around self-service provision, co-production or self directed design. Embedding personalisation wherever possible will be important - but must be identified by customers as a distinct part of KCC's broader service offer.
10. Ensures all our activity as an organisation supports the economic development and regeneration of Kent as set out in Unlocking Kent's Potential - aiding recovery from recession with Kent's GVA and GDP improving and converging towards South East averages.
11. KCC will be transparent. We will publish salary and expense details of senior staff, as well as organisational financial and performance data and provide the web resource so residents and businesses can better hold us to account for what we are spending their money on. Our one council procurement processes will be open with contract requirements clear so it is understood who we are spending public money with and what is expected of them.
12. Has an information management system fit for all levels of the organisation (CMT/Cabinet) that produces the intelligence on customers, services and markets needed to commission and de-commission services effectively. Delivers - and is seen to be delivering - value for money, and fully understands the cost, spend and value of each part of the business and uses this to drive up our productivity.
13. Our structure will be as flat as possible to ensure the appropriate number of tiers between the Corporate Management Team and the front line (no more than five tiers of management) with effective spans of control throughout the organisation. Planning, monitoring and management systems will drive corporate accountability for delivery by officers across all levels of the organisation.

14. Provides a framework for creative discipline for managers with a “tight-loose” relationship which allows decisions to be taken at the appropriate level and managers having operational freedom within an underpinning ‘one council’ approach. Only those decisions that need be escalated up the management chain will be, and managers will be personally held to account for delivery.
15. We will utilise all the councils assets strategically to support our front line service model and rationalise back office functions – people, money, contracts and buildings – to deliver as one organisation.
16. KCC will have a local and personal presence - residents will understand what we do for them, their families and their local community - as well as for the wider county of Kent. Builds a mature relationship with the people of Kent based on an honest conversation and a clear understanding of what is possible and affordable.
17. There is only one KCC brand. We will establish a residual brand value with the people of Kent that goes beyond individual services and maintain a clear corporate message to all audiences through a single system of internal control for all communication and marketing activity.



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