

From: Roger Gough, Leader of the Council
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To: Cabinet – 26th January 2023

Subject: **Strategic Reset Programme**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: The Strategic Reset Programme (SRP) is Kent County Council's transformation programme that oversees complex, high priority programmes which are critical for sustainable change and the future of the Council. This paper provides an overview for Cabinet on the programmes within SRP, an update on progress, and sets the context for delivering change in a challenging operating environment.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1) **NOTE AND DISCUSS** the progress within SRP since its inception in 2020.
- 2) **DISCUSS** the focus of SRP within the current operating environment, and how it will contribute to the delivery of the Council's priorities.
- 3) **AGREE** that SRP will continue to update Members on delivery every six months.

1. Background

- 1.1 In July 2020, a paper to County Council entitled "*Strategic Reset – recovery, resilience and reset in Kent County Council*" set out the need for a KCC-led programme to manage the extensive change required given the fundamental shift and demands in our operating environment, largely driven by the unique challenges of COVID-19. It was about responding to the immediate 'here and now' challenges, as well as looking ahead to prepare KCC for the future.
- 1.2 It was agreed that the Strategic Reset Programme (SRP) would be collectively owned by the whole council. A key aim was to ensure that KCC's operating model could deliver organisational priorities and was affordable in the challenging financial environment.
- 1.3 SRP went live in December 2020, as the [Interim Strategic Plan](#) was approved by County Council. Many of the programmes within SRP were agreed to be in scope because they contributed to KCC's response to the five Challenges within the Interim Strategic Plan, were enablers for frontline change and

continued to support our recovery from Covid-19, for example building on the Kent and Medway Economic Resilience and Recovery Plan with our partners.

- 1.4 This close alignment between SRP and the political priorities of the Council continued in May 2022, when the County Council agreed [Framing Kent's Future Our Council Strategy 2022 - 2026](#). SRP's scope was updated to contribute towards the delivery of the commitments in the Strategic Statement and will continue to respond to the Council's political priorities.
- 1.5 SRP's approach is about being flexible and responsive to the organisation's needs and resources available. The scope of SRP has evolved over time and now covers 11 programmes, focusing on the most critical, complex and high risk strategic priorities for the Council.

2. SRP's Focus and Scope

- 2.1 KCC continues to face an exceptionally pressured and fast-paced operating environment. Our services are accountable for driving through complex, medium-term change in an incredibly difficult financial and service delivery context. Changes in the Government's policy position and the financial challenges facing the Council, means that SRP needs to be focused on making real progress on those challenges and building organisational resilience.
- 2.2 Managing this scale of cumulative, complex change across the organisation, alongside the delivery of our budget commitments, is exceptionally challenging - SRP aims to deliver change in a realistic, agile and pragmatic way.
- 2.3 The focus of SRP is to deliver sustainable change together for our Council's priorities. Our short-term priorities for the programmes within SRP are to:
 - Respond to our finance and resource challenge
 - Mitigate significant risk for the Council
 - Work as one council and manage critical dependencies
- 2.4 Whilst we have a clear short-term focus, it is important that SRP also has a long-term sense of purpose and direction. To support this, SRP has five Ambitions. Each SRP programme assesses their contribution and confidence against the Ambitions every six months, to keep us focused on the longer-term aims of SRP and ensure we are pulling together in the same direction. The Ambitions are:
 - Improved experience for residents, staff and people who use our services
 - Lower cost, value for money services
 - Data and digital led
 - Resilient and future ready
 - Joint working with our partners
- 2.5 Since SRP was established two years ago, events have brought into focus the exceptionally difficult scale of the financial challenge facing the Council over the medium term. SRP will need to continue to adapt to the financial reality and the delivery of our programmes must now be even more focused on financial sustainability, opportunities for return on investment, and contribution to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) budget challenge. We are continually

examining ways to be more effective, productive and efficient and to make use of the limited resources we have in the best possible way.

- 2.6 SRP includes programmes which are responsible for contributing to the delivery of significant savings as part of the Council's Budget, including Adults' Sustainability and Integration, Children's Transformation, Future Assets and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation. As set out in Section 3, SRP provides financial oversight and assurance for programmes, with quarterly financial monitoring for all programmes. Any financial issues (e.g. overspend, slippage or reprofiling of savings) are escalated to SRP Programme Board for management response, with the management accountability for the delivery of savings remaining with individual services.
- 2.7 Planning for change is never a linear process – the scope of SRP will further evolve over time to respond to changing needs and priorities. SRP is not intended to be representative of the whole Council's business-as-usual and statutory responsibilities, or the delivery of all our budget commitments. Instead, SRP helps to ensure that the officer leadership team is focused on the successful delivery of projects and programmes that support KCC's most critical priorities.
- 2.8 To deliver added value to the Council, SRP needs to rigorously focus on prioritisation and best use of resources. The Leader, Deputy Leader and SRP Programme Board (Corporate Management Team) regularly reflect on the priorities within SRP to prioritise the right activities, at the right time. With the focus on our challenging budget position, in December 2022 it was agreed that several programmes would come out of the scope of SRP and move to core business delivery to allow a greater focus on prioritising resources on the remaining 11 high priority programmes.
- 2.9 Central to SRP's approach is joining up, working together and collaborating as one Council, particularly on complex and difficult issues that have implications across KCC. SRP has helped to take forward a whole-council approach on areas such as digital transformation, SEND and commissioning. Officers in different services now work much more closely together and have built strong relationships through a more agile approach including Task and Finish Groups. These connections and dependencies between the programmes are essential to SRP and need strategic management – these are detailed in *Appendix 1*.
- 2.10 There are currently 11 programmes in scope of SRP. *Appendix 1* sets out a summary description of each programme and the responsible Cabinet Member. The SRP programmes comprise:
 - Adults' Sustainability and Integration
 - Building Our Resilience
 - SEND Transformation
 - Children's Transformation Programme
 - Commissioning
 - Enterprise Business Capabilities
 - Environmental Step Change
 - Future Assets
 - Resident and User Experience
 - Social Care Reform

- Strategic Economic Interventions

3. Programmes within SRP – programme delivery, reporting and governance

- 3.1 In order to monitor the activity of the different programmes within SRP, there is a clear cycle of reporting and governance. Each programme maintains their own delivery accountability and has their own individual programme governance (*Appendix 1* provides further information). Programmes provide regular updates, critical management decision points and escalations up to the SRP Programme Board (Corporate Management Team).
- 3.2 The SRP Programme Board provides robust challenge and oversight of individual SRP programmes, collective oversight for SRP as a whole and shared responsibility for the successful delivery of the programme's objectives. It takes management decisions (e.g. business case approval, changes in scope, resource decisions) and provides a strategic steer for programmes.
- 3.3 The SRP Programme Board considers quarterly financial monitoring across the programme as a whole, and for individual programmes, including costs, financial benefits, alignment with MTFP savings and funding sources. SRP provides an independent view of the financial and resource planning for programmes, and financial modelling and impact assessments to support business case development, working closely alongside Finance.
- 3.4 The SRP Programme Board also takes a strategic view across SRP as a whole considering items on prioritisation and resources, risk, progress against the SRP Ambitions, dependencies (connections and relationships between programme activities) and the 'critical path' to advise on sequencing the right activities in the right order to work cohesively and meet our ambitions.
- 3.5 SRP has a monthly reporting cycle whereby each programme submits a Monthly Status Report which provides an overview of milestones, timelines, risks, issues, financials, dependencies and any required decisions or escalations for SRP Programme Board. Trends in monthly reporting are being developed, for example to analyse common risk themes across programmes.
- 3.6 The SRP Team triangulates the findings of these reports with other information about the programmes to develop a monthly highlight report for the Leader, Deputy Leader and SRP Programme Board giving them the most up to date picture of programmes' progress and current status along with high risks/significant issues at the time of reporting. This report also tracks key milestones, providing commentary on reasons for changes in milestones and any programme slippage.
- 3.7 The SRP Team provides a range of programme management, dependency, stakeholder and financial management and expertise, and practical support for individual programmes. For example, the team are currently prioritising support for the SEND Transformation, Future Assets, Children's Transformation and Commissioning programmes.
- 3.8 SRP works closely with the Corporate Assurance and Risk team to understand key risk themes, mitigate risks and improve delivery confidence to get

programmes working in the right way to deliver successfully. Delivery confidence recommendations are provided on draft business cases to ensure these are robust and well-developed.

- 3.9 Whilst SRP is focused on transformation/change programmes not core business risks which are outside of scope, the alignment between programme risks and mitigations with the Corporate Risk Register is strong through regular engagement with the Corporate Assurance and Risk team, SRP Programme Board and Corporate Board (Cabinet and Corporate Management Team). Corporate Assurance and Risk also have an open invitation to attend SRP Programme Board items where there could be significant risks.
- 3.10 SRP, Corporate Assurance and Risk and Internal Audit also take an integrated assurance approach, for example on the Enterprise Business Capabilities programme working together on risk management, business case development and programme governance.

4. Benefits and positive outcomes

- 4.1 It is important to be clear on 'why' many of the SRP programmes were created and included in SRP. A key focus is to improve the quality of services delivered to Kent residents. SRP covers a unique variety of programmes, which are at different stages of delivery and benefits realisation – from early scoping to full implementation. *Appendix 1* provides further detail for each of the programmes.
- 4.2 Change is difficult and complex - we need to focus on the impact we are having and the progress towards our longer term outcomes and ambitions. SRP supports sharing lessons learned and being open about what does and doesn't work. Being clear on our success measures, the benefits we want to deliver and tracking this through to successful delivery and transition into 'business as usual' is something we recognise we need to continue to develop.
- 4.3 To support this, we are learning from best practice in other councils and working closely with the Analytics, Evaluation and Internal Audit teams. We also work jointly with Finance to track financial benefits (including important non-cashable benefits such as productivity gains and cost avoidance).
- 4.4 Since its inception in 2020, programmes within SRP have delivered a variety of positive change and tangible outcomes, with some examples captured below. In addition, SRP has also been involved in developing KCC's Data Strategy.
- 4.5 The Automation programme has recently successfully transitioned from SRP into core business. The programme developed a Centre of Excellence that supports staff across KCC to upskill and utilise technology for improved efficiency and productivity gains. The team supported the Homes for Ukraine project to develop a new app to enable the dissemination of information and to gather information on key checks to pass back to Government, which made a huge difference to how we are able to support Ukrainian citizens and families. The Centre of Excellence is now supporting other frontline services to release hours of time each month for added value activities, rather than dealing with complex processes.

- 4.6 The People Strategy was recognised as an important enabler and dependency within SRP and is now into long-term delivery in core business. Since the launch in April 2022, key activities have included development of a workforce planning tool, a new recruitment website, the Inclusion Passport, Single Parents staff group and the Reverse Mentoring project.
- 4.7 The delivery of the Making a Difference Everyday (MADE) strategy will continue to be a core part of our Adults' Sustainability and Integration programme. A real achievement has been creating Technology for Independent Living Facilitators who are able to provide advice on every day digital solutions such as voice assistants like Alexa, apps and the video carephone, KARA. The role has been designed as part of the MADE Innovation approach – working with staff and people we support to consider how technology can be used to empower and support independence. In August 2022, the authority won an award at the Health Tech Digital Awards for the “Best COVID-19 Solution for Safeguarding the Vulnerable” category.
- 4.8 The new Children's Transformation Programme will build on the achievements delivered by the previous “Change for Kent Children” programme which over the past two years has helped to achieve:
- An Outstanding Ofsted rating in 2022
 - Recognition of Kent as a Family Hubs Transformation Authority
 - Improved quality of work, audits and review of cases in Child Protection and Children In Care service with 80% outstanding – a 10% increase since 2019 – through the implementation of the Practice framework
 - Hired 70 newly qualified social workers and improved support to them
 - Hired extra in-house foster carers and a reduction in deregistering of foster carers, due to an increase in support to foster carers
- 4.9 The Environmental Step Change programme supports KCC's linked objectives to achieve Net Zero for its own estate and services and for Kent as a whole to be Net Zero by 2050. Most of this work not only reduces carbon emissions but also energy costs for KCC, Kent's residents and businesses. Projects under way include:
- For our own estate**
- Funding won to identify which of KCC's own buildings consume the most energy and create feasibility studies, decarbonisation plans and energy efficiency measures, such as solar and LED to reduce carbon emissions and costs.
- For Kent businesses**
- The [Kent REVS electric van trial](#) scheme (a joint scheme with National Highways) is reaching its final stage. Kent REVs has enabled nearly 300 Kent companies borrow an Electric Van (EV) for up to two months to encourage them to make a permanent switch to electric vehicles. The vehicles will now be incorporated into the KCC fleet as part of KCC's own switch to EV's.
- For Kent Residents**
- Round Two of the 'group buying' [Solar Together](#) scheme for solar panels run with most of the Kent districts and iChoosr has been fully subscribed. The scheme is open to all Kent residents and helps secure a better price for participants. Round One saw 230 installations of solar panels and

storage batteries. Round Two has already seen nearly 700 installations complete with more to come.

- KCC has won funding from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme to deliver 26 public charge points at four different locations (The Turner Gallery, Kings Hill, Paddock Wood Community Centre and Gravesend Cyclopark). This scheme will allow KCC to test out new technologies to bring forward charge points in areas constrained by electricity supply. Work also continues on the [EV 600](#) scheme to install public charging points in district council car parks across Kent.
- KCC was also awarded LGA funding in November 2022 for a behaviour change campaign [Share the Warmth](#) on social media to encourage people to share five important energy saving measures with loved ones.

4.10 The Digital Inclusion project, part of the Resident and User Experience programme, has utilised the Helping Hands funding and Contain Outbreak Management Funding in targeting support in local communities. Over 3800 laptops have been provided, 900 internet packages and just over 1000 Microsoft software packages to those most in need. Over 5,400 people have been reached through the Engagement and Skills project which includes one to one support as well as group work. In addition, 512 people across Kent have signed up to be volunteer Digital Champions, supporting friends, family and colleagues with their digital skills, motivation and confidence.

4.11 The Building Our Resilience programme has made positive progress to migrate our services to the Cloud and improve our technology security and areas of critical vulnerability. The new Digital Transformation workstream will prioritise digital support for critical business areas, placing the people we support at the heart of service design and delivery, developing a more cohesive approach and will ultimately mean KCC can spend money on ICT projects in a smarter way.

5. Member Engagement

5.1 The Leader and Deputy Leader have regular oversight of SRP through monthly meetings and reports, whilst Cabinet Members are updated on overall SRP progress every 4-6 months.

5.2 Individual programmes should provide their Cabinet Member with regular updates including governance to support decision making and have a responsibility to keep Members informed through Cabinet Committees, briefings and public consultations. This will help to inform Cabinet Member(s) with formal decision making, including key decisions for significant service change.

5.3 The SRP Team provides regular briefings and updates for all Elected Members to ensure they are aware of the latest progress. In January 2022, an All Member Briefing was held virtually to provide Members with an update on SRP, including how the programmes are delivering towards the Ambitions. A written update was also provided to all Members in June 2022, including latest updates on each programme. A further All Member Briefing was recently held in January 2023, highlighting the focus and priorities of SRP, including how programmes are working towards them, along with governance and monitoring and looking ahead.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The Council's Strategic Reset Programme is helping to progress a number of wide-scale changes that are required for a variety of important driving factors, including organisational and financial sustainability, resilience, improved experience and better-quality partnership working.
- 6.2 Programmes within SRP will continue to progress at pace and monitoring will continue of deliverables and outcomes which will be shared with Members.

7. Recommendation(s):

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- 3) **AGREE** that SRP will continue to update Members on delivery every six months.

7. Background Documents

- 7.1 County Council July 2020 paper: [Strategic Reset - recovery, resilience and reset in Kent County Council](#)
- 7.2 [Interim Strategic Plan](#) (approved December 2020)
- 7.3 [Framing Kent's Future Our Council Strategy 2022 - 2026](#) (approved May 2022)

8. Contact details

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