

**By:** Kevin Lynes, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise  
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**To:** Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee 24 June 2011

**Subject:** 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Kent – Unlocking Kent’s Potential

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** In January 2009, KCC published for consultation *Unlocking Kent’s Potential*, the county’s Regeneration Framework. This set out an ambitious but pragmatic approach to Kent’s economic growth and led directly to a series of workstreams, strategies and delivery plans to make the Framework’s aspirations a reality.

The visionary document *21<sup>st</sup> Century Kent, A Blueprint for the County’s Future*, produced in conjunction with the leading architect and masterplanner Sir Terry Farrell, was launched in January 2010, through a series of events which took place along the route of High Speed One.

With these workstreams now largely concluded and actions identified, and in the context of a changed national context, work is under way to prepare *21<sup>st</sup> Century Kent – Unlocking Kent’s Potential*, a new, high-level document to reflect this changed context; report on progress in taking forward the workstreams resulting from the Regeneration Framework and the links between them; and set out the next steps.

This report sets out the background to producing a new document, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Kent – Unlocking Kent’s Potential*. Members are asked to note progress. There will be a short presentation to accompany this paper.

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## **1. Background: the Regeneration Framework**

- 1.1. Produced for consultation in January 2009 and adopted in October 2009, *Unlocking Kent’s Potential*, the county’s Regeneration Framework was a new approach to taking a broad, strategic view of our regeneration priorities. It aimed to set out the challenges and opportunities facing Kent, highlight the questions and choices we will need to address in the future and scope the county’s essential investment needs over the next 20-25 years. In particular, it highlighted five key challenges:

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

1.2. The Regeneration Framework is KCC's core regeneration strategy and, having been endorsed by Kent Partnership, has had wider influence in setting county-wide economic policy. In particular, it has informed *Bold Steps for Kent*, KCC's Medium Term Plan and the development of the emerging *Ambitions for Kent*.

## 2. Translating the Regeneration Framework into delivery

2.1. The Framework itself did not seek to be a detailed delivery plan. However, to address the key challenges that it identified, it commissioned a series of workstreams, focused on:

- a) Creating an overarching 'blueprint' for the county's future development, setting a vision for the next thirty years. Sir Terry Farrell was commissioned to contribute to this, and following extensive consultation, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Kent* was launched in January 2010.
- b) Identifying the key transport investments through *Growth without Gridlock*, launched in December 2010.
- c) Addressing the poor level of broadband provision in Kent through the development of *Connected Kent*, the digital delivery plan due to be launched later this year, but dependent upon the amount of funding to be allocated through the BDUK bid.
- d) Supporting delivery, choice and quality in housing provision through *Better Homes: Localism, aspiration and choice*, the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy, launched in May 2011 and its subsidiary workstreams including the recently launched Rural Housing Protocol.
- e) Ensuring the right level of community infrastructure to support housing growth, through a community infrastructure planning model now largely completed and the forthcoming revision of KCC's Developers Guide. In tandem work has begun on innovative funding models, including a proposed Kent & Medway Investment Fund which could lever in substantial private sector funding for regeneration and development schemes, potentially involving SEEDA's land and property assets; and ideas for potential pilots for Tax Increment Financing schemes.
- f) Supporting the development of Kent's diverse sector base through a series of sector focused 'conversations' in 2011 – in part reported elsewhere on this agenda.
- g) Developing the county's skills base and the links between employers and education providers through the work of the employment and skills partnerships including the Strategic Skills Group.

- h) Maximising the contribution that Kent's cultural offer can make to economic development through *Unlocking Kent's Cultural Potential*, published in December 2010.
  - i) Addressing the challenges presented by climate change through *Environment: The Kent Delivery Plan*, published in October 2010 and supported by a detailed three-year action plan.
  - j) Embracing and supporting Kent's changing population through the *Policy Framework for Later Life*, published in October 2009.
- 2.2. Progress on many of these workstreams has already been reported to this Committee. They are summarised at Appendix 1.
- 2.3. As the delivery plans that support these workstreams have either been completed or are nearing completion, there is now a focus on ensuring that the actions contained within them are delivered. To support this, the emerging actions are being mapped to produce an integrated, outcome-focused performance and delivery framework. This is intended to take a high-level strategic view of progress and will be used as a lobbying tool to promote Kent's strategic interests and to further the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Kent* brand.

### **3. The changing policy context**

- 3.1. While work has been taking place to take forward the workstreams resulting from the Regeneration Framework, the wider national policy context for regeneration and economic growth has changed substantially. Many of these policy changes had already been called for in *Bold Steps for Radical Reform*, KCC's discussion paper published in January 2010, including the abolition of regional government, a reduction in inspection regimes and a more incentive-based approach to unlocking growth including the introduction of the New Homes Bonus and the Community Infrastructure Levy and forthcoming pilot initiatives such as Tax Increment Financing.
- 3.2. Locally, the context for regeneration has also changed significantly, with a reduction in the number of local delivery partnerships, the development of a stronger relationship between KCC and the Kent Districts through the Kent Forum and the creation of a strategic relationship with Essex and East Sussex through the new Local Enterprise Partnership. At the same time, we have created opportunities in growth sectors such as renewable energy, particularly offshore wind as well as experienced significant challenges such as the decision by Pfizer to exit its Sandwich site by 2012 and wider public sector job losses.
- 3.3. It is clear that sharp reductions in public expenditure and an increasing focus on private sector job creation will continue to influence the priorities for the delivery of regeneration in Kent.

#### **4. Joining it all together: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Kent – Unlocking the Potential**

- 4.1. The Regeneration Framework set a clear strategic direction for the county and remains the basis for our overall economic regeneration policy. However, the outcomes of the delivery plans produced over the past two years, the consultation associated with them and the changed national context provide an opportunity for a light-touch progress review. This will sit alongside the performance framework described in para. 2.3 to ensure that our overall strategic framework remains robust.
- 4.2. To support this, it is envisaged that *21<sup>st</sup> Century Kent – Unlocking the Potential* will be a short, high-level document which will:
- a) Set out the contextual changes described above and their implications for Kent;
  - b) Report on progress in taking forward the workstreams flowing from the Framework including case studies of many of the activities identified;
  - c) Act as a concise delivery plan for the strategic priorities identified in the Regeneration Framework;
  - d) Highlight where there are gaps and where further work needs to be taken forward; and
  - e) Identify the next steps in taking forward the vision and workstreams identified in the Framework.
- 4.3. In developing the Regeneration Framework and its subsidiary workstreams there has been significant consultation undertaken with partners and the people of Kent. It is therefore not proposed to carry out a full consultation exercise on the summary document. However, there will be a series of discussions with key stakeholders in order to strengthen the document and encourage a wide buy-in to its contents. This is likely to include the Kent Forum. The discussion at this Committee provides one such early opportunity for Members to debate and provide guidance on its contents. A presentation will expand upon the proposed contents of the document and in particular provide a summary of the workstreams identified in section 2 above and at Appendix 1.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1. Members are asked to **note** the contents of this report and the presentation to be made to the Board.

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21<sup>st</sup> Century Kent – Unlocking Kent’s Potential

## A Delivery Plan for Growth

Framework/Delivery Plan	Status
Unlocking Kent’s Potential (Regeneration Framework)	Published: January 2009
21st Century Kent (Sir Terry Farrell vision)	Published: January 2010
Transport: Growth without Gridlock	Published: December 2010
Digital: Connecting Kent	Release of action plan dependent on amount of funding allocated through BDUK bid
Housing: Better homes: localism, aspiration and choice	Published: May 2011
What Price Growth?	Modelling to be complete: Spring 2011 Consultation: 2011
Business Sectors: Sector Conversations	January: Rural Economy, Agriculture & Horticulture March: Construction and Civil Engineering May: Low Carbon & Energy Production September: Health & Social Care October: Digital and Creative Media
Skills: Kent & Medway Skills Board	Incorporated into Strategic Skills Board For review
Culture: Unlocking Kent’s Cultural Potential	Published: December 2010
Environment: Kent Delivery Plan	Published for consultation: October, 2010
Older People: Policy Framework for Later Life	Published: October 2009
21st Century Kent - Unlocking Kent’s Potential	To be published: 2011