

By: Paul Carter, Leader of the County Council

To: County Council – 13 December 2012

Subject: Bold Steps for Kent: Progress to Date and Next Steps

Classification: Unrestricted

---

Summary: Bold Steps for Kent: Progress to Date and Next Steps sets out the progress to date made against Bold Steps for Kent since it was approved by County Council in December 2010, as well as identifying the next steps required to support continued delivery against the key work streams identified in Bold Steps for Kent.

---

1. Bold Steps for Kent, the medium term plan until 2014/15 was approved by County Council in December 2010. On the second anniversary of its approval by County Council it is appropriate to reflect on the progress to date, including what has been successfully achieved, where we are still striving to deliver against priorities and where more still needs to be done.

2. Bold Steps for Kent: Progress to Date and Next Steps (attached at Appendix A) provides a substantive commentary on the significant progress made against the key work streams set out in Bold Steps for Kent. The performance of the organisation in meeting the challenges set out in Bold Steps has to be placed into the context of the most significant financial challenge facing the County Council in living memory, as well as internal restructuring as a consequence of our Change to Keep Succeeding Programme. Whilst acknowledging that there remains more to do in meeting the challenges set by Bold Steps for Kent, it is important to reflect on how much has been delivered by our staff in the face of considerable pressure.

3. Against Bold Steps for Residents, KCC has successfully established ten Locality Boards, which are now starting to redesign youth and library service provision in local communities and take an oversight role over the Troubled Families programme. We have opened up our services to challenge through the Community Right to Challenge in a sensible and pragmatic way. Our new Category Management approach is seeing KCC increasingly drive value for money out of our commissioning and procurement practices for the Kent taxpayer. 57% of all goods and services provided by KCC now delivered through Kent businesses, an increase of 10% in the last year alone. Our Customer Services Strategy is increasingly focussed on redesigning access and assessment to services with a greater focus on personalisation and channel shift from face-to-face to greater telephone and online access.

4. Against Bold Steps for Education, we have set out our strategy and approach to sustain the quality of education and training in Kent by publishing Bold Steps for Education, Learning and Skills, which sets ambitious targets for improvement across education and training in Kent. We have also established the Kent Association of Head Teachers, which represents almost 600 schools and brings together primary, secondary and special schools from across the county to help support KCC develop the policies and practices to ensure all schools succeed. The 'Kent Challenge' is

helping to improve education performance, 73% of secondary schools are now rated as good or outstanding. There was continued improvement in the performance at Early Years Foundation Stage, with 72% of children achieving a good level of development, which is well above the national average, and helps ensure children are ready for school and do not begin to fall behind early in their school journey. At Key Stage 1, the results for children in reading, writing and mathematics improved by several percentage points in 2012, and standards are now mostly in line with the national average. At Key Stage 2, 77.5% of pupils are now achieving English and Maths at level 4, an improvement of 5.4% on previous years. At Key Stage 4 GCSE results at 5 A\*-C grades including English and mathematics improved to 61% compared to 59% in 2011. This is above the national average. 64 secondary schools improved their performance in 2012, with eight schools improving their performance by more than 10%. We have continued to devolve more funding to schools, and have established EduKent as KCC's trading vehicle for the provision of support services for schools.

5. Through Bold Steps for Transport we have continually lobbied the Government to carry out the necessary development work to identify a new Third Thames Crossing as part of a strategic route between Dover and the Midlands, whilst also identifying how it can be provided without the need for public money to be spent. Following our lobbying campaign, the Government has now committed to introduce HGV road user charging, and we have developed an entirely new source of funding through the concept of a UK Fuel Loyalty Card. We have continued to lobby for these new funding streams to be reinvested in the Kent strategic road network. With our District and Borough Council partners we have identified deliverable commercial lorry parks to relieve the pressure of unofficial lorry parking, and have continued work to identify a permanent and affordable solution to Operation Stack. We have delivered the £87m East Kent Access Road to support growth at the Discovery Park Enterprise Zone, Kent International Airport and the Isle of Thanet, as well as securing £5m from the Regional Growth Fund to deliver rail journey time improvements between Ashford and Ramsgate. Through the publication of Bold Steps for Aviation, we have robustly opposed proposals for a new hub airport in the Thames Estuary and have continued to promote full utilisation of existing capacity, such as Kent International Airport.

6. In Bold Steps for Health we have moved KCC to the forefront of thinking in the local government sector with regard to how we can use the opportunity of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to reshape community health provision and integrate health and social care commissioning so as to shift resources from the acute sector to better community provision. Our Health and Wellbeing Board early implementer status has allowed the County Council to develop strong and effective relationships with emerging Clinical Commissioning Groups, whilst the Kent Health Commission has been in the vanguard of working with the South Kent Coast Health and Wellbeing Board to design new ways of working in Dover and Shepway and reported to the Secretary of State for Health in February 2012.

7. In support of Bold Steps for Business and the Economy, KCC has successfully responded to the major challenges that were not originally foreseen in Bold Steps for Kent, especially the major closures of Pfizer at Sandwich, DTSL at Fort Halstead, Seafrance at Dover and Thamesteel at Sheerness. At Sandwich we acted quickly and decisively by establishing a Task Force and worked with Government and business to secure an economic growth package including an Enterprise Zone designation, £40m Regional Growth Fund investment and delivery of £20m improved

flood defences. In total we have secured £55m direct financial assistance through Expansion East Kent and TIGER (Thames Gateway, Innovation, Growth & Enterprise) loans schemes and are unlocking private finance and investing in businesses with the appetite to grow. We have delivered a sector based approach to engaging with Kent businesses through our sector conversation programme of events, and have worked with the construction industry to bring major developers and construction companies together to highlight regulatory barriers to delivering growth. We have streamlined working arrangements in the Thames Gateway, establishing the Thames Gateway Strategic Group to ensure continued Ministerial involvement in the Gateway and maintaining it as a national priority. We have unlocked development in the Gateway by agreeing to manage the £110m Homes and Roads Programme, offering up a potential blueprint to unlock further sites. We have secured £9.87m of additional Government funding from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and have matched this with £10m of KCC funding to bring broadband to every property in Kent, and ensure that most will be able to access superfast broadband services.

8. Our focus on supporting the growth of apprenticeships through Bold Steps for Employment & Skills means that Kent is now outperforming all other local authorities in the South East in the number of apprenticeship starts over the last year. There has been a 16% increase in the number 16-18 year olds starting apprenticeships, a 13% increase in the number of 18-25 year olds starting an apprenticeship and a 39% increase in the number of 25+ year olds starting an apprenticeship. This means 2000 more people starting an apprenticeship in 2012 than 2011. KCC has led the way through its £2m investment in the Kent Jobs for Kent Young People campaign, the continued success of the Kent Success Apprenticeship scheme, with over 500 apprentices taken on within KCC, with over 80% who complete their apprenticeship moving into full-time permanent employment. Our work with the National Apprenticeship Service to deliver a service to small and medium sized enterprises (SME) via a one stop shop for SME employers is simplifying taking on an apprentice for the majority of businesses across Kent.

9. Bold Steps for Tackling Disadvantage has focussed on tackling the underlying causes of disadvantage of unemployment and worklessness. We are utilising funding from the European Social Fund to increase employment by giving unemployed and disadvantaged people the training and support they need to enter employment. A number of local schemes across Kent are supporting residents in deprived areas by providing holistic training and support and referring people to the Work Programme. The £2m Kent Employment Programme has been established to create a flexible grant fund to encourage local businesses to take on 18-24 year old young unemployed people on jobseekers allowance or on the Work Programme, and we have established new BTEC courses across Kent to help address the needs of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). We are continuing to ensure that our Foster Carer recruitment and assessment includes promoting the importance of long term provision of foster care to provide more continuity and stability in foster care placements, as an important part of our Looked After Children Plans. We have campaigned on the need for all councils to place children closer to home, unless by exception, to prevent the placement of vulnerable Looked After Children in East Kent by other local authorities, and will continue to lobby the Government to take action against those authorities who continue this practice.

10. Through Bold Steps for Supporting the Vulnerable we have continued to build on the follow up inspection by Ofsted of Children's Services in 2011 which showed that KCC has successfully addressed the priority actions identified by the 2010 Ofsted inspection of Children's Social Services in Kent, and have now completed the first two phases of our Children's Services Improvement Plan. We have established a multi-agency Central Referral Unit to deal with all contacts to Specialist Children's Services efficiently and effectively ensuring all referrals are assessed in a timely way. We have developed a workforce strategy and launched a recruitment campaign that has successfully recruited more permanent and experienced social workers, which is supporting the priority of ensuring that less qualified and newly qualified staffs receive quality supervision. 85% of Kent's social workers are now permanent, and turnover has reduced from 15% to 11%. We have developed our Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, and established an outcomes based Commissioning Framework, to inform commissioning of evidence based high quality preventative services. We have continued to strengthen our safeguarding arrangements for both vulnerable adults and children. We invited Essex CC to provide external scrutiny of our adult safeguarding arrangements by carrying out a Peer Review and we have developed an action plan to address the areas for development identified, whilst the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review of Children's Safeguarding has provided a steer on areas for development ahead of the anticipated unannounced Ofsted inspection of Children's Safeguarding.

11. Following Bold Steps for Housing we launched the Kent Forum Housing Strategy which sets the strategic direction of housing across the county. It is the only Housing Strategy in the country that brings together County, District and Unitary council ambitions into a single document and has been described by Government as being 'ahead of the game'. Through the strategy we have worked with local planning authorities to develop a common framework for deriving housing numbers to support the development of Local Plans across Kent. We have successfully attracted additional public investment in the Live Margate housing intervention programme. KCC's initial investment of £10.5m has acted as a catalyst for further public sector investment and the total investment now stands at £23.6m. Through our Kent Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, we have made available £12m to support first time buyer mortgages and have worked with Kent district and boroughs to set up match funding arrangements in each part of the county as the scheme rolls out. We have developed an Integrated Infrastructure Funding Model to provide a consistent basis for costing community infrastructure to support new development, and have also entered into a bold and innovative new partnership with Kier to deliver new homes using KCC land and major institutional investment.

12. Our commitment to meeting the climate change challenge and priorities in the Kent Environment Strategy have helped deliver Bold Steps for the Environment. We have invested over £2m in the KCC estate in energy measures saving the taxpayer £4m and have cut 2.5 million business miles saving £200,000 annually. The Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership has been established to drive £40m investment to improve the energy efficiency of homes. Through Bold Steps for Social Enterprise, Community and Voluntary Sector we have established the Kent Big Society Fund through the Kent Community Foundation, which is now making more affordable loans to facilitate the growth and development of the social enterprise sector across Kent, which traditionally struggles with access to finance. Some £108m of KCC services are delivered through the Voluntary and Community sector, and a strategic forum

was established in November 2011 to provide more consistent support and engagement to the sector in their role as a provider of public services in Kent.

13. However, it is also important to recognise there are areas of public service reform in which Bold Steps for Kent anticipated local government playing a far greater role, but where these opportunities didn't arise or national government imposed solutions that have limited local government involvement. For example, Bold Steps for Kent anticipated local authorities playing a more significant role in the Work Programme to reduce welfare dependency and tackle worklessness. However, the programme was ultimately designed around large-scale private sector providers taking on significant financial risk by acting as prime contractors to the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), so was restricted largely to private sector companies. Through Bold Steps for Health, it had been anticipated early in the health reform agenda that local authorities might be able to provide back office commissioning support arrangements for the emerging Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) on a traded basis. However, in the event, the NHS Commissioning Board imposed commissioning support arrangements on CCGs from within the NHS as part of the CCG authorisation process.

14. Moreover, activity and priorities have sometimes been forced to shift from that referred to in Bold Steps when the need and opportunity required. For example, whilst Bold Steps focussed on the economic development opportunities in the Thames Gateway, the announced closure of Pfizer in Sandwich and the creation of Expansion East Kent has meant that much economic development activity and focus has been on East Kent since Bold Steps was published. However, following the recent Eastern Quarry agreement and successful TIGER bid to the Regional Growth Fund, delivering the opportunities in the Thames Gateway remains an important area of focus over the coming years. In some instances, the fragility of the economic climate has meant take up of some opportunities has not been as fast as anticipated. For example, the roll out of the Kent Local Authority Mortgage Scheme and the Kent Big Society Fund have been slower than anticipated. However, there are signs that as awareness of such schemes increases, interest and appetite are also increasing, and we remain confident that they will be successful.

15. The document also sets out key next steps for each area of Bold Steps for Kent. A number of the critical next steps include:

- CIL and the infrastructure challenge: With the Government placing a greater emphasis on infrastructure funding through the development of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and schemes such as the New Homes Bonus, it is vital that there is agreement on the allocation of funding available for infrastructure and the public services to support infrastructure between all partners, as well as identifying new funding mechanisms to support infrastructure given the gap between current infrastructure funding and future demand led growth, such as greater use of institutional investors.
- Continuing to drive up achievement in education and training: Although strong improvements have been made on education and training, there is still more to do, in particular to bring at least 85% of primary schools to be judged as good or outstanding, as well as to bring up attainment at A-level above the national average, as well as to continue to close the gap in educational achievement for

vulnerable learners, such as Looked After Children and those on Free School Meals.

- Delivering the Adults Transformation Programme: Transforming our services to that older people are able to remain independent in their own home for longer is central to our Adults Transformation Programme which will allow us to meet the demand of an aging population within the resources that are available, through closer integration with health. We will also continue to lobby the Government for implementation of the Dilnot Commission recommendations on funding of adult social care, so that the adult social care system becomes more affordable and fairer.
- Continuing the work of the Kent Health Commission: The Kent Health Commission has been vital in setting out the new ways of working between local government and the NHS, but its work has so far concentrated on the developments in the South Kent Coast CCG covering Dover and Shepway, in support of the early implementer Health and Wellbeing Board arrangements. The Kent Health Commission will continue to act as a forum for disseminating the learning and best practice found in the South Kent Coast CCG across other areas of Kent, and likewise capture the innovations happening in other Kent areas and help disseminate that practice, so that the opportunities of the health reform agenda are not fully seized.
- Moving from improvement to the transformation on Children's Services: As we come to the end of Phase 3 of the Children's Services Improvement Plan and hopefully move out of statutory improvement notice, it is necessary to continue the pace of change in Children's Services by moving the service into being transformed, placing a greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention, so fewer young people come into care, and for those that do, permanent placements are sought as quickly as possible, and that outcomes for those who do come into care dramatically improve.
- Rolling out the Integrated Adolescent Support Service: Integrating similar services supporting the same client base is a critical theme of Bold Steps and the development of the Integrated Adolescent Support Services will be rolled out across the county, with the best practice disseminated across other areas of KCC business. A key area will be to look at how we can deliver a similar integrated service around the families and young people aged 0-11.

16. The next steps set out in Bold Steps for Kent: Progress to Date and Next Steps will be taken forward by integration of priorities and actions in the divisional business plans, currently being prepared across the organisation for consideration by Cabinet Committees ahead of approval by Cabinet in March 2013.

#### **Recommendation**

17. County Council is asked to note *Bold Steps for Kent: Progress to Date and Next Steps*

Appendices:

Appendix A: Bold Steps for Kent: Progress to Date and Next Steps, December 2012

Background Papers:

Bold Steps for Kent: The medium term plan until 2014/15, December 2010

Contact details:

David Whittle

Head of Policy & Strategic Relationships

Tel: 01622 696969

Email: [david.whittle@kent.gov.uk](mailto:david.whittle@kent.gov.uk)