

December 2012

Bold Steps for Kent

progress to date and next steps



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Introduction: Serving the People of Kent

In December 2010 we launched Bold Steps for Kent, our medium term plan until 2014/15.

Bold Steps is an ambitious plan that challenges KCC to fundamentally rethink how it serves the people of Kent in an era of radical public service reform and increasingly limited financial resources - whilst continuing to deliver our three overriding aims of helping the economy to grow, putting the citizen in control and protecting the vulnerable.

Now that we are almost two years into delivering Bold Steps it is the right time to take stock and report on progress to date.

When Bold Steps for Kent was launched it was anticipated that KCC would have to make savings over the 4 year period until 2015 of £340million. This has proved to be an accurate prediction of the scale of the challenge. Through our Change to Keep Succeeding programme, KCC is on course to deliver £340million in savings, which includes £50m on staff with the removal of 1,500 posts through service redesign and a focus on rationalising management and support posts.

However, some of the assumptions made when Bold Steps was published in 2010, in particular the expectation that by 2015 the economy would be on a more sustainable footing now seem optimistic. Weaknesses in the world economy and crisis in the euro zone have caused sluggish economic growth and lower than expected tax income into HM Treasury.

The Government has already indicated that austerity will continue beyond the end of the current Parliament in 2015, with significant savings required until at least 2017. However, if the national finances are to be brought under control without increasing the tax burden on already financially stretched families, there will need to be even deeper reform of public services to deliver greater savings. It is increasingly likely that local government will face significant financial pressure until at least 2020.

The aim of this document is therefore twofold. First it aims to report back on the progress to date in delivering what we set out in Bold Steps. Whilst much has been achieved, and achieved at a time of very significant financial pressure and uncertainty, we also recognise that there is still much more to.

Second, it also outlines how, as an organisation we are beginning to plan beyond the initial Bold Steps timeframe, beyond 2015, so

we put in place today the fundamental approaches necessary if we are going to successfully respond to the financial challenge that awaits us beyond the next general election. Our strategy will be focussed on embedding the five Ps of prevention, productivity, procurement and partnership working, with the people of Kent at the heart of everything we do.

In many ways the world has moved on apace since Bold Steps was written, but in many ways, the message and ambition set out in Bold Steps for Kent remains as pertinent today as it did in 2010.

The need for radicalism and urgency in public service reform is growing not diminishing, and change cannot be avoided but must be embraced. Pace and urgency will be necessary if we are to continue to provide the people of Kent with the high quality service they expect and deserve.

I remain confident that Kent can, and will, respond to the challenge ahead.

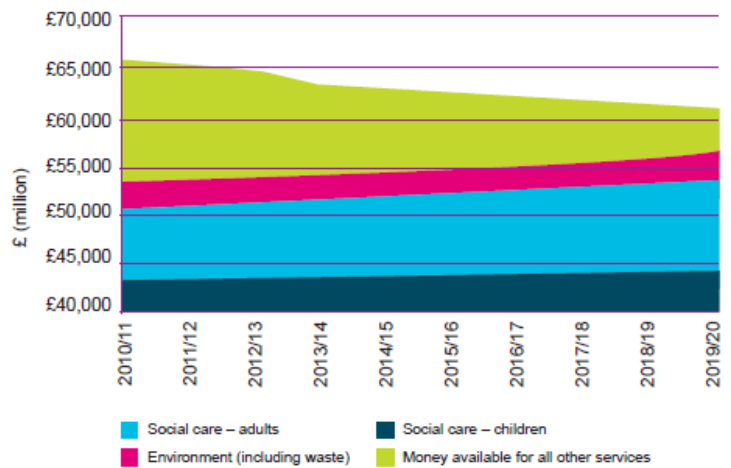
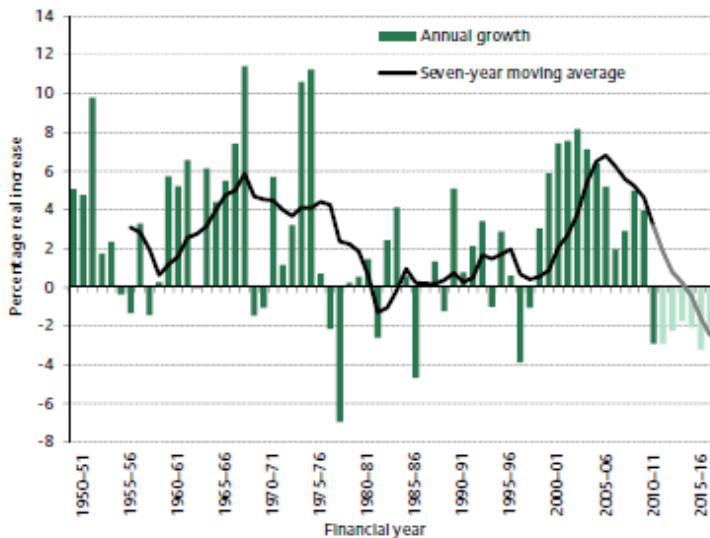
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Carter'.

Paul Carter,
Leader, Kent County Council

Delivering against the financial challenge of a lifetime

Bold Steps for Kent is a very different medium term plan designed to help shape Kent County Council to meet the new reality of public service spending in the UK, as the coalition Government attempts to rebalance the public finances and reduce the structural deficit. All that has been achieved in delivering Bold Steps for Kent over the last two years must be placed into a context of huge financial pressure placed on public services.

As the graph prepared by the Institute for Fiscal Studies below shows, whilst there have been sharper one-off reductions in public spending since the 1950s, in particular the response to the oil crisis in the mid 1970's, there hasn't been the sustained, year-on-year reduction in public spending seen since 2010 in our lifetime. Moreover, due to weaker than expected growth, we know that this ongoing reduction in public service spending must continue beyond the next general election until at least 2017, but in all likelihood it will last throughout the next Parliament until at least 2020.



The impact on local government is marked. As highlighted by the Local Government Association graph above, the pressure on local authority services, in particular on adult social care, children's social care and waste, at a time when public spending on services is being significantly curtailed, means that local government services as they are currently designed and delivered, are unsustainable. The message we set out two years ago in Bold Steps for Kent – that we have no choice but to deliver transformation and change in what we do and how we do it – is more relevant now than it was in 2010.

So when we consider progress to date against Bold Steps for Kent we must consider it in light of the enormous pressures that staff have faced over the last two years, including every directorate and department of the council being restructured with the result of 1500 job losses across the authority. Likewise when considering the next steps in delivering the Bold Steps agenda, consideration must be given to the scale of the financial challenge all public services still face over the years ahead. The three aims set out in Bold Steps – helping the Kent economy to grow, putting the citizen in control and tackling disadvantage – must still drive everything that we do. At the heart of delivering our next steps must be a focus on the five 'P's' of people, prevention, partnership, productivity and procurement.

Prevention

We must move away from expensive reactive service provision that responds once problems have already occurred, to investing in preventative models that not only deliver better outcomes, but are also more cost effective. A preventative approach will also allow us to better manage demand on services, especially from a rapidly ageing population.

Productivity

We must deliver a step change in the productivity of our services and staff through greater integration around our key client groups and investing in our back office support systems and procedures to release resources to the front line.

People:
Putting
residents at
the heart of
everything
that we do

Partnership

KCC does not operate in isolation and to deliver our strategy we must have effective partnerships so that prioritisation, productivity and prevention are driven not just within KCC but intelligently across all Kent public services. This will involve increasing joint commissioning and integrating services across public services.

Procurement

We must introduce the best business and service practice found across the private sector into KCC – with particular regard to improving how we procure goods and services, not just scaling-up contracts to deliver efficiencies. But scaling-down contracts to support localism and innovation.

These five P's have been central to the development of our budget proposals for 2013/14 and medium term financial plan until 2015/16. The focus upon them has been strongly endorsed through our budget consultation exercise, and embedding these principles in everything we do across KCC will be central to ensuring that the vision of Bold Steps for Kent is delivered.

Bold Steps for Residents

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will develop place-based commissioning of local services through new Locality Boards, together with public service partners such as District Councils, Police and Health. More decisions about local services will be taken at the local level, with more use of joined up local Community Budgets, to deliver local priorities.

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.

Progress to date:

- Established ten Locality Boards, and are working with remaining Districts to develop options for Locality Board arrangements
 - Locality Boards have started to play a key role in shaping local services, in particular setting up task and finish groups to support the Future Library Services and Youth Service Transformation programmes. They are also taking an oversight and assurance role in the Troubled Families programme.
 - We have developed a Category Management approach to the delivery of more effective spend on key KCC services, which are embedding principles of best value in our procurement activity
 - We have established the Kent Business Portal for the advertising of all KCC contracts, moving away from the generic South East Business Portal and allowing a greater focus on Kent based businesses. It is also open to all Kent based public sector bodies to use, if they wish.
 - We have developed performance indicators that allow us to effectively measure the percentage of contracts awarded to Small and Medium sized enterprises for KCC goods and services, as well as the percentage of KCC spend to Kent based suppliers.
 - KCC is currently performing well in ensuring local businesses are securing work from the authority, with 57% of all KCC goods and services delivered by local businesses in 2011/12, an increase of nearly 10% on the previous year. This compares favourably with our neighbouring authorities.
-
- Proposed Right to bid enshrined in legislation through 'Community Right to Challenge' enacted in June 2012,
 - Provides voluntary and community groups and two or more public sector staff a chance to bid to run KCC services. Programmed approach to managing the Right to Challenge process, linked to our commissioning and procurement cycles
 - Detailed briefings and a comprehensive website to help explain how the Right to Challenge process work
 - Explored options for the mutualisation of services
 - We have developed a rolling three-year Expression of Interest register which helps staff and community groups to plan for any expressions of interest they may want to submit.

Bold Steps for Residents

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will move to a single initial assessment framework – reducing duplication in assessment processes that residents go through to access KCC services.

We will further drive the 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 look to introduce more smart card technology that will allow residents to access a range of services, from libraries to concessionary travel through a single KCC smart card.

Progress to date:

- Customer Services Strategy launched in January 2012 with a key priority to create a single customer account and a single initial assessment process
- The Family Common Assessment Framework has been introduced in Kent to co-ordinate multi-agency support around the needs of families, not just individual children.
- Adult Transformation programme is joining up adult social services, acute hospitals and community health colleagues to streamline and integrate assessment processes.
- Partners are now using the FACE assessment tool which provides a single assessment document used by both social care and community health teams, reducing duplication.
- Exploring the potential on online self-assessment to make it quicker and easier for residents to access our services
- Developing a single 'report it' and online payment system for KCC services which will be in place by December 2012.

- Our personalisation agenda remains at the heart of our adult social care transformation programme.
- We are increasing the role of Trusted Assessors so a range of providers can complete assessments on KCC's behalf.
- We are supporting more people to self assess and self direct their services where possible and appropriate.
- Building on the success of the Kent Card so that it becomes the first option for people who use direct payments and we are testing whether the card can be used by more people with personal health budgets.

- Customer Services Strategy commitment to research suitable products to enable customers to access services through a single smart Kent Card, by March 2013.
- Engaging with partners in the Kent Customer Services Group to expand Kent Card to access a wider range of public services, including leisure and public transport.
- Examining the potential development of smart card ticketing products which could enable the Kent card to be used for Concessionary Travel.

Bold Steps for Residents

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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.

Progress to date:

- Since 2010, we have opened Ashford Gateway plus and Sheerness Gateway, with negotiations for Swanley Gateway underway.
- Adult social services are now using Gateways as a first point of contact for services and Occupational Therapy clinics.
- We have focused on expanding Gateway as a multi-channel access point, supporting and enabling channel shift by re-designing access to services via our Contact Centre and website.
- We are examining the potential for further integrating our 'front desk' offer including Libraries, Contact Centre, Children Centre's and Gateways so we can streamline the customer journey and ensure an enhanced customer experience, regardless of channel.

- 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.
- Published our Corporate Directors and Director's Salaries and Expenses
- Published all Councillor allowances and expenses
- Published details of all staff who earn over £58,200
- We have published all invoices and purchase card payments over £500.
- We have published a range of Directorate statements and performance data, Kent population data and Council spending.
- We are also working with our public sector partners in Kent to publish data about our services on the Open Kent website.

Bold Steps for Residents

Key next steps

- We will fully exploit the opportunity of Locality Boards with them taking additional responsibilities for public service design and stewardship in their localities.
- We will fundamentally review our partnership arrangements to identify areas where Locality Boards may take on the functions and responsibilities of existing partnership arrangements, to streamline the partnership landscape and provide better value for money.
- We will further increase the percentage of spend of KCC goods and services with Kent based business. Our target is to ensure 60% of KCC spend is spent with local Kent businesses.
- We will work with the Cabinet Office to help reform and redesign the Community Right to Challenge to make it an effective tool to open up public services to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector.
- We will fully explore and utilise options to use pilot and pre-procurement opportunities in the forthcoming EU public procurement reforms to develop procurement and commissioning model that is both flexible and responsive to meet the changing service need and new financial climate.
- Through our Library Modernisation Programme, we will identify and transfer at least 10 local community libraries to community control, either through voluntary groups, parish councils or local social enterprises.
- We will continue to enhance the customer journey through reducing duplication in our contact and assessment processes. Through increasingly integrating our service offer around key client groups, we will be able develop a strong understanding of the customer journey, and improve the quality of our services accordingly.
- We will undertake a review of our Gateway Strategy to ensure that it is effective in the light of channel shift to online access to KCC services, and continues to provide value for money to the Kent taxpayer and our partners.
- We will further drive the personalisation agenda, particularly in the area of Special Educational Needs through the SE7 SEN pathfinder project and reform of SEN transport arrangements.
- We will continue to be open and transparent about our use of taxpayer's money and publish information on contract, spend, salaries, expenses, and other expenditure as required in order to help Kent residents hold us to account.

Bold Steps for Education

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will establish a new Kent Schools Association to ensure KCC has a strong working relationship with all schools that will help 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 that are struggling, so that all schools in Kent are helped to improve.

Progress to date:

1. We have produced Bold Steps for Education, Learning and Skills, which sets out our strategy and approach to improve and sustain the quality of education and training in Kent and deliver better outcomes for Kent by outlining ambitious targets for improvement.
2. Established the Kent Association of Head Teachers in November 2011 which represents almost 600 schools and 210,000 children and young people.
3. It brings together primary, secondary and special schools from across the county and ensures that KCC has a strong working relationship with all schools.
4. The Association is helping to develop policies and practices to ensure that all Kent schools succeed.
5. A key priority has been looking at education standards and exploring how the Association can work with other local organisations such as early years providers, further education colleges and universities.
6. We have developed an Education Commissioning Plan which sets out the need for new early years and schools provision and identifies where capital funding will be used to provide new schools and additional classes up to 2014.

- Working with the Department for Education and schools, we set up the 'Kent Challenge' – a Kent plan for improving the educational performance.
- This collaborative intelligence-led approach has built on the development of the Kent Learning Partnership – designed to develop and support a self-improving school system based on stronger and weaker schools working together in more formal improvement partnerships.
- There are now 40 improvement hubs of schools with clear partnership agreements focussed on improving leadership, the quality of teaching and standards of attainment.
- We have worked effectively with emerging Academies to ensure that the children and young people of Kent receive the best possible education provision, and ensuring academies remain in the family of Kent schools
- We have strengthened our analysis of up-to-date school level and district data to help drive improvement and facilitate school-to-school support and promotion of good practice.

Bold Steps for Education

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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 for those from disadvantaged backgrounds

We will agree a new financial deal with schools in Kent, devolving more grants and services where schools wish to use this funding to purchase or oversee support services directly.

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.

Progress to date:

- Building on the 'Kent Challenge' we have continued to focus on driving improvements in pupil attainment.
- Key Stage 1 the results for children in reading, writing and mathematics improved by several percentage points in 2012, and standards are in line with the national average.
- Key Stage 2 standards have improved with 77.5% of pupils achieving English and Mathematics at Level 4. These were the first signs of significant shift in primary school performance overall since 2008. However, Kent remains in the bottom quartile for local authority performance in primary education.
- At Secondary level the overall effectiveness of our schools has improved with 73% of secondary schools rated as good or outstanding.
- Key Stage 4 standards have continued to improve and are above the national average, with 61% of pupils gaining five GCSE including English and mathematics at A* - C grades.
- At A-level the proportion of students achieving two or more A*-E passes increased by 1.5% in 2012 compared to 2011. However, attainment overall at level 3 is still below the national average and below our statistics neighbours.

- As a result, £13.6m has been devolved to schools from the Dedicated Schools Grant since 2010.
- We have undertaken discussions with schools to consider what funding and resources should be further delegated or devolved to schools from the centrally retained part of the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- We have devolved the Specialist Teaching Service to a Lead Special School in each district to improve support to mainstream schools for special educational needs and achieve better progress and outcomes for pupils.

- We have established EduKent as Kent's trading vehicle for the provision of support services to schools.
- EduKent is designed to meet the needs of schools and academies by providing a diverse range of over 41 education support services for schools including leadership development, catering contracts and training.

Bold Steps for Education

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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.

Progress to date:

- EduKent provides high quality, competitively priced services delivered by experienced staff and has already secured strong levels of buy-back of services as a baseline on which to build for the future.
- We have continued to develop EduKent so that it is supported by more effective business planning, marketing and providing tailor made procurement of services for schools.

- All targets have been met with mostly good or better provision in early year's settings.
- 72% of children achieving a good level of development in 2012 which is an increase of 7% on 2011 and is well above the national average.
- Outcomes for children at the end of the Foundation Stage are above national average, with the achievement gap narrowing for the 20% most disadvantaged children at age 5, which is now well below the national achievement gap.
- We have continued to provide a high quality development programme for leaders and managers in the early years sector in order to improve the quality of early education provision.
- Through our Improving Together Network, we have delivered training on the revised Early Years Foundation Stage framework and continue to share effective practice across the sector, as well as supporting individual child tracking and successful transfer into Reception Year.
- The 2012 Foundation stage assessments, taken in a child's first year of Reception, show significant improvement in all 13 aspects of learning.
- We have strengthened links between Health Visitors and early year's practitioners around the carrying out of 2 year old checks to improve identification of children in need of early intervention and targeted support.

Bold Steps for Education

Key next steps

- We will continue to use our available powers of intervention and support to accelerate improvement and quickly address decline to bring about a dramatic improvement in the quality of schools in Kent.
- We will revise Bold Steps for Education to ensure our activity is focussed on the key priorities that will drive further improvement in educational outcomes for all young people in Kent, including setting stretching targets to drive improvement.
- We will reduce the number of KCC schools in an Ofsted category of concern, and there will be more good schools, with at least 85% of primary schools judged as good or outstanding. All special schools will be good or outstanding.
- We will continue to strengthen Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that outcomes in early years of learning perform above the national average with year-on-year reductions in achievement gaps.
- Support all schools to achieve well in the basics of literacy and mathematics, especially in reading and writing by age 6
- Continue to raise standards at Key Stages 2, 4 and 5, with achievement amongst the best for our statistical neighbours and above the national average.
- We will develop school to school collaboration further to achieve a faster rate of improvement in the quality of schools and outcomes for pupils, including reducing achievement gaps.
- Focus on improvement and innovation in teaching and learning and expand the use of 'Every Lesson Counts' programme so that satisfactory teaching becomes good teaching quickly.
- We will continue to improve district based working so that more decision making and coordination of services for children and young people happens through school collaboration and there is better integrated working between education, health and social care.
- Improve the provision of high quality performance data at school, district and county levels to sharply focus improvement and identify and learn from rapidly improvement trends.
- We will continue to revise and update the Education Commissioning Plan on an annual basis to ensure that provision continues to match demographic demand.
- Develop the Kent Association of Headteachers further to support school to school improvement and partnerships.
- We will further develop EduKent to procure better services for schools at competitive cost and expand the trading of services to more schools in and beyond Kent.

Bold Steps for Transport

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will develop innovative new financial models to pay for strategic transport infrastructure

Progress to date:

- Through the clear and persistent case KCC put forward, Government has now committed to introducing a HGV road user charge that will see international lorries contribute towards the cost they impose on the UK road network. Government currently will not commit to allocating some of this new funding for improvements to the strategic road network.
- We have developed a proposal for an innovative and entirely new source of funding for Treasury. This is based on the concept of a UK Fuel Loyalty card for drivers entering the UK from Europe and could potentially raise £640m per annum. We are advocating that this new revenue stream is used to fund the strategic road projects we are so challenged in delivering in the current economic climate.
- We have been at the forefront of investigating the potential use of Tax Increment Financing to kick-start infrastructure that will unlock development. We are disappointed that to date no significant schemes have been delivered by this means and Treasury stance of imposing a funding cap will not help this position.
- We have established a Council-wide working group to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken in engaging with district councils on developer contributions for services and infrastructure as the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) system is implemented. We have commenced a programme of meetings with the district authorities to establish local infrastructure and service priorities under CIL.
- We have succeeded in securing Government commitment to progress the A21 Dualling by demonstrating that Kent County Council could deliver the scheme for around one third less than the Highways Agency estimated it would cost. The DfT have now publicly committed to re-starting the public inquiry.

We will press forward the case to deliver a Third Thames Crossing as part of the delivery of a strategic transport route from Dover to the Midlands – vital to economic growth in the Thames Gateway and to the continued prosperity of London and the Greater South East

- We have succeeded in influencing Government to carry out the necessary development work to identify a deliverable Third Thames crossing route option as part of a strategic route between Dover and the Midlands.
- We have continuously stressed the urgency of this project and highlighted the desperate need for an additional crossing. In response the Government has committed to start public consultation in the summer of 2013.

Bold Steps for Transport

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

Progress to date:

- The Leader of KCC has engaged with the Local Enterprise Partnership and other local authority Leaders with the objective of achieving a consensus on the following issues:
 - o The M25 J30/31 must be improved
 - o Free flow tolling technology must be implemented by the end of 2013
 - o An additional Thames Crossing must be constructed by 2020
- We visited North America to talk directly to the investment sector and established there is a real appetite to finance a Third Thames Crossing at no recourse to public funding.
- We have proactively engaged with the Department for Transport on their plans third Thames Crossing.
- We have carried out our own new assessment studies to ensure we are well placed to push for early delivery of this project essential to enabling both county and national growth. This work was carried out with Essex County Council and Thurrock District Council.
- We have demonstrated that the biggest blockage to growth and prosperity in the south east is the traffic congestion at the existing Thames crossings.
- KCC has concluded that a third Thames Crossing can be delivered without the need for public money to be spent.
- We are considered as influential in driving and shaping this project vital to UK and regional economic growth.

We will develop new solutions to relieve pressure on the Channel Corridor

- We have been working with district and borough councils to identify deliverable commercial lorry parks to relieve residents and communities from the considerable impact on their quality of life caused by unofficial lorry parking.
- We have met with the Planning Inspectorate and undertaken further work to identify a permanent solution to Operation Stack to minimise the severe impact this has on Kent business and residents. We are ready to deliver, however given the current economic climate, we feel a lower cost option needs to be pursued before we can make a recommendation to Government.
- We have developed a Freight Action Plan and commenced its implementation with the roll-out of Lorry Watch.

Bold Steps for Transport

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will explore options to deliver radical transport solutions for East Kent to support vital regeneration

We will work towards delivering an integrated public transport network to make it an attractive travel option for Kent residents

Progress to date:

- Delivered the £87m East Kent Access Road to support growth of Discovery Park Enterprise Zone, Kent International Airport and the Isle of Thanet.
- We have advanced work on a new Thanet Parkway station to bring rail access from London to the airport and Discovery Park to within an hour. Despite challenges such as the changing fortunes of key players, (withdrawal of Pfizer and airport sale), we have completed technical work on the optimum location for a new station. We have also engaged with Network Rail to ensure we comply with the necessary processes to deliver this station vital to boosting growth in East Kent.
- £5m Regional Growth Funding secured for Phase 1 of rail journey time improvements on the Ashford to Ramsgate line which will again benefit access to the airport and Discovery Park as well as widening the much needed employment catchment for Thanet residents.
- We have robustly opposed the proposals for a new hub airport in the Thames Estuary by producing Bold Steps for Aviation. This clearly sets out our position that maximising use of existing regional airport capacity, such as Kent International Airport, along with some airport expansion will cater for the UK's growing demand for aviation.

- Over 26,000 Freedom Passes have been issued for the 2012/13 academic year allowing easy and affordable bus travel to education for Kent's young people and tackling peak traffic congestion.
- We have introduced the Kent 16+ travel card as an extension to the successful Freedom Pass scheme.
- We actively support 7 Quality Bus Partnerships including most recently, a Punctuality Improvement Partnership, to ensure a high quality and effective public transport option for journeys across Kent. This work has helped contribute to a 2.5% increase in bus patronage across the county between 2009/10 and 2010/11 against a national increase of only 0.1% for the same period.
- We secured £2.7 million of Local Sustainable Transport Funding for improved access to stations.
- We are progressing smart ticketing by building on the successful rollout of over 300,000 KCC smart concessionary travel passes.

Bold Steps for Transport

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

Progress to date:

- We presented the Rail Action Plan for Kent to Theresa Villiers, the then Transport Minister, and used the plan as the basis of our input to the franchise process. Across the rail industry and Government, the Rail Action Plan for Kent has led to Kent County Council being recognised as a voice of authority on rail matters for the South East.
- In September 2011 we financed the extension of high speed services from London to Deal and Sandwich, the success of which led to Southeastern putting on additional services with all services to be incorporated in the new franchise. We influenced Southeastern to introduce a new high speed service from Maidstone West to St Pancras from May 2011.
- We have held a series of highly successful rail summits for rail user groups, district authorities, other stakeholders and the rail industry.

Bold Steps for Transport

Key next steps

- Kent's strategic road network suffers the bulk of the impact of international freight as 87% enters the UK through the county. We will take every opportunity to lobby for Government to invest an element of the HGV road user charge in addressing the problems HGV traffic causes across Kent's strategic road network.
- We will undertake further research on EU compliance matters for the UK Fuel Loyalty Card and then seek Government acceptance and commitment to implement. We will lobby Government to ensure Kent sees the benefit of any new Kent derived funding stream.
- We will continue to investigate new sources and models for funding infrastructure including a Ports Landing charge and pension fund investments.
- We will work closely with our district council colleagues to identify the infrastructure and funding packages needed to deliver the homes and jobs vital for economic growth across the county, whilst also pressing Government to contribute to Kent's strategic housing and transport infrastructure needs. This work will be supported by the new Duty to Co-operate under the reformed planning process.
- With our partners we will consider how Community Infrastructure Levy, business rates retention, New Homes Bonus and other emerging funding streams available to district authorities will be allocated given the significant funding gap between these devolved funds and the infrastructure needed to deliver growth. This work will focus on achieving agreement on how the services and infrastructure that the County Council is statutorily required to provide, and is vital to facilitate development, can be provided, with support from national Government.
- We will continue to press the case for KCC to deliver the A21 dualling and so ensure the highest value for money from the scheme. At the same time we will maintain contact with the Highways Agency to ensure the A21 dualling is treated as a high priority and delivered at the earliest opportunity to support economic growth in the west of the county.
- We will continue to work with Government, local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure the delivery of a Third Thames Crossing by 2020. This must be delivered as part of a strategic transport route from Dover to the Midlands.
- We will continue to support upgrades to enable the bifurcation of traffic travelling to and from Dover. This would enable traffic heading for Dover's Eastern Docks to be directed via the M2/A2, thereby relieving pressure on the M20.
- Further develop links with North American investment sector and broker talks with Government to help facilitate a non-public funding model to deliver a new crossing on the River Thames.
- Continue to engage with the FTA, RHA and businesses to make the strategic case for improved access from Kent to the Midlands and North.
- We will complete work in partnership with the district authorities to identify a number of smaller overnight lorry parking facilities across the county. We will seek to progress to a point whereby commercial operators take on delivery of these facilities.
- We will continue to develop a lower cost long-term solution to Operation Stack that will complement the delivery of a number of smaller overnight lorry parking facilities across the county.
- We will continue to deliver the Freight Action Plan to improve the efficiency and minimise the impact of freight through the county. Some of the policy and practices of the Highways Agency can unfortunately have negative impacts on Channel Corridor movement and Kent residents. We will input to policy consultations and lobby at Ministerial level to change such practices to ensure Kent is not left to deal with the negative impacts, such as lorry parking impacting on local communities after the removal of lay-bys.
- We will refresh the business case and undertake the next stages in Network Rail processes to deliver a new parkway station supporting the airport, Discovery Park and Thanet residents to significantly boost the economy of East Kent.
- Implement Phase 1 of the rail journey time improvements and work with Network Rail to ensure Phase 2 secures funding and is implemented by 2016/17 to help ensure East Kent becomes a truly competitive business location giving access to the City in less than an hour.

- We will develop strong evidence-based case supporting growth in regional airports with limited runway expansion as a solution to the UK aviation capacity issue. We will present this to Davies Commission on aviation to seek to achieve an outcome that will produce substantial growth for regional economies including Kent.
- We will work closely with bus operators to drive efficiencies in the current £68 million Kent County Council spends on public transport subsidy and concessionary travel.
- We will work with the development sector to help deliver bus rapid transit systems for Ashford and Dover.
- We will develop the community transport network by pump priming new schemes supporting localism and improving accessibility in the most rural areas of the county.
- We will implement the final years of the Local Sustainable Transport Plan and bid for Better Bus Area funding to deliver improvements on the ground for journeys in Kent by public transport.
- We will work with partners to further roll out smart ticketing products including Southeastern to improve rail-bus integration.
- We will continue to fight for the best deal for Kent rail passengers throughout the delayed franchise process including improved services to London City from Kent's main stations and better journey times on North Kent Mainline.
- We will develop the case for an Ashford to Gatwick rail service and work with the operator and Network Rail to deliver.
- We will continue to host an annual rail summit and stand up for Kent's residents and rail users to enhance Kent County Council's reputation and standing on rail matters ensuring we are able to influence in the right places and deliver the best outcomes for Kent's rail passengers.

Bold Steps for Health

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will help ensure that GP commissioning plans meet the health needs of all residents and communities in Kent. Working at County and District level we want Locality Boards to play a key role in this commissioning process, better connecting KCC and wider public services with health provision at the local level.

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.

Progress to date:

- Kent is an early implementer for the Health and Wellbeing Board and has established its shadow Board arrangements.
- We have also worked with partners to develop the South Kent Coast Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and have been working closely with local GPs in Dover and Shepway through the Kent Health Commission.
- We have published an updated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Draft Health and Wellbeing strategy which has been written with partners and will now be consulted on.
- We have actively supported the development of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and their commissioning plans.
- We are developing a virtual integrated commissioning approach for Health, Social Care and District Councils

- The Kent Health Commission is looking at how resources can be shifted from the acute sector to develop extended hours community services to ensure that people can access the right services, at the right time and in the right place; to better support patients and reduce the number of preventable hospital admissions.
- The Commission is now costing and scoping the whole range of community health provision which is needed so that we can start to deliver a new model which can be replicated across Kent, tailored to local need.
- Through our adult social care transformation programme we are exploring how we can diversify the market with our health colleagues so that there is greater choice and provision by social enterprises and the voluntary and community sector.
- We are using our role on the Health and Wellbeing Board to challenge Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Health representatives to ensure we advocate patient choice and service quality and that services are integrated. This will have an impact on the health and care market place in Kent, leading to a growing plurality of service providers.

Bold Steps for Health

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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 support services directly.

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 as now.

Progress to date:

- We have been working closely with health colleagues to integrate our services to ensure we have seamless, high quality, cost effective social care and health services in Kent.
- We have been developing an integrated access model with health colleagues and have appointed the first integrated KCC and Kent Community Health NHS Trust post to manage adult social care and adult community health services across Thanet and Dover localities.
- We have been developing risk stratification, patient self management and integration to reduce the impact of Long Term Conditions. This will enable us to reduce unscheduled care episodes by 20%.
- In children's services we are exploring the potential of integrated adolescent support services to provide more holistic, appropriate and consistent support to meet the needs of young people across the public sector.
- The development of multi-agency specialist hubs will improve access to integrated children's services provision, for example around Special Education Needs, community CAMHS and emotional and wellbeing services

- We have developed a health inequalities action plan, setting out our plans for delivering public health from April 2013 when we take on the transfer of public responsibilities and funding.
- We have developed successful initiatives such as HOUSE and Activmobs which help to develop community capacity and promote healthy living and exercise through friendship/ community groups.
- HOUSE which has worked in innovative and discrete ways to promote healthy living and change behaviours in young people has now been developed into a mobile service reaching more communities.
- We are implementing the three pronged approach to Long Term Conditions, which includes supporting patients and their families to look after their long term conditions in a more proactive and preventative way, leading to a reduction in hospital admissions and need for care support.

Bold Steps for Health

Key next steps

- We will continue the Kent Health Commission to support both local government and the NHS in Kent share best practice, innovation and opportunities in driving new ways of working which improves the quality of care provided and delivers the shift in spending to preventative community health to support the delivery of financial savings across both sectors.
- We will work with Clinical Commissioning Groups, District Councils and other providers to establish local Health and Wellbeing Boards around CCG boundaries, to support the integration of local health and social care commissioning arrangements.
- We will lobby central government for a fairer allocation of public health monies through a shift to a needs based formula which would increase money available for spending on public health in Kent by approximately £14m.
- We will undertake a review of public health services as they transfer from the NHS to KCC to ensure that provision is effectively targeted against identified need, is aligned to the priorities in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Health Inequalities Action Plan, and that they provide value for money and deliver real improvements in health outcomes.
- We will meet Prime Ministers Dementia Challenge through the development of the Kent and Medway Integrated Dementia Care Pathway, by working with people living with dementia and their carers to co-design and co-produce effective early intervention and prevention support services.
- We will work to improve access to mental health services, including linking provision of adolescent mental health services with the development of the Integrated Adolescent Support Service.

Bold Steps for Business and the Economy

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

Our role is to ensure that 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 flourish

Progress to date:

- Major challenges that were not foreseen in Bold Steps for Kent, especially major closures such as Pfizer at Sandwich, DSTL at Fort Halstead, Seafrance at Dover and Thamesteel at Sheerness had not been planned for but which KCC has responded to.
- At Sandwich, we acted quickly and decisively, establishing a Task Force and working with Government and business to secure an economic growth package including Enterprise Zone designation, Regional Growth Fund investment (£40 million), and delivery of improved flood defences (£20 million)
- At Thamesteel, we supported staff faced with redundancy and secured continuing employment for all HNC students employed on the site
- Securing £55 million in direct financial assistance to business through the Expansion East Kent and TIGER loan schemes – unlocking private finance and investing in businesses with the appetite to grow
- Attracting 5,831 jobs into the county through Locate in Kent, KCC's inward investment arm
- Working with the private sector and Government to find pragmatic solutions to unlock major sites, such as Ebbsfleet Valley
- Supporting spin-outs from Pfizer get their businesses started with our Accelerator Grants programme
- Promoting tourism in partnership with Visit Kent – for example the successful Kent Contemporary campaign with Saatchi. The campaign has generated an average ROI of 53:1 and has directly benefited the Kent economy to the tune of £34m
- We have produced a suite of coordinated delivery plans, including Growth without Gridlock and Better Homes – setting out bold, clear and pragmatic priorities to deliver Unlocking Kent's Potential, Kent's regeneration framework

Bold Steps for Business and the Economy

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will deliver a sector-based approach, aiming to tailor the assistance we can provide to key business sectors in Kent so that it meets their needs

We will develop a new relationship with business through the Local Enterprise Partnership

We will work with Government to design solutions that ensure that the Thames Gateway ambition is delivered

Progress to date:

- We have delivered sector conversations with businesses in the food production, low carbon, construction, health and social care and media and creative sectors, identifying barriers to growth and potential solutions. This has been the start of a new strategic dialogue with business, but we have more to do to fully understand the needs of Kent's business base
- We have delivered High Growth Kent, providing county-wide business coaching and mentoring support to businesses in all sectors with high growth potential – supporting 255 businesses so far and helping to create 389 jobs
- Through Locate in Kent, our inward investment arm, we have focused on attracting new investment into Kent's priority sectors, including life sciences, creative and media, land based and low carbon industries
- However, we recognise that not all our interaction with business will be sector-based – with Expansion East Kent backing businesses from a diverse range of sectors

- Working with business and local government in Essex and East Sussex, we have supported the South East Local Enterprise Partnership – England's largest LEP.
- With the support of a strong chairman, we have ensured that the LEP remains focused on the two or three big issues where working together across boundaries truly adds value – avoiding duplication and ensuring that real business and political leadership remains at county level
- We have ensured a clear voice for Kent on the LEP, backed by strong representation from Kent's Business Advisory Board
- Our positive approach to the LEP has brought us real benefits – in particular, helping us to secure major investment through the Regional Growth Fund, the Enterprise Zone at Discovery Park and Growing Places Fund

- We have established the Thames Gateway Strategic Group, ensuring continued Ministerial involvement in the Gateway and maintaining the Gateway's status as a national priority.
- However, with public funding greatly reduced and recession impacting scheme viability, delivery in the short-term continues to be constrained.

Bold Steps for Business and the Economy

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

• Progress to date:

- We have secured £20 million through TIGER - Thames Gateway Innovation, Growth and Enterprise - to support business expansion. With Thurrock participating alongside North Kent, we have a great opportunity to build a better relationship with South Essex partners
- We have helped to unlock development, agreeing to manage the £110m Homes and Roads transport programme) with partners - offering a potential blueprint to unlock other sites
- A variation to the S.106 Agreement for Eastern Quarry has been completed with land securities, securing a £24.7m contribution towards the programme. Land Securities has also committed to accelerate development at Eastern Quarry.

We aim to move towards a single delivery vehicle for the Thames Gateway, owned by all local partners, to streamline decision making and the interface between developers, local authorities and central government.

- We have reduced the bureaucracy associated with the delivery of the Thames Gateway, reducing the plethora of local partnerships and delivery vehicles and sharply cutting administration and management costs.
- With the other North Kent authorities, we have reinforced our support for the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership, increasing business representation on the Board
- However, rather than pressing for a single delivery vehicle, we have taken a more pragmatic approach, working with developers and the public sector to take practical action to unlock sites (see below)
- We have attempted to gain a better understanding of the sites across the Thames Gateway and where public intervention could make a difference – but we have not yet made as much progress as we would have liked

The construction industry is recovering slowly from recession, and we will work with developers to identify blockages preventing development

- We brought together major developers and construction companies (including Kier, Bouygues, Skanska and Land Securities) together with Government to highlight regulatory barriers to delivery
- We have developed a stronger relationship with the construction and development industry, meeting regularly with key businesses in the sector through the Kent Developers' Group
- With our partners in the LEP, we have secured over £20 million to unlock stalled sites through the Growing Places Fund

Bold Steps for Business and the Economy

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will work to ensure that isolated rural communities have access to broadband provision, and ensure that there is a well developed approach to allowing companies to develop the infrastructure necessary to support high speed broadband in Kent

Progress to date:

- We looked at the feasibility of a revolving investment fund – the Kent & Medway Investment Fund (KMIF), although the model failed to prove viable
- We have delivered better broadband access to 13 rural communities with no or very poor broadband access benefiting over 10,000 households and 1,250 businesses under the Kent Rural Community Broadband Pilots Scheme.
- We have launched the Make Kent Quicker campaign to evidence the need for better broadband in Kent's rural communities to lever in the necessary investment required to upgrade the County's broadband infrastructure – which has attracted over 16,500 registrations for better broadband.
- We have secured £9.87 million of additional Government funding from Broadband Delivery UK to improve rural broadband access and matched this with £10 million of KCC funding. This will bring broadband to every property in Kent – and will ensure that most will be able to access superfast broadband services.
- We have secured an early slot on the Government's procurement pipeline – which means that Kent will be able to benefit from better broadband infrastructure ahead of many other rural areas.
- We have also worked with District partners to bid for over £3 million of additional EU funding to provide superfast broadband access in the hardest to reach areas of Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Ashford and Shepway Districts that are not likely to get superfast broadband access under the BDUK project.

Bold Steps for Business and the Economy

Key next steps:

- We will deliver our TIGER and Expansion East Kent programmes, making sure that we support those business propositions with the greatest potential to make a real difference to long-term growth
- As investor confidence starts to rise, we will promote Kent as a prime investment location, using campaigns such as 'Grow for It! East Kent' to transform perceptions of the county
- We will hold a large tourism conference focused on coastal regeneration in East Kent in spring 2013.
- We will focus on the long-term funding challenge presented by the Community Infrastructure Levy and the other newly-introduced growth levers, and propose pragmatic solutions to unlock sites and identify new opportunities for private investment to reduce the costs of development
- We will refresh Unlocking Kent's Potential, our regeneration framework for Kent, and develop a new growth strategy focused on supporting business into recovery.
- We will expand our High Growth Kent service, so that it is able to support a wider range of businesses with growth potential across the county
- We must maximise Kent's entrepreneurial spirit, working with higher education to develop a support package for high-value business starts
- We will build a broader business partnership, through our work with Discovery Park spin outs, TIGER and Expansion East Kent and improving our understanding of the county's business community.
- Following the Heseltine Review and the prospect of further Government investment being channelled through the LEP, we will put the LEP on a stable, long-term footing by working towards a clear, federal model – making sure that we work together where it matters, we minimise bureaucracy and ensure that financial allocations and delivery are focused on Kent's priorities
- Following the success of London 2012, we must now increase the profile of the Thames Gateway as the UK's most important growth area and the only significant area of brownfield land in the Greater South East.
- We will work closely with the new Thames Gateway Minister and colleagues in London and Essex to bring forward new solutions for institutional investment in housing and infrastructure and to maximise the use of the new 'levers for growth'
- We will work with all partners to capture the opportunity of Paramount's development in the Swanscombe Peninsula, opening up the potential delivery of 27,000 jobs
- Working with Medway, the North Kent Districts and the private sector, we will continue to support Thames Gateway Kent Partnership in making the case for future investment in the Gateway.
- Following the Action for Growth summit in September, we will develop a 10 Point Plan to help unlock development, and we will launch this in the New Year
- Learning from our experiences with KMIF, we will take a strategic view of our existing investment funds making sure that they are used more effectively to unlock growth.
- We will develop a more proactive approach towards working with utility providers, to ensure a better, more consistent service from them in providing utility infrastructure needed on major sites.
- We will work together with local planning authorities to overcome barriers to development, where it will deliver new jobs and quality housing, reviewing S106 agreements where appropriate and when it will lead to accelerated development.
- We will continue to deliver the BDUK project which seeks to bring broadband to every property in Kent - and will ensure that most will be able to access superfast broadband access, and work to identify additional funding to bring superfast broadband infrastructure to the hardest to reach rural areas that will not receive superfast broadband access under the BDUK project.
- We will build on the BDUK investment by driving up business take-up of digital usage and transformative technologies - especially amongst SMEs
- We must continue to support the development of Discovery Park at Sandwich as a premier location for scientific research and development just over an hour from central London via High Speed 1
- We will learn from our experiences at Sandwich and Thamesteel and will maintain capacity to respond quickly and effectively to major economic shocks – and new opportunities for growth

Bold Steps for Employment and Skills

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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.

Progress to date:

- Kent is now outperforming all other local authorities in the South East in terms of the number of apprenticeships starts over the last year. There has been a 16% increase in the number of 16-18 year olds starting apprenticeships, a 13% increase in the number of 18-25 year olds starting apprenticeships and a 39% increase in the number of 25+ year olds starting apprenticeships. In total this means 2000 more people starting apprenticeship in 2012 than 2011 in Kent.
- KCC has worked with the National Apprenticeship Service to deliver a service to small and medium (SME) size businesses in Kent to become a one stop shop for SME employers to ensure that the employment of an Apprentice is a simple and straightforward process.
- We have undertaken successful trials of our Small Business Support Service – enabling small businesses to recruit apprentices and established local employer networks in three KCC areas.
- The 'Kent Jobs for Kent Young People' campaign is now gaining traction across the county, with over 100 apprenticeships pledged. This campaign aims to make all employers - large, small, public sector, private sector - aware of the enormous benefit that young people in the workplace can bring to their business, as well as the reciprocal benefit for young people being able to train, gain knowledge and experience and, most importantly, help and support the business.

- We have launched the Kent Apprenticeship Strategy 2011-2014, which outlines how we have delivered a pioneering 14-16 vocational programme, setting up 25 Vocational Skills Centres across Kent which has enabled 8,500 14-16 year olds to undertake a vocational course.
- We have continued to recruit around 1500 apprentices to the Kent Apprenticeship scheme, which has an average 65% achievement rate.
- KCC is leading by example with the Kent Success apprenticeship scheme, which is set to continue to expand as a result of the Kent Jobs for Kent Young People campaign. Over 500 young people have been employed by KCC as apprentices and 80% who achieve their framework go into full time, permanent employment.

Bold Steps for Employment and Skills

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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 work with the Higher Education sector to improve graduate retention in Kent through supporting greater use of sandwich year placements and other mechanisms that provide graduates with the real world skills and experience needed by Kent employers as part of their course.

Progress to date:

- We have also supported the employment of 69 vulnerable young people into Apprenticeships by paying their salary for 12 months and providing co-ordinated support to them and their employers throughout the Apprenticeship.

- KCC's current 14-19 education and training programme prepares young people for working life through innovative and vocational approaches to the curriculum to help more young people to gain the skills to make them employable and raise their aspirations.
- KCC plays a key role in planning and commissioning vocational courses, apprenticeships and foundation learning, delivered by schools, academies, further education institutions, work based learning providers and operational skills centres.
- We are building on this by developing our 14-24 Strategy which will be consulted on and launched in the autumn of 2012.

- In the current economic climate graduates are finding it increasingly difficult to secure employment and often relocate to areas where there are more work opportunities and a wider range of jobs.
- In October 2011, we launched GradsKent - a new online graduate recruitment and support service in Kent to increase employment opportunities for graduates.
- KCC is working in partnership with Kent universities and employers to match the best graduate talent with the best local businesses. The service also acts as a single place to advertise job and placement opportunities for interns, gap-years and sandwich-year students.
- The service incorporates the previous graduate recruitment scheme which has been running successfully for six years and has placed over 400 of Kent's finest graduates into employment throughout the County.

Bold Steps for Employment and Skills

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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.

Progress to date:

- The Skills and Employability team have successfully expanded the Skill Force programme and undertaken the review and implementation of the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Curriculum framework.
- A key development has been refocusing the planning and delivery of the change from the Connexions contract to deliver the All Age Careers Service.
- Our on-line portal 'Kent choices 4 U' has been developed to provide Information, Advice and Guidance to develop the career management skills of young people, and features an online application process.
- The 'Kentchoices' prospectus is now the largest and most used area-wide online prospectus in the country with over 10,000 courses and 250 learning providers for post 16 learning opportunities.
- In 2011 there were over 13,000 active Year 11 users accessing the site for research and to apply for their courses – take up has increased year on year and is now used by 83% of the target cohort.
- In addition to our online offer to help young people make more informed career choices, we have produced data packs to inform career planning decisions and delivered 10 Masterclasses.

We will increasingly focus adult education provision on the skills needed in the Kent economy and improve access to adult education provision.

- Our Community Learning & Skills service offers Family and Community based programmes which are targeted to improve access for parents, carers and children from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds and deprived communities to adult education opportunities, which now make up around 15% of service enrolments.
- We also target Basic Skills training to adults with low skills to increase their employability and life skills (Maths, English, ESOL and Independent Living Skills) through face to face support. Vocational Learning and Apprenticeships offer work-based training for young people and adults, and Foundation Learning which offers personal and social development, vocational and basic skills qualifications to young people (aged 16-18) classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training.

Bold Steps for Employment and Skills

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

Progress to date:

- We are building on our links between adult education and skills needed for the Kent economy by promoting 50 adult education courses that offer access to job related qualifications. We have supported this by developing new adult learning pathways, including progression to vocational qualifications through collaboration with Kent's Further Education colleges to strengthen links between adult education and the further and higher education.

Bold Steps for Employment and Skills

Key next steps

- Our focus on improving employment and skills will be driven through delivery of our 14-24 Learning and Skills Strategy.
- We will raise attainment by ensuring that more young people are ready to progress to post 16 learning, and that we close the gap so that more 16-19 years olds achieve level 2 and 3 qualifications, that more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds go to university and more young people can progress from advanced level to higher level apprenticeships and higher education.
- We will improve vocational education and training opportunities, building on the successful 14-16 vocational programme, ensuring a strong links between vocational provision and the needs of the Kent economy, and that options for young people lead to higher qualifications and better progression to post 16 vocational learning and training.
- We will continue to directly support apprenticeships through the Kent Success apprenticeship programme within KCC, and increase the take up and completion of apprenticeships, and ensure there is better progression to higher level apprenticeships.
- We will continue the Kent Jobs for Kent Young People scheme and will examine every opportunity for identifying further funding that will allow the Kent Jobs for Kent Young People scheme to continue into the medium term.
- We will undertake a Select Committee inquiry into opportunities and outcomes post apprenticeship.
- We will seek to expand vocational options that lead more directly to employment in the Kent economy, and develop young people's employability skills as an essential part of the curriculum.
- We will develop an effective system of local 14-19 learning and employment partnerships that engage schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and Jobcentre plus in delivering planned coordinated improvements in young people's skills, qualifications and employability, as well as developing employer engagement in education, more opportunities for young people to have contact with, and careers advice from employers
- Following the Make, Buy, Sell Review of community learning, we will have developed and agreed a business case for the Community Learning and Skills Service to become independent provider, potentially through the development of a social enterprise or mutual service model, freeing the service to compete in the market.
- We will work with schools and colleges to develop an enterprise and entrepreneurship offer that will foster and inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs who will deliver the high levels of growth and jobs need to support the Kent economy.

Bold Steps to Tackle Disadvantage

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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. Working with new welfare to work providers in Kent to help the unemployed access the employment opportunities that exist in Kent.

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.

Progress to date:

- The design of the DWP Work Programme specifically excluded local authorities from playing a direct role as a prime provider, whilst opportunities for local authorities to act as sub-contractors for prime providers were limited. Although KCC did sub-contract to provide some specialist support for niche client groups in supporting welfare to work arrangements, our focus has shifted to other programmes to support vulnerable groups into work.
- 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 jobs. A number of local schemes throughout Kent are supporting Kent residents in deprived areas by providing holistic support and training to return to work, referring people to the Work Programme and the Troubled Families Community Budgets programme.
- The £2m Kent Employment Programme was launched to provide grants to employ unemployed young people for apprenticeships is open to Social Enterprises operating in the Kent County Council area, and there is no size limit for social enterprises to access the scheme to encourage their participation.

Bold Steps to Tackle Disadvantage

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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.

Progress to date:

- The Kent Employment Programme has been established to create a £2m flexible grant fund to encourage local businesses to take on 18-24 young unemployed people in Kent who are on jobseekers allowance or on the Work Programme.
- This builds on our successful experience in delivering 890 additional jobs for this group of young people through the Future Jobs Fund.
- To help address the needs of young people Not in Education, Employment and/or Training (NEET), we have established new BTEC courses in place across Kent, which will offer more relevant skills for local employers.
- We created 10 youth work apprentices with a further 16 apprenticeships for young people on statutory youth justice orders through the KCC Vulnerable Learner Apprenticeship Scheme.
- Our emerging 14-24 Strategy is focused on delivering increased youth employment through support for apprenticeships, internships, work placements, re-training opportunities, targeted work with those out of work for more than six months and engagement with employers and other agencies to promote wage and training incentives.

- The Ofsted inspection of Fostering rated the service as adequate in July 2012
- Our Fostering Service aims to provide stable and high quality foster care placements for children of all ages that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals. We have launched the 'Changing Futures' campaign to promote foster care opportunities to support children until they can return to their own family, move onto an alternative permanent family or grow in to adulthood and independence.
- We are ensuring that Foster Carer recruitment and assessment includes promoting the significance of long term/permanent provision of foster care to provide more continuity and stability of foster placements, as an important part of Looked After Children Plans.
- We have seen a gradual and targeted increase in the number of KCC foster carers to support children with special needs. We are supporting the work of district teams through the provision of appropriate permanent fostering placements under the Staying Together project.

Bold Steps to Tackle Disadvantage

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will move towards greater integration between the Youth Service and Youth Offending Service to better target services at young people most at risk of offending.

Progress to date:

- Our Specialist Looked After Children teams are now operating across the county which will help lead to more timely care planning with decisions on adoption, special guardianship, boarding school placements or returning home being taken at an early stage.
- We are continuing to lobby Government to urge the need for all councils to place children closer to home, unless by exception.

- 2012/13 will be the first full year of operation of our new Integrated Youth Services, following the merger of our Youth and Youth Offending Services.
- This has enabled us to make progress against the primary aim in our Youth Justice Plan – the prevention of offending by children and young people. Bringing the services together has strengthened our preventative and community based provision, with additional input and expertise of youth workers.
- This has led to more targeted programmes to reduce reoffending rates and provide early intervention to those not yet entrenched in criminal behaviour. Performance has already improved with a downward shift in young people entering the Youth Justice System for the first time, falls in the youth offending population and reduced usage of the Secure Estate. We will be targeting services in our most vulnerable and deprived communities, complementing the Troubled Families Community Budget programme.

Bold Steps to Tackle Disadvantage

Key next steps

- Delivery of the Troubled Families programme in Kent will be the key driver of tackling disadvantage, including worklessness and welfare dependency. We are committed to taking the bold and radical steps needed to successfully turn around the lives of 2560 families by 2015.
- Through our Troubled Families programme we will ensure that all under-25 year olds within the programme have access to employment or training opportunities in order to help break the cycle of inter-generational worklessness.
- We will embed integrated adolescent support services that will provide targeted help for vulnerable young people and those at risk of poorer outcomes and future unemployment, with at least four areas of high need piloting integrated adolescent services before the programme is rolled out across the County from 2013 onwards.
- We will work with partners and agencies to ensure as many unemployed 18-24 year olds as possible benefit from the Youth Contract, which provides extra support such as an offer of a work experience or sector-based work academy place, and entry into the Work Programme which provides a subsidised job with wage incentives for employers to take on young people.
- We will work to bring down the number of young people not in education, employment or training. This is currently rising and there is over representation in this group of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, such as those looked after by the local authority, care leavers, young offenders, young parents, refugees and asylum seekers which must be tackled.
- We will improve participation, provision and outcomes for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, including better integrated support for them as they move towards adult life.
- We will work to improve the outcomes for 19 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds will be above the national average and the achievement gap between this group and other students will have reduced by 10%
- We will ensure a strong drive for permanence and stability for children in care, including working with the courts to ensure a speedier legal process is developed, better matching of children to placement and effective and speedy family finding service for children awaiting adoption.
- We will continue to drive forward the improvement in educational achievement of the most vulnerable groups in Kent, in particular Looked After Children, those with Special Education Needs and Disabilities and those on free school meals.
- We will continue to ensure that the most vulnerable groups, including Looked After Children have access to education and training, and reduce the number of Looked after Children excluded from school on both a fixed term and permanent basis.
- We will carefully performance manage the new contracts for delivery of local youth services to ensure that youth service provision continues to be effective whilst providing value for money.

Bold Steps to Support the Vulnerable

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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 are challenging, stressful and demanding circumstances.

Progress to date:

- A recent follow up inspection showed that a series of 'priority actions' and recommendations made by Ofsted have been successfully addressed.
- Although the progress is encouraging, there is still more to do. We have completed the first two phases of our Improvement Plan and have now developed Phase 3.
- The Specialist Children's Services restructure has been completed and is designed to continue to deliver sustainable improvement.
- We have established a multi-agency Central Referral Unit to meet the requirements in the Improvement Plan to deal with all contacts to Specialist Children's Services efficiently, effectively and ensure all referrals are assessed with in a timely way with adequate information and thresholds appropriately applied.
- We have implemented a robust quality assurance framework which includes the introduction of a Quality Assurance Online Audit program involving all managers. The quality assurance framework is supported by a new Performance Management Framework to ensure we continue to make progress against our improvement plan priorities.
- Dedicated Looked After Children teams have been established in each of the 12 districts, helping drive improvements for looked after children at a local level.

- We have put in place support mechanisms for front line social workers as a critical part of our Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan.
- This includes weekly reviews to ensure appropriate caseload levels for all social workers, support and guidance to raise standards through mentoring, reflective learning sessions and supervision.
- Our social workers work in accordance with the supervision policy which reflects the recommendations of the Social Work Reform Board and to ensure supervision and practice are child focused and reflective.

Bold Steps to Support the Vulnerable

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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 ensure that our public protection arrangements for adults, whether vulnerable elderly, those with learning disability, physical disability or mental health issues are robust and effective.

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.

Progress to date:

- We have developed a workforce strategy and launched a recruitment campaign that has successfully recruited more permanent and experienced social workers which is ensuring that newly qualified and less experienced staff receives quality supervision.
- 85% of Kent's social worker staff are now permanent and turnover has reduced from 15% to 11%.
- We have introduced a development programme and reward package to ensure we retain social workers.

- We have established strong governance for our safeguarding arrangements, with multi-agency strategic leadership given by the Children and Vulnerable adults safeguarding boards.
- Good progress has been made on our multi-agency safeguarding training programme for social care staff, including those employed by the independent sector.
- We have also delivered campaigns to raise the awareness of safeguarding amongst the community.
- Our monitoring shows rising standards of practice in response to our management of safeguarding cases.
- We have now established an adults safeguarding unit which has developed a programme of internal and external audits and further training including risk assessment training.
- Essex County Council provided external scrutiny of our adult safeguarding arrangements by carrying out a Peer Review and we have now developed action plans to address any key development areas identified.

- We have been revising our Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and have established outcomes based Commissioning Framework to inform the commissioning of evidence based high quality preventative services in line with the strategy's priorities.

Bold Steps to Support the Vulnerable

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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.

Progress to date:

- We have introduced our Family Common Assessment Framework, and Team Around the Family approaches to ensure that vulnerable children are identified early and that services from relevant agencies are deployed effectively and speedily to meet their needs.
- We have established Early Intervention teams in each district who will provide an in-house resource to respond to the whole range of families' and young people's needs, from universal to high and complex. They will also provide the vital link that universal services and, in particular schools and Children's Centres, need to be able to access quickly when they need additional support.
- We have invested £2.7m in early intervention preventative services across the country focussed on vulnerable parents with babies and toddlers.
- We are also reducing the use of high cost placements in mother and baby units and residential provision and with independent fostering agencies.
- We are ensuring our emerging Kent Action for Families Programme and community learning programmes provide appropriate support for complex family needs such as supporting long term unemployed families back into education, training and employment.

- We have been working intensively with a small number of families across Swale and Thanet with family intervention project workers as part of the 2011 national Community Budgets pilot which focused on families with complex needs.
- A multi agency steering group has been set up establish a business case to oversee the Troubled families programme from 2012-15 with local project teams established to create a district level project plan.

Bold Steps to Support the Vulnerable

Key next steps

- We will set out a longer term view vision for Children Services that identifies how the service will move from the short-term focus on improvement to longer term transformation of children's social care which provides a sustainable and quality service within the financial resources available.
- Our clear priority will be to develop effective early intervention and prevention services that to divert a higher proportion of children and young people away from statutory intervention and continue to be supported through universal services.
- We will deliver increased integration of services around particular client groups, in particular families and children aged 0-11 and through the development of integrated adolescent support service.
- We will continue to embed improved quality and consistency of practice in Children's Services, including implementation of the Munro principles.
- We will further develop and improve the Kent Safeguarding Children Board, as recommended in our Peer Review, and better align our children's partnership arrangements with the emerging health partnership arrangements.
- We want to see an increase in permanent staff in children's social services to be 90% of the social care workforce in Kent, and improve the quality of social worker supervision to ensure of the social work best practice is developed and embedded in the service.
- We will strengthen the consultation and participation arrangements in regards to Children's Services; in particular we will develop mechanisms for understanding every child's journey and building the child's voice into social care decisions.
- We will lobby Government to implement the Dilnot Commission's recommendations on the funding of adult social care by 2015, including the lifetime cap on care costs and increased means test level. A properly funded system for adult social care will relieve the increasing pressure on adult social care services in the future.
- We will deliver the Adult Transformation Programme which will drive savings through ensuring provision is suited to individual's needs and circumstance, and improve outcomes by ensuring people can remain independent in their own home for as long as possible.
- The first phase of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme will focus on transforming care through giving as many people as possible the opportunity to receive services that enable them to be independent for as long as they can be through greater use enablement services and telecare.
- We will utilise ring-fenced NHS social care funding to develop a range of new services that will provide additional support to carers, prevent social isolation, avoid hospital admissions and ensure safe and timely hospital discharge.
- Through innovative strategic commissioning and procurement arrangements we will keep social care prices affordable, providing value for both clients and the taxpayer, through close engagement with the social care market in Kent to ensure social care businesses are not put at risk.
- We will continue to improve our safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable adults in line with the requirements set out in the forthcoming Care and Support Bill.
- As part of our preventative approach we will review Children's Centres to ensure they provide both targeted and universal support for vulnerable families, and explore the possibilities of much closer collaboration and integration with Health Visitors and GPs as well as schools and early years providers.

Bold Steps for Housing

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We will deliver the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy, providing the overarching strategic investment requirements for housing, infrastructure and managed growth in Kent and Medway

Progress to date:

- In May 2011 we launched the Kent Forum Housing Strategy, sets the strategic direction for housing across the County. It is the only Housing Strategy in the country that brings together County, District and Unitary ambitions into a single document and was described by Government as being “ahead of the game”. The Strategy was refreshed in September 2012 to reflect the fast-paced changing environment surrounding housing.
- Following a recommendation in 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 the County.
- We have also drawn together the housing forecasts from adopted a draft Local Plans into a single managed growth ambition for Kent and Medway, which demonstrates a range of between 134,000 and 150,000 new dwellings. This compares favourably with the South East Plan target of 140K and demonstrates a real commitment from Kent and Medway authorities to housing growth.

We must ensure that new affordable housing is provided in Kent at a time when grant funding for new affordable housing is falling in real terms

- Despite the reduction in public funding available, KCC and Kent Housing Group have worked with the HCA to maximise the delivery of new affordable homes across the County. By 2015, around 4,000 new affordable homes will have been delivered in Kent under the Affordable Homes Programme, a quarter of the entire South East’s allocation
- Through the No Use Empty programme we have continued to bring a number of empty homes back into use. KCC has secured funding from the HCA’s Affordable Rented Homes Programme to bring much needed affordable family-sized homes to the rental market.
- We have successfully attracted additional public sector investment to 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 programme has now attracted £5m of Growing Places funding, £4m from Thanet District Council and £4.1m from the HCA, bringing total investment to date to £23.6m.

Bold Steps for Housing

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

Our ambition is to ensure that new housing is developed intelligently, building homes with a sense of place, rather than soulless estates

We will ensure that new housing comes with appropriate infrastructure, such as roads, education and health facilities

Progress to date:

- Through our Kent Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, we have made available £12m to support first time buyer mortgages and we have worked with Kent Districts and Boroughs to set-up match funding arrangements in each part of the County.
- Development of the Scheme across the County has been slower than anticipated and so far the scheme has launched in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling. However, a number of other areas are close to launching.

We have used our Kent Forum Housing Strategy to work with the Homes and Communities Agency and the Kent Housing Group, Kent Developers Group and Kent Planning Officers Group to develop a co-ordinated approach to housing development across Kent, to ensure that attractive high quality homes are built in the right place. Following recommendations in the Strategy we have:

- developed a Rural Housing Protocol to stimulate delivery of affordable rural homes for Kent's rural communities
- developed a Framework for the delivery of much-needed older people's accommodation across Kent
- developed a Kent-wide framework for Tenancy Strategies, which will help to ensure that new affordable homes are rented in way that responds to the needs of the local community
- developed the Kent-wide Creating Successful Communities Protocol, to ensure that future housing developments across the County meet the objective of creating long lasting and successful communities, where people want to live and work both now and in the future

- We have developed an Integrated Infrastructure Funding Model providing a consistent basis for costing community infrastructure to support new developments.
- We have produced Development and Infrastructure: Creating Quality Places, setting out a framework for securing development contributions, based on the Integrated Infrastructure Funding Model
- We have secured £x million in developer contributions to support essential KCC services, working jointly with the Kent Districts.

Bold Steps for Housing

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

Progress to date:

- We will 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
- We have entered into a bold and innovative new partnership with Kier to deliver new homes using KCC land and major institutional investment. The Kier Kent Initiative will bring forward new homes for both rent and sale, giving people in Kent a wide choice of high quality housing options as well as helping to meet housing need

Bold Steps for Housing

Key next steps

- We will use our strong relationships with Government, the Homes and Communities Agency and our district partners to continue to provide a powerful voice for Kent on housing issues, influencing Government policy and building closer working relationships with the HCA to ensure that we maximise value from housing investment.
- We will work our partners to link our housing growth ambitions and infrastructure requirements and make the case to Government for the necessary resources to deliver it
- Building on Kent's strong relationship and reputation with the HCA, we will ensure that we work more closely with the Agency on the future delivery of new publicly-funded homes
- We will work with the HCA to develop new models of funding for affordable and social homes after the current Affordable Homes Programme comes to an end in 2015
- We will work with the HCA, Kent Developers Group and the Kent Planning Officers Group to develop a Kent-wide understanding of viability, to help unlock stalled development and ensure that affordable housing continues to be delivered across the County
- We will implement the Kier Kent Initiative and ensure that new affordable homes are delivered through the model. We will build on the success of this initiative to identify further opportunities to deliver new affordable homes using private sector investment
- We will continue to deliver the Live Margate Housing Intervention Programme and seek to attract new levels of funding, including from the private sector
- We will continue to work with our District partners to roll-out the Kent local Authority Mortgage Scheme and seek to attract new lenders into the scheme
- We will continue to build on our strong relationships with Kent Developers Group to develop a framework for testing the viability of housing sites, to help unlock housing growth across the County
- We will work with the Kent Planning Officers Group to develop guidance for local communities on community-led planning, to help local people make informed choices about how to have their say on local development
- We will work with our partners through the Kent Design Initiative to ensure that new housing development is attractive and appropriate for Kent
- We will continue to identify ways in which we can cut the costs of new community infrastructure – ensuring quality provision without unnecessary gold-plating
- We will continue to work with major institutional investors to develop new innovative opportunities for investment in new housing development, across a range of tenures

Bold Steps for the Environment

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

We would meet the Climate Change Challenge and deliver the themes and priorities of the Kent Environment Strategy

Progress to date:

- We have invested over £2m in the KCC Estate in energy measures saving over £4m of Kent taxpayer's money.
- We have cut business miles by 14%, 2.5m miles saving over £200,000 annually.
- We have set up the Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership (KM GDP) to drive £40m of investment to improve the energy efficiency of homes, saving residents money.
- We are supporting SMEs to access the rapidly expanding home energy efficiency retrofit market and the Green Deal worth c. £1.5bn.
- With partners we have levered c. £2m to: support low carbon businesses to access the RGF and TIGER funds; develop emerging markets and supply chains for retrofit, marine technologies, wood fuel and offshore wind and help in excess of 600 business save money, with average annual savings of £2k, totalling over £1.2m.
- With partners we have levered in over £1m of funding to improve the resilience of Kent's communities and businesses.
- We have established a Severe Weather Impacts Monitoring System (SWIMS), now being rolled out nationally by Government. Improved resilience can reduce costs from severe weather events, estimated at £4m/yr.
- The Flood Risk Management Strategy for Kent has been prepared.
- We are working in partnership to develop Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) design guidance – to minimise negative impact on the economy from surface water flooding.
- The Kent Local Nature Partnership, one of the first in the country is working with business to support and grow our economy through the natural and historic assets.
- Through strategic heritage crime assessments we are protecting valuable heritage assets with dedicated police time.

Bold Steps for the Environment

Key next steps

- We will continue to invest around £500k annually to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, street lighting and schools.
- We will work with the Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership to retrofit around 5000 homes in the next two years, saving c. £1.5m for residents annually, and attracting around £40m of investment.
- We will set up a Kent and Medway Green Deal Partnership Supply Chain Network to help SMEs access the £1.5bn energy efficiency retrofit market.
- We will target help to low carbon SMEs to access funds such as the East Kent Regional Growth Fund and Tiger and further explore the potential of sectors such as offshore wind, marine tech, retrofit and biomass.
- We will support help Kent's SMEs to be more competitive through reducing their costs by being more energy and resource efficient.
- We will continue to develop community based resilience plans with the Environment Agency and Emergency Planning.
- We will use SWIMS to maximise the resilience of Kent public services to the impacts of climate change.
- Working with the Environment Agency we will contribute £4.66m to complete the Sandwich town tidal defence scheme in 2015.
- We will implement SUDS duties when empowered by Government to do so.
- We will engage with residents and businesses to fully utilise our natural and historic environment to support the Kent economy.
- We will finalise the District Heritage Strategy for Dover and work with other Kent Districts in the development of their heritage strategies.
- We will actively contribute to the statutory review of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan.

Bold Steps for Social Enterprise, Community and Voluntary Groups

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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.

Progress to date:

- In December 2011, we launched the Kent Big Society Fund, managed by Kent Community Foundation to provide loans to help support social enterprises that have the desire and appetite to grow their enterprise in the county and create further employment at a time when access to finance from high street banks and grant funding from the public sector is increasingly difficult.
- £1m funding was given to Kent Community Foundation in January 2012 to help establish the fund.
- Despite an initial slow start, the Big Society Fund has started to make its first loans to Social Enterprises in Kent.
- The Voluntary & Community sector already plays an important role in delivering around £108m of KCC services.
- We are developing a new strategic relationship with the sector, increasingly moving from the provision of direct grant and infrastructure support to outcomes-based commissioning arrangements.
- The Voluntary & Community Sector Engagement Forum was established in November 2011 to provide more consistent support and engagement for the sector to enhance their role as a provider of public services in Kent.
- We are transforming our commissioning and procurement teams to offer more flexible and creative procurement opportunities for the sector so they can fairly compete to play an ever greater role in the delivery of local services.
- For example KDAAT's prime provider model for substance misuse services has rationalised the number of contracts whilst maintaining opportunities for sub-contracting to grass roots voluntary & community sector providers.
- We remain committed to support the development of local community groups to gain skills and knowledge they need to develop tailored solutions to meet local need without the need for high levels of intervention.
- This can be achieved through greater use of co-production and co-design principles when developing options for service reform and transformation.

Bold Steps for Social Enterprise, Community and Voluntary Groups

In Bold Steps for Kent we said:

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.

Progress to date:

- KCC is discussing with District planning authorities how we will manage the implications of the forthcoming 'Community Right to Buy' provision in the Localism Act (2011).
- KCC is exploring innovative property options to support new service delivery models – for example in our Youth Service Transformation programme leasing community buildings to local youth work providers.

- The way that the Sustainable Communities Act works has been changed since Bold Steps for Kent was agreed by the Sustainable Communities Amendment Act.
- Instead of being undertaken in a series of rounds instigated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government the Government now allows proposals to be submitted directly to the Secretary of State at any time.
- There is no longer a direct need for local organisations to bid through local authorities or through the Local Government Association.

Bold Steps for Social Enterprise, Community and Voluntary Groups

Key next steps:

- We will continue to support the Big Society Fund as an important long-term market development tool for the social enterprise sector.
- We will review what additional investment is required to support the Fund, including working with the Kent Community Foundation to further market the opportunities the Fund provides.
- We will explore further opportunities for social financing, including how we might maximise for Kent any innovation or priming monies available for social financing from Government.
- Through the development of our procurement Category Strategies we will ensure that opportunities for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector are built into our commissioning and procurement processes.
- We will continue to engage with our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector Forum to ensure that the voice of the voluntary sector is heard in County Hall.
- We will explore opportunities with the VCSE sector around how they can be used to help improve and support service delivery through greater innovation, co-design and piloting new service delivery arrangements.
- We will further work to embed social value into our commissioning and procurement arrangements, meeting our duties under the Social Value Act.
- Drawing on the national evidence base of best practice, we will identify service areas where effective co-production and co-design or service delivery will better meet service user, and reduce waste and duplication.
- We will work with our partners across other service providers and local authorities in Kent to examine opportunities to extend the use of Community Budgets; especially where more integrated targeting of shared clients can drive better outcomes and greater value for money.

