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To: County Council – 15 May 2014

Subject: Facing the Challenge: Closing down Bold Steps for Kent

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Bold Steps for Kent: The medium term plan until 2014/15 is KCC's current strategic statement. It has been successful in leading KCC through significant change over the past three years. As the council now moves into a phase of radical transformation, it is important that there is absolute clarity on the delivery of the Facing the Challenge transformation programme. Subsequently, County Council is being asked to close Bold Steps for Kent early and commission a new Strategic Commissioning Plan to underpin Facing the Challenge delivery. This paper reflects on the achievements of Bold Steps for Kent and the lessons that can be taken forward as we develop a new strategic statement for KCC.

Recommendations:

County Council is asked to:

- 1) Note the achievements of Bold Steps for Kent
- 2) Note the lessons learnt from Bold Steps for Kent
- 3) Agree the close down of Bold Steps for Kent

1. Introduction

1.1 'Bold Steps for Kent: The medium term plan until 2014/15' was approved by County Council in December 2010. It is KCC's strategic statement, setting out the direction and high-level priorities for the authority. KCC has had a series of four year strategic statements, including 'Next Four Years' which ran from 2002 to 2006 and 'Towards 2010', from 2006 to 2010. Strategic statements are included in the Policy Framework which is part of the Constitution, and must be debated and approved by County Council.

1.2 Bold Steps for Kent was written in 2010, at a time of significant change. 2010 saw the formation of the coalition government, with a high degree of uncertainty around the direction they would take in many areas that were to affect KCC. Before the 2010 Spending Review and Emergency Budget, KCC anticipated the need to make savings of between 25-40% over the financial years from 2011 to 2015, which proved to be remarkably prescient. The 2010 Spending Review introduced £81 billion in public spending cuts. It estimated that the average reduction in central government funding for local councils would be 26%, and after taking account of Council Tax projections would represent an overall 14% reduction in councils' budgets. Economic forecasts were suggesting that the financial downturn would hit councils hard from

2010 as the coalition government attempted to address the deficit and rebalance public spending, and that the economy would be in recovery by 2015. Subsequently, Bold Steps for Kent was a very different strategic statement to those that had gone before it, designed to shape KCC to manage the reduced funding and increased pressure on local government, and to respond to the opportunities and challenges of our customers' changing expectations.

1.3 Bold Steps for Kent has successfully provided strategic direction for the authority since 2010, and has proven to have numerous strengths, including:

a) Traction within and beyond KCC

Bold Steps for Kent, and in particular the three ambitions for Kent that it is written around, are widely known and referenced by Members, staff and external partners.

b) Leading the achievement of financial savings

Central to Bold Steps for Kent was the need to respond to the challenging financial climate. KCC estimated that it would need to save £340 million over the four year period to 2015 – the middle point between the best and worst case scenarios of 25% and 40% savings anticipated before the Spending Review 2010 and Emergency Budget. This proved to be an extremely accurate prediction of the required savings. Through the direction set out in Bold Steps for Kent, along with the Change to Keep Succeeding programme, KCC has delivered savings of £269 million over the three financial years to 2013/14.

c) Accurately predicting the policy agenda

Bold Steps for Kent anticipated the national policy agenda in many areas of service delivery, and the challenges that KCC would face. Some of the areas where it predicted the agenda ahead of its time include:

- **Troubled Families** – Bold Steps for Kent made a commitment to tackle high-cost disruptive families, taking a firm and coordinated approach across agencies to require a change in behaviour through in-depth intervention, building on the experience and learning from the pilot work within the Community Budgets agenda. The following year, after the riots of 2011, government introduced the Troubled Families programme to turn around the 120,000 highest cost families across the country. This involves a coordinated approach across agencies to provide intensive intervention to tackle issues including antisocial behaviour and crime, school truancy and worklessness. For Kent this means working with 2,560 families. With our partners we are making good progress, with 560 families already turned around as at October 2013, and a further 2153 being actively worked with.
- **School support services** – Bold Steps was written at the start of significant educational reform. We recognised that we would need to build a new relationship with schools in order to support them in their new freedoms and continue to promote good educational attainment and best practice across schools. This included a commitment to provide school support services, using our trading experience and expertise to offer comprehensive services to schools. EduKent was established in 2011 and provides services to schools,

academies and local authorities across the country. Since Bold Steps was written, educational reform has continued at pace, and many more local authority areas are developing traded school support services.

- **Community Right to Challenge** – Bold Steps for Kent committed to introduce a ‘Right to Bid’ to encourage individuals or groups from the private, public or voluntary sector to put forward ideas to deliver services in a better way. This included KCC staff with a business case to deliver their service through arms-length arrangements. This commitment recognised that KCC does not have the monopoly on ideas and solutions, and that opening up the market to invite innovative ways of doing things is a positive way to drive greater choice and value for money. Through the Localism Act (2011) government introduced the Community Right to Challenge, giving voluntary and community groups and members of local authority staff the right to submit bids to councils to take over the running of services. KCC has taken a proportionate and sensible approach to managing the Right to Challenge, preserving the original aims of our Right to Bid in encouraging interested groups to talk to us about their ideas.
- **Promoting social value** – Perhaps most significantly, Bold Steps for Kent predicted the social value agenda, which has become an important and much debated issue for local government. Bold Steps committed to maximising the social and community benefit from our procurement of goods and services. It recognised that as one of the largest buyers in the Kent economy, we have significant spending power to leverage wider social and community benefit from contracts where it makes sense to do so. In Bold Steps we committed to ensuring our procurement system maximises the opportunities for social and community value, alongside other changes to our procurement practices to seek the most efficient provision of goods and services possible.

The Public Services (Social Value) Act was enacted in 2012. In a similar way to our Bold Steps commitments, it puts into action government’s intention to encourage diversity of provision within public services and particularly to open up public services to social providers, including voluntary and community organisations, which have sometimes been disadvantaged by procurement practices that emphasise only best value. KCC was in good shape to respond to the legislative requirements through our already established Category Management approach, allowing social value to be reflected on a case-by-case basis in tender specifications and contracts. There are several examples where this approach has delivered both high social value for the county and efficient value for money, including in Highways, Substance Misuse and Youth Service contracts.

1.4 Bold Steps for Kent has been successful in anticipating the financial and policy challenges that would face KCC over the four year period. However, it could not have predicted the scale of those challenges. The 2013 spending review announced further spending cuts for 2015-16, including a further 13% cut to baseline funding for local authorities in cash terms. This equated to reductions of a similar magnitude to 2011/12, when the original reductions under the 2010 Spending Review were intended to be front-loaded. Government has had to extend the deadline for eliminating the structural deficit to 2017/18, and overall we are expecting reductions in the period up to 2018 to continue at a similar scale as we have had to make through the 2010 Spending Review period, meaning we are only about halfway

through this journey of budget reductions. In the context of a larger and longer-term financial challenge facing us, KCC must now enter into a period of radical and transformational change to ensure that our services continue to meet the needs of our service users and communities in the coming years. Facing the Challenge is a natural extension of Bold Steps for Kent, building on the priorities for Kent's communities and new delivery models it set out, but with the added clarity and focus required to deliver the scale and pace of transformation that is now essential.

1.5 Given the context we are in, the overriding priority of the council must be to deliver the transformation agenda set out within Facing the Challenge, and this is now the defacto strategic driver for KCC. However, as referenced in the Facing the Challenge progress report to County Council in March 2014, lessons learnt from Phase 1 of transformation suggest that there is some confusion about what the strategic driver for the authority is, as both Bold Steps for Kent and Facing the Challenge have been running concurrently. Subsequently, in order to provide absolute clarity for Members and staff, County Council's approval is sought to close Bold Steps for Kent nine months early. This paper seeks to review the council's achievements in delivering Bold Steps for Kent, gather the lessons that can be learned, and look forward to the development of a new strategic statement for the council to underpin Facing the Challenge transformation and the move towards becoming a strategic commissioning authority.

2. Bold Steps for Kent themes

2.1 Bold Steps for Kent comprised of a series of themes. Over the last three years, the council has made significant progress in delivering many of the commitments set out within the themes. In a time of such radical change nationally and locally, it is also inevitable that in some cases priorities have needed to shift or external events have overtaken. It is important to recognise how much has been delivered by staff in the face of considerable pressures. The following sections provide a summary of some of the achievements under each of the Bold Steps themes.

2.2 Bold Steps for Residents

(1) Bold Steps for Residents is about putting power in the hands of Kent's communities and the people who use KCC's services. An integral part of this theme is the personalisation of services, recognising that individuals and families are best placed to understand their own needs and choose how they receive their care and support services. The Kent Card has been used in adult social care for a number of years and we have continued to find innovative ways to extend its use. The new Kent Card contract will allow KCC to move towards a single card for all payment related transactions in social care, including direct payments for adults and children, and payments to asylum seekers. Over the last year we have worked with South Kent Coast CCG to test Integrated Budgets for health and social care through the Kent Card for people with long-term conditions. This has reduced duplication and led to good health outcomes for the patients. Separately, Kent is also part of the SE7 Pathfinder group who are testing out proposals in the Children and Families Act (2014) to improve support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, including the use of personal budgets and personalised, fully integrated education, health and care plans.

(2) Personalisation is central to the transformation of adult social care, and is being given added emphasis by the Care Bill (2013) requiring councils to diversify the local social care market and provide greater choice and personalisation. A good example of how Bold Steps has driven person-centred services is the award winning Broadmeadow Integrated Care Centre for people with dementia. Broadmeadow offers innovative day support services, respite care and use of tele-technology within residential care. It forms a centrepiece of the Kent Integrated Care and Support Pioneer programme. In addition, the Kent Enablement at Home service provides short-term support to help people gain maximum independence and daily living skills following illness or injury. Through this service we are helping people to live independent lives in their own homes. 56% of people coming through the service do not require any social care support afterwards.

(3) Another priority of Bold Steps is to promote easier and more seamless access to our services. We have improved and streamlined assessment practices in many areas to ensure that people who need our services, and the services of other agencies, get them more quickly and in a more co-ordinated way. Our aim has been that wherever possible, people only need to tell their story once. This includes the use of the Family Common Assessment tool to co-ordinate multiagency support around the needs of the entire family, and this approach is being successfully used to deliver the Troubled Families programme. Between 2010 and 2013, use of the Common Assessment tool has more than doubled to 3,517 and over 2,500 children are now supported through a Team Around the Family approach. We have also seen a 45% increase in Children's Centres using the tool, and use by GPs has also increased by nearly 10% in the past year. The new Early Help and Preventative Services Division in Education and Young People Services will continue to drive seamless, family-centred support ensuring that families get the right help at the right time reducing the need for more costly and specialist services.

(4) Both adults' and children's social care teams are part of the multi-agency Central Referral Unit partnership, with Police, Health and Probation, open 24/7 to provide immediate co-ordinated support. Streamlining assessment is an important part of our Adults Transformation programme. Working with Newton Europe, the Adult Social Care Team in Dover are piloting the use of streamlined processes, which has already led to an 80% reduction in time from initial contact to assessment (from an average of 28 to 6 days). Building on this success, the pilot is being extended to west Kent areas, and initial indications show similar benefits are being achieved.

(5) People expect to be able to access information and services quickly and easily through a variety of channels, including digitally. We have made progress in channel shifting many of our services to the web, and in March 2014 launched the new KCC website which is designed around the way in which customers want to search for information and carry out transactions. It will allow people to find what they need quickly and easily, whatever device they access the website from. We will continue to improve the website in response to feedback to ensure that it meets our customers' expectations. We now publish online as standard a variety of financial and performance data about the council, including salaries, expenses and spending over £500, as well as the Quarterly Performance Report, so that residents are empowered to hold KCC to account. As part of ongoing transformation, we will continue to explore innovative, cost effective delivery options for our customer facing services, including libraries and Gateway.

(6) As part of the commitment to put more power in the hands of local communities, Bold Steps included proposals to introduce area based governance for public services, working with local partners, in the form of Locality Boards and local place-based commissioning. This was a highly ambitious change to the governance, commissioning and delivery of services across partners in a short period of time that was dependent on the actions and decisions of various partners as well as KCC. Despite excellent individual examples of closer joint working across many areas of service, this ambition has not been fully realised.

(7) Bold Steps also committed to achieving value for money for our residents, squeezing every pound of public spending and keeping our spending within the Kent economy wherever possible. Improvements in our procurement practices and the introduction of a Category Management approach have already been mentioned, and will deliver total contract savings of just under £18 million between April 2012 and March 2015. The Kent Business Portal has been established for advertising all of KCC's contracts, and the focus on procuring from Kent businesses has seen an increase in the percentage of KCC contracts delivered by local businesses. In 2012/13, KCC's total spend was approximately £1 billion, of which £568 million was spent with Kent businesses, £439 million with SMEs. Also taking into account local subcontractors, we will exceed the Bold Steps target of 60% spend with local businesses this year.

2.3 Bold Steps for Education

(1) Bold Steps for Kent recognised the changing role of the local authority in education, driven by government reforms that aim to drive up standards and increase parental choice through handing decision making power and funding to schools and diversifying the range of education provision. In order to deliver the Bold Steps for Education priorities, an Education, Learning and Skills Vision and Priorities for Improvement Plan was drawn up in 2012, in consultation with education leaders. Our strategic priorities are:

- Ensure all pupils meet their full potential;
- Shape education and skills provision around the needs of the Kent economy; and
- Improve services and outcomes for the most vulnerable young people in Kent.

(2) The plan is annually updated to review progress against key strategic developments, identify the challenges for the future and establish annual key priorities.

(3) Now even more so than in 2010, the world is changing fast, expectations are rising rapidly and a more diverse education system is developing quickly. The UK must achieve a more educated and skilled workforce, and we cannot afford to lose the potential of so many young people who, if they are not educated and skilled enough, will lead less productive and satisfying lives. In this context, the role of the local authority is to be more ambitious, focused and strategic in bringing about educational transformation for Kent by being a strong and influential partner with schools and other stakeholders and providers.

(4) At the cornerstone of our new relationship with schools is the establishment of Kent Association of Headteachers (KAH), which supports the development of school

collaborative partnerships and wider networks for school to school support. KAH aims to create a network of excellence so that all Kent schools are able to improve and achieve good and outstanding performance in Ofsted inspections. In order to ensure that best practice and expertise is shared between schools, we have developed a system of school to school collaboration (Kent Learning Collaboratives) and there are now 60 of these improvement hubs, involving nearly 500 schools with clear partnership agreements sharply focused on improving leadership, the quality of teaching and standards of attainment. Collaborative activity identified by the schools is supported by funding from the Kent School Funding Forum, who committed £5.2 million in 2012/13 and a further £2.4 million in 2013/14.

(5) This focus on the self-improving school system is paying off in Kent. The percentage of schools rated as Good or better by Ofsted has improved from 59.2% in 2010 to 74% in March 2014. We have also narrowed the gap with the national average of schools rated Good or better. Pupil performance at all Key Stages is also improving, and in 2012/13, results improved for children at every stage of education. At Key Stage 1, we met or surpassed our targets for Level 2B and above in reading, writing and maths during 2013. At Key Stage 2, we saw a 2% improvement in children attaining Level 4 in reading, writing and maths combined in 2013, which remains 2% below the national average but the gap has closed since 2010. At Key Stage 4, there was a good improvement in children achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSE grades including English and maths, from 61% in 2012 to 63% in 2013, which is ahead of the national average. Looking over the lifetime of Bold Steps, we have made continued improvements in attainment.

(6) In order to ensure that children enter primary school at the appropriate level of development, we have continued to secure high quality early years education for all 3 and 4 year olds, with targeted provision for disadvantaged 2 year olds. Progress has been good – in 2013, 64% of children at early years foundation stage achieved a good level of development, which is 12% higher than the national average. Achieving the aims of the Early Years and Childcare Strategy will enable us to improve and extend the role of early years provision in early intervention and prevention in order to ensure better continuity of provision and services across the 0 – 5 age range, ensure an increasing number of children are school ready at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and mitigate the effect of poverty, inequality and disadvantage through the provision of high quality early education and childcare, including support for parents and carers and narrowing early development achievement gaps.

(7) As we accelerate the rate of progress in attainment overall, we need to work even harder to close the gaps that exist for children from vulnerable groups – those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), Children in Care and children eligible for free school meals. Standards are improving at all Key Stages. For example, between 2010 and 2013, we have seen a 7% improvement in pupils who are eligible for free school meals achieving 5 good GCSEs including in English and maths. However, progress is slower in narrowing the gaps for children with SEN. In spite of improvements in the outcomes for Children in Care, their achievement gap continues to be the widest of any pupil group, and this is a key priority for 2014. We have developed our Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (2013-2016) to improve the outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities in educational attainment, health and wellbeing. There has been and

continues to be significant investment in Kent Special Schools which has helped to ensure that 83% of Special Schools are good or outstanding.

(8) The Education Commissioning Plan 2013-18 sets out how we carry out our responsibility for ensuring there are sufficient early years and school places of high quality, in the right place for all learners. The plan sets out in detail how we will meet the future need for education provision in the county. Our projections show the need for substantial expansion of school places in the next several years. In the 2012-13 school year we achieved our aim of creating an extra 22 forms of entry in Primary Schools and four forms of entry in Secondary Schools, plus 362 temporary places to meet short-term pressures for Reception aged pupils.

(9) Bold Steps committed to agreeing a new financial deal with schools, devolving funding where possible. 90% of school budgets are now based on pupil numbers and other related factors, under the government's changes to the National Funding Formula. Though KCC welcomes the delegation of funding to schools, government's simplification of the budget for schools is creating problems for some Kent schools with low rolls, and KCC will take the opportunity to stand up for Kent's schools in the current DFE consultation. We are working with schools to promote decision making and at the local level, including commissioning to pool and target resources to meet local needs in districts. Decision making and resources continue to be devolved and delegated to schools and school collaboratives, with lead schools in each district taking on the management of the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service and Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Curriculum provision. Further devolved responsibilities for SEND provision will follow.

(10) As committed to in Bold Steps, we have developed EduKent, which is Kent's trading vehicle for the provision of support services to schools that they can choose to access. EduKent provides 16 key services to over 800 customers, which are mostly schools and academies in the county but also a small and growing number outside Kent. These traded services have been successful in generating income of approximately £19 million per annum and continue to grow.

(11) As the schools system becomes more diverse and autonomous, the need for KCC to continue to provide strong strategic leadership becomes ever more critical. Key amongst our core education responsibilities is the duty to robustly challenge underperformance in schools where it exists. We have developed a School Improvement Strategy, supported by the Kent Association of Headteachers, which sets out how KCC challenges and supports schools where there is a need to improve, and when we will intervene to ensure high standards of pupil achievement. When KCC intervenes, prompt decisive action is taken to turn around the school and tailor made packages of support are brokered and delivered, often in partnership with our good and outstanding school leaders, to secure rapid school improvement and put them on a sustainable improvement path.

2.4 Bold Steps for Transport

(1) Work around this theme has been focused on delivering the strategic transport priorities set out in Growth Without Gridlock, our integrated transport strategy, to ensure that Kent's infrastructure supports economic growth. We committed to developing innovative new financial models to pay for strategic transport infrastructure. We have successfully influenced government to introduce an HGV

road user charge for international lorries which was introduced on 1 April 2014. However we are disappointed that government have chosen not to passport any of this money back to KCC, and will continue to take opportunities to lobby on this. We will continue to push for the introduction of a UK Fuel Loyalty Card.

(2) We are also disappointed that the Treasury have not facilitated the introduction of Tax Increment Financing, but we continue to explore other options for funding transport infrastructure to unlock development. Working with district partners, we are maximising the benefit to the county of the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for managing developer contributions for infrastructure. CIL charging schedules are being agreed with each District, with a number already confirmed. As part of this work, we have developed a powerful infrastructure planning tool, the Integrated Infrastructure and Finance Model (IIFM), outlined in section 2.10.

(3) On strategic transport projects, we have secured government commitment to progress the A21 Dualling by demonstrating that we could deliver the scheme for one third less than the Highways Agency's estimate. KCC officers and members gave evidence at the public inquiry in May 2013. Work is due to commence in Autumn 2014. In Bold Steps we committed to press the case for a Third Thames Crossing, and have demonstrated that congestion from the existing Dartford crossings is the biggest blockage to growth and prosperity in the South East. KCC put forward a robust case to the public consultation in summer 2013 for the crossing to be located east of Gravesend, the option that provides most congestion relief and economic benefit as well as potentially creating a new national strategic transport corridor between Dover and the Midlands and so benefiting the national economy. Government are continuing to consider this location as well as another crossing at Dartford while dropping an option for the Swanscombe Peninsula, and we will continue to call for the east of Gravesend option. We have also successfully lobbied for the introduction of free-flow technology at the Dartford Crossing to ease congestion, and this will be in place by October 2014.

(4) In addressing the issues caused across the county by Operation Stack as well as inappropriate overnight lorry parking, we are working with Districts to identify a network of low-cost commercial lorry parks that will relieve these problems and the impacts it has for Kent communities and businesses. In respect of this, we have secured £12.7m reduced rate borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board to help us deliver this initiative.

East Kent has particular regeneration needs, and Bold Steps made several commitments to deliver radical transport options to support this. We have delivered the £87 million East Kent Access Road to support growth at the Discovery Park Enterprise Zone and Isle of Thanet. We have secured investment through the Regional Growth Fund - £5 million in Phase 1 with a further £6.8 million secured for Phase 2, to improve rail line speeds to Ramsgate, taking up to 10 minutes off the journey time to London. We are also committed to delivering Thanet Parkway Station that will serve Discovery Park and a number of surrounding business parks and significantly improve these areas for inward investment as well as increasing the employment catchment area for East Kent residents. We have carried out initial technical work on the optimum location and refreshed the business case for the station. We will continue to work in partnership with Network Rail, Southeastern, the District authorities and the Department for Transport in delivering this project.

(5) We have robustly opposed proposals for a new hub airport in the Thames Estuary by producing Bold Steps for Aviation, which clearly calls for maximising existing regional airport capacity along with some airport expansion to cater for the growing aviation demand and improving surface access connections particularly by rail. Our work in this area has included presenting evidence to the Transport Select Committee on this subject.

(6) We have been successful in securing £5m through the Department for Transport's Local Pinch Point Programme for two schemes in the county that will directly relieve bottlenecks and unlock development (£3.5m for North Farm, Tunbridge Wells and £1.56m for Westwood Cross in Thanet). We have also secured a further £25m for two major schemes (M20 Junction 10a and A226 London Road/B255 St Clements Way improvement in Gravesend) through Local Transport Body funding. This latter funding mechanism has now been subsumed into the Single Local Growth Fund being devolved by Central Government and available through Local Enterprise Partnerships on the basis of their Strategic Economic Plan. As part of this funding "growth deal" negotiation with Government, we have bid for £360m to implement a programme of transport schemes across Kent and Medway vital for delivering homes and jobs from 2015 onwards.

(7) We have made good progress in delivering an integrated public transport network to make it an attractive option for Kent residents. We have continued to provide the Kent Freedom Pass for young people and introduced the Kent 16+ travel card, supporting young people to access education and training. Given the financial pressures facing us, we have developed a pragmatic solution to continue to offer this much-valued discretionary service. The new pass for pupils aged 11-16, the Young Person's Travel Pass, will continue to offer free bus travel on week days during the academic year at a cost of cost £200 per year (£100 for low income families and free for looked after children and young carers), with the option for families to spread the cost in two halves over the year. We continue to work in partnership with District and Borough Councils and the major commercial bus operators in eight voluntary Quality Bus Partnerships and one Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme to deliver improvements to the bus network. Our commitment to partnership working has led to both Arriva and Stagecoach investing in new vehicles for use in Kent and enhancements to frequencies on key inter-urban corridors, forging of new connections, and the delivery of a more robust bus network.

(8) We have continued to robustly press for better rail service for Kent passengers based on the Rail Action Plan for Kent. This has been a key part of our discussions with Department for Transport and the rail operators in seeking rail service improvements and has contributed to KCC being recognised as a voice of authority on rail matters for the South East. The extension of high-speed services from London to Deal and Sandwich, funded by KCC between September 2011 and March 2014, has led to the Department for Transport including this service in the new franchise from April 2014, at no further cost to KCC as well as the introduction of off-peak high speed services on this route from January 2015. We have also succeeded in obtaining Department for Transport agreement that the specification for the new Thameslink franchise will include a direct service between Maidstone East and the Thameslink City stations from May 2018. In addition, a business case has been prepared to assess the viability of the proposed direct service from Ashford to Gatwick. This work has concluded that such a service would not be commercially

viable and so this proposal will no longer be included in the specification for the Direct Award for the Southeastern franchise area.

(9) We have continued to work closely with our European partners on the Transmanche Metro project, part of which addresses the need for an upgrade to the signalling deployed on the Ashford Spurs which link HS1 with Ashford International Station. We have succeeded in obtaining match funding of £260,000 from the EU, which together with match funding from our stakeholders will fund the planning and design work by Network Rail. We continue to hold our successful annual Rail Summits for rail user groups, districts, other stakeholders and the rail industry.

2.5 Bold Steps for Health

(1) The last three years has seen significant reform in health, led by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The direction had been set in 2010, and Bold Steps for Kent committed to supporting GPs in their new role as commissioners, forming a team around the patient coordinated by their GP. KCC has moved to the forefront of local government thinking about how we can reshape community health provision and integrate health and social care commissioning to shift resources from the acute sector to the primary and community sectors. KCC has developed a new, direct relationship with GPs which is allowing us to take innovative steps and facilitate conversations between commissioners and providers.

(2) From 2011, KCC was an early implementer for Health and Wellbeing Boards, and established the South Kent Coast Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board at local level. We also established the Kent Health Commission, working closely with GPs in Dover and Shepway to ensure that Kent takes full advantage of the opportunities presented by the reforms. The Commission piloted new approaches to managing long-term conditions and shaped thinking around stimulating the health provider market. The Commission reported to the Secretary of State in 2012 and this was well-received.

(3) Since 2012, we have actively supported the development of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), and have established Health and Wellbeing Boards at CCG level to bring together GP and adult social care commissioners, providers and local elected members. Our discussion document Delivering Better Healthcare for Kent in 2013 brought together our thinking on how radical health reform can lead to better use of public money and better outcomes for people. We have published and continued to update the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Kent, and have published the first Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Kent, with the refreshed three-year Strategy due to be agreed in July 2014. KCC pioneered Health Watch, which has been rolled out across the county to ensure that the voice of the patient is heard. Health Watch Kent is promoting choice and service quality and engaging communities.

(4) Recognising our extensive track record in health and social care integration, KCC was chosen as a Pioneer area in the Department of Health's Integration Pioneer Programme, which aims to establish new ways of delivering coordinated care. Through the Pioneer work, over the next five years, we aim to re-design models of care to make a real difference to the way people experience health and social care in Kent. By bringing together CCGs, KCC, District Councils, acute services and the voluntary sector, the aim is to move to care provision that will promote greater

independence for patients, whilst reducing hospital and care home admissions. In addition, a new workforce with the skills to deliver integrated care will be recruited. Patients will have access to 24/7 community based care, ensuring they are looked after well but do not need to go to hospital. A patient-held care record will ensure the patient is in control of the information they have to manage their condition in the best way possible. Patients will also have greater flexibility and freedom to source the services they need through a fully integrated personal budget covering health and social care services. We will use innovative approaches including risk stratification and 'Year of Care' commissioning for long-term conditions. Through better integration we can deliver comprehensive, 24/7 community health services, reducing demand on hospitals. By shifting just 10% of funding from acute to community care in Kent, we can free up £170 million a year to invest in community services.

(5) In 2013, Government launched a 'call to action', recognising the enormous scale of the challenge they face in responding to the increasing demands on the NHS and the funding gap this will create. Integration of health and social care is the best way to tackle this challenge, and the Better Care Fund was created, supporting the full integration of services by 2018, with challenging targets to hit by 2016. This has accelerated the pace and scale of integration that KCC had already begun and will continue through our Pioneer work. Through the Kent Better Care Fund proposal, a pooled fund of £122 million from existing resources has been identified to support integration in the county.

(6) The transfer of Public Health to KCC as part of the wider health reforms was managed smoothly, and we are already starting to make the most of the opportunity it presents to promote the preventative approach to public health that Bold Steps committed to. We successfully lobbied government for a more generous funding settlement for Public Health, allowing us to spend significantly more per head on Kent's residents. Interventions will continue to focus on preventative approaches that consider a person's entire health and wellbeing needs, to support people to make better lifestyle choices and where possible prevent future health problems. Some of our successful Public Health initiatives include HOUSE, an innovative way to promote healthy behaviours to young people which continues to expand across the county, and ActivMobs to promote healthy living and exercise through friendships and networks. Tackling health inequalities remains at the heart of Public Health work, and we have published 'Mind the Gap', Kent's health inequalities action plan, which is driving improvements in all areas that affect people's health, including work, housing, access to health services and a healthy start for all children. It has excellent traction with partners and has been complemented by a series of District and need-specific action plans. We were also the first local authority to introduce a health inequalities impact assessment tool to ensure our policies promote fairness and act to narrow the gap in health inequalities.

(7) Figures show that mortality rates in the county continue to improve and over the last year have moved closer to the regional average, with the gap in deaths per 100,000 population reducing from 542.4 in 2009 to 469.9 in 2012. Importantly, mortality that is considered to be avoidable through better healthcare has also decreased from 87.4 per 100,000 in 2009 to 75.7 in 2012 and again we have significantly narrowed the gap with the South East average.

2.6 Bold Steps for Business and the Economy

(1) Bold Steps for Business and the Economy is about supporting the business community to lead Kent's return to growth by helping to create the conditions in which business and entrepreneurship flourishes. Since 2009, the number of active business enterprises in the county has grown by 1.2%, which is close to the South East average of 1.3%. Over the past three years, KCC has delivered many successes in this area, as recognised by the high praise for our economic development activities in the recent LGA Peer Challenge. We have secured £60.5 million from the Government's Regional Growth Fund to establish three access to finance schemes for local businesses - Expansion East Kent, TIGER in North Kent and Escalate in West Kent. So far we have committed funds that will secure 3,250 jobs.

(2) In support of business and the economy, KCC has successfully responded to a number of major challenges that could not have been foreseen when Bold Steps was written. The most significant of these was the withdrawal of Pfizer from its Sandwich base in 2011, directly threatening 2,400 jobs. The Taskforce led by Paul Carter has delivered a package of measures including the designation of Discovery Park as an Enterprise Zone, now one of the county's most successful, creating or safeguarding over 1,300 jobs. It also secured over £20 million in public and private funding to protect the site against flood risk, and a £5 million contribution through the Regional Growth Fund for Phase 1 of line speed improvements to Ramsgate.

(3) Building a new relationship with business was a key commitment in Bold Steps. This has included taking a sector-based approach to engage local businesses and tailor the assistance we provide. We have delivered a series of sector conversations to identify barriers to growth, leading to a series of programmes to support business. High Growth Kent provides coaching to businesses with high growth potential, and since 2011 has supported 262 Kent and Medway businesses, helping them attract £39 million in private investment and creating 413 jobs. We have also established the School for Creative Start-ups, enabling the creation of 85 businesses since 2013, and the Kent International Business initiative to help Kent businesses trade overseas. In the four year period up to April 2014, an average of 11,280 jobs per year were created and safeguarded through Locate in Kent, and Visit Kent has continued to assist the visitor economy to grow.

(4) Underpinning our engagement with business, we provide secretariat support for Business Advisory Board, a successful private sector forum also attended by BIS and the Bank of England. The increased direct contact that we have with business has strengthened our understanding of business priorities. Building on this, a programme of roundtable conversations with businesses in key sectors has informed the development of Unlocking the Potential - the new Growth Strategy for the County as well as the update of Growth without Gridlock in Kent and Medway, the county's transport delivery plan. This joint working with business has been cemented by the establishment of the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) as the county's primary strategic economic partnership body. Bringing together business, local government and the higher and further education sectors, KMEP has helped to determine transport and economic growth priorities and provides a strong public-private voice for Kent.

(5) In addition, KCC continues to attract the maximum possible investment into the country through the South East LEP, England's largest local enterprise partnership. We have worked with our neighbours in Essex and East Sussex to ensure that the LEP is focused on the major strategic issues for the South East. The recently developed South East LEP Growth Deal and Strategic Economic Plan makes the case for Local Growth Fund investment from Government of £501m for Kent and Medway over six years to support the delivery of infrastructure that could ultimately enable 165,000 jobs and nearly 130,000 houses. The Growth Deal includes establishing a revolving property investment fund as well as capital investment in further education facilities.

(6) Another key commitment in Bold Steps is to promote the county's key growth areas. Progress towards achieving the Thames Gateway ambition has been slower than anticipated due to the economic downturn. However, KCC has worked with Medway and the North Kent Districts to map in detail the barriers to delivery on all major sites in the Thames Gateway and we have worked with Government and the private sector to secure vital transport infrastructure to enable the first phase of delivery at Eastern Quarry to come forward. The Government has reaffirmed its commitment to the Thames Gateway with the designation of Ebbsfleet as a new Garden City and we are working closely with business, Government and District colleagues to establish a new Urban Development Corporation for the Garden City.

(7) Bold Steps for Kent recognised that digital infrastructure is of vital importance to Kent's economic future, especially in rural parts of the county. KCC has matched £9.87 million investment from Broadband Delivery UK, secured over £20 million from the private sector along with an additional £1.6 million of public funding from other external funding bids. Kent has been of the first counties in the country to deliver broadband to areas of market failure and our project work will ensure the delivery of superfast broadband to 91% of the population by the end of 2015, with all areas being able to receive a basic broadband service of at least 2mb. We are also working to optimise take-up of these services and associated technologies.

2.7 Bold Steps for Employment and Skills

(1) Bold Steps for Kent committed to unlocking talent to support the Kent economy, matching education and skills to the needs of the local economy. The level of workforce skills in Kent is showing consistent long-term improvement and we are improving at much the same rate as the regional average. The percentage of the population aged 16 to 64 with at least a level three NVQ or equivalent qualification has risen from 49.7% in 2010 to 55.4% in 2013.

(2) Ensuring that Kent's young people have the necessary skills and preparation for employment is essential. The 14-24 Strategy was launched in 2013 to link the world of learning to the world of work more successfully, and to bring about more rapid transformation in young people's skills, qualifications and employability. It is overseen by a county Employment, Learning and Skills Board that brings together council, providers and other partners. While performance at post-16 as a whole improved in 2013, we are behind the national average on some measures. We are working with schools to develop new post-16 curriculum options that will improve participation and attainment, including the "2-1-2" model that offers two days of key skills (maths and English,) one day of work experience and two days of vocational learning. 100 post-16 learners are participating in this pilot to July 2014. We have also created post-16

District Data Packs which provide detailed information on the local curriculum offer and employment opportunities, highlighting any gaps, so that schools, colleges and training providers can plan provision to address the gaps. A number of schools have already realigned their post-16 offer based on information from the data packs, and schools are also finding them useful in tailoring their careers advice to the local jobs market. Through our Community Learning and Skills service we promote skills development for young people through the Work Ready Extra programme to increase their basic and employability skills. 550 unemployed / inactive young people aged 16 to 23 have accessed the programme, with 65% of these progressing to employment with training or further learning.

(3) In 2012 KCC launched the Kent Employment Programme (KEP), providing grants for local businesses of all sizes to employ young people in apprenticeships. Since April 2012, KEP has engaged with 915 SMEs in the county, resulting in 602 supported apprenticeship starts across the county. We want to further expand KEP to provide an important brokerage service for SMEs that would not otherwise have the capacity to arrange taking on apprentices. The KCC Apprenticeships programme has exceeded its Bold Steps target for the provision of in-house apprenticeships each year. We are on track to exceed this year's target of 120 new KCC apprenticeships by August 2014, and have placed 694 internal apprenticeships to date. Overall Kent is leading the way in apprenticeships, with apprenticeship starts increasing faster in the Kent than the rest of the South East region. From 2009/10 to 2012/13, there have been 9,870 16-18 year olds taking up apprenticeships, while in total there were 36,880 new apprenticeships starts across all ages for this period.

(4) In order to support young people in a dynamic jobs market, we have invested in developing young people's careers management skills so that they can identify career opportunities and tailor their learning and development. We have established KentChoices4U, the county's online applications and careers portal. 80% of target pupils (13,063 young people) are using the system to apply for courses and access information about careers and post 16 options. It is the largest and most used site of its type in the country, and we plan to extend the website to 17 and 18 year olds as well as graduates. We also plan to expand its functionality to offer a CV builder and other tools, and also to allow training providers and companies to be able to advertise their employment and training offer. In addition, we are encouraging specific vulnerable groups to use the portal and increasing numbers of young people who are either educated at home or in Pupil Referral Units are beginning to use the portal to apply for post-16 options. The annual two-day KentChoices Live event, which in 2014 attracted 4,500 young people, offers an opportunity for young people to meet employers and gain information about possible careers through interactive employer and provider exhibits and master classes.

(5) As well as promoting skills and employability for young people, adult education provision is another important route to improving individual prosperity and supporting the local economy, and is led by KCC's Community Learning and Skills (CLS) service. CLS has worked with schools, Children's Centres and other community organisations to provide externally funded free Family Learning courses for 8,163 families living in some of the most disadvantaged communities in Kent. These courses enhance parent skills, support pupil attainment, enable adults to help their children with homework and provide a first step to gaining qualifications and developing employability skills. In addition, 1867 low-waged or unemployed adults have taken part in free courses provided by CLS in partnership with organisations

across the voluntary and community sector aimed at improving their employment prospects, encouraging volunteering and progression to further learning, especially work-related qualifications. Per annum 3,200 young people and adults enrol at CLS Skills Plus Centres to improve their employment prospects by boosting their maths, English and IT skills. Of the 3,200 people accessing these courses, 95% have achieved their intended outcome.

2.8 Bold Steps to Tackle Disadvantage

(1) Bold Steps for Kent stated that the best way to tackle disadvantage is to address worklessness and promote economic growth, so people can earn a salary and support themselves and their families, providing opportunity rather than supporting dependency. KCC's significant achievements in developing the Kent economy and facilitating job creation are covered in section 2.6. Since 2010, government's welfare reform programme has been introduced, albeit with various changes and delays. KCC, working with partners, has played a role in understanding the impacts of these changes on local people, and supporting them to manage without falling into further disadvantage. This has included the joint commissioning of an online benefits calculator to help people identify the impact of the reforms and how much better off they would be in work and this has been used by over 1000 people in the first year.

(2) In response to the localisation of council tax benefit, KCC worked with District councils to develop a shared approach to managing the 10% reduction in funding. We have also been working to reduce the discounts and exemptions on empty properties and other ways to maximise the Council Tax base and collection rates. This can be evidenced in both the higher Council Tax base we have seen reflected in the budget and the Collection Fund surpluses. KCC has also developed the Kent Support and Assistance Service (KSAS), following the closure of the DWP Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans. Rather than giving out money, KSAS uses the reduced funding that has been transferred from government to provide the items that individuals or families need to deal with a short-term crisis or retain their independence.

(3) Bold Steps made commitments to prevent young people from becoming disadvantaged in the future. Youth disengagement is one of the reasons why young people fall into the benefits trap. As well as supporting the Kent economy, apprenticeships offer an attractive option to help keep young people engaged post 16. Our Assisted Apprenticeships scheme provides placements for vulnerable young people including care leavers, young offenders and disabled young people, and each cohort has an identified champion who works with the young people while KCC provides support to the employers. Over 100 young people have been supported into apprenticeships through this programme. A project has also been established to help young people with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) achieve a more successful transition into post-16 learning and training. KCC in partnership with Kent's BESD Special Schools have joint-funded three mentors to work with 119 pupils during their transition to FE College and then during their first few weeks of term. As a result, this project is helping to significantly reduce the number of BESD young people dropping out during their first terms at college.

(4) Since 2010, the number of Kent's young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) has fluctuated, hitting a high in 2011 caused by the

economic downturn, in line with the national picture. Since 2012, NEETs in Kent have consistently decreased. KCC has launched 'NEET to EET' groups in every district, bringing together providers and agencies to identify and work to provide a personalised solution for young people who are NEET in the area. By taking this case management approach, 200 young people have been found learning, training and employment placements, who might otherwise have experienced negative outcomes post-16. In addition, Youth Employment Zones have been set up in the five districts with the highest youth unemployment rates to pilot interventions in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and other agencies and providers, initially focusing on 18 years olds.

(5) Another way in which Bold Steps committed to preventing future disadvantage was to reduce the number of disruptive moves for young people in foster care. Since 2010 we have made significant improvements to the fostering service. We have launched the 'Changing Futures' campaign to promote stable fostering opportunities and have promoted the provision of permanent / long-term foster care in the recruitment of foster carers. Virtual School Kent, set up in 2011, supports the educational achievement of children in care, co-ordinating educational services and providing advice to schools and access to specialist services. This has contributed to an improvement in the educational attainment of children in care in Kent, from 22.5% of children achieving 5 GCSE A* to C equivalent in 2010, to 36.8% in 2013. Importantly, the educational attainment of our children in care is now in line with national performance, having been lower in 2010. We have continued to campaign against other local authorities placing vulnerable looked after children in East Kent and to keep them as close to home as possible. Bold Steps committed to move towards integration between the Youth Service and Youth Offending Service to better target services at those young people most at risk of offending. In 2012, the integrated Youth Service was launched, and has strengthened preventative and community-based provision. Between 2010 and 2013, the number of young people engaging in crime has reduced, with a reduction of 39% in the number of young people sentenced in court and a 22% reduction in the number of custodial sentences.

(6) Bold Steps also committed to integrating wider services for adolescents. The Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service (KIASS) now operates across the county. KIASS is designed to work closely with schools to provide better support to vulnerable young people so they can access the right service in the right place at the right time. It is an integrated multi-agency service with Secondary schools at its heart, bringing together practitioners from health, social care, youth work and education to provide a more joined up response for those vulnerable adolescents who are most at risk of harm and exclusion, disengagement from education and physical and mental health difficulties. Since the inception of KIASS, more young people are accessing early help services and are being referred for early intervention before problems escalate. KIASS will make a significant contribution to reducing exclusions, NEETS, youth offending, antisocial behaviour, the need for social care and child protection and improve the educational and wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable adolescents.

2.9 Bold Steps to Support the Vulnerable

(1) Supporting the most vulnerable members of our community will always be of highest priority for KCC. Shortly before Bold Steps for Kent was published, KCC's Children's Services received an inadequate Ofsted inspection, and was placed under special measures. We responded immediately and robustly, developing and

implementing a comprehensive Improvement Plan, and invested £30 million into improving the service. KCC's leadership has been praised by Ofsted for the high priority it has placed on improving services for vulnerable children.

(2) One of the most important improvements has been the establishment of the multiagency Central Referral Unit to improve assessment, ensure that thresholds for intervention are applied more consistently and coordinate partners including KCC, Police and NHS services. Since it was launched in 2012, the Central Referral Unit has made a real impact on improving consistency in the application of thresholds and reducing inappropriate contacts in to social care teams. For example, the timeliness of initial assessment has improved, with the number of initial assessments completed within 10 days of contact now significantly better than our statistical neighbours. Through the improvements we have also seen a reduction in the number of children on Child Protection Plans for more than two years. Our partnership with charity Coram has significantly increased the number of children adopted and adopters recruited – the number of children adopted per year has doubled between 2010 and 2014.

(3) Other improvements have included significantly reducing social work caseloads to levels that are manageable for staff and implementing a Recruitment and Retention plan to attract and keep more permanent and experienced social workers. Recruiting a permanent social worker workforce still remains a challenge across the country, and remains a priority for KCC. Bold Steps stressed the importance of supporting our children's social care staff with the best leadership and resources we can offer. We have developed the Social Work Contract to lay out our vision for children's services and what we expect from our staff. In return, it sets out what management will do to empower and support staff to reach those standards, including social work Master Classes with national experts and improvements in systems and IT.

(4) Early intervention and prevention was an important element of this Bold Steps theme, and continues to be a central element of our services for children and families. The Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy has driven this work, and we have made significant progress. The success of the Common Assessment tool has already been referenced in section 2.2. A suite of early intervention and preventative services have been commissioned across the county through a few framework, including support for Young Carers, support for children who have witnessed domestic abuse and young people at risk of violent relationships/teenage pregnancy, and emotional health and wellbeing support for children and young people. Recent reviews of these services demonstrated improved school attendance and behaviour, reduction in feelings of isolation, reduction in levels of conflict and improved relationships. There are fewer cases being 'stepped up' to social care in comparison to those being stepped down.

(5) We are also making good progress in ensuring that the voices of vulnerable young people are heard and that we understand their journey. Quality assurance surveys, focus groups and exit interviews take place with children in care and care leavers, and the Young Lives Foundation has been commissioned to develop a new survey to understand more fully what it is like to be a child in care. Some specific work has been undertaken to ensure that disabled children and their families are involved in the commissioning of all new services.

(6) KCC also continues to provide robust public protection arrangements, particularly important in the context of various safeguarding failures across the country over the last three years, including at Winterbourne View Hospital, the Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust and tragic individual cases of child abuse and neglect. We lead the Kent Adults' and Children's Safeguarding Boards, bringing key partners together to promote safeguarding and investigate and drive improvements when things go wrong. The Kent and Medway Adults' Safeguarding Board continues to expand in membership and has developed a multiagency training programme for adult safeguarding. KCC's Adult Safeguarding Unit is now fully embedded and is implementing the recommendations of the Essex County Council Peer Review. Safeguarding activity is increasing (15% increase in referrals in 2012-13 compared to the previous year), and social care teams are dealing with more complex cases. The Kent Safeguarding Children Board also continues to provide multiagency safeguarding training, carry out audits of partners' safeguarding activities and promote coordination and information sharing between agencies. Kent remains below the national average for child deaths. The new Central Referral Unit for adults and children's services will continue to streamline processes.

(7) Since Bold Steps for Kent was written, the Care Bill has been published, which will introduce massive, once in a generation reform of adult social services. The changes will include a lifetime cap on care costs helping more people keep their homes, which KCC has lobbied for. Working with partners through the LGA and ADASS, we will continue to lobby for a fair funding deal to implement the far-reaching reforms of the Care Bill. Paul Carter has become the County Councils Network's (CCN) Spokesperson for Health and Social Care. CCN has recently submitted a research report to government putting forward three critical issues concerning the Care Bill. These cover the need to gain a stronger understanding of the true cost of the reforms, the need for a cast iron funding commitment from government to fully meet those costs and the need for timely publication of guidance to enable local areas to mobilise resources to implement the reforms in time. Responding to the Care Bill is fully integrated into the adults' transformation programme, launched in 2012, which sets out how we will meet the challenges of an ageing population, increasing long-term and complex needs and customer expectations within reducing funding. It involves a fundamental redesign of the way services are commissioned and delivered. Working with efficiency partner Newton Europe, the programme is on track and already delivering significant benefits for customers and savings. Recently the contracts for homecare were re-let, delivering a £2.7million saving and allowing us to more efficiently monitor the quality of care delivered. Retendering of telecare monitoring has been completed which has successfully reduced the price per user per week from £2.11 to 24p.

2.10 Bold Steps for Housing

(1) Bold Steps for Housing is about building homes and communities, not estates. Our ambition for managed growth continues to be that new housing is developed intelligently, fully integrated into the wider community, also ensuring that affordable housing is provided. The Kent and Medway Housing Strategy, the first of its kind in a two-tier area, leads our coordinated approach to housing, with a focus on meeting the housing needs of a growing population. It is delivered in practice by effective relationships between KCC and the Kent districts, and has led to high levels of investment from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) compared with other agencies. Around £62 million of funding has been made available in Kent and

Medway to help bring forward 3,969 new homes by 2015, the greatest allocation to any county or city region in England. Kent continues to exceed previously set targets for 70% of new housing development making use of brownfield sites, reaching 75.1% in 2012/13.

(2) KCC and Kent Housing Group have worked with the HCA to maximise the delivery of new affordable homes, and the Affordable Homes Programme has been particularly successful in Kent compared to other areas. In 2012/13, 1,250 affordable housing units were completed, which is 35% of all completions, an increase on 29% in 2008/09. Following significant investment in numerous projects in Margate, we are continuing to develop the work being undertaken in Cliftonville under the Live Margate Housing Initiative. With encouraging signs of private investment developing throughout the area, KCC is nearing the completion of several of its own first phase projects (both new build and renovation). We have successfully attracted additional public sector investment to the scheme, with KCC's investment acting as a catalyst to promote further regeneration. Our No Use Empty programme has brought 3,320 empty homes back into use since it started in 2005 (including 2,054 between 2010-11 and 2013-14), through a combination of loan support and advice and is recognised nationally as a leading housing initiative.

(3) Through the Housing Strategy we have also worked with the HCA, districts, and local developers to develop a co-ordinated approach to ensuring that attractive high quality homes are built in the right place, including the development of the Rural Housing Protocol to stimulate delivery of affordable rural homes. We have also entered into a bold and innovative new partnership with developer Kier. The Kier Kent Initiative which was launched in 2013 packages together KCC-owned sites in Sevenoaks, Canterbury and Swale and brings in investment to build new homes for affordable, intermediate and private rent and open market sale, enabling new affordable homes to be delivered without Government grant.

(4) Bold Steps committed to ensuring that new housing comes with appropriate infrastructure and services. We have developed a powerful and innovative infrastructure planning tool called the Integrated Infrastructure and Financing Model (IIFM). It is a population-based forecasting tool that enables service providers (education, adult social services, libraries, community learning and youth) to assess changes in demand for services over a short, medium and long term time frame, distinguishing between demand arising from new housing and indigenous population (and provides costs for both). The model is capable of scenario testing for different housing trajectories and provides a credible and robust evidence base to feed into joint KCC/District Infrastructure Delivery Plans. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14, we agreed approximately £55 million in developer contributions to support education, social care, libraries, community and youth services needed to accompany housing growth, as well as securing two primary school sites and land for the expansion of an existing school.

(5) Through the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, we were the first two-tier area to offer a scheme to help first time buyers obtain a mortgage at a time when lenders were asking for large deposits. As at end of March 2014, loans had been approved for 56 mortgages with a total value over £9m, with local authorities providing £1.8m of indemnity. As well as helping individual buyers, this has provided an important stimulus to the housing market at a difficult time, and we believe contributed to government introducing the 'Help to Buy' scheme on a national basis.

2.11 Bold Steps for the Environment

(1) Bold Steps committed KCC to playing its part in meeting the climate challenge. The Kent Environment Strategy focuses on making the most of the environmental opportunities we have in Kent, including offshore wind power and low carbon construction, to tap into the highly valuable global low carbon market without placing burdens on Kent businesses. We are making good progress in delivering against the Kent Environment Strategy across the three themes of 1) living within our environmental limits, 2) working towards a low carbon economy that is prepared for climate change, and 3) valuing our natural and historic environment.

(2) On the first theme and starting with our own organisation, over the last three years £1.8m has been invested in energy measures for corporate estate buildings, street lighting and schools, with £5 million lifetime savings expected. Overall since the Energy Efficiency Investment Fund began in 2005, £3.3m has been invested with expected savings totalling £8.5m. This equates to an annual fuel cost saving of £742,000. Recently completed projects include LED lamp upgrades to illuminated street signs and bollards, expected to save £1.2m in energy over their lifetime, and three solar photovoltaic projects, which have outperformed expectations by 25% saving £21,500 in the first year. We have also continued to cut business miles achieving a 19.5% reduction since 2010-11.

(3) Looking beyond KCC, we have established the Kent Warm Homes Scheme to improve the energy efficiency of Kent's homes, saving money and tackling fuel poverty. Over 1000 homes have had measures installed ranging from loft insulation through to new boilers. Due to changes in Government policy that has affected funding nationally, this scheme is now on hold, with the intention of re-launching with a new offer in October in time for the winter season. KCC continues to work with its partners to support Kent SMEs to save money and take advantage of the fast growing low carbon sector market through the Low Carbon Kent initiative. Over 1000 businesses have been engaged with 600 given intensive support, generating potential savings in excess of £1.2m per annum. In February, as part of Low Carbon Kent we launched Low Carbon Plus, an ERDF funded project providing £1million of grants to support Kent and Medway businesses to develop in the low carbon and environmental sector. Grants to the value of almost £90,000 have been provisionally approved.

(4) To ensure our local economy is resilient and prepared for a changing climate, KCC has continued to develop the Severe Weather Impacts Monitoring System (SWIMS) across Kent and Medway. Over 100 users from the public and private sector use the system to capture the effects of severe weather on their services. Partners include Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, NHS, Environment Agency, the Met Office, the Highways Agency, Port of Dover Authority, all Kent local authorities and Medway unitary authority. For winter 2013-14 alone, services captured over £3.8 million costs through the system and recorded over 1,230 days to deal with emergencies and safeguard Kent residents and services. This data is currently being used to inform business continuity and resilience planning across the county. The system is now being rolled out nationally as part of the Government's Climate Ready programme.

(5) In addition, we have developed the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Kent and completed surface water management plans for priority high risk areas. We

have continued to develop our forthcoming role as the drainage approving body, working with our partners in the southeast to deliver guidance for planners on the integration of sustainable drainage into new developments to assist them in meeting the new drainage requirements. We have invested £5m in the £21.7m Sandwich Town Tidal Defence scheme, reducing risk of tidal flooding to 488 homes and 94 commercial properties and raising the standard of flood defence from a 1 in 20 years level of protection (classed as significant risk) to 1 in 200 year (low risk). KCC's contribution not only helped secure the funding for this scheme, but also through solving the flood risk problem for the area enabled the designation of Discovery Park as an Enterprise Zone (it was a precondition of the designation) and the resulting economic benefits this brings.

(6) On the third theme, around valuing our natural and historical environment, we have established the Kent Local Nature Partnership, to work with business to support and grow our economy through natural assets and support the health and wellbeing of our residents by improving the quality of, and access to, our natural environment. We have worked with Dover District Council and English Heritage to prepare the first stand-alone district Heritage Strategy in the country, enabling Dover District Council to secure government funding of £100,000 from the Delivering Differently initiative. We are also working with Kent Police to protect valuable heritage assets through a heritage crime assessment for Dover District.

(7) The Kent Farmsteads Guidance (prepared by English Heritage, Kent Downs AONB and Kent County Council) to help assess the character of historic farmsteads and assist in the process of sustainable development was endorsed by KCC in 2013. A training seminar and launch has been arranged for May 2014. Within the new Growth, Environment and Transport directorate, all services that promote the protection and enjoyment of our environment and heritage are now being brought together, including our work on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Public Rights of Way, countryside access and country parks.

2.12 Bold Steps for Social Enterprise, Community and Voluntary Groups

(1) Bold Steps for Kent set out KCC's commitment to the Voluntary and Community sector (VCS). Recognising the added value of the sector, it stated that we would make it easier for voluntary organisations and community groups to deliver our services. Much progress has been made since then, however we recognise that there is still more we can do and it has therefore been agreed that we will develop a VCS Policy which will consider the relationship of the Council with not only the VCS which provides services on our behalf but the community groups and organisations which provide local infrastructure and resilience to families and communities. This will consider the support the sector needs to thrive within a commissioning environment and to continue to play a vital role in building capacity within communities.

(2) Bold Steps committed to establishing a Big Society fund to help provide funding for new social enterprises in Kent. This was launched in December 2011, managed by the Kent Community Foundation. Kent Community Foundation has now received £2 million in funding and has offered just under £1.2 million in loans. This funding has not only helped a range of initiatives it has also helped to increase and sustain employment in the sector and increase volunteering opportunities. The fund also made a one-off donation of £130,000 from the Big Society Fund to support the

setting up of a micro-finance hub in Kent managed by the Fredericks Foundation. This extension has allowed individuals as well as incorporated Social Enterprises to access the fund to start or expand their business.

(3) The VCS continues to play a significant role in delivering around £110m of KCC services. As stated in Bold Steps, our strategic relationship with the sector is developing and this means that where appropriate we are moving from the provision of grants to outcome based commissioning arrangements for service delivery. Bold Steps was clear that we needed to support the sector in this transition and that we would need to work with the voluntary sector to better understand its capabilities and to shape our commissioning approach. Since setting up the Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Forum in 2011 we have continued to engage with the sector and have remained committed to using co-production principles when designing our services wherever possible. Adult Community Support has placed co-production at the heart of their service design and is working with the Social Innovation Lab Kent (SILK) within KCC to re-design dementia services and establish Dementia Friendly Communities. However, we recognise that there is still more we can do through our commissioning and a Select Committee on Commissioning was established in November 2013, with a particular focus on the VCS and the extent to which the authority was using its commissioning processes to ensure it meets its duties under the Social Value Act.

(4) Supporting the sector to be self-sustaining and competitive is a priority for KCC and we have continued to explore more flexible procurement processes to offer opportunities to the sector. For example the Youth Service Transformation Model used a dynamic purchasing model to commission the delivery of youth services. The successful 22 providers were local Kent based organisations (with one exception) ranging from small to countywide VCS organisations delivering lots across the county.

(5) Bold Steps set out our intention to develop a new approach to Community Asset Transfer so that the VCS could take on the management and ownership of KCC assets linked to the delivery of public services, where it offered value for money. Since the publication of Bold Steps the Localism Act was introduced and included the Community Right to Bid which has seen slow uptake nationally. However in Kent we have been exploring innovative property models to support new service delivery, for example in our Youth Service Transformation programme, and will continue to explore how we can support the sector through a range of property solutions.

3. Lessons learnt from Bold Steps for Kent

3.1 As we move forward, it is important to recognise strong progress against Bold Steps, but also to learn from any areas where we could improve in the development, monitoring and delivery of future strategic statements. Three main lessons can be learnt from Bold Steps for Kent and factored into our thinking as we go forward:

a) Coverage and mapping of priorities to services

Although the Bold Steps themes cover a wide range of priorities, they do not obviously and immediately map to KCC's service areas. In order to understand how each service plays a contribution to achieving the priorities set out in Bold Steps, it was sometimes necessary to search through the document for the relevant

statements. For some services, there was no direct match between what they deliver and what Bold Steps says. Whilst this was deliberate in order to provide a more strategic one-council focus, going forward with a need for even sharper focus on delivering the council's priorities, it will be important to translate our strategic outcomes and priorities into clear and specific deliverables for all of KCC's services. This will provide cohesive direction for the council and assist every member of staff in understanding the role they play.

b) Performance management arrangements

The delivery of Bold Steps for Kent was built into the council's business plans, in order to embed it into the day-to-day working of the council. Subsequently, monitoring and reporting against progress has been through existing arrangements for performance monitoring, including the Quarterly Performance Report and Directorate Dashboards, rather than through specific monitoring against Bold Steps. As a strategic commissioning authority, a stronger performance framework will be required to ensure that we have clear, specific performance information to monitor progress against the council's priorities and take action where needed.

c) Achievability of priorities

Bold Steps for Kent aimed to bring about significant change to the way in which services are delivered to meet the needs of our service users and residents in a financially sustainable way. It was therefore inevitably ambitious and challenging in several areas. A number of the most challenging ambitions set out in Bold Steps were dependent on external factors and the actions of external bodies including central government. In several cases, factors outside of KCC's control have meant that it has not been possible to deliver commitments as planned. For example, the design of the DWP Work Programme excluded local authorities from playing a role in delivery, meaning that we were unable to align our Supporting Independence Programme with the Work Programme as planned, and have instead shifted our focus to other programmes to support vulnerable groups into work. In addition the delivery of government's vision around localism has not been as extensive as anticipated, and the proposed return of structure planning has not happened. Going forward, we will need to make sure that priorities and outcomes are challenging but achievable within KCC's influence, working with our partners.

3.2 These lessons will be taken forward as we develop the next strategic statement for the council.

4. A new strategic statement

As referenced in the Facing the Challenge progress report to County Council in March 2014, it is proposed that a new Strategic Commissioning Plan and accompanying Outcomes Framework for KCC is developed. This will be developed through Facing the Challenge Phase 2 transformation with the intention of it being adopted as the strategic statement from 2015/16 onwards, subject to approval by County Council. It will articulate the priorities that the council needs to deliver to achieve the vision set out in Facing the Challenge, and provide continued direction for whole-council transformation.

5. Recommendations

County Council is asked to:

- 1) Note the achievements of Bold Steps for Kent
- 2) Note the lessons learnt from Bold Steps for Kent
- 3) Agree the close down of Bold Steps for Kent

Background papers:

Bold Steps for Kent: The medium term plan until 2014/15, County Council 16 December 2010

Facing the Challenge: Progress to Date and Phase 2, County Council 27 March 2014

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