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To: Corporate Policy Overview Committee – 26 March 2009

Subject: Access Kent Overview & Draft Business Case

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To share the Access Kent business case and obtain Member input to the document and the principles of Access Kent. The information within this document stems from agreements and discussions across the public sector

1. Introduction

Accessing public services should be simple, friendly and effective. Access Kent will achieve just that. Our vision statement is:

“Access Kent will deliver Public Access for the 21st century. It is a multi-channel partnership approach: putting choice and personalisation at the heart of the service.

Putting the customer first means not only delivering a consistent and coherent experience and looking beyond organisational boundaries: but also value for money for Kent Tax-Payers.”

The business case outlines the objectives, outcomes and benefits of Access Kent and some of the more detailed work that is being and will be undertaken. Input has been received from a range of other organisations to shape this document.

2. Context

- 2.1. There are a myriad of public and voluntary sector agencies delivering services to Kent residents and they all have different locations, telephone numbers and websites. At present, it is up to Kent residents to establish which organisation provides the service they require (assuming they know the service exists) and sometimes make numerous visits or telephone calls before they find the right person in the right organisation.
- 2.2. Our service delivery and access is more diffuse and complex as it has become more personalised and offers greater choice to the public. It is more difficult for the public sector to manage this, therefore the purpose of this project is to make complex services easy to access for Kent residents.
- 2.3. If you have noisy neighbours – is that the police or your local council? If it is your local council, which council is it?
If you have high level social care needs or need information on disability services, is that the NHS or your council?
If you need information on credit unions or benefits or business survival tips – is that Citizens' Advice, Business Link or local council?
How would you know and why should it be your problem to find out?
- 2.4. Access Kent will transform and simplify access to services for Kent residents. By joining up access across the three main channels of access (face-to-face, telephone and web) the task of ensuring an individual or family finds the right point of contact in a timely and effective way is on us as public and voluntary sector agencies - where it should be.
- 2.5. The vision of joining up and streamlining access is ambitious but will be taken forward in a phased approach rather than “big bang” and initially will build on the work already underway in pockets across the Kent public sector. It will build on the principles that have ensured the success of Gateways so far and apply these to telephone and web/email.
- 2.6. The door is open for all public sector partners and discussions are moving forward with KCC, district and borough councils, Medway, Fire, Police, NHS, Voluntary Sector, business support organisations and many others. A full list of potential partners is in the business case. It is a partnership of the willing.

3. Progress to Date

- 3.1. Governance arrangements have been established with a Programme Board (chaired by Tanya Oliver) taking forward the practical issues on behalf of a strategic Access Kent Advisory Board

(chaired by Peter Gilroy, with Colin Carmichael from Canterbury City Council as Vice-Chair). Both Boards are multi-agency and consist of officer representation. Support has been secured from the Kent Partnership as one of their main themes over the coming years (see business case for membership of these groups).

- 3.2. Individual organisations will of course use their own internal governance arrangements where decisions are required.
- 3.3. A business case has been drafted and is being shared with partners over the coming weeks and partner agencies will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding if they are willing to be part of this project.
- 3.4. Funding of £170k has been secured from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership in the current financial year to take forward Access Kent and a further £300k in 2009/10.
- 3.5. Work is underway on a number of first year projects that are outlined in the business case in more detail.
- 3.6. A partnership seminar was held in December 2008 to engage with partners across the public and voluntary sector.
- 3.7. KCC ran a Member Seminar in December 2008 to gain insight from Members and to help shape KCC's input into the project. Feedback from this seminar has already been fed into the business case.
- 3.8. A project manager has been appointed.

4. Funding

- 4.1. Partners are already investing millions of pounds in Access Kent through normal business e.g. Gateway investment and ICT connectivity across the Kent economy. Money from the Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnership has been secured (£170k in 2008/9 and £300k in 2009/10). This money is also being used for project management capacity and to support existing projects (e.g Gateway Hubs, ICT strategy, telephone connectivity etc). Further funding is being sought from a range of external funding streams, such as European money and government funding, by all partners.
- 4.2. Money secured specifically for this project will be allocated where it can add the most value as agreed by the Advisory Board and Programme Board.
- 4.3. A Department of Work and Pensions project "**Tell Us Once**" began in Kent in late 2008 with KCC, Ashford, Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Dover and Thanet. This is government funded and is a direct result of the Gateway project. This project enables the citizen to register a death and then allow public sector organisations to notify each other automatically, without the resident then having to then do this themselves.
- 4.4. We have also secured through a joint bid under **Interreg IVa, 4.3 million euros** over three years to support a greater understanding of customer profiles and using new technologies and techniques, similar to those applied by successful retail organisations such as Tesco. This is a partnership project with Kent and European partners and the money is divided between all partner agencies.

5. Summary

This project will transform and deliver 21st century access to services for Kent residents. It is in early stages and will therefore evolve over time with the input of all partners. It is a partnership of the willing and will proceed at each stage with those partners who wish to be part of it and will not be held back by those who do not. At the heart of this programme will remain an effective and efficient customer experience.

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to support the principles and objectives of Access Kent

Tanya Oliver
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