

From: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport  
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee Meeting - 4 December 2015

Subject: Kent Environment Strategy: A strategy for environment, economy and health

Key Decision: 15/00087 (affects more than 2 electoral divisions)

Classification: **Unrestricted**

**Past Pathway of Paper:** Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 21 July 2015

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Cabinet – 25 January 2016, County Council March 2016

**Electoral Division: Kent Wide**

**Summary:**

The *Kent Environment Strategy: A strategy for environment, health and economy* was subject to public consultation from 27 July to 25 September 2015, as agreed at the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee meeting on 21 July 2015. Following the consultation, the strategy has been updated to reflect feedback and this paper seeks endorsement of the final strategy and the proposal to adopt it at Cabinet on 25 January 2016.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Cabinet Committee is asked to review the key consultation feedback outlined in this report and agree the amendments proposed in the final draft of the Kent Environment Strategy (Annex 1)
2. The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposed decision to adopt the refreshed Kent Environment Strategy: A strategy for environment, health and economy at Cabinet in January 2016, is attached at Annex 5.

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The previous *Kent Environment Strategy* ran from 2011 to 2015 and delivered multiple partnership projects and outcomes, which are detailed through the Kent Environment Strategy monitoring and Climate Local Kent reports on our KCC website<sup>1</sup>. Highlights include:

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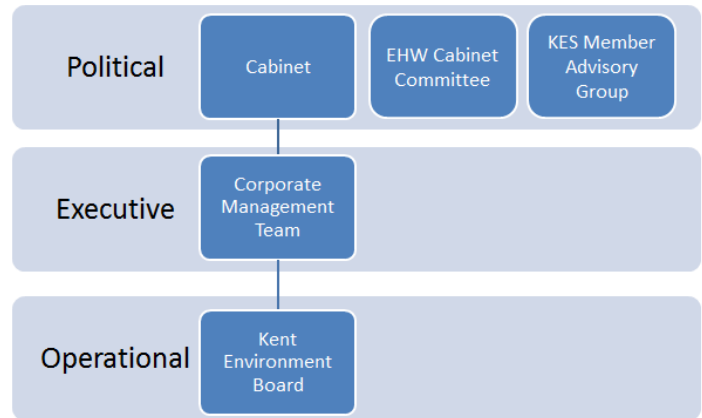
<sup>1</sup> [Kent Environment Strategy Progress Report 2014](#)

- £5.5m in savings to Kent residents through retrofitting of energy efficiency measures for the most vulnerable;
  - the development of our Low Carbon Kent network, providing support to over 1,700 businesses in resource efficiency and business continuity;
  - grants provided to low carbon businesses to support growth and expansion, unlocking private sector investment;
  - public sector partners have undertaken a range of energy efficiency and generation schemes, with KCC alone investing £3.9m to realise £12.9m in lifetime savings through energy efficiency measures; and
  - working in partnership, evidence and data have been strengthened around water management, energy efficiency and generation, the value of the natural environment and the financial impacts of severe weather, supporting commissioning, business planning and decision making.
- 1.2 In light of the strategy coming to an end and with significant changes in Central Government, both at Ministerial and policy level, a refresh has been undertaken with our partners, resulting in the development of the ***Kent Environment Strategy: A strategy for environment, health and economy (Annex 1)***. This iteration of the strategy has sought to strengthen links across sectors and partner strategies with a particular focus on the integration of environmental, health and economic outcomes. The strategy therefore looks to maximise opportunities in a time of decreasing resources, minimising duplication and identifying where partners can benefit from improved joined up approaches to delivery of positive outcomes for Kent and Medway.
- 1.3 The 10 strategic priorities identified by stakeholders and partners seeks to support:
- a competitive and resilient economy, with business innovation in the rural economy and low carbon and environmental services sector driving economic growth;
  - communities and businesses in saving money through resource efficiency, whilst preparing for severe weather and its impacts through an increased awareness of environmental risks and opportunities;
  - residents to have a high quality of life, saving money in warmer, healthier homes and benefitting from the many services provided through natural and historic assets, both within communities and across the county; and
  - public sector partners in saving money through evidence-based commissioning, strong partnership working, resource efficiency and avoiding future costs through increased resilience to environmental change.
- 1.4 A summary of the structure of the strategy and priorities is given in **Annex 2**. Delivery of the Kent Environment Strategy (KES) priorities directly aligns to a

number of KCC's strategic outcomes and a summary of these is given in **Annex 3**.

1.5 As a strategy for environment, economy and health, the priorities within the KES cut across Directorates within KCC and partner organisations, with all having a role in developing and delivering activities both internally and across the county.

1.6 The proposed reporting and governance for KCC's responsibilities in relation to the strategy are **Figure 1**. It is proposed that Cabinet hold responsibility for the oversight of delivery of the strategy, supported by Corporate Management Team and the Kent Environment Board. The Kent Environment Board is made up of KCC Directors with responsibility for environmental outcomes, providing operational steer and challenge for the strategy internally within KCC. Regular reports on progress will be provided to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee and, in addition, support and challenge will be provided through KES Member Advisory Group established by Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.



**Figure 1:** Overview of governance for the KES within KCC

1.7 The wider partnership governance structure for the KES is **Annex 4**. This structure represents the wide variety of groups, networks and organisations that have a role to play in oversight, challenge, steer and delivery of the KES. The KES Steering Group, comprising representatives of the main delivery and oversight bodies, will have responsibility for strategic direction and delivery. It is proposed that the main reporting line is to Kent Leaders and Kent Chief Executives to ensure that delivery of the strategy maintains the strong alignment to local authority priorities and outcomes, reflecting local circumstances

## 2. Consultation on the Kent Environment Strategy

2.1 The draft strategy was open for public consultation between 27 July and 25 September. The consultation was promoted through a press release, social media accounts (KCC's corporate and Explore Kent's Twitter accounts) and targeted emails to key networks and stakeholders. Parallel to the consultation, the strategy has been presented to senior management teams across all Districts and Boroughs and many key stakeholder groups. All documents were made available through [www.kent.gov.uk/kesconsultation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/kesconsultation)

2.2 Just over 100 responses were received - 51 from individuals and the remainder from organisations representing public, private and voluntary sectors including the Environment Agency, National Farmers Union, Country Land and Business

Association, NHS, Kent Wildlife Trust, Kent Nature Partnership and Kent Association of Local Councils (as well as seven Districts and Boroughs).

- 2.4 From those who completed the online questionnaire, the majority of respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the priorities identified for each theme (ranging from 78% to 81% of respondents).
- 2.5 The responses from the consultation have provided a wealth of further information that we had not previously had access to for integration into the strategy, evidence base and implementation plan. Feedback has been incorporated into this final draft of the strategy and a full report on the consultation will be made available to all respondents and on the website from November 2015. Some areas that were raised across respondents and requiring particular attention include:

**2.5.1 Balance of priorities in relation to development:** This is the most strongly and frequently made concern that was raised across respondent types, primarily in relation to the pressures of increased housing growth on infrastructure, and in particular, on transport networks, water and energy resources, natural environment and landscape. There was significant concern around the risk of “growth at any cost”, which was perceived in light of current targets for growth and development, but at the same time, concerns were raised that the strategy “can’t be a barrier to meeting housing targets”. In the final draft of the strategy, greater emphasis will be given to how improved joint working and locally appropriate evidence and guidance can support healthy, resilient communities as places of choice for businesses and residents. The strategy seeks to provide mechanisms to support planning decisions, recognising the need for sustainable growth in Kent and Medway. (Page 4)

**2.5.2 Influencing national Government and bodies:** There is widespread concern that national policy is not providing sufficient incentives or resources for delivery of the priorities identified by the KES. Many respondents expressed concern that, in some cases, Government policy is moving away from effectively supporting energy efficiency and generation, low carbon development and long term resilience to severe weather and climate change, despite their benefits for the economy, health and resilience of communities and businesses. A priority for Theme 1 is to influence national and local policy and strategy, and through the implementation plan, we will seek to establish a mechanism for this, including a KES Member Advisory Group proposed by Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport. (Page 15)

**2.5.3 Agriculture, forestry, viticulture and horticulture:** Multiple respondents felt that the growing importance of these sectors and their role in our economy and the health and resilience of the county is not fully realised. We have received significant amounts of data and information to support the update of the strategy but in addition, through development of the implementation plan, Economic Development will play a major role in ensuring that opportunities and risks to the sector are addressed in shaping future work programmes. Development of activities for the implementation plan will also

need to integrate, and work, with those of the Kent Rural Board.(Page 30 and Priority 10.2 page 32)

**2.5.4 Sustainable Transport options:** A conflict was seen by respondents between priorities to reduce car travel and what is perceived as a lack of investment in affordable public transport options, particularly in rural areas. It was also felt that the targets and indicators in this area are weak. We will work across the relevant teams in development of the KES implementation plan to ensure that activities are SMART; that the KES influences and link to other strategies such as the Local Transport Plan 4 and the emerging Active Travel Strategy; and that the targets and indicators for this area are strengthened through the activities included in the implementation plan.

**2.5.5 Noise pollution:** The issues and impacts surrounding noise pollution are an omission in the current draft of the strategy and this was raised by a number of respondents, with a particular focus from those in the area impacted by air traffic for Gatwick Airport. Further research on the impacts of noise pollution will be integrated into Theme 1 of the strategy with associated activities integrated into Theme 2. Links to Kent County Council (KCC) and District and Borough policy in this area will be more clearly defined in the strategy and implementation plan. (Page 17)

**2.5.6 Links between strategies, plans and partner roles:** There was significant feedback requesting clarification on how links will be made between strategies, local plans and where the Kent Environment Strategy fits into these. In addition, respondents were keen to see how they could play a role in delivery of the priorities. To address this point, the strategy will be updated to further refine strategic links and governance building on discussions across partner organisations and KCC Policy Team. Development of the implementation plan will be carried out in partnership with stakeholders to ensure clear roles, resourcing and timelines are identified. (Page 10 and 11)

### 3. Next steps

- 25 January: Final draft to be taken to Cabinet for proposed adoption
- February: Finalisation of the partnership Implementation Plan underpinning the strategy (currently in development with partners)
- March: Adoption of the KES by all partners and launch

### 4. Recommendations:

- 4.1. The Cabinet Committee is asked to review the key consultation feedback outlined in this report and agree the amendments proposed in the final draft of the Kent Environment Strategy (Annex 1)
- 4.2 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the proposed decision to adopt the refreshed Kent Environment Strategy: A strategy for environment, health and economy at Cabinet in January 2016, is attached at Annex 5.

## 5. Background Documents

- All consultation documents available at [www.kent.gov.uk/kesconsultation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/kesconsultation)
- Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee paper - KES consultation 21 July 2015

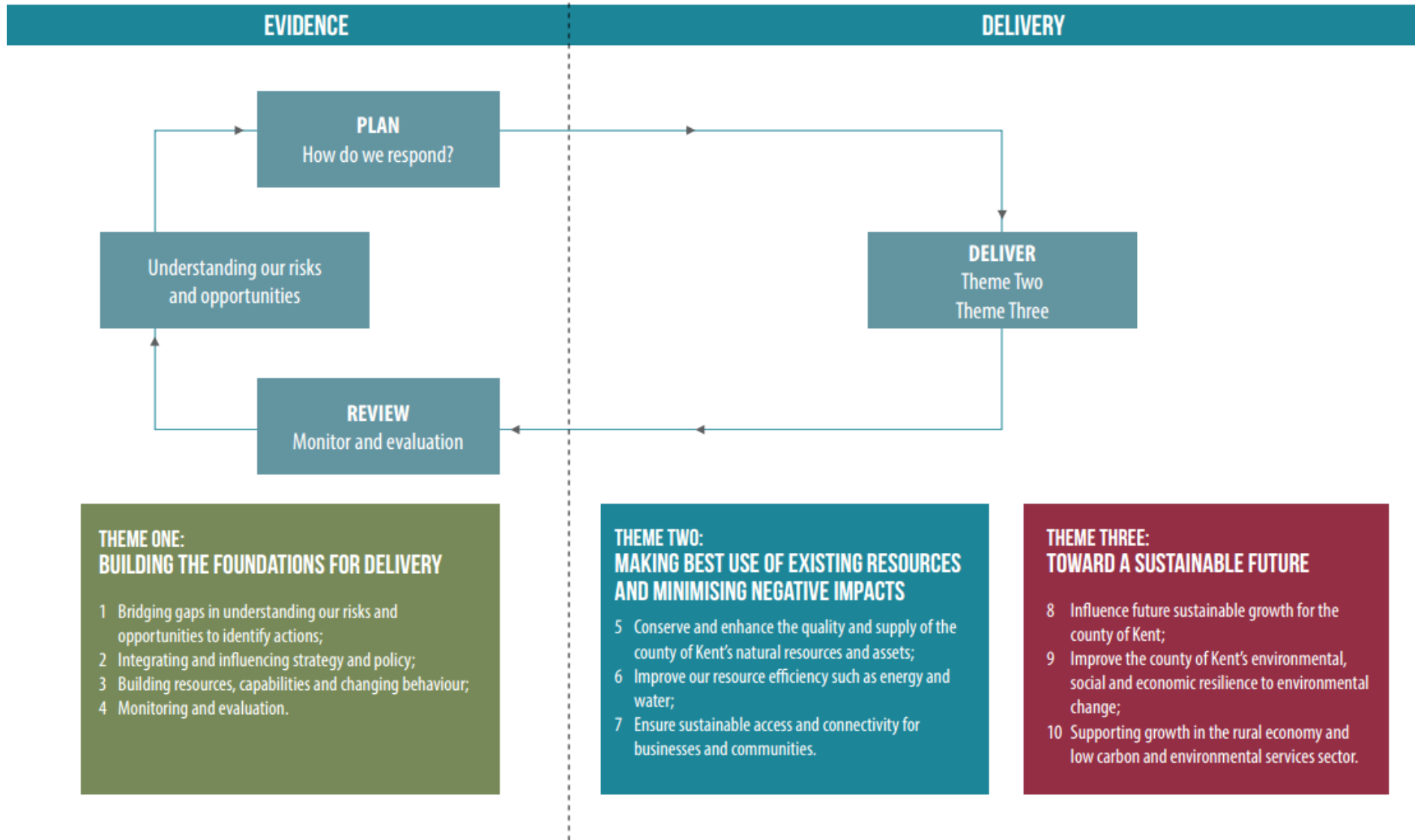
## 6. Contact details

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## Annex 2: Summary of priorities and structure of the Kent Environment Strategy

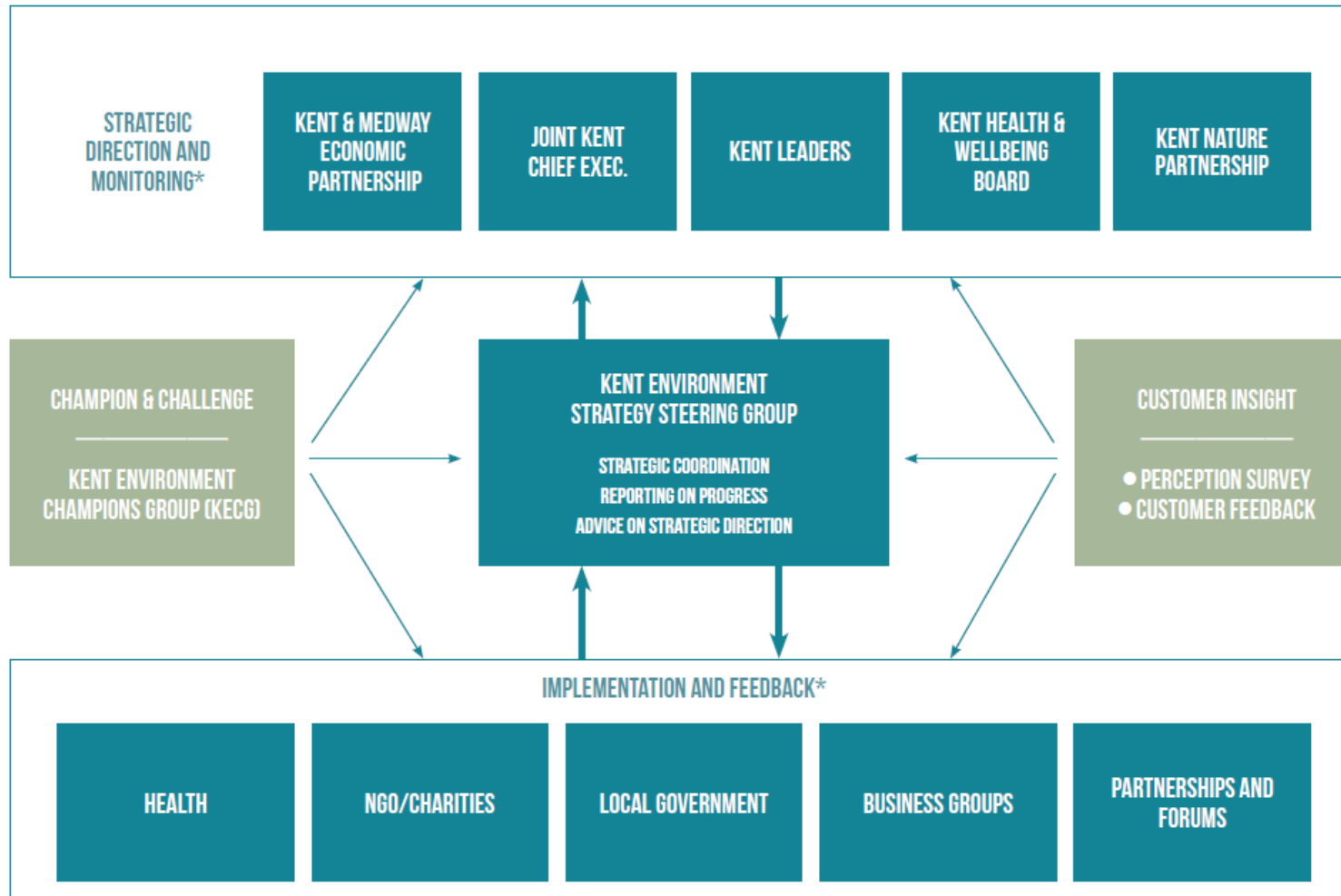


### Annex 3: Alignment of KES priorities to KCC's strategic outcomes

KCC's strategic outcome	Kent Environment Strategy priority
<b>Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life</b>	<b>Priority 9:</b> Improve the county of Kent's environmental, social and economic resilience to environmental change (sub-priority 9.1: Increase awareness of the impacts of severe weather and environmental change and empower businesses and communities to build resilience)
	<b>Priority 10:</b> Supporting growth in the rural economy and low carbon and environmental services sector (sub-priority 10.3: Support skills development to facilitate growth)
<b>Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life</b>	<b>Priority 1:</b> Bridging gaps in understanding our risks and opportunities to identify actions
	<b>Priority 5:</b> Conserve and enhance the quality and supply of the county of Kent's natural and historical resources and assets
	<b>Priority 6:</b> Improve our resource efficiency, including energy and water
	<b>Priority 7:</b> Ensure sustainable access and connectivity for businesses and communities
	<b>Priority 8:</b> Influence future sustainable growth for the county of Kent
	<b>Priority 9:</b> Improve the county of Kent's environmental, social and economic resilience to environmental change
<b>Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently</b>	<b>Priority 6:</b> Improve our resource efficiency, including energy and water (sub-priority 6.2: Improve the resource efficiency of our homes through delivery of retrofitting programmes, reducing costs and improving health outcomes for the most vulnerable).



## Annex 4: Partnership governance of the Kent Environment Strategy



\*Representatives sit on the Kent Environment Strategy Steering Group  
The main reporting line will be to Kent Leaders and Joint Chief Execs