From:	Eric Hotson, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Democratic Services David Cockburn, Corporate Director Strategic and Corporate Services and Head of Paid Service
To:	Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee, 19th March 2019
Subject:	Development of the Strategic Delivery Plan
Classification:	Unrestricted
Past Pathway:	Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee (29th June 2018)
Future Pathway:	Cabinet Committees (March 2019), Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee (13th June 2019)

Summary: The Strategic Delivery Plan will be the strategic business plan for Kent County Council, which supports the delivery of the outcomes in the Strategic Statement. As a rolling plan, it sets out the significant activity we need to deliver over the medium term, connecting strategy with the resources and capacity we need to deliver effectively at pace.

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to:

(1) **Consider and discuss** the draft Strategic Delivery Plan summary.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 In June 2018, the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee endorsed the move from directorate business plans to a strategic business plan for the whole Council, which could better support the delivery of the outcomes in KCC's Strategic Statement.

1.2 The Strategic Delivery Plan is being collectively developed with services, Cabinet Members and Corporate Management Team. It is supported by a summary document and will be agreed by Corporate Board.

1.3 The Strategic Delivery Plan is designed to be outcome led, with a strong focus on accountability for the delivery of significant activity, including commissioning, service change and strategy/policy development. It focuses on action not words, clearly setting out what activity needs to be delivered, with a light-touch narrative of key themes.

1.4 It is driving a step change in business planning, looking ahead over a rolling three-year cycle, to progress activity through the right informal and formal governance arrangements. It is progressing management action on resourcing, capacity and compliance issues, in a disciplined way which supports KCC's new Operating Standards.

1.5 The Strategic Delivery Plan is supported by divisional/service 'Operating Plans'. The Operating Plans capture core business activity across the Council (e.g. statutory responsibilities) and align with activity within the Strategic Delivery Plan. These remain a management responsibility and will be made accessible to all elected members on KNet from April 2019.

Figure 1: KCC's business and financial planning cycle

2. THE STRATEGIC DELIVERY PLAN PROCESS

2.1 The Strategic Delivery Plan approach was endorsed by Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee in June 2018 and agreed with Cabinet Members and CMT in September 2018. A business change approach was developed to support the creation of the plan, maximising the potential of our Microsoft 365 tools to gather, analyse and store information across the Council in a simple, efficient way. Officer engagement began in October 2018, including briefings for Challenger, Directors and Extended CMT.

Identifying a long list

2.2 The first step in the process was to create a 'long list' of activity from all divisions across the Council. This included "significant" activity which was likely to be high value, profile, risk and complexity, and likely to meet the key decision criteria. This included people commissioning, infrastructure commissioning (including assets and technology), significant service changes and strategy/policy development.

2.3 The officer response was extremely positive, with proactive engagement with the business change approach from across the Council. A simple

online form was used to gather information from services, which was open for a 6 week submission period and only took a few minutes to submit. This allowed the instant collation of a vast amount of information on 183 different activities by the end of November, with automatic analysis of the data trends.

2.4 The breadth and volume of activity identified for the 'long list', enabled constructive discussions with Cabinet Members and CMT in early December about the resource and capacity implications for the Council. These are further considered in Section 4.

2.5 The discussion identified some activities which did not meet the criteria for the Strategic Delivery Plan as they were operational delivery or core business (e.g. statutory duties), not strategic activity. It is important that the plan does not become an exhaustive list of everything we do (already captured in documents such as Operating Plans, Budget Book and strategies/policies), but prioritises the most significant activity for the Council. An updated list of 171 activities was confirmed by Cabinet Members by the end of December.

Prioritising a short list

2.6 The aim was now to move from a 'long list' to a 'short list' which could inform the narrative for the draft Strategic Delivery Plan. The short list needed to prioritise activity with high strategic importance, value, risk and complexity. Any activity not prioritised for the short list would be used to inform the development of divisional Operating Plans. Detailed activity 'scorecards' were used to capture all the information about each piece of activity on a page, including financial information, decision authority and accountability.

2.7 In early January 2019, we assessed all the activity submitted by services, from a whole Council perspective to inform a relative prioritisation discussion with Cabinet Members and CMT. This was achieved using a simple, consistent framework which is considered best practice by the National Audit Office and has already proven valuable for prioritising project, programme and assurance work within the Council.

2.8 In early February, Cabinet Members and CMT confirmed 79 activities for the short list and highlighted key themes to include within the Strategic Delivery Plan. The majority of these activities (89%) are already in delivery and will form the 'pipeline' for CMT and Corporate Board, so management action can be progressed at pace. This pipeline will help to determine which activities will benefit from robust business case development and a disciplined focus through informal and formal governance arrangements, ahead of decision making.

Developing the plan

2.9 Once the short list was confirmed, this helped to identify shared themes, opportunities and challenges to include in the narrative for the draft Strategic Delivery Plan, including:

- Outcomes based commissioning
- Integration and partnership working

- Place-shaping
- The right infrastructure for a growing county
- Resilient services and communities
- Shaping future strategy

2.10 Brief 'headline' descriptions for each piece of activity were developed, to clarify what the activity intended to achieve, which will feature in the summary document. The information submitted by services was updated to provide clarity on what needed to be delivered and include the proposed informal governance route for each piece of activity.

2.11 Two versions of the Strategic Delivery Plan were developed:
- A full version which includes detailed activity submissions
- A summary which captures our ambition and activity to deliver better outcomes

2.12 Draft versions of the Strategic Delivery Plan were considered by Cabinet Members and CMT in February. The draft Strategic Delivery Plan Summary **(Appendix A)** was shared with elected members as part of briefings on the Strategic Delivery Plan process with Political Groups in late February. Feedback on the draft will be considered to develop the final versions of the Strategic Delivery Plan, ahead of approval by Corporate Board.

3. THE ROLE OF MEMBERS IN BUSINESS PLANNING

3.1 Elected members play an important role in considering activity within the Strategic Delivery Plan through the governance and decision making arrangements for the Council.

3.2 Members work with officers to provide input and advice on individual activities through the Council's informal governance arrangements and contribute to other task and finish groups to inform activity in advance of formal governance and decision making. This adds value by helping to inform options for strategic commissioning or service change and contributes to member's role in strategy and policy development. This is an important part of KCC remaining an effective member led and Strategic Commissioning Authority, with effective joint working between members and officers.

3.3 Members will consider individual activities within in the Strategic Delivery Plan as they progress through Cabinet Committees ahead of formal decision making. Officers are responsible for delivering and managing the activity that flows from decisions that are taken by members. Cabinet Committees provide oversight of activity throughout delivery, for example considering the effectiveness of contract management. Corporate Directors ensure members are engaged in oversight of activity within directorate arrangements, for example informal briefings on the Adult Social Care and Health Portfolio projects.

3.4 The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee has oversight of the business planning framework for the Council. A review of the Strategic Delivery Plan process will be reported to this committee in June 2019.

4. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

4.1 The development of the Strategic Delivery Plan has highlighted benefits and challenges, which will inform future action and a review of the Strategic Delivery Plan process this Spring.

Benefits

4.2 One of the major successes of the Strategic Delivery Plan has been the collaborative engagement from across the Council. Officers and Cabinet Members have worked together to ensure it reflects the key issues in our operating environment and critical success factors for the Council. Officers have embraced new ways of working, proactively submitted a wealth of information and have been keen to support the new process.

4.3 The process has demonstrated the significant opportunities of business change. It has maximized our investment in the Microsoft 365 tools, proving these can be used in efficient, creative ways to support key business processes. The tools made it quick and simple to gather information in a structured way from across the council. Automatic analysis in Microsoft Forms provided early indications into how plan was shaping up, to issues could be swiftly addressed. This enhanced the productivity of the whole process and saved hundreds of hours compared to gathering and processing business planning information by traditional means.

4.4 The Microsoft Teams site has been a hub for officer information, allowing for real time updates and queries to be resolved instantly. It also facilitated engagement between officers in different teams on shared projects. The learning from this approach can now be applied to other business processes.

4.5 The plan has helped to identify clear shared themes, which will support the development of next Strategic Statement. The prioritisation short list process has ensured the right activity is in the plan and has the right focus through the informal governance arrangements. We will capture this learning for the next Strategic Statement to ensure we prioritise even more effectively in future business planning rounds.

4.6 The capacity and demand information that emerged through the plan process is now shaping resourcing decisions. CMT have taken a strategic leadership role on this issue, considering how to prioritise the right skills and capacity effectively. Corporate support services are using the plan to respond to future demand. For example, 73% of short list activity identified the need for Strategic Commissioning support, so the division is now using the Strategic Delivery Plan analysis to prioritise limited resources on the most significant activity.

Challenges

4.7 The volume of activity identified within the process, in addition to core business delivery, has exposed the need to carefully consider resources, impact and the value of activity to ensure a strong focus on outcomes. 32% of responses said they were still unsure about the capacity needed and needed to further assess what is required. This has demonstrated the need to prioritise and challenge what can be achieved within the year ahead, and over the medium term in the context of rising demand and financial pressures.

4.8 The volume issue is particularly significant in terms of demand for corporate support services, who not only need to deliver corporate enabling activity, but also support significant service activity. 71% of activity requires support for across KCC services for delivery, with particularly high levels of demand for Strategic Commissioning (73%) and Finance (63%) support. However, Directors are already responding to this issue by using the analysis of the Strategic Delivery Plan to effectively plan for future capacity and demand.

4.9 The volume has also indicated that there is insufficient prioritisation across the Council, both corporately and within services. It was noticeable during the analysis of the emerging plan, that the Strategic Statement outcomes were unbalanced (38% of activity is within Outcome 2), too broad and do not easily capture cross-cutting enabling activity (21% of activity), which is an increasing focus of a Strategic Commissioning Authority model. The breadth of activity reinforces the need to ensure the next Strategic Statement is clearer about member priorities, allowing greater prioritisation of business activity across the Council.

4.10 The quality of the financial information submitted by services in the process correlates with issues previously raised by Corporate Assurance about effectively defining costs and benefits. For example, only 54% of activity responses identified revenue investment costs. The gaps in financial information show that too often activity is initiated without a full appreciation of financial implications and there is a need for greater discipline on this through business case development.

4.11 The plan has also raised some compliance risks around the sufficiency of equalities and data protection analysis. Only 29% of activity has completed an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) initial screening or has one in progress, and 21% have a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) completed or in progress. CMT and the General Counsel are providing leadership on this issue to ensure that activity is unable to proceed without having met these compliance requirements, address any immediate risks and continue to enhance the quality of our analysis.

5. DELIVERING THE RIGHT ACTIVITY, IN THE RIGHT WAY

5.1 By focusing on high value, complex activity, the Strategic Delivery Plan is an important part of managing organisational risk effectively. Recent National Audit Office reports have highlighted the financial and delivery risks in the local government operating environment. This plan means that

we can have a proactive and disciplined response to managing risk, with many activities within the plan linked to supporting mitigating actions in the Corporate Risk Register.

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5.2 To do so, we need to ensure we are managing the delivery of the right activity in the right way. The way we will achieve this is through better business case development. The HM Treasury Better Business Cases principles are being used to strengthen this in commissioning practice and assurance of change projects/programmes. Only 53% of the activity in the short list was identified as being part of a programme or project, which highlights the need to consider future change management capacity.

5.3 The short list will help to determine what activity requires robust business case development and ensure this is delivered effectively in line with KCC's Operating Standards as it proceeds through the informal and formal governance arrangements. The short list will now become the focus for the Corporate Assurance and Risk team to prioritise activities which need strong, effective business case development and delivery.

5.3 CMT are taking a leadership role on management action for the Strategic Delivery Plan, using this to drive forward agenda planning and taking a programmed approach, supported by collective business case development.

6. NEXT STEPS

6.1 This report, including the draft summary document, will be made available to Cabinet Committees during March 2019, where requested by the Cabinet Committee Chairman.

6.2 The final Strategic Delivery Plan and Strategic Delivery Plan Summary are due to be approved by Corporate Board. It is intended to publish the summary document on Kent.gov and the full plan and supporting Operating Plans on KNet, in April.

6.3 To build on the successful momentum of the Strategic Delivery Plan process and positively address emerging issues, a review of the process will be undertaken this Spring. This will be reported to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee in June 2019 and used to shape future business planning rounds, which will start later this year, informed by the Spending Review (2019).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The recommendations are as follows:

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee Cabinet Committee is asked to: **(1) Consider and discuss** the draft Strategic Delivery Plan summary.

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Appendix A: Draft Strategic Delivery Plan Summary document

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