
By: Peter Gilroy – Chief Executive

To: Roger Gough – Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services & Performance Management

Subject: Phase 2 – Gateway Roll-out across the County.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Phase One of Gateway is complete. This report **seeks approval** for Phase Two of the Gateway programme including entering the relevant legal and contractual arrangements for each individual Gateway.

Introduction

1. (1) The Gateway programme has been underway for over six years with the first Gateway opening in Ashford in October 2005. Phase one has seen Gateways completed in Thanet, Tunbridge Wells, Tenterden, Maidstone, Dover and Tonbridge, joining up access to services across the non-emergency public and voluntary sectors. A Mobile Gateway has also been developed. Feedback from Kent residents has been positive overall and this (along with any suggestions for improvements) has been used to inform each Gateway and the overall Gateway model. Gateways were green-flagged in the recent Corporate Area Assessment by the Audit Commission as a national exemplar.
- (2) The Gateway programme has been endorsed by the Kent Partnership as one of their key themes and also forms part of the Government's Total Place initiative, for which Kent is a pilot.
- (3) Gateways are part of the Strategic Development Unit and form part of the business plan for that unit.
- (4) Plans for phase two of Gateway include Gateways in Swale, Sevenoaks, Gravesend, Canterbury, Shepway and Dartford (subject to the partnership and legal agreements). It will also include Ashford Gateway Plus.

Context

2. (1) The Gateway programme is part of Kent County Council's overall modernisation programme and is closely aligned to Better Work Places, the asset management stream of Total Place and the work of individual directorates. The value of Gateway is enhanced by the strong partnership arrangements with districts, NHS, police, fire, voluntary sector and central government.
- (2) The work on Interreg IVa, Tell Us Once and the Benefits Hub are all contributing to enhancing the Gateway model and ensuring it continues to develop to meet citizen needs both now and in the future.
- (3) Telephone and online services are also being joined-up and developed along the same principles as face-to-face Gateways but any implications for Kent County Council will be reported separately.

(4) Through the work of the Gateway programme, savings are being built into the Medium Term Financial Plan through access and assessment as well as the asset rationalisation work (see 4 below).

Policy Framework

3. The Gateway programme delivers part of the national government strategy (e.g. strategies outlined by Varney in 2005 and the Lyons Review in 2006). It also is a key deliverable against local priorities, such as the Vision for Kent, Kent Commitment and Kent Partnership along with Kent County Council priorities, such as Towards 2010. Gateway is part of the Strategic Development Unit business plan for 2009/10 and this decision is included in that business plan.

Implications

4. (1) The budget implications for Gateway phase two are built into the capital and revenue Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and before any individual Gateway proceeds, financial commitments will be secured from partner organisations as appropriate.

(2) The Gateway programme is also enabling savings that are built into the MTFP and at present, those savings total £20m for a combination of asset and access and assessment costs over the duration of the MTFP. Not proceeding with the Gateway programme would have a significant negative impact on the ability of KCC to deliver these savings.

Consultations

7. (1) The Gateway programme has been to the Corporate Policy and Overview Committee (now the Policy, Overview & Scrutiny Committee) on a number of occasions. A separate Member seminar has also been held within the last year.

(2) Feedback from the public has been sought through a number of routes, including forums, feedback forms and satisfaction surveys and this information is available to Members and residents on request. Feedback overall has been very positive and where improvements have been suggested, these have been taken up locally (e.g. re-designing the layout of Tenterden Gateway as a result of local feedback). The National One-Stop-Shop benchmarking survey returned an average result of over 90% for Gateways in Kent.

(3) The National Audit Commission, having received evidence on a range of themes around Gateway as part of the CAA, found Gateways to be a national exemplar and awarded them a green-flag.

Local Members

8. Local Members (both county and district) are key stakeholders in Gateways and will be consulted as part of the discussion around all future individual Gateways.

Conclusion

9. Gateways are transforming access to non-emergency public and voluntary sector services in Kent. It is part of general modernisation and the feedback from Kent residents is a key factor in the decision to proceed with phase two of Gateway. Gateways have received local, national and international recognition for what they are achieving and this would not be possible without the support of KCC elected Members and partner organisations across Kent.

Recommendations

10. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services and Performance Management is recommended to agree that subject to the Chief Executive being satisfied as to the detailed terms and conditions he be authorised on behalf of the County Council to enter into all such legal and contractual agreements as maybe necessary in order to bring about the completion of phase two of the Gateway programme, as detailed in this report.

Background Documents:

Towards 2010

“The Future is Retail” – Gateway Strategy for Kent January 2007

Front Office Shared Services reports 2007, 2008 & 2009 (Cabinet Office, Department for Communities & Local Government & IDEA)

Strategic Development Unit Business Plan 2009/10

Corporate Area Assessment report 2009

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