

From: Paul Carter, Leader

To: County Council, 17 October 2019

Subject: ***Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes - Strategic Statement Annual Report 2019***

Summary: This report outlines the progress made towards the strategic outcomes set out in KCC's five-year Strategic Statement (2015-2020), *Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes*.

Recommendation(s):

County Council is asked to:

- **Note and Comment** on the *Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes* Strategic Statement Annual Report 2019.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our Strategic Statement, "*Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes*", agreed by County Council in March 2015 set out our ambitions for the county by 2020. These focus on ensuring children and young people get the best start in life, Kent communities benefit from being in-work, healthy and enjoy a good quality of life, and older and vulnerable residents remain safe and supported to live independently.
- 1.2 Within the Strategic Statement a commitment was made to all elected members to deliver an Annual Report to County Council. This has provided an opportunity to reflect on our successes and areas for improvement and identify future priorities to drive progress towards the outcomes.
- 1.3 This Annual Report, provided in Appendix A, demonstrates the progress we have made over the last 12 months and since 2015 towards delivering better outcomes. It includes a commentary on each supporting outcome and provides an assessment of our direction of travel.
- 1.4 Against a challenging financial backdrop the County Council has taken significant actions to ensure effective and efficient services are continued to be delivered which achieve the Strategic Statement's overall aim to 'improve lives by ensuring that every pound spent in Kent is achieving better outcomes for Kent's residents, businesses and communities'. We continue to make good progress across a wide range of outcomes but also recognise that achieving our outcomes is a medium to long term aim and in some cases, achievement is dependent on other organisations, requiring us to work in partnership to address whole system issues.
- 1.5 The 2019 Annual Report will be the last focused on the current Strategic Statement which ends in 2020 and provides an opportunity to reflect ahead of the development of the County Council's next 5-year plan from 2020.

2. Operating Environment

- 2.1 **Responding to the Financial Challenge:** Since 2010 KCC has faced an unprecedented financial challenge from a combination of rising spending demands, reductions in central government funding and freezes/limits on raising council tax. We have successfully responded with planned annual savings of £50.2m in 2018-19 and totalling £559m in the eight years since 2010. The sustained financial pressures have meant it has been imperative to demonstrate robust financial management, something we have a strong track record in accomplishing, **ensuring our limited resources are utilised as effectively as possible to make the biggest difference to people's lives.** Where necessary we have prioritised those services which will achieve our strategic outcomes and which matter most to Kent's residents and businesses.
- 2.2 **Developing our Commissioning Authority:** Since 2015 in response to the changing needs and expectations of our residents and businesses, alongside the financial challenge, we have made significant progress in embedding our strategic commissioning authority model. Through structural changes, including the creation of a strategic commissioning function, **we have placed the authority in a strong position to maintain a broad range of statutory and non-statutory quality, lower cost services, which can achieve our outcomes.** Our co-designed commissioning operating model strengthens our capacity and capability to effectively deliver, with the right capabilities including strong commercial leadership and judgement, evidenced based decision-making and first-rate analysis skills and improved commissioning standards and processes.
- 2.3 **Innovating across our services:** Over the last 5 years KCC has developed and matured our traded service arrangements. This has enabled them to successfully and sustainably deliver, hold providers to account and maximise income generation. Through enhanced growth potential the trading companies are able to explore potential markets and grow their future customer base to generate income for the benefit of the whole authority. We have established a holding company to ensure effective governance and now have a range of transactional ICT, HR and Finance services delivered for KCC through Cantium Business Solutions, launched in July 2019, and education services including early years and childcare, skills and employability and school improvement through The Education People (TEP), which launched in September 2018. **Our innovation across our internal services, our traded services, and our integration with partners, have improved our efficiency, effectiveness and delivery of our outcomes.**
- 2.4 **Recognising our staff:** The successes we have achieved since 2015 would not have been possible without **our staff's continued dedication to delivering high-quality services and excellent customer service.** At a time of significant change, we have invested in our staff supporting the development of our management capacity including skills, knowledge and mind-set, equipping our staff with the right tools, and supporting the resilience of our workforce. We have also responded to our 2018 Staff Survey to build on our successes and existing practice and to maximise future opportunities through targeted actions at both an organisational and directorate level.

3. Areas of Success

3.1 Over the last year and since the Strategic Statement was agreed by County Council in March 2015, Kent County Council has continued to deliver both core services and a broad range of support for our residents, communities and businesses. We have prioritised those services which matter most to our communities, which support better outcomes, and which offer value for money. Below are a number of key successes Kent County Council has achieved towards our three strategic outcomes:

Strategic Outcome 1: Children and young people get the best start in life

3.2 **Transforming Children's Services:** The 'good' Ofsted judgement of our children's services in 2017 put Kent's children's services among the top 30% in the country. The County Council has continued to place a key focus on assuring the delivery of quality and effective children's services through the Change for Kent Children programme which has supported the development of a fully integrated approach to managing adolescent risk and the new 'Front Door' for all Early Help notifications and Social Care referrals which is ensuring families are able to access the right service at the right time to address their needs.

3.3 The driving ambition for the integration of all elements of children's social care and early help is to reduce escalating demand on children's services, better supporting children, young people and their families at an earlier stage, without recourse to statutory intervention. It is therefore positive that we have **reduced the number of children in care (excluding asylum)** and remained consistently below the national average. The percentage of **cases closed by Early Help Units with outcomes achieved has also significantly increased** from 69.0% in 2015 to 79.8% in 2019.

3.4 **Improving Schools Standards:** Kent schools have an excellent track record in raising standards. Since 2015 the percentage of **schools with good or outstanding Ofsted inspections has improved** significantly with the proportion of Kent schools with an Ofsted judgement of good or better now standing at 91%. This is a marked increase from 79.6% in 2015 and is above the national average. The **Early Years and Childcare Sector in Kent is also of high quality** with 97% of group provisions, 98% of childminders and 100% of standalone out of school childcare provisions currently judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding.

3.5 **Raising Educational Attainment:** Educational attainment in Kent has continued to increase year on year. Following changes to Key Stage 2 standards in 2016 and Key Stage 4 in 2017, Kent has seen an **improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths at Key Stage 2 and the percentage of pupils achieving a standard pass (grade 4 or higher) in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 has increased** and improved against our statistical neighbours.

Strategic Outcome 2: Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life

- 3.6 **Delivering Infrastructure Improvements:** We have worked to deliver the infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of our growing communities and support Kent businesses to drive economic growth and deliver new jobs across the whole of Kent. The Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF), the first of its kind in the country, provides a county-wide picture of the growth and infrastructure required. We have attracted **significant investment** into our county, **delivered vital Local Growth Fund projects, converted our streetlights to LED, and continued to maximise financial contributions towards our services from developers** of new housing sites. Kent's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) programme has also now **brought superfast broadband of at least 24mbps to 95.9% of homes and businesses**, many of which would otherwise have had no or slow broadband connectivity.
- 3.7 **Investing in Highways Maintenance:** We have invested **heavily in the county's highways** including through a **comprehensive annual 'Pothole Blitz' programme**. This has addressed the needs of our communities by prioritising pothole repairs, tackled the impact of severe weather and responded to the significant challenge of maintaining our ageing highways assets. The pothole blitz has seen over £15m in pothole repairs over the last two years. In 2018 KCC filled over 54,000 individual potholes and carried out over 267,000sqm of resurfacing. **Our road re-surfacing programme has also received substantial additional capital funding investment**, with KCC allocating £60m over the next two years. This doubles investment into road maintenance, trebles footway maintenance and will support implementation of a crash barrier update programme on main roads. KCC has also ensured that additional EU Exit preparedness funding from Government has been effectively spent including on improving Kent's transport infrastructure.
- 3.8 **Promoting Kent's Cultural and Sporting Offer:** KCC's Libraries, Registrations and Archives and Community, Learning and Skills provide a wide variety of opportunities for children and adults whether it be for personal development, pleasure or wellbeing. We have supported international artistic and sporting events across the county including the 2019 Turner Prize and 2020 Open Golf, have launched the Everyday Active campaign and continue to work with Kent's sports clubs to ensure high quality experiences. **The percentage of population aged 16 and over participating in regular physical activity and the percentage of adults engaged in sport and physical activity have increased** over recent years.
- 3.9 **Protecting and Improving our Environment –** We continue to deliver on our priorities set out in our Kent Environment Strategy. In March 2019, we **achieved our five-year target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our estate and services**, two years early, by reducing our emissions by 33% compared to a 2015 baseline. This is a positive step towards our commitment to achieve net zero emissions in the shortest possible timeframe. We have worked with the transport, business, schools and health sectors across Kent to secure funding and address key environmental challenges such as poor air quality. We have also set out clear aims to maintain and improve our county's environment through the multi-agency Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, Kent's Plan Bee and the Kent Biodiversity Strategy.

Strategic Outcome 3: Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently

- 3.10 **Enabling Independence:** Our ambition for older and vulnerable people is to help improve or maintain their wellbeing and for them to live as independently as possible. This forms a crucial element of our Adult Social Care Strategy and new operating model which focus on what people can do, not what they cannot do. Our Kent Enablement at Home Service, Kent Pathway Service and Kent Enablement and Recovery Service **support service users to continue living in their own homes.** We are also working with the NHS to commission additional enablement capacity and with providers to refresh the Accommodation Strategy to ensure the right provision in the right places. An important strategic priority within the revised Accommodation Strategy is increased provision of extra care housing and other similar models. This approach has **reduced Delayed Transfers of Care and freed up capacity within the Home Care provider market.**
- 3.11 **Promoting Choice and Control:** We are delivering on our adult social care vision for greater choice and control through focusing on the individual's needs and their desired outcomes. Since 2018, **the percentage of adult social care service users who are extremely or very satisfied with their care and support, who say services have made them feel safe, and who say they have adequate or better control over daily life have all significantly increased.** We continue to develop our services and work with service users, commissioners, providers and health partners to deliver the new model of care which ensures the most appropriate support at the right time to meet individual needs. We are also increasing engagement with older and vulnerable adults through user and stakeholder innovation forums for Local Care, are working closely with the voluntary sector to ensure a strong customer voice and are putting the ESTHER model at the centre of how we develop our services.
- 3.12 **Providing Advice, Information and Support:** We have improved our information and advice to service users, families and carers. **The percentage of adult social care service users who find it easy to find information about services and the percentage of carers who find it easy to find information and advice about support & services have both increased.** We have developed a new Being Digital Strategy and are reviewing the Area Management referral service, continuing to build the client support service, and are working with NHS and community and voluntary sector partners to improve information, advice and access points.
- 3.13 **Tackling Social Isolation:** **KCC provide a wide range of support to service users, residents and communities to help tackle social isolation.** This includes our unique Young Persons Travel Pass and 16+ Travelcard and support for non-profitable bus routes which serve isolated communities. We have seen an **increase in the percentage of adult social care services users who have as much social contact as they would like.** We are looking to develop our Voluntary and Community Sector policy into a 'civil society' strategy for Kent which will recognise the role of civil society in tackling social isolation and are taking forward the recommendations from the recent KCC Select Committee on Social Isolation and Loneliness.

4. Working with our Partners

- 4.1 The outcomes and performance indicators agreed within the Strategic Statement place an emphasis on Kent County Council working in partnership with our partners to address whole system issues. Below are a number of key areas where Kent County Council has driven progress:
- 4.2 **Supporting Kent's Businesses – KCC works closely with businesses, young people, education providers, business support organisations and strategic partners to increase employment and boost Kent business growth.** Despite challenging economic conditions beyond the County Council's control, KCC has secured additional funding and provided valued support to businesses including through our three Regional Growth Fund (RGF) Programmes: Expansion East Kent, Tiger and Escalate and the Kent and Medway Business Fund which is funded by loan repayments from our previous RGF schemes. Our three RGF programmes have invested over £55m and as of March 2019 created or safeguarded 4,399 jobs. The Kent and Medway Business Fund has committed £5.7m, creating 70 jobs and safeguarding 30 jobs to March 2019, with a further funding round in June 2019. We are also working to deliver the Case for Investment for the Thames Estuary Production Corridor to become Europe's most productive creative corridor and support economic growth. At a time where many local authorities have focused on core services, KCC has continued to support Kent's offer to businesses including through Visit Kent, Locate in Kent and Produced in Kent.
- 4.3 **Increasing Housing and Improving Affordability:** We have an ambition for all Kent's residents to live in the home of their choice and are working with the Kent Housing Group to support Kent's housing authorities to **accelerate housing delivery and affordability with an 'infrastructure first' proposition** to Government for investment in Kent and Medway. Whilst the county faces pressures from its South East location, Kent has delivered 22,010 net new dwellings over three years to 2017/18. This **outperforms all counties of larger or similar size** per 1,000 population, whether metropolitan or shire counties and including London and Greater Manchester. We are building on established and successful joint working arrangements between councils and partners for investment for accelerated growth supported by joint infrastructure planning and greater co-ordination with Government agencies. We continue to press for real policy change to maximise the funding secured, and **promote "good growth" in the Thames Estuary, Otterpool and Chilmington.**
- 4.4 **Delivering the Benefits of Health and Social Care Integration:** As a significant partner in the Kent and Medway Sustainability and Transformation Partnership we are working with the NHS and wider partners to address national challenges to build safe, high-quality, joined up and sustainable health and social care services. The Partnership is working together to build on local opportunities to redesign our health and social care system around the needs of our communities and more effectively use our collective resources. KCC is influencing the development of integrated services and ensuring that the delivery of social care becomes an integral part of or complements NHS services. Our work is already creating better joined-up services for frail, older people and people with complex needs. Through this

partnership approach we want to make changes to how we are organised and how we work together. The development of the Kent and Medway Integrated Care System, when all organisations involved in health and social care work together in new ways, has provided us with the opportunity to expand new models of care, including the creation of multi-disciplinary teams at Primary Care Network level which is enabling us to **bring together health and care provision** around GP practices. Together we have also made significant progress in developing local care which aims to move more care out of hospital and closer to home. Good progress has been made in working with our partners to reduce delayed hospital discharge by ensuring people have the right support at the right time. We are commissioning appropriate community services to enable people to return home with the right support, or remain in their own homes after a stay in hospital. **The average daily number of delayed transfers of care from hospital per 100,000 population aged 18 or over where KCC are responsible and where Social Care or NHS are responsible have decreased since 2017.** However, there remains more to do working across Health and Social Care to further realise the benefits of integration.

5. Areas for Improvement

- 5.1 Whilst Kent County Council has made progress or maintained performance across a wide range of outcomes and performance indicators, below are a number of areas which are national, long-term, challenges which require further action and collaborative work with partners to drive improvement:
- 5.2 **Reducing Attainment Gaps:** Narrowing attainment gaps for vulnerable learners across Kent has proved challenging. Overall pupil attainment in Kent is rising but the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers remains persistent. This is despite a considerable focus in recent years including actions from Select Committee reviews and close working with schools to promote best practice and effective use of the Pupil Premium. **KCC remains committed to accelerating efforts to close the gap and are working with local partners and national experts to drive progress.**
- 5.3 **Promoting Work, Education and Training Opportunities:** We have promoted training opportunities for young people and adults across the county and it is encouraging that **the percentage of population aged 16 to 64 with level 3 NVQ equivalent qualifications has increased** and those with **level 4 NVQ equivalent qualifications has also increased.** Following the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy there has been slow implementation of new standards and providers nationally which has presented challenges outside of KCC's control. Although Kent saw a 24% decrease in apprenticeship starts between the introduction of the levy and September 2018, this was far below the national decrease of 46%. With greater availability of new standards and providers it is anticipated that the number of apprenticeship starts will increase and we hope to take advantage of the new Social work and Occupational Therapy degree level standards shortly. As new Apprenticeship training standards come on line, KCC will look for opportunities to convert existing programmes to Apprenticeship training both for graduates and to 'grow our own' graduates as part of our workforce planning activity, succession planning and to fill our skills gaps. The

Education People work with young people across the county to increase uptake, with a target to achieve over 7000 starts annually for 16-24 year olds by 2022. We also continue to encourage schools and employers to utilise the Apprenticeship Levy.

5.4 **Transforming SEND Provision:** Following an Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission joint inspection of the county's services for children and young people with special education needs and / or a disability, which identified a number of areas of weakness, immediate action has been taken including establishing an SEND Improvement Board to deliver a coordinated response and develop a joint improvement plan. **An Ofsted approved Written Statement of Action will drive a series of improvements alongside a new Local Area SEND Strategy to embed a culture of inclusion within Kent.** We remain committed to working in partnership to make the necessary improvements for children and young people with SEND and their families.

5.5 **Supporting Children and Young People's Physical and Mental Health:** KCC are seeking to support the mental health of vulnerable children and young people through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CAMHS) contract which was re-commissioned with Kent's 7 clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in 2017. KCC has worked with the provider, North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), to ensure more effective, joined up and timely assessment and treatment. Whilst the **percentage of children and young people waiting less than 18 weeks for CAMHS treatment has decreased**, we have seen an increase in referrals into Kent's Children and Young People's Mental Health Service and in the number of children and young people waiting for CAMHS treatment. Work is continuing to improve the numbers of cases being taken as referrals and KCC, with Kent's CCGs, are considering ways to increase access across preventative services, with the aim of driving down need for higher level services and increasing access to evidence based Mental Health treatment.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The Annual Report demonstrates the breadth of activity and achievements across the council and with our partners and providers towards achieving our strategic outcomes. The County Council has played a vital role in achieving better outcomes for our residents, businesses and communities.

6.2 As we come to the end of the current Strategic Statement, we are in a strong position to build on our successes, address the challenges we face and continue to deliver crucial quality services, at low-cost, for our county going forward. The Annual Report's reflections will inform the development of the County Council's new 5-year plan from 2020.

7. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

County Council is asked to:

- **Note** and **Comment** on the 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes' Strategic Statement Annual Report 2019.

8. Background Documents

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Strategic Statement Annual Report 2019

Background Documents:

- *"Increasing Opportunities: Improving Outcomes": KCC's Strategic Statement 2015-2020*, County Council, March 2015.

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