

By: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member Corporate Support Service & Performance Management
Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive
Tanya Oliver, Director Strategic Development & Public Access

To: Corporate Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee 14 January 2010

Subject: Gateway Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To update Members on the Gateway programme in Kent across face to face, telephone and online access. This report also includes an update on the Interreg IVa project, the links with Total Place and Better Work Places and the recently launched Welfare Pathway with the Ministry of Defence

For Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Gateway programme in Kent is transforming access to public services for Kent residents. It is a partnership across local government (county, district and borough councils), fire, police, NHS, the voluntary sector and central government, providing joined-up access to services with a focus on customer service. The Gateway programme was recognised with a “**green-flag**” in the **December 2009 Corporate Area Assessment (CAA)** for Kent as an example of national best practice. This is a testament to the work of all partners involved in this programme. It also featured in the 2009 Front Office Shared Service event as an example of good practice, facilitated since 2007 by the IDEA on behalf of the Cabinet Office and Department for Communities and Local Government. A full list of partners, participating agencies, and services is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 The Gateway programme became operational in Kent in October 2005 with the opening of the Ashford Gateway pilot. There are now seven Gateways and two mobile Gateways active across Kent and the underpinning service principles have been extended to improve telephone and online access as well as face-to-face. The work of this programme is also aligned with other initiatives, such as Better Work Places, Total Place and KCC’s Contact Centre and is enabling significant savings to be delivered.
- 1.3 The **Kent Partnership** has endorsed the Gateway Programme as one of its key themes for the coming years and as a result it has been selected as one of the three priorities under Total Place. A full list of partners linked to Gateway is attached as appendix one.
- 1.4 This report is to update Members on the overall Gateway programme, highlight progress made to date and outline the future strategy. Whilst the front-end of the Gateway programme aims to keep access simple, behind the scenes a lot of detailed work is going on across the public sector to ensure this happens and this work will be outlined in this paper.

2. Vision

- 2.1 Access to public and voluntary sector services should be simple, friendly and effective. The Gateway programme aims to achieve this by joining up access across the three main channels of access – face-to-face, telephone and online. The vision is for coherent access, including the aspiration to move towards a single non-emergency number and a single web portal in addition to the

- physical Gateway network. It is a partnership of the willing but with the aim of putting the citizen first and improving their experience of public services.
- 2.2 By taking this approach, public sector organisations in Kent are rationalising their front and back-office processes and physical estate to deliver cashable savings whilst at the same time, enhancing the citizen experience.

3. Progress to Date (Face-to-Face)

- 3.1 The face-to-face gateway channel has been underway the longest and the original vision and principles of the Ashford pilot remain. The same principles are now also driving telephone and web access.
- 3.2 Gateways are now open in the following locations:
- Ashford (October 2005)
 - Thanet (January 2008)
 - Tunbridge Wells (November 2008)
 - Tenterden (December 2008)
 - Maidstone (January 2009)
 - Tonbridge (July 2009)
 - Dover (July 2009)
 - Mobile Gateway (2007/2009)
- 3.3 The footfall through the existing Gateway network (full year effect) is anticipated to be in excess of one million.
- 3.4 Phase two of Gateway is now underway and (subject to the appropriate decisions, legal and partnership agreements etc) there are Gateways planned in the following locations:
- Gravesend
 - Sevenoaks (Swanley)
 - Swale (Sheerness)
 - Canterbury
 - Shepway
 - Dartford
 - Two further Mobile Gateways
- 3.5 Feedback from customers using Gateway has been positive overall. Customer surveys regularly record satisfaction levels in excess of 90%. The **National One Stop Shop Benchmark Survey** undertaken in Maidstone and Tenterden Gateways in April 2009 returned satisfaction results of 99% and 97% respectively. All Gateways in future will be part of this survey.
- 3.6 Where issues have been raised, these have been addressed locally. For example, following feedback from customers, the floor layout at Tenterden Gateway was reconfigured. In Thanet, a customer who raised concerns about confidentiality is now an informal customer advocate for Thanet Gateway. Representatives from local Access Groups, district and county professionals are jointly developing best practice guidance for the use of Changing Place to benefit the wider community. Changing Place is a facility for individuals who cannot use standard accessible toilets. This includes people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their carers as well as many other disabled people. These facilities are available in Gateway, creating a freedom that most take for granted.
- 3.7 Within KCC, **Contact Kent** staff represent the county in Gateways in order to strengthen the links between telephone access and face-to-face and to utilise the expertise of the Contact Kent staff who are able to provide access to the full range of KCC services. This arrangement has been successful and will be built into all future Gateways.
- 3.8 The Gateway team with Thanet District Council, Migrant Helpline and the Children, families and Education directorate is collaborating with funding

- support from the Migrant Impact Fund to deliver Mobile Gateway services to migrants and individuals and families from minority community groups.
- 3.9 A Health kiosk is present in the Maidstone Gateway and evaluation so far suggests this could have a positive impact in prevention terms in public health, with parts of the population accessing health monitoring services such as weight and blood pressure that are perhaps less likely to access their GP.
- 3.10 In addition to the continued roll-out of Gateways across Kent, we will continue to work with partners across the public and voluntary sectors in order to maximise the citizen benefits of Gateway.

4. Progress to Date (Telephone)

- 4.1 The **Virtual Private Network** (VPN) project, led by the Gateway team in partnership with other organisations in Kent has joined up non-emergency call centres across the public sector in Kent. This means customer calls can be redirected appropriately between organisations using the VPN as though via an internal line. Protocols have been agreed between partner organisations to ensure that the caller transfer is as seamless and consistent as possible for each customer. The work achieved means customers will no longer be asked to call another number if they are unsure who provides the service they want, e.g. if they call KCC to ask to make a council tax payment they can be seamlessly transferred to the relevant council tax payments team at no cost to the organisation or the customer or if they telephone Kent Police regarding a KCC issue, they can be transferred. The VPN project is both improving the quality of service and broadening the knowledge of public sector delivery for Customer Service Advisors working in each participating organisation.
- 4.2 The VPN is now live between KCC, all 12 districts and boroughs, Kent Fire & rescue and Kent Police and commitment has also been given by Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT and Medway Unitary Authority to be part of this initiative.
- 4.3 In addition to customer service benefits, other benefits have been achieved through the VPN, for example, Thanet DC has incorporated this enhancement into their business continuity planning. Calls can be routed at no extra cost in the event of a technical difficulty in their own system or if they experience extraordinary call volumes. Kent Police and KCC have also initiated a pilot project on transferring customers to Highways for faulty traffic light reporting. There is potential for this referral process to save 4 hours per week call centre operator time for this process alone.
- 4.4 Next steps include:
- Broadening the training profile for contact centre staff, thereby increasing the ability to answer enquiries on behalf of participating organisations.
 - Working with partner organisations to manage peaks and troughs. For example, district and borough councils experience high call volumes after Council Tax bills are sent out, while Contact Kent receive very high call volumes relating to education during September. As the peaks are at different times, KCC can support districts and boroughs and vice versa during these busy periods, saving costs and improving efficiency for workforce planning around peak times. These discussions are underway.
- 4.5 The VPN is a strategically important fore-runner that will inform the design and implementation of Unified Communications, being delivered for Kent partners in 2012.

5. Progress to Date (Online)

- 5.1 A Web channel is the most cost-effective way to deliver services. However, there are studies (reference from Socitm Insight Channel Value Benchmarking Service) that show local authority websites offer customers the lowest satisfaction rate of all three channels – phone, web or face to face. To be effective in persuading customers to choose online services in future, the public

sector must improve the experience and level of fulfilment this channel offers to customers. The Online project will seek to extend the range of end to end online transactions available from KCC, building links with those offered by districts and other partner agencies. This will provide the citizen with a greatly improved service, and a more efficient, joined-up way to access public services via the web. The experience gained from multi-agency delivery of face to face transactional service via Gateway is already informing the design of virtual customer journeys across telephone and web channels

- 5.2 The Online project will develop through the use of the Kent specific Customer Insight data (MOSAIC) which is able to identify local community, key or target groups, levels of service engagement and importantly, service deficiencies relative to the local demographic. The detailed profiles can inform the development of the type and volume of web based service transactions that are best able respond to particular needs/outcomes (see Interreg IVa section). For customers this means they will have an easier and more personalised experience when accessing and completing transactions online. For organisations, this will contribute significantly to benefits and savings that can be achieved through channel migration strategies, targeted marketing campaigns and measurable performance improvement. For Gateway this will offer an opportunity to develop the self-help function, and there will be opportunities to promote web as a channel through the free internet access, with Customer Service Advisors able to support individuals at physical Gateway locations.
- 5.3 This work is aligned with the recent update of the KCC website as it enables more transactions to take place online and makes it easier to navigate through the "Do it Online" section. The Corporate web team are fully involved in this initiative within KCC and are working with partner organisations through the Gateway Boards, Kent Connects and Kent Customer Service Network Group.
- 5.4 The initial phase of work on this project has focused on comprehensive online service mapping with as many willing partners as possible and this information will inform the business case and any decision taken as a result to improve online transactions. The business case is expected by the end of March 2010.

6. Progress to Date (Service Hubs)

- 6.1 A virtual hub model is being developed which will underpin the Gateway service model across all channels. Work has begun with partners to review business processes in order to align them more closely with the customer experience and improve end-to-end delivery of access and service. The identified hubs are Benefits, Community Safety, Greener Communities, Health and Independent Living and Working and Learning. Each hub will develop across all channels of access but some are focusing on individual channels initially.
- 6.2 The **Community Safety Hub** is focusing this approach via telephone and is looking at common transactions across community safety services in order to reduce duplication between agencies and enhancing staff training. For customers, this will mean they only need to contact one organisation to report a community safety issue, even if it involves several organisations to deal with the enquiry. For organisations, this will mean savings made through a reduction of duplication and waste.
- 6.3 The project is being led by Kent Police, with representation from district and borough councils and KCC on the project team. Further engagement from Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and the Kent Partnership has also been achieved. The project will focus initially on issues such as graffiti.
- 6.4 The **Working and Learning Hub** is developing in Thanet initially working with the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund initiative and the Margate Taskforce. This touches on the Margate strand of Total Place. The Neighbourhood Renewal

Fund is part of Department for Work and Pensions and focuses on working with adult learning providers.

- 6.5 The **Benefits Hub** is being developed with assistance from an organisation called Steria with Kent partners. The focus is on streamlining the number of duplicated transactions that a citizen experiences related to Benefits. The vision is moving from the “as-is” (where there is known duplication and inefficiency) to the “to-be”. The two areas being focused on initially are retirement and redundancy. The impact either change of circumstance can have on an individual or family can be significant and the “as-is” requires contact with a number of different organisations for a number of transactions. The work with Steria will identify the potential solution to this across organisations (the “to-be”).
- 6.6 These hubs are well underway and will deliver an improved customer experience as well as savings by reducing transactions. The **Health and Independent Living** hub and **Greener Communities** hub are next on the agenda to develop with partners.
- 6.7 **Tell Us Once** is an example of a “mini” multi-channel hub that has been operational for over a year, focusing on registration of deaths and births. This was a central government initiative and Kent was chosen as one of only two county pilot areas owing to the Gateway network.
- 6.8 Working with the Communities directorate and partner agencies, including district and borough councils, DWP and HMRC, Kent developed the most cost effective, integrated and sustainable model as part of this pilot. Kent officers directly contributed to the success of this initiative, which is being endorsed as national policy from April 2010. Kent is now involved in the development of a change of policy concerning ‘change of circumstance’. This has a significant positive impact on citizens, and directly extends the potential of the Gateway service model.
- 6.9 The vision for all hubs is that in the future, agencies and service providers will:
- Pass information to each other as required for applications (subject to consent and complying with data protection – this has been achieved through Tell Us Once)
 - Accept one another’s validation of evidence
 - Have common customer-facing functions (e.g. financial assessments)
 - Identify a full range of the needs of the citizen
 - Have a full view of entitlements to addressing needs
 - Take responsibility for the fulfilment of the application/process
 - Minimise customer visits/contacts
 - Offer choice

7. **Interreg IVa**

- 7.1 Through a Gateway team initiative and working closely with Kent Connects, Finance and the International Affairs Team, Kent County Council was successful in securing **4.45 million euros** on behalf of Kent partners to fund and lead a three year project across Kent and Pas de Calais. KCC is the lead authority and project partners include KCC, 12 district and borough councils and Medway Council. We have also established positive links with both the Police and NHS Observatory. Our international links are with 4 partners from France (Conseil Général du Pas de Calais (CG62), Agence d'Urbanisme et de Développement de la Région de Saint-Omer, Communauté d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer, Communauté de Communes du Canton de Fauquembergues) with the overall aim of “Improving Quality of Life” (priority 3 within Interreg), through improved customer insight. Of the total bid, KCC will receive approximately **£1 million over the 3 year period**.
- 7.2 The main project objective is to improve customer satisfaction and fulfilment from public services, and to improve the efficiency of service delivery by

understanding citizens needs better. This will be done by implementing research, service review and planning and targeted marketing techniques previously not used across the Public Sector.

- 7.3 The main result of this work will enable Partners to identify where and how services can be delivered more effectively in future and to keep this under ongoing review. This will provide evidence of customer needs which can be used to plan both future capital and revenue spending, and asset realisation. KCC will become a public sector leader in this area of expertise on behalf of Kent partners through the Research and Intelligence Team.
- 7.4 Activity in Kent to date includes:
- A procurement exercise for customer insight software - Experian were chosen as the supplier for Kent partners.
 - Selected five pilot districts (Canterbury, Gravesend, Swale, Thanet, Tunbridge Wells) and KCC to provide anonymous transactional data to enhance the Kent & Medway "MOSAIC"
 - The "MOSIAC" segmentation was received from the supplier in July 2009.
 - An officer guide known as the "pen portrait" was received from the supplier in September 2009 identifying common profile groups.
 - A "service delivery framework" a cross section of data held about Kent public services as compared to the national MOSAIC prediction of service take up was delivered in September 2009.
 - Medway Unitary, Dover, Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone joined the project in September 2009 and have submitted data to enhance the Kent and Medway "MOSAIC" further. Ashford, Dartford, Shepway and Sevenoaks will join the project as planned in January 2010.
 - Held initial discussions with Police, Fire & Rescue and both PCTs about inputting anonymous data into MOSAIC to increase the applicability of the service frameworks.
 - Established a "MOSAIC Users group" to share best practice in the use of these tools.
 - Established an Interreg Steering group, chaired by KCC
 - Working closely with partners in France to share mutual benefit from method and approach; sharing best practice.
- 7.5 What does this mean? The following practical projects have begun in Kent and are already delivering outcomes:
- Gateway service and partner planning - Gateway has used these tools in Tenterden, Tonbridge and Dover to ensure that service design matches the specific needs of the respective local community. Work is currently ongoing to make this analysis more comprehensive for the next Gateway in Sheerness.
 - Council Tax Recovery Actions in Swale - MOSAIC allows analysis and identification of groups of people who are not paying council tax but can afford to pay. By targeting resources on these groups collection rates can be increased (Coventry City Council have already worked with Experian in this areas and we are benefiting from this best practice).
 - KCC Libraries and Archives - to increase library usage of under-represented groups. Libraries have a huge amount to offer the community but the services available are often not always fully understood by the general public. Libraries and Archives are keen to focus on three underrepresented groups from affluent groups, poorer families with children and younger people not in education, employment or training.
 - Council Tax Text Alert Service - essentially identifying customers who would prefer to receive a reminder text rather than a letter for council tax

bills. Potential to save each district significant amounts in letter and court summons production.

- Service Delivery Point Kiosk Location Optimisation – Dover - ensuring that access points are within a five minute drive of more people in Dover District by seeing where customers live, what their needs are and where current access points are – from 52% to 85%. This analysis will also have benefits for KCC for preplanning the roll out of Mobile Gateways.

7.6 Other projects under discussion are:

- Diversifying the customer base for Adult Education
- Child Poverty Pilot – how can partners work together to better focus resources on those likely to suffer from child poverty? Links between Gateway/Children Centre are being developed.
- Kent Waste Partnership – how can we influence behaviour on recycling and waste?
- Kent Adult Social Services – how can we influence behaviours now that will promote long term well being?

7.7 The potential impact of this work is in the ability to target services more effectively whilst delivering better outcomes and savings is significant. This approach is already becoming established and will be used ongoing as a key tool to inform financial planning by service directorates within KCC and by partner organisations during this difficult financial time within local government.

8. Links with other programmes and initiatives

8.1 The **Better Work Places** initiative within KCC has been transferred to the Strategic Development Unit in order to align the service and asset requirements around access more effectively and ensuring the KCC Gateway and back-office estate are coherent. This has already led to additional potential savings being identified. Following the launch of Total Place, Better Work Places is also aligned with the asset part of this initiative.

8.2 Gateway has been selected as one of the 3 initiatives within **Total Place**. As a result, discussions with central government departments, particularly regarding operational relationships with DWP/Job Centre Plus and HRMC/Pensions have taken place and progress is being made to enable Job Centre Plus in Kent to engage in the Gateway initiative.

8.3 The strong partnership approach that has made the Gateway programme so effective is helping provide the platform for discussions around rationalising assets and transactions.

8.4. The **Ministry of Defence**, having heard of the Gateway developments in Kent, approached Kent County Council regarding their new **Welfare Pathway** initiative. The aim is to join up access to public and voluntary sector services for the Armed Forces Community, using Kent as a pilot. This initiative was launched in November 2009 and a more detailed paper on progress will be brought to the Corporate Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee at a later date. This initiative fits exactly with the principles of Gateway however and as a result, we have identified a number of voluntary sector organisations that provide additional services to the Armed Forces Community and are working more effectively with them. The feedback from the Kent pilot will be used to inform local and national policy where appropriate.

9. Finance

9.1 The Gateway programme has contributed to significant savings already within KCC and partner organisations. For example:

- An indicative saving of £500k per year across the 6 district areas piloting the Tell Us Once initiative by reducing the number of transactions

involved to register a death from 8 to 1 and linking 26 separate service organisations.

- A Better Work Places revenue saving of £338k in 2009/10. This is made possible in part by the presence of convenient public access through Gateways, reducing the need for a number of back-office buildings.
- Social Return on Investment assessment of the impact of Skills Plus delivered through Ashford Gateway has shown a £15 return for every £1 invested.
- Moving towards telephone and online, service transactions will save significant money as SOCITIM research shows the following cost ratios in England per transaction channel:
 - Face-to-face - £4.83 to £9.62
 - Telephone - £1.28 to £5.57
 - Online - £0.22 - £0.56
- Thanet DC saving – through reduction in back-office estate, predicted £250k annual savings will be following the opening of Thanet Gateway
- Savings delivered through rationalising office estate elsewhere, such as Tenterden Gateway and the future plans for Ashford Gateway Plus.

9.2 These are only some examples of savings but the future potential is significant. KCC alone is committing to c£20m savings as a result of the Gateway, Better Work Places and Total Place activity. Further savings will be made by partner organisations through the proposed improvements to web transactions and through property rationalisation.

9.3 The **Gateway Card** aspiration (joining up the functionality of existing access cards across multiple organisations) will also have the potential to reduce transactional costs. This is being piloted between KCC, Thanet and Tunbridge Wells councils. This card will bring together a range of existing cards the public sector use to access services, such as leisure cards and library cards. As well as providing convenience for customers, this will reduce the transaction and infrastructure costs related to maintaining so many access cards across the public sector. This work is aligned with work on the Kent Card (purchase card) with the aspiration to include those services in the future.

9.4 Funding of the telephone and online aspects to Gateway are receiving financial support from **Improvement and Efficiency South East**.

10. Franchising

10.1 The face-to-face Gateway model is tried and tested and has received significant national and international recognition, not least the recent green-flag in the CAA. As a result, KCC has been approached by a number of organisations to work with them to develop this model outside of Kent. The Gateway team are currently working with local government partners in Buckinghamshire to develop a model that will deliver the principles of Gateway in that area. This has been agreed in principle and further details can be made available to Corporate Policy, Overview and Scrutiny Committee members in the future.

10.2 The franchise model works on a similar principle to the Swindon/KCC Social Services model, with members of the Gateway team spending time working with other organisations to support them in developing and delivering a Gateway model. This will include the brand and service design elements but with a focus on transferring practical experience in a sustainable way.

11. Summary

The Gateway programme is transforming customer access by improving customer experiences and in turn, enabling significant savings to be delivered. A lot of detailed work is well developed that is and will continue to deliver real

outcomes for Kent citizens. There is a lot more to be done however and the support from elected members is critical to ensuring this programme continues to be a success and continues to move forward. We need further engagement from directorates within KCC, from other partners in Kent and from key central government departments to truly maximise the potential this programme offers.

12. Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- 1) Note this progress report

Background Papers

Gateway Strategy for Kent, January 2007 (KCC)

Front Office Shared Services report May 2007 & May 2009 (Idea, Cabinet Office & Department for Communities and Local Government)

Tanya Oliver

Director Strategic Development & Public Access

tanya.oliver@kent.gov.uk

01622 694817