

**From:** Roger Gough, Leader of the Council

**To:** County Council, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Subject:** ‘*Kent’s Future, Our Priority*’ – Kent County Council’s 5 Year Plan

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway:** Cabinet (02.03.20)

**Future Pathway:** None

**SUMMARY:** ‘*Kent’s Future, Our Priority*’ will become Kent County Council’s new 5 Year Plan, to replace the previous strategic statement ‘*Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes (2015-2020)*’. It captures the council’s ambition to deliver outcomes and objectives that will improve the quality of life for Kent’s residents, businesses and communities. This includes joined-up working with our partners and clear asks of Government. The 5 Year Plan has been informed by extensive engagement and a six week public consultation. The final plan was approved by Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> March to recommend for approval by County Council.

**Recommendation(s):**

County Council is asked to:

- (1) **Note** the findings of the engagement and consultation which have informed the changes to the 5 Year Plan, summarised in this report and set out in detail in the supporting ‘*You Said, We Did*’ document.
- (2) **Note** the equality considerations which have been informed by the engagement and consultation process.
- (3) **Approve** ‘*Kent’s Future, Our Priority*’ as the new 5 Year Plan for Kent County Council.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) has traditionally had a series of strategic plans or statements which set out the administration’s ambitions and priorities for the medium term. This is a key part of the Policy Framework in the KCC’s Constitution and influences our strategy, budget, commissioning and service delivery. The current strategic statement ‘*Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes*’, approved by County Council in March 2015, ends in 2020.
- 1.2 In summer 2019, KCC began developing a new 5 Year Plan which could replace the previous strategic statement. This is still grounded in outcomes to deliver a better quality of life in Kent, but has very much been shaped by what is important to Kent’s residents, young people, staff, partners and businesses. The intention was to create an ambitious yet

realistic plan, which aligned with the council's spending priorities and had clear objectives to deliver over the next five years.

- 1.3 Outcomes cannot be achieved in isolation, so although this is predominantly a plan that is clear about what we need to deliver within our direct responsibility as the County Council, it also sets out our convening role and objectives that require close collaboration and joined-up working with partners. The objectives also include asks of Government, where we want to work together to stand up and lobby for the interests of Kent's residents, on issues such as fair and sufficient funding for public services, sustainable infrastructure and devolved powers for local government.
- 1.4 The 5 Year Plan began with open conversations with residents about what is important to the quality of life in Kent. This was part of a wider discussion about our future Budget spending priorities, so we could ensure the plan is realistic and deliverable within our resources and focused on the things that matter most to Kent's council taxpayers.
- 1.5 These ideas helped to crystallise our thinking, shaping a consultation draft that was launched in January 2020. We are pleased to have received such positive and considered responses to the consultation, with 423 responses in total, more than seven times the level of consultation response we received in 2015. We have carefully considered the consultation responses and used this to make substantive changes to the final plan. Further detail on the engagement and consultation process is set out in Section 3 and the changes we have made is summarised in Section 5 of this report.
- 1.6 On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, Cabinet approved the 5 Year Plan to recommend to County Council, subject to a factual correction on the title of the Plan Bee: Pollinator Action Plan and some minor point of fact clarifications, which have been reflected in the final design document.

## 2. THE 5 YEAR PLAN

- 2.1 The full 5 Year Plan is available in Appendix A. The bold, visual design for County Council brings to life the beauty, distinctiveness and diversity of Kent with images of residents, voluntary sector organisations and businesses who participated in the 5 Year Plan engagement process. This was important to connect back to the people whose ideas helped shape the plan and to create a distinctive 'Kent' feel, rather than a generic strategy. The design version of the 5 Year Plan is available as electronic copy only to improve accessibility and minimise environmental impact, with no printed copies to be made.
- 2.2 The 5 Year Plan is the flagship strategy for KCC and therefore is necessarily a substantial document, given the breadth of KCC's responsibilities, the many important issues raised during the plan's development and the variety of audiences the plan needs to respond to. To help to keep the plan as simple and accessible as possible, we have taken the following actions:
  - Used a highly visual and professional creative **design** for the final plan

- Included a **plan summary** to summarise our ambition at a glance
- Creating seven distinctive '**outcome chapters**', each with colour coding and sub-sections to make it easier for people to 'dip into' areas of specific interest
- Highlighting **objectives** throughout the document, to make it clear what actions and improvements we will take to respond to the opportunities and challenges raised in the document
- We are developing a simple 10 page **resident summary**, to capture key messages in plain English, to be launched on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020
- Clear **signposting** of the detailed plans and documents (including hyperlinks) which explain issues and actions in greater depth.

2.3 The 5 Year Plan is structured around seven outcomes which reflect the key things that stakeholders said were essential to a good quality of life in Kent. Each outcome has a headline ambition, narrative sections with supporting KCC 5 Year objectives, areas of collaboration with our partners and asks of Government.

### 3. **ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION APPROACH**

3.1 The content of the 5 Year Plan has been informed by extensive, meaningful engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, which started in August 2019, followed by formal consultation in early 2020.

3.2 A critical aspect of the engagement process was hearing the views of **Kent residents**, with a focus on engaging general council taxpayers rather than service users to balance a broad range of issues, attitudes and perspectives. The engagement included qualitative workshops with residents in East, North/Mid and West Kent, held in accessible community venues over a series of weekends in September. This was important to reflect the diversity and distinctiveness of issues in different parts of the county.

3.3 Professional market research recruitment helped to ensure a balanced mix of residents were able to attend, reflecting the demographics of each area and including people with disabilities. The four-hour workshops were independently facilitated by Westco Communications who were able to help explore in depth what mattered most to people's quality of life, their top spending priorities and how they wanted KCC to work in the future.

3.4 The resident engagement was targeted at adults over the age of 18, so it was important to also listen to **young people**. Workshops were held with Kent Youth County Council and the Young Adult Council, which includes young people aged 16-25 with experience of the care system. This helped to understand distinctive priorities for young people including protecting the environment, wellness, mental health and the importance of affordable housing. Broader online engagement was also available to schools, colleges and young people over the age of 16, promoted through our education and further education networks.

3.5 The hard work and commitment of our **staff** is essential to delivering the 5 Year Plan, so it was important that our staff helped to shape the outcomes

and objectives, drawing on their frontline service experience. Many of our staff are also Kent residents, so were also able to share that perspective. A workshop in October 2019 with operational managers (the 'T200' group) explored the same themes as residents, so we could compare and contrast their feedback, with the exercises available online for managers to encourage further conversations in their teams. We received several 'team' responses to the consultation with creative suggestions of how staff could help contribute to the 5 Year Plan delivery. In February, T200 helped to identify ideas to help make the 5 Year Plan real, meaningful and relevant for staff. Senior managers, including Heads of Service and Directors were also engaged through the 'Challenger' and 'Extended Corporate Management Team', to ensure we gathered views from a wide variety of KCC services.

- 3.6 As a 5 Year Plan to be agreed by County Council, it is was important that all KCC **Elected Members** had the opportunity to reflect the issues that matter to the communities that they represent and the views they hear from regularly engaging with local residents, charities, community groups, parish and town councils and businesses. A cross-party Member workshop was held to gather views in November 2019, in addition to political group briefings, with all Members able to participate in the consultation.
- 3.7 As we need to closely collaborate to achieve better outcomes, **partner** engagement was an essential part of the process, with the Leader personally writing to key partners to welcome their views in the consultation. A wide variety of partners were engaged including:
- **Parish and town councils** – including an early engagement workshop with the Area Committee Chairs of the Kent Association of Local Councils
  - **Public sector partners** – including district and borough council Leaders and Chief Executives, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, Further/Higher Education and health partners through the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) Board
  - **Members of Parliament** – were invited by the Leader to contribute to the consultation
  - **Businesses** – including Business Advisory Board, Chambers of Commerce and online surveys open to local businesses
  - **Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector** – including engagement events linked to the development of KCC's forthcoming Civil Society Strategy and online engagement open to local charities, community groups and social enterprises.
- 3.8 This extensive engagement helped to shape the draft outcomes and objectives. The draft 5 Year Plan provided an opportunity to test these back with stakeholders during a six-week public consultation period which ran from 6<sup>th</sup> January to 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
- 3.9 In total, 423 responses were received during the consultation, with is an unprecedented level of engagement for a high-level strategic document of this nature. This is over seven times the level of responses received during the 2015 consultation. The consultation identified clear feedback

themes, where multiple stakeholder agreed issues were important and needed to be strengthened or clarified in the plan.

3.10 The consultation responses were received from a wide range of residents, staff, partner organisations and Elected Members. This included:

- 208 Kent residents (including some who attended the resident engagement workshops earlier in the process)
- 128 KCC staff
- 28 voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- 15 county, district, borough, parish and town councilors (Elected Members)
- 13 parish, town district and borough councils (in an official capacity)
- 8 local community groups and resident associations
- 4 Kent businesses
- 3 educational establishments
- 1 non-Kent resident
- 14 others

3.11 We particularly welcome the level of engagement from our partners which helped to shape the final changes to the 5 Year Plan. We received many positive and constructive suggestions for collaborative joint working with public sector partners, including district, borough, parish and town councils. Responses from the voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations reflected strong support for the 'stronger communities' and 'Civil Society' objectives. We also appreciated the time and effort put into considered responses from wider partners including:

- 8 district, borough and city councils, including Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone and Hythe, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Swale, Thanet and Tunbridge Wells
- Kent Association of Local Councils
- Kent Police
- Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company (probation)
- Accountable Officer for the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Groups
- KIMS Hospital
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
- East Kent College Group
- West Kent Partnership
- Creative Folkestone
- Arts Council
- Cultural Transformation Board
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Port of London Authority
- Getlink (Eurotunnel)
- Road Haulage Association
- Environment Agency
- Unison

3.12 Of those that responded to the consultation, 248 people chose to provide personal information which provides an insight into the demographic reach of the consultation. The respondents included a good balance of

geographies, with responses from all Kent's district areas, gender and age, with most responses from adults aged 35-59. 31 respondents considered themselves disabled (as set out in the Equality Act) and 28 considered themselves carers.

- 3.13 The '*Kent's Future, Our Priority*' **You Said, We Did** document (Appendix B) sets out in detail the views that were shared with us during the engagement and consultation process and how those views influenced and informed changes in the final plan. The main changes are summarised in Section 5.

#### 4. EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 As the 5 Year Plan covers a huge breadth of issues that matter to all residents and communities in Kent, it was vital that we revisited our equality analysis regularly throughout the process. The initial Equality Impact Assessment (background document) was updated following engagement, consultation and discussions with KCC's Corporate Equalities Group.
- 4.2 County Council is asked to consider the main equality considerations set out below, which has informed changes to the 5 Year Plan. The consultation raised a couple of individual comments on specific protected characteristic groups (e.g. transgender, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community), which are accepted as important issues for the council but were too detailed to be included in the main plan. These will be properly considered and taken forward as part of refreshing KCC's **equality objectives** during 2020.
- 4.3 The main equality considerations for the 5 Year Plan included:
- There are no negative/adverse impacts on protected groups directly related to the 5 Year Plan. There is the potential for the plan to have a positive impact on people from all of the protected characteristic groups through aiming to improve their quality of life.
  - Consultation feedback said there should be more inclusion of older people within the strategy – references to our support for older people has been included in multiple outcomes, such as adaptable 'lifelong' and multi-generational housing for older people and extra care housing, sufficient health and care infrastructure for an ageing population and services to support connected communities where older people feel included, involved and less isolated.
  - Consultation feedback cited the importance of public transport which disproportionately affects older or younger people, those with disabilities and those without access to a private car. Sections on public transport, integrated travel, bus travel and sustainable transport (e.g. walking and cycling) have all been updated and strengthened as a result.
  - Any specific proposals or changes arising from the delivery of the 5 Year Plan will be subject to equality analysis and consideration of equality impacts.

## 5. YOU SAID, WE DID – KEY CHANGES FOLLOWING CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Leader has carefully considered the consultation feedback and updated equality analysis which has helped to inform the final changes to the 5 Year Plan, and discussed this with Cabinet Members. Important points and constructive suggestions were raised during the consultation which has resulted in extensive changes from the consultation draft.
- 5.2 The detailed feedback and how this has changed specific sections and objectives in the 5 Year Plan is set out in the '**You Said, We Did**' document in Appendix B. This is presented in a professional design version and will be made available on our website, so people can see how their voice helped to make a difference.
- 5.3 The key general comments about the consultation draft and how we responded to those in the 5 Year Plan are summarised below.

**Table 1: Summary of You Said, We Did general consultation feedback**

<b><i>You said</i></b>	<b><i>We did</i></b>
The title should be less personal and more specific to Kent	88% of respondents liked the draft title ' <i>Your Future, Our Priority</i> '. We agree it should be distinctive to Kent and have changed it to ' <i>Kent's Future, Our Priority</i> '.
The outcomes are the right things to focus on	We have kept the outcomes the same and are pleased that 219 (57%) of respondents fully supported and 137 (36%) partly supported the outcomes as reflecting issues that were important to their quality of life.
KCC needs to be clear how it will deliver the plan and if it has the capacity to deliver within funding restraints	We have included a new section early on to explain this. We have made the objectives within each outcome clearer and more action focused and signposted detailed plans and strategies. It is important that the 5 Year Plan is realistic, so our 2020-21 budget has made available additional investment for the spending priorities identified in the 5 Year Plan.
Progress needs to be clearly measurable	We have committed to developing a framework for measuring the 5 Year Plan and making this publicly available. We have included more detail in an improved 'How will we measure success?' section.
The plan is long and the language can be hard to understand	The plan covers a large range of issues which people felt were important to include. We have simplified the text, objectives and removed acronyms where possible. We know that not everyone will want to read the full plan so we will produce a plan on a page and residents summary in plain, simple language.
The outcomes should be in a different order	We carefully considered comments about putting environment and people outcomes first. The outcomes are all inter-linked and equally important, but we think this order is the most logical way to flow from one topic to another.
More context is	We have included a new section at the start of the

<i><b>You said</b></i>	<i><b>We did</b></i>
needed about things that will be important in Kent over the next 5 years	plan called 'What could affect the 5 Year Plan?', which outlines major changes such as national Government policy, climate change and digital technology. We have also updated the 'Kent's Strengths and Challenges' sections to provide additional context.
KCC needs to be honest about things that are not in their direct control	We agree it is important to be clear about the direct role of the council, where we have a convening role, or the issues are the responsibilities of other partners and providers. We have updated the text to make this clearer, including on housing, local planning, transport, highways, rail and buses.

5.4 We received many detailed comments about the outcomes and objectives. We've reflected as much of the main themes of consultation feedback as possible, however in a high-level, countywide plan it is not always appropriate to respond to detailed policy questions or issues in specific locations. We will share this more detailed consultation feedback with services and partners to inform our service delivery and strategy development. The main changes that have been made from the consultation draft are summarised below. The figures relate to those who answered set consultation questions online, via post or email.

**Table 2: Summary of You Said, We Did outcome consultation feedback**

<i><b>You said</b></i>	<i><b>We did</b></i>
<b>Outcome 1: Enterprise and investment</b>	
135 (37%) of people fully supported and 138 (38%) of people partly supported Outcome 1 objectives. Strengthen content on town centres and high streets, garden towns and communities, inward investment, adult skills and creative industries (including those beyond East Kent). Recognise the role of further and higher education and cultural organisation partners.	We updated the text and objectives to respond to people's feedback on these important issues. We expanded the 'Ambitious people and places' section to provide more context about challenges in different parts of Kent and to be clearer about our role. We added a new paragraph on creative industries. We substantively improved the 'Sustaining Kent's town centres' and 'Skills for life' sections to respond to partner and staff feedback. We included new partnership objectives to better reflect and value the role of our partners.
<b>Outcome 2: Securing sustainable infrastructure</b>	
118 (32%) of people fully supported and 141 (38%) of people partly supported Outcome 2 objectives. Support for the 'infrastructure first' ambition and concern about housing growth. Clarify that housing and local planning is not in KCC's direct control. Recognise different issues	We clarified KCC and partner roles in this outcome and strengthened our response on housing growth to reflect the strength of comments of this issue. We updated the text and objectives to respond to people's feedback on these important issues, including respecting different solutions and needs for each area and added more content on



<b>You said</b>	<b>We did</b>
in different parts of Kent (e.g. viability). Strengthen content on affordable housing, sustainable and flexible housing design and protecting Kent's natural environment and green spaces in development.	affordable housing. We substantially improved the 'High quality design' section to better reflect older people and sustainability. We have included new partnership objectives to reflect the role of our partners and incorporate suggestions we received from partners in the consultation feedback.
<b>Outcome 3: Connected transport and communities</b>	
108 (29%) of people fully supported and 152 (41%) of people partly supported Outcome 3 objectives. This outcome received the greatest number of comments during the consultation. Recognise the impact of the quality of the roads and congestion on Kent's residents and challenges of connectivity in rural areas. Strengthen content on lorry parking, buses, rail, integrated travel and sustainable travel including walking and cycling, linked to congestion, carbon reduction and air quality.	We clarified KCC and partner roles in this outcome. We updated the text and objectives to respond to people's feedback on these important issues, including being clear on the national, regional and Kent transport policy position. We added a new section on 'Tackling congestion'. We have separated out the 'Integrated travel' and 'Importance of bus travel' sections and substantially improved these to reflect the comments we received. We improved the renamed 'walking and cycling' section (previously active travel) and added more on sustainable transport and modal shifts. We added more specific KCC and partnership objectives.
<b>Outcome 4: A cleaner and greener Kent</b>	
121 (33%) of people fully supported and 149 (40%) of people partly supported Outcome 4 objectives. Strengthen content on the climate emergency, climate resilience and adaptation. Be clear about KCC's action and where there is joint work with partners on carbon reduction and air quality. Include more objectives on ecology and natural environment. Recognise the importance of litter and fly tipping enforcement, flooding and green business growth.	We updated the text and objectives to respond to people's feedback on these important issues. We separated out sections on 'Responding to the climate emergency and climate adaptation' and 'Climate resilience, with clearer descriptions of KCC and partnership actions, aligning this to consultation responses received on the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy. We improved content on fly tipping, protecting the environment (including tree planting), biodiversity and flooding as a result of partner and resident feedback. We included new content on supporting green business and infrastructure. Comments on sustainability and climate adaptation also helped to improve Outcome 2.
<b>Outcome 5: Stronger and safer Kent communities</b>	
124 (33%) of people fully supported and 152 (41%) of people partly supported Outcome 5	We updated the text and objectives to respond to people's feedback on these important issues. We included a new

<b>You said</b>	<b>We did</b>
<p>objectives. Support for Civil Society, opportunities to bring different people together and road safety objectives. The important role of arts, sports and culture is missing. Recognise the role of cultural organisation partners. Strengthen content on community safety partnership working, visible presence, serious crime, doorstep crime and domestic abuse. Include more objectives that recognise the role and work of partners.</p>	<p>section on 'Enjoying life in Kent' to emphasise the contribution of arts, sport, culture and heritage. We strengthened and updated the text to reflect the forthcoming Civil Society Strategy which is currently out for consultation. We improved the 'Feeling safe' and 'A joined up response' sections to reflect partner and staff feedback, including new partnership objectives based on suggestions from our partners.</p>
<b>Outcome 6: Opportunities for children and young people</b>	
<p>120 (33%) of people fully supported and 149 (40%) of people partly supported Outcome 6 objectives. Highlight importance of sufficient funding for education and children's services. Strengthen content on prevention, inclusive youth activities, sports, arts, culture and nature experiences for young people. Recognise work of schools and colleges in mental health and transition between children and adult mental health services. Recognise role of further and higher education partners and vocational and technical training.</p>	<p>We updated the text and objectives to respond to people's feedback on these important issues. We expanded the 'A county that works for all children' to be clearer about our preventative and advocacy role to champion children, young people and families, especially vulnerable students. We added new asks of Government on special educational needs reform and funding. We included new content on sports, arts, culture and wellness, recognising this contribution to children and young people's wellbeing. We improved content on funding, prevention, youth offer and mental health. We included new partnership objectives to reflect feedback from our partners and made our convening role in skills clearer.</p>
<b>Outcome 7: Quality health, care and support</b>	
<p>117 (32%) of people fully supported and 132 (36%) of people partly supported Outcome 7 objectives. Highlight importance of sufficient funding for social care and health infrastructure/capacity in local communities. Strengthen content on KCC's role in social care market, wider determinants of health, older people and support within communities. Recognise work with partners on the health and social care workforce.</p>	<p>We updated the text and objectives to respond to people's feedback on these important issues. We separated out sections on 'Sustainable Social Care' and 'Integrated health, care and support' to make this clearer. We added new content on workforce based on our partner feedback. We included more of the role of housing in health and wellbeing and our market shaping work with the independent sector. We added new partnership objectives, based on suggestions from our partners.</p>

## 6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Following Cabinet approval, the 5 Year Plan is recommended for approval at County Council.
- 6.2 The 5 Year Plan will be launched on 30<sup>th</sup> March, with updated website content on Kent.gov, alongside our final agreed Budget. The launch will include the publication of a Resident Summary and the Strategic Delivery Plan summary which lists significant activities that support the delivery of the outcomes.
- 6.3 We are committed to continuing the conversation with residents, partners and staff on how we are delivering the 5 Year Plan, including an honest and open reflection of our progress. Our Kent Communications team have listened to the feedback from Kent residents and will progress further communication and engagement with residents.
- 6.4 We will continue work with our partners on shared objectives and discuss with our staff about how to make the plan real and meaningful for the frontline staff who do so much to support our residents and communities every day.
- 6.5 We committed in the 5 Year Plan to developing a framework for how we will measure success and impact of the plan, including public reporting. We will provide further details on this in due course, but we know it is important to have a strong evidence base and an honest reflection of our progress, including both quantitative and qualitative information.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The recommendations are as follows:

County Council is asked to:

- (1) **Note** the findings of the engagement and consultation which have informed the changes to the 5 Year Plan, summarised in this report and set out in detail in the supporting '*You Said, We Did*' document.
- (2) **Note** the equality considerations which have been informed by the engagement and consultation process.
- (3) **Approve** '*Kent's Future, Our Priority*' as the new 5 Year Plan for Kent County Council.

## 8. APPENDICES AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 8.1 Appendices:

Please note that this report is accompanied by two substantial appendices. Given their size, these appendices have been published on the County Council's website alongside the agenda and are available via the modern.gov app. A hard copy of the appendices is available on request from Democratic Services ([democratic.services@kent.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@kent.gov.uk))

- Appendix A: 'Kent's Future, Our Priority', Kent County Council's 5 Year Plan 2020-2025 (design version, electronic copy only)
- Appendix B: 'Kent's Future, Our Priority' 'You Said, We Did' – How your feedback has helped shape KCC's 5 Year Plan (design version)

## 8.2 Background papers:

- 5 Year Plan consultation draft (January 2020)
- 'Kent's Future, Our Priority' 5 Year Plan Equality Impact Assessment
- 'Kent's Future, Our Priority' – Kent County Council's 5 Year Plan (Cabinet, 02.03.20)

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