

From: Linden Kemkaran, Leader of the Council

Brian Collins, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
Amanda Beer, Chief Executive Officer

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 2 July 2026

Subject: Local Outcomes Framework

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

Following publication of the government's Local Outcomes Framework, this paper summarises the key elements of that policy, compares it to KCC's current performance reporting and details potential implications for KCC.

Recommendation:

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the briefing on the Local Outcomes Framework and the proposal to bring a further paper to the Committee when the Local Outcomes Framework tool is published.

1. Background

1.1. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) released a policy paper on 12th February 2026 announcing the ['Local Outcomes Framework'](#) (LOF) - a set of outcomes-based performance measures against key national priorities delivered at the local level and driven by councils as local leaders of place.

1.2. The Framework is centred on 16 priority outcomes that reflect the government's goals for achieving shared objectives and improving living standards through the core functions of local government.

1.3. The government intends this Framework to increase transparency for residents by consolidating outcomes data in a single place, while ensuring that both central and local government use consistent measures to track progress.

1.4. Each priority outcome is underpinned by a set of metrics to measure progress, with 133 metrics included in total, although 17 are placeholders and the 'Housing Supply' priority outcome metrics are still being considered.

1.5. Not all of the 16 priority outcomes directly relate to services delivered by KCC. Three of the 16 relate to housing supply, housing quality and safety, and homelessness and rough sleeping, all of which are primarily the responsibility of district councils. Other priorities and metrics are delivered either jointly by KCC or through multi-agency working. However, this distinction is not clearly stated in the policy paper which instead implies a place-based, whole-area approach rather than distinguishing between tiers of local government. In this sense, the Framework as a whole applies better to existing and future unitary authorities. It remains to be seen exactly how these metrics will be

presented and whether this will help to clarify responsibilities between upper- and lower-tier authorities. If not presented clearly, metrics could be wrongly attributed to KCC or to district and borough councils.

1.6. In addition, two of the 16 priority outcomes, are contextual priorities, meaning they will not be used to judge council performance, instead they are there to provide the underlying economic and social landscape of an area which may help explain variation in outcomes.

1.7. For most of the metrics, the Framework makes use of existing published data - Official Statistics standard or similar quality, at local authority level. However, for some measures, data is not currently available; in these instances, a placeholder has been included to reflect the ongoing development of a new dataset.

2. Government use of the Local Outcomes Framework

2.1. The outcomes and metrics for each local authority area will be published on gov.uk, with the aim that this will improve transparency and enable the public, government, local government and local partners to have a shared view of delivery of government priorities. This is intended to help focus efforts on delivering for local people and strengthening the way central government supports and holds councils to account for progress.

2.2. Outcomes for each local area will be made comparable against that area's 'statistical neighbours', i.e. areas most similar in terms of their context and challenges. A new statistical neighbours model is being developed for this purpose. The government intends to launch a digital tool in 2026, although the precise timing for this is not known.

2.3. The policy paper makes it clear that the framework does not replace existing accountability mechanisms, like Ofsted inspections of local authority children's services, but is designed to drive a coherent approach to outcomes-based accountability and improvement.

3. Framework principles

3.1. The government have a number of framework principles:

- **Partnership-led delivery**
Local government as leaders of place will work with other local bodies, residents and service users to deliver the best outcomes for local people and communities.
- **Government support and local accountability**
Government will use the framework to support improvement and hold councils to account where needed. Relevant departments will lead on oversight and improvement for outcome areas relating to their responsibilities. MHCLG will take a broader view across all the priority outcomes in a local authority area, considering whether challenge and support is needed for council leadership.
- **Use of data for assessing council performance**
The data in the framework will help the government to understand the

contributions of councils towards priority outcomes, taking into account relevant contextual factors, wider data and assurance mechanisms. It will also contribute towards assessments for compliance with the Best Value Duty.

- **Government working with councils**
Where data suggests outcomes are poor or declining in an area, government will work with councils to understand the root causes, as well as the needs of local service users, so that appropriate action can be taken by the council, local partners and/or relevant central department(s).
- **A variety of action options**
Actions can include improvement support, constructive challenge, and options for enhanced oversight and corrective measures where serious underperformance is identified, as well as potential policy change at the national level.
- **Expectations on councils to use the framework to:**
 - Clearly articulate the outcomes being delivered in a local authority area and understand how those outcomes may interact.
 - Monitor progress, bringing outcome delivery into multi-agency conversations.
 - Inform strategic decision-making, prioritisation, and resource allocation at a local level.
 - Support self-assessment and benchmarking their own performance
 - Foster collaboration between local government and partner organisations.
 - Demonstrate how funding - from central government or raised locally - is being used to drive outcome delivery.
 - Support conversations with central government on the challenges and opportunities facing local partners in delivering improved outcomes.
 - Engage constructively with local residents and local public service users to help them understand service performance and actively steer improvement.
- **Data collection principles**
MHCLG has sought to reassure councils that, if additional datasets need be submitted in relation to the placeholder metrics, they will seek to minimise unnecessary burdens on local government. This will be managed through the process for adding new datasets to the [Single Data List](#). This lists all the datasets that local government must submit to central government, which currently sits at 142 datasets across local government.

4. Comparison to current KCC performance reporting

4.1. There are several differences between the LOF and KCC performance reporting. We report against service delivery by Directorate / Service, not against national priority outcome (although there is some overlap); our performance measurement is primarily against target / floor standard, not by comparison to other local authorities, even if this is considered in the setting of targets; accountability in our reporting is at Cabinet

Member / Corporate Director level, whereas the LOF views the whole council (plus local partners potentially) as accountable; KCC uses a mixture of local and nationally-reported measures in its reporting, LOF uses nationally-reported measures only; and linked to this last point, many of KCC's measures can be reported quarterly or even monthly, whereas LOF measures are only likely to be reported on an annual basis. A summary of this comparison is below:

Difference	LOF	KCC performance reporting
Focus	National priorities (outcomes)	Service delivery on national and local priorities e.g. potholes repaired in 28 days
Measure comparator	Statistical neighbours (model being developed)	Target / floor standard (generates RAG ratings)
Accountability	Local area (council / multi-agency)	Cabinet member / Corporate Director
Measures used	Nationally-reported indicators	Mix of national and local
Measurement period	Annual	Annual / Quarterly / monthly

4.2. In terms of how measures in LOF align with those reported in KCC performance dashboards to Cabinet Committees, some LOF priorities show strong alignment, while others are less closely aligned. For example, there is close alignment under the LOF priorities of Every child achieving and thriving, and Environment, circular economy and climate change, but it is less close under the priorities of Adult Social Care (Quality), Transport and local infrastructure, and Health and Wellbeing. The full list of LOF priorities, associated measures and how closely they align with measures in existing Cabinet Committee dashboards can be found in Appendix 1.

4.3. It should be noted that although many of the LOF measures shown in Appendix 1 are not currently reported in Cabinet Committee dashboards, they are usually derived from information submitted by local councils and, in KCC's case, are often reported internally as management information.

5. Implications for KCC

5.1. The LOF policy paper states that the government will act where outcomes are poor, but this would start with conversations with local leaders to understand how they (the government) can support local areas and reduce barriers to delivery.

5.2. There is scope for government to use the LOF in different ways and until the government makes use of the LOF for any conversations with local authorities, some of the implications remain unclear.

5.3. This is a policy paper from MCHLG, but will rely on commitment and support from other arms of government which interact with local authorities such as Ofsted, CQC, Department for Education, Department of Health, and others, if it is to work effectively.

5.4. There is an emphasis on local authority accountability, yet many of the priorities require multi-agency working for effective delivery.

5.5. Careful attention will also need to be made of any measures which have not been normalised for population size, or are skewed, for example due to the size of Kent's

UASC population, which may not then lead to a fair comparison with other authorities.

5.6. As outlined above, one of the Framework principles makes clear that councils are expected to actively use the Framework rather than wait for government to initiate engagement. Given that the Framework relies on nationally-reported metrics, which are typically updated annually, this contrasts with locally determined metrics that are reported more frequently and agreed by Directors and KCC Cabinet Members. This indicates that the LOF should be seen as complementing, rather than replacing, existing performance reporting arrangements. However, services should consider the LOF metrics as part of the next annual review of Key Performance Indicators used in Cabinet Committee dashboards

6. Next steps

6.1. Once the digital tool is published, it is proposed that the Chief Analyst will bring a further paper to this Committee detailing the progress KCC is making against the priority outcomes within the Framework, according to the tool.

7. Recommendation

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the briefing on the Local Outcomes Framework and the proposal to bring a further paper to the Committee when the Local Outcomes Framework tool is published.

8. Contact details

Report Author:

Matthew Wagner
Chief Analyst
Chief Executive's Department
03000 416559
Matthew.Wagner@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

David Whittle
Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance
03000 416833
David.Whittle@kent.gov.uk