

By: Paul Carter, Leader of the Council
To: County Council
Date: 16 December 2010
Subject: Bold Steps for Kent: The Medium Term Plan to 2014/15
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Invites Members to approve Bold Steps for Kent: The Medium Term Plan to 2014/15.

Introduction

1. Bold Steps for Kent is the proposed new four year medium term plan for Kent County Council (KCC). As the strategic statement it is required to go before County Council for 'approval and debate' under Appendix 3 (Policy Framework) of the KCC Constitution. Bold Steps for Kent was considered by Cabinet on the 29 November 2010. Cabinet endorsed the document, subsequent to some minor refinements, and agreed to recommend approval of Bold Steps for Kent to County Council.

Relevant priority outcomes

2. As the new four year plan and strategic statement for Kent County Council, Bold Steps for Kent sets out this administrations ambitions and priorities for the medium term. These are centred on three aims of 'helping the Kent economy to grow', 'putting the citizen in control' and 'tackling disadvantage'.

3. In response to the financial and policy environment facing local government, Bold Steps for Kent is necessarily very different from the previous four/five year plans and strategic statements approved by the County Council. Underpinning Bold Steps for Kent is a desire to move to a new way of working as one council, which places joint service delivery with public service partners across Kent at its heart; which embeds the principle of subsidiarity in Kent by putting localism into action; and which creates a more dynamic, productive and cost efficient mixed economy of service provision which seeks to increase opportunities for the voluntary sector and social enterprises in the delivery of public services.

4. It is important to consider Bold Steps for Kent alongside the report of the Group Managing Director, *Change to Keep Succeeding* and the restructure proposals within that report that aims to re-shape the organisation so that it is able to deliver the agenda set out in Bold Steps for Kent.

Financial Implications

5. Central to Bold Steps for Kent is the need to respond to the challenging financial climate faced by local government and the need to save £340million from the KCC

budget over the next four years. Almost inevitably there will be financial implications resulting from this new approach to service delivery which aims to reduce cost, whilst some specific commitments will require funding (i.e. the proposal to establish a Big Society Fund). It is too soon to judge the exact financial implications arising from Bold Steps for Kent, but financial implications will be considered by Cabinet, County Council and Committees through the Authority's decision making framework as specific policy options and service changes are developed and proposed.

Legal Implications

6. There are no identifiable legal implications arising directly from the publication of Bold Steps for Kent. Legal implications from specific policy options and services changes that emerge as a result of Bold Steps for Kent will be reported in the normal way during the decision making process for each.

Consultation and Communication

7. The key consultation events for Bold Steps for Kent included:

- A report to each Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee inviting comment on the themes and priorities identified for Bold Steps for Kent pre-launch of the consultation draft.
- E-mail alert to all staff.
- Distribution of the consultation draft to all Kent Local Authorities, including all District, Town and Parish Councils.
- Distribution of the consultation draft to all Kent Members of Parliament.
- Distribution to private and public sector partners.
- Publication on the KCC website.
- Media coverage that drew residents' attention to the document and the opportunity to respond to the draft online.

8. Emerging key themes and priorities for Bold Steps for Kent were considered by each Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee (POSCs) pre-publication of the consultation draft in the September 2010 round of meetings. Appendix A sets the issues raised by Members and a response to each, including where Bold Steps for Kent changed as a result of Member comment or where the issue raised is dealt with in the content.

9. The public and partner consultation exercise has proved very worthwhile. Bold Steps for Kent was open for public and partner consultation from the 18 October 2010 until Friday 12th November (4 weeks). A total of 103 consultation responses were received, 22% of the responses were from residents, 23% from voluntary and community organisations, 9% from other public authorities, 22% from Parish/Town Councils and 1% from private enterprises. An analysis and summary of key issues from all consultation responses is set out in Appendix B to this report.

10. All comments received have been considered. Overall, the vast majority of the comments demonstrated support for the priorities, themes and approach set out in Bold Steps for Kent, and a clear understanding as to 'why' KCC was adopting such an approach at this time. Inevitably, responses demonstrated a diverse range of opinion as to what should be the priorities for the County Council, and it is not possible to accommodate every view expressed, but efforts have been made to

balance responses based on the weight of argument and the importance of the case made.

Delivery and Monitoring:

11. The intention is to embed Bold Steps for Kent into the day-to-day working of the organisation. As such, delivery will be built into directorate business plans, as well as personal indicators for members of the Corporate Management Team, with monitoring and reporting through existing arrangements such as the Core Monitoring Report and the Annual Report. There will, of course, be a requirement to develop both quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure the progress against priorities and actions in Bold Steps for Kent not already covered through existing monitoring or reporting arrangements. Moreover, given the centrality of *Unlocking Kent's Potential* (KCC's regeneration framework) to Bold Steps for Kent, the actions and commitments emanating from associated strategies derived from the regeneration framework will also be built into the monitoring arrangements.

12. Recommendation 3 from the Cabinet Scrutiny committee meeting of 20th October 2010 was for the "*Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services and Performance Management to ensure that members are fully involved in the formulation of the targets that will comprise Bold Steps for Kent*". It is intended to take a separate paper to all Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committees following consideration of Bold Steps for Kent by County Council, to engage all Members in developing appropriate measures and indicators used in monitoring delivery of Bold Steps for Kent, following a similar process adopted for *Towards 2010*.

Customer Impact Assessment

13. A customer impact assessment (CIA) has been prepared for Bold Steps for Kent has and has been approved by Directorate Equality Lead officers and the Corporate Diversity Team.

Recommendation:

14. Members are asked to:

- a) Note the recommendation from Cabinet to approve Bold Steps for Kent: The Medium Term Plan to 2014/15.
- b) Approve Bold Steps for Kent: The Medium Term Plan to 2014/15.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Bold Steps for Kent: Emerging Themes and Priorities – Response to Member comments raised through September POSC Meetings

Appendix B: Bold Steps for Kent: Analysis and Summary of Key Issues from Consultation Responses

Background Documents:

Change to Keep Succeeding: The transformation of the Council's operating framework, Report of Group Managing Director to KCC Cabinet, 11 October 2010

Bold Steps for Kent: Medium Term Plan to 2014/15 – Consultation Draft
Bold Steps for Kent: Customer Impact Assessment
Bold Steps for Kent: Consultation Responses

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Bold Steps for Kent: Emerging Themes and Priorities

Response to Member comments raised through September POSC Meetings

Concern about commitment to Free Schools in emerging priorities and theme:

○ **Response:** The explicit commitment of supporting parents who wish to establish Free Schools is now a broader commitment to “support quality and choice from a diverse range of providers”. This may well include Free Schools where there is a desire to create them and approval is granted by the Secretary of State, but now reflects that education provision will be provided by a mixed economy of providers, of which Free Schools may be one education provider amongst many, that KCC must maintain effective working relationships with.

Focus on commissioning/downplaying service delivery role:

○ **Response:** Bold Steps for Kent envisages a greater mixed economy of providers delivering public services, including increased use of the voluntary and social enterprise sector. The document is explicit in stating that KCC will be focused on commissioning services from providers who can best deliver the greatest value for money on behalf of Kent taxpayers, irrespective of whether providers are from the public - including in-house - voluntary or the private sectors.

Examine whether Children Social Services and Adult Social Services should be structured to work better as a means to support all vulnerable people:

○ **Response:** Bold Steps for Kent makes a specific commitment to restructure adult and children social services so that it provides a more integrated and resilient service – and it is in a better position to serve the interests of vulnerable adults and children in Kent.

Need to define what the Big Society is and what it means:

○ **Response:** Two specific sections defining the Big Society have been included in Bold Steps for Kent. P.30 attempts to define the Big Society as it has been interpreted by KCC going forward in the short-medium term – together with examples of how the Big Society agenda is already in operation in Kent (p.32). As the Government begins to firm up its Big Society agenda - including through policies, projects and services approaches (starting with the Big Society Green Paper due before the end of the year) the definition of Big Society approach may develop further, but in the meantime the statements made in Bold Steps for Kent represent a foundation for delivering the Big Society in Kent.

Assessment speed and thoroughness where assessments overlap or are dependent on other assessment processes – including those of other public service agencies:

○ **Response:** Bold Steps for Kent now makes an explicit commitment to move to a single initial assessment framework in order to reduce duplication and speed up assessment and access to specialist assessment for Kent residents. It also makes a specific commitment to simplify and rationalise assessment processes shared with

other public bodies to reduce delay and provide a more integrated and seamless service.

Specific focus on climate change needs to be included in the document:

- **Response:** By embedding the Regeneration Framework as the delivery mechanism of Bold Steps for Kent – the Kent Environment Strategy becomes a key delivery mechanism for the document. Bold Steps for Kent explicitly reflects this under the section 'Meeting the Climate Challenge'.

Fit for purpose chapter – emerging priorities don't fit well together – some are customer focussed some are staff focussed:

- **Response:** Following Member comments it was decided to remove the proposed 'Fit for Purpose' chapter with the remaining customer/resident focussed priorities moved to the 'Putting the Citizen in Control' chapter. The staff focussed priorities have been removed within the main body of the document, and are now captured by the publication of the Design Principles within the Appendix.

Needs to be section/paragraph on 'enjoying life:

- **Response:** A paragraph on continuing to focus on high quality of life for residents has been added to the document.

Specific commitment to Broadband development should be included:

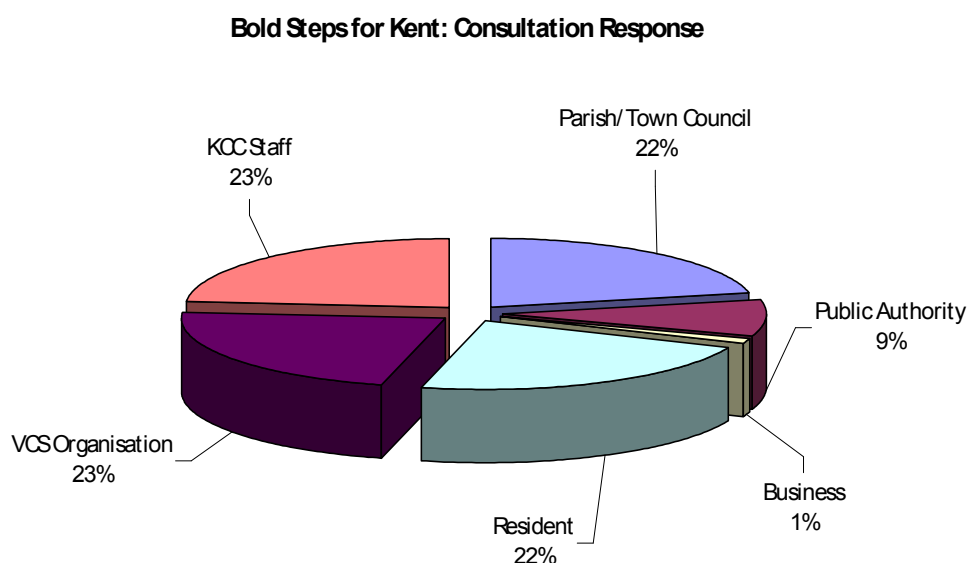
- **Response:** A specific commitment to facilitate access to high-speed broadband infrastructure has been included in the 'Driving Economic Prosperity' chapter of Bold Steps for Kent.

Bold Steps for Kent: Analysis and Summary of Key Issues from Consultation Responses

1. Background:

1.1 Bold Steps for Kent was put out for consultation for six weeks, from 18th October to 12th November 2010. Hardcopies of the document were sent out to key partners, and the document was made available on the public website, as a main item on the front page.

1.2 We received 103 responses from a variety of stakeholders:



Pie chart showing breakdown of respondent groups

2. Overall reaction to the plan:

2.1 On the whole, there was strong support for the overall vision set out in Bold Steps for Kent and acceptance of the need for change in how KCC delivers services. A number of respondents, however, highlighted specific areas where they either had concern about an approach, or wanted to make a suggestion to develop the concept further.

- 27 respondents specifically emphasised their support for the vision of the document, and the three ambitions. Six respondents specifically expressed dissatisfaction with an element of the document. However, these typically referred to a specific issue/service rather than the vision of the overall document.
- Some respondents highlighted the difficulty of the timeframe to respond and felt that more time would have been helpful.
- A number of respondents wanted further detail about the practical arrangements for delivering the 'Bold Steps for Kent' vision – particularly in relation to 'Big Society' and how we will work with the Voluntary and Community Sector.

“Bold Steps in essence is a strategy of broad parameters, an ethos, and a modus operandi. I embrace its purpose, direction and overall concept of where Kent is and where it should go. It is a broad vision and a philosophy of aims and objectives that creates a system for values and tenets that key people and organisations can relate to.”

Parish Council

“The Authority broadly welcomes the aims, tone and most importantly, content of ‘Bold Steps’, the three strategic aims – growing economy, citizen empowerment and tackling disadvantage – all resonate and are congruent with the strategic agenda for policing and community safety. Notwithstanding some of the immense challenges facing us over the next few years, the draft does strike an appropriately positive tone in acknowledging the substantial opportunities and imperative created by the new public sector and financial realities.”

Kent Police Authority

“It is quite typical of Kent to be one of the first Councils off the mark to produce a corporate plan in response to the dynamic duo and ‘Big society’, and the document overall is very good.”

Resident

3. General themes in the responses:

Big Society:

3.1 Many respondents focused on the ‘big society’ themes. In general, there was a lot of praise of the vision of KCC’s role in supporting Big Society, and the commitments that are set out in the document, however there were also a number of responses who had further detailed questions about how it would work. Some respondents used the consultation to highlight (their) work they feel already falls within the Bold Steps for Kent’s approach to Big society.

3.2 There was a great deal of interest in the practical arrangements for the Big Society agenda in Kent, and largely a lot of support for KCC’s approach. However, there were a few questions about how KCC’s relationship with the VCS would be changed and the capacity of the sector to respond to this new role.

3.3 There were a few requests for further reference to volunteering and its importance in delivering the Big Society.

“The ‘Big Society’ is the source of confusion for many. It needs greater clarification and THIS DOCUMENT DOES THIS in the content of Kent.”

Parish Council

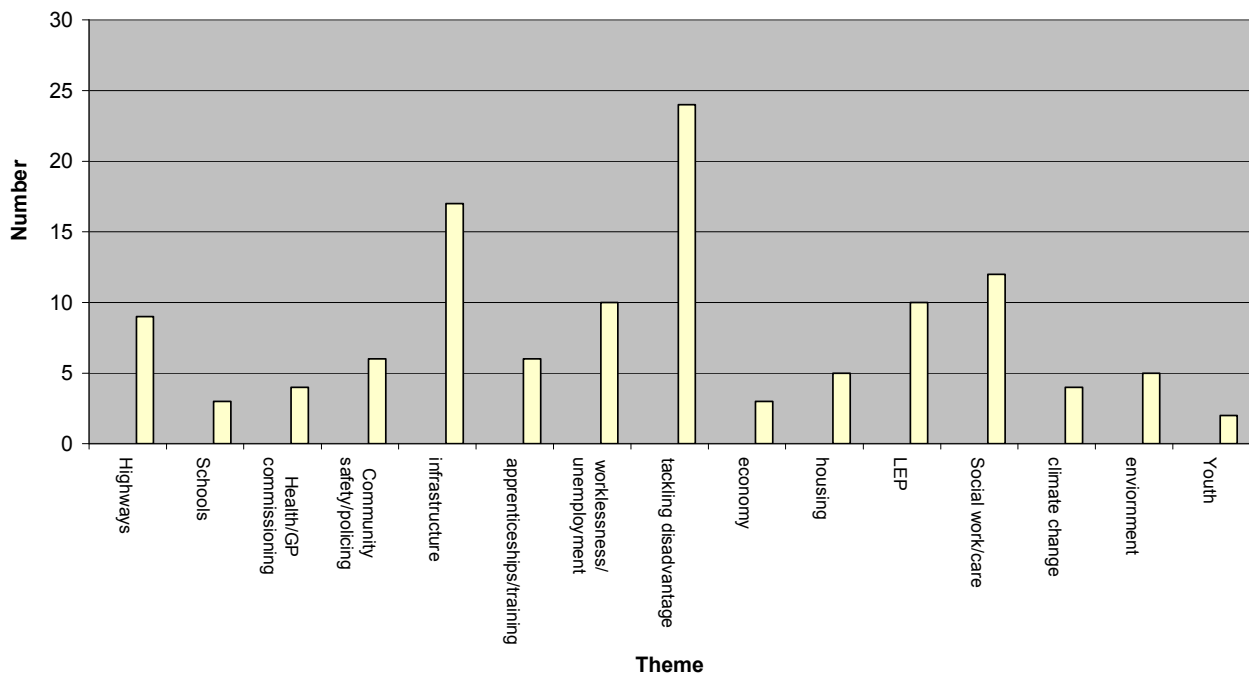
“A right to bid process for any organisations or indeed KCC staff wishing to run their own project from a voluntary perspective is a positive route to take.”

Resident

“The establishment of a Big Society Fund has the potential to support the development of a socially responsible economy and I welcome this and would like to know more on how this fund will be applied to support a vibrant social enterprise and voluntary sector economy.”

VCS

Areas referenced in responses



Locality Based Commissioning:

3,4 There was a strong appetite for locality based commissioning and the approach set out in Bold Steps was warmly welcomed – particularly from Parish and District partners. It was felt that this approach offered many positive benefits to the delivery of public services for local communities.

“The Council strongly supports the concept of monies being pooled into a single commissioning pot, drawing budgets from locally democratically accountable councils and government departments and agencies and spent locally on agreed priorities. Joint commissioning should lead to a better targeting of scarce resources, more joined up service delivery and less duplication as organisational boundaries are increasingly blurred in the design and delivery of services by partners”.

Partner

Specific topics:

3.5 Most respondents gave sector specific responses focusing on key areas of interest such as issues for their local area, or those related to their own expertise/ job. This is a summary of the key issues covered, with a selection of comments that reflect this view:

- **Tackling Disadvantage:** There were a large number of comments that emphasises the importance of supporting the vulnerable and welcomed the commitments to this in Bold Steps. Some respondents focused on specific groups or examples. There were a few that expressed concerns about the impact of the budget cuts on these groups.

“It is good to see the strong level of support given to social work in this document. There is clearly an understanding of our need to support our weaker fellow citizens, and respect for the people who do that. Thank you.”

Resident

- **Parishes:** A theme that emerged from a number of respondents (particularly from Parish councils) was a request for further references to Parishes and their role in this vision – particularly with regard to the commissioning and delivery of public services.
- The **Local enterprise Partnership:** There was strong support for the Kent/Essex partnership from a wide range of respondents.
- **Apprenticeships:** There was a positive response to Bold Steps’ commitment to Apprenticeships and the Kent Success programme in particular.
- **Transport and infrastructure:** Many respondents highlighted specific issues relating to transport in Kent and there was a request for further reference to transport networks.

“The document has no ‘bus or rail section. Increasing rural poverty and unemployment will isolate people, and they will need their buses, post-buses and community taxis. The freeing of government overview now has given Kent a chance to manage its roads, buses and trains for the benefit of Kent, without having to take account of the overriding need of London”

Resident

- **Gateways:** A number of respondents welcomed the commitment to the roll out of the Gateway model, however a few raised concerns - in terms of how well all residents’ needs are met, and where these are located. (Given the nature of the comments, some of this may be down to miscommunication of what the Gateway concept entails)

- **Implementation:** A few requests from residents asked very specific questions about what the document means for them and the services they receive.

“For those of us who just want local government to provide services, it is difficult to understand what it is all about.... If it can't do basic stuff which is required by law, what is the point of trying to do a load of stuff which is not?”

Resident

- **Communication/engagement:** There was interest in the decisions about how cuts are made, and services are delivered, and a general appetite for further communication in relation to this. Parish councils, and other partners were particularly keen to be involved in future decision making about their areas.

“We note that KCC wants to pick up messages from government to ‘just get on with it’. As a small parish using some KCC services directly for the roads in the parish and for all its residents in some form (NHS, Police, waste management, libraries/gateway etc) we need to be able to stay up-to-date with how and what services are being provided and in what form.”

Parish Council

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4. Key Issues from Consultation Responses

<u>Category</u>	<u>Resident/Organisation</u>	<u>Key issue to note:</u>
Resident	Resident	Don't forget the private sector and the benefits they can offer
	Resident	Pay community businesses the same as big businesses
	Resident	Confused by graphic choice, focus on European links, doesn't like LEP. Interested in transport, planning and support for social services.
	Resident	Fully focused on the case for youth services, and preventative work
	Resident	General comment
	Resident	Welfare reform - request for personal budgets to be rolled out
	Resident	Concerns that not enough about how cuts will be made
	Resident	Specific questions about wheelchair transport
	Resident	General comment
	Resident	Relates specifically to the need for a youth service and not targeted service
	Resident	Comments on decentralisation, LEP, need to focus on strengths and weaknesses
	Resident	Specific comments re: transport and infrastructure
	Resident	Document too long and too difficult to understand
	Resident	Personal complaint re: social services issue
	Resident	Too hard to respond to such detail effectively
	Resident	Personal issue
	Resident	Specific suggestion about communities taking over district database
	Resident	List of comments related to KCC sport service
	Resident	General comment
	Resident	Request for specific info related to deaf people
	Resident	Requests for further detail
	Resident	Request for specific info related to deaf people
	Resident	Parking/highways issues
Parish	Pembury Parish Council	General comment

Category	Resident/Organisation	Key issue to note:
	Coxheath Parish Council	Welcome the focus on enhancing rural economy and principle of subsidiarity
	Headcorn Parish Council	Strong support. Concern about lack of references to Parishes
	Mereworth Parish Council	Support for overall doc, feels there are a no of assumptions
	Langdon Parish Council	General comment
	Seal Parish Council	Concern about gateway model, TIF
	Hadlow Parish Council	Offer of facilities to support Big society
	Addington Parish Council	Strong focus on volunteering
	West Malling Parish Council	Concern about Gateway model
	Leybourne Parish Council	Request for more practical details about how it will work, who will provide what
	Sellindge Parish Council	Channel corridor comments specifically. Against proposed lorry park
	Benendent Parish Coucnil	General comment
	Queenborough Town Council	Support for regeneration aims, in particular those affecting Queenborough
	Wingham Parish Council	General comment
	New Romney Town Council	Want to be consulted and delegated powers for everything related to New Romney
	Ditton Parish Council	General comment
	Minister-on-Sea Parish Council	Concerns about locality based commissioning
	Sturry Parish Council	Support for TIF
	Chevening Parish Council	Comments about Kent County Council management
	Whitfield Parish Council	General comment
	Aylesham Parish Council	Concern that approach should not lead to wholesale outsourcing of services
	Westwell Parish Council	General comment
	Sevenoaks Town Council	More emphasis on West Kent, more refs needed to transport, support for LEP
Partner	Connexions Kent and Medway	Issues relating to apprenticeships qualification requirements
	Kent Police Authority	Commitment to supporting BSK in partnership work - particularly PBB and self financing LG

Category	Resident/Organisation	Key issue to note:
	Environment Agency	Generally supportive and commitment to work together on areas of mutual interest in light of financial challenges facing public sector.
	Natural England	General support for overall aims and placing the Environment Strategy at the heart of Bold Steps for Kent.
	Eastern and Coastal Kent NHS	Suggestions regarding public health and not placing blame on individuals
	Gravesham Borough Council	Too long, request for further clarification on self sufficiency
	Canterbury City Council	Governance issues, support for LEP, Gateway, further clarification wanted on self financing and TIF
	Thanet District Council	Support for Kent Forum, argument for co-location with District Council services
	Swale Borough Council	Supportive of approach and three ambitions set out in Bold Steps for Kent, particular support for Locality Boards and Local Enterprise Partnership.
Private	Hugh Lowe Farms	Food security, stronger statements on green economy - particular issues with one sentence
VCS	North West Kent Carers Support Service	Concerns about value for money agenda for VCS, need for focus on heterogeneous nature instead
	Carers First	Technical questions about how commitments will be delivered. Capacity/support etc.
	Community Action South & East Kent	Questions about transparency and communication
	The Kent CYP VCS Forum	Comments about the practicalities of contract arrangements with VCS
	KCFN	Concern about expectations and capacity of VCS. Raising need for partnership and looking forward to future relationship
	Maidstone and Malling Carers Project	Welcomes new relationship but concern over practicalities of how the existing VCS will be engaged. Particularly welcomes Big Society Fund
	Kent Link	Needs more recognition of carers and the role they play in supporting the vulnerable. Concern over association between tackling disadvantage as dependency/burden
	Action with Communities in Rural Kent	Covers a large variety of opinions
	Kent Community Care Association	Strongly welcome BSK, particular focus on rural issues. Suggestion about the need to 'rural proof' decisions
	Sustainability Actions	General comment
	Kent Community Action Network (CAN)	General comment
		Raising points about practicalities

Category	Resident/Organisation	Key issue to note:
	Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)	Issues relating to the barriers for people with disabilities into work and welfare reform.
	Every Family Matters - CIC	Concerns flagged about implications of budget pressures.
	Volunteer Centre Thanet	Highlighting their life coaching work and link to Big Society
	Swale Council for Voluntary Service & Volunteer Centre	Queries re: practicalities
	Maidstone Volunteer Centre	Focus on queries about the practicalities of how new relationship with VCS will be achieved
	Enterprising Opportunities CIC	Strong focus on volunteering
	Voluntary Action Maidstone	Concerns over VCS capacity etc
	Epilepsy HERE	Strong focus on volunteering, older people forums
	Cruse Bereavement Care	Suggestions related to sector specific issues
	Maidstone Deaf Pub	Highlighting their need for funding support
	Community Action South East - Shepway & Dover	Request for information about what it will mean for specific group
	Kent & Medway Citizens Advice	Gives detail of their services
KCC	Kent Arts Development Unit	Highlighting how they can support BSK aims
	Gypsy and Traveller Unit & Kent Supported Employment	Strong support, and detail about how ADU supports BSK aims
	Kent Libraries & Archives	Would like more detail about how decisions re: commissioning services are made. Clear interest in alternative approaches. More info about plans to engage with staff
	Regeneration & Economy Division	Focused specifically on literacy & reading and relationship with Big Society ' The Kent Approach'
	CFE, Learning Group	Request for more practical information, need to balance on rural economy, and other key areas to consider re: economy. Skills inequalities. Strong support for the Big Society fund
	Quality and Standards Team, KCC Community Safety and Regulatory Services	Concerns about the concept of putting the citizen in control. Feels there are gaps: focus on outcomes, personal responsibility, advocacy for the vulnerable. Questions about practical delivery
	Kent Downs AONB	General comment
	KCC Staff	Summary of how Kent downs supports BSK, wants more specific recognition of KD AONB
		Information systems, safeguarding issues

Category	Resident/Organisation	Key messages to note:
	Kent Partnership Team, KCC	Focuses on links with Vision for Kent and formatting
	Kent Supporting People Team, KCC	Focuses on how SP fits the vision, concerns about equitable treatment in LBC, wants more ref to SP
	KASS System Support & Projects Team, KCC	KASS data reporting comments
	KCC Staff	Comments on the practicalities, and diversity in particular
	Kent Volunteers, KCC	Relates specifically to volunteering and the KV team
	KCC Staff	Further reference to ASS
	KCC Staff	Focus on climate change, wants more emphasis on this
	KCC Staff	General comment
	KCC Staff	Comment about restructure and Bold Steps for Kent
	KCC Staff	Request for more references to Children's Centres
	KCC Staff	Specific suggestion for income generation for Highways
	KCC Staff	Specific suggestion for housing related issues
	KCC Staff	Wants further reference to the environment
	KCC Staff	Sports focus and commissioning comments
	KCC Staff	Comments related to CFE issues
	KCC Staff	Comments specific to KASS case management issues, Swale