

Your Future, Our Priority – Consultation Response

Final Decision-Maker	Policy and Resources Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

“Your Future, Our Priority”, is Kent County Council’s draft 5-year plan. The Plan has been developed following consultation and engagement with key stakeholders including business representatives, young people, residents and the voluntary and community sector. This report provides the Council’s response to the draft plan to be submitted during the consultation period. The draft response is at Appendix 1.

Purpose of Report
Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the consultation response on “Your Future, Our Priority” is approved for submission to Kent County Council.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	12 February 2020

Your Future, Our Priority – Consultation Response

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>The response to the consultation is focussed on how KCC's objectives align to our own vision and priorities for the Borough. Any gaps have been highlighted in the consultation response</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>KCCs five-year plan broadly supports the achievement of the cross cutting objectives</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	<p>By responding to KCC's five-year plan consultation we can help to ensure that its strategic plan aligns with MBC's. The plan highlights opportunities to collaborate with KCC to lobby and apply for funding, for example the shared UK Prosperity Fund. There are no specific financial implications at this stage.</p>	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our	Head of Policy,

	current staffing and welcome the opportunity to work closely with KCC and other partners to achieve our priorities and shared objectives.	Communications and Governance
Legal	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers	
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no data protection implications in responding to the consultation.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	KCC have carried out an EqIA of the plan and this is available on their website	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	We recognise that the 5-year plan is seeking a positive impact on population health in Kent.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Crime and Disorder	The 5-year plan identifies priorities for stronger and safer communities	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	No implications from responding to the consultation	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Kent County Council has created a new 5-year strategic plan for Kent, "Your Future, Our Priority". The plan shapes what Kent County Council will do, what they will prioritise spending money on and how they will work together with their partners over the next 5 years.

1.2 The plan has been developed following engagement activity with:

- Kent residents
- young people
- businesses
- voluntary and community sector organisations
- their staff
- partners across public services.

1.3 As a result of the engagement activity seven outcomes have been agreed summarised on KCC's website as:

1. Enterprise and investment

Making Kent an ambitious and successful county, with high quality jobs, skilled workers, enterprising businesses and thriving town centres and rural areas.

2. Securing sustainable infrastructure

As Kent grows, working with partners to put in place the infrastructure that communities need, including roads, school places and utilities.

3. Connected transport and communities

Keeping Kent's roads and pavements well maintained and safe, keeping traffic flowing and improving public transport so everyone can get around the county.

4. A cleaner and greener Kent

Keeping our streets, towns and parks tidy and clean, protecting the green areas and coasts that make Kent so special and leading the way on tackling the climate emergency.

5. Stronger and safer Kent communities

Continuing to bring communities together so everyone feels involved and supported and working with partners to make sure everyone feels and stays feeling safe.

6. Opportunities for children and young people

Giving children the best start in life, providing effective early help when families need it and making sure every young person gets the education, skills and experiences they need for a successful future.

7. Quality health, care and support

Helping people to live well, working with partners to improve people's physical and mental health and resilience and providing quality social care when people need it.

- 1.4 The foreword of the document by KCC Leader, Councillor Roger Gough's provides a summary:

"Kent is a unique County – with its distinctive geography spanning from the North Downs to the East Coast; rural countryside in the Weald to the urban areas of North Kent; traditional market towns and villages to planned garden communities at Otterpool and Ebbsfleet. We have a proud history from our historic city in Canterbury and Channel ports, to a vibrant, modern economy founded on thriving small and medium sized businesses.

With a peninsular geography bordering all the opportunities of London and Europe, Kent is an exceptionally diverse county with endless potential. This statement draws together an assessment of Kent's distinctive challenges and opportunities, with the aim of improving the quality of life for all Kent's residents.

Kent County Council has a proud history of providing strategic leadership across the county, with strong working relationships with our local government partners at district, borough, city, town and parish level, all working together to protect Kent's distinctive character and promote a good quality of life. As such, Kent's residents identify with the county as well as their local town, village or neighbourhood. They see that Kent is more than the sum of its parts.

We have improved many outcomes despite a long period of financial challenge, which could not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of our staff, such as our health visitors, youth workers, community wardens and social care teams who make a visible difference every day for the communities that they serve. However, we recognise there are areas where we can and must do more and we are not complacent about our need to continue to improve over the next 5 years.

We put a strong emphasis on prevention – tackling social and health problems at an early stage. This is not only about the right help for people with complex needs; it also means supporting strong connected communities that reduce isolation and promote a thriving Civil Society across all parts of Kent. Kent is a county of many different local communities that often require local solutions where the County Council is not always part of the answer. We must seek to enable and support Kent charities and community groups to improve their local communities, whilst building stronger social bonds which underpin our quality of life.

Over the last 5 months, we've been listening to what our residents, young people, partners, businesses, staff and Elected Members have told us are the most important issues and concerns facing the county. They want us to work better across the public, private and voluntary sectors to meet the challenges which impact them on a daily basis: the increasing demand for local public services from an aging and changing population, the impact of significant housing growth, and the pressure on our transport infrastructure.

Our relationship to London is critical. We must use our proximity to the capital to our advantage to drive economic development and greater prosperity, not just soak up additional pressures on our county and its public services.

The County Council has a responsibility to set out a clear plan with a strong, positive vision for the county that reflects the people we represent, to partners and to Government. With a shared vision, our voice is stronger, and we can collectively stand up for Kent's best interests nationally. We cannot do this alone – we must work closely with our partners, businesses and the voluntary and community sector to achieve great things for a great county. What an extraordinary privilege it is for all of us to serve it.

We welcome your views on our draft 5 year plan. After the consultation, we will produce a You Said, We Did document to show how your voice has made a difference. Together, over the next 5 years, we want to deliver the priorities that matter most to Kent's residents."

- 1.5 Consultation is currently open on the plan until 17 February 2020 with all interested parties invited to respond on:
- how well the 7 draft outcomes reflect what is important to your quality of life
 - how well the draft objectives will help us to deliver each of these outcomes.
- 1.6 The response at Appendix 1 is based on our own Strategic Plan and how well KCC's plan aligns to our vision, four priorities, cross cutting objectives and outcomes. KCC's full 5 year plan has not been attached as it is 44 pages, Committee members can find the document here:
- https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/103635/Draft-5-Year-Plan-Public-Consultation-v1_060120.pdf
- 1.7 Your Future, Our Priority, broadly aligns to the Council's own vision and priorities, as such comments are focussed on gaps, challenges or where we believe clarification is required. The plan emphasises the importance of partnership working to achieve the outcomes set out as emphasised in the Leader's foreword above.
- 1.8 We have identified areas where we believe Maidstone should be mentioned for example the North Kent Enterprise Zone and Kent Innovation Centre under Outcome 1. We have also identified opportunities for greater collaboration on all outcomes and in particular on securing sustainable infrastructure, asking for clarity on the infrastructure first approach.
- 1.9 Under Outcome 4, our response provides a challenge to KCC's ambition, requesting quicker action on climate change and a commitment to 2030 in-line with us and other district council's in Kent. Looking at Outcomes 6 and 7 we have asked for a recognition of inclusive growth, the district role in public health and the wider social determinants of health such as housing, opportunities for children and young people and quality health, care and support

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee has the following options available to it:
1. Not to respond to the consultation thus missing the opportunity to comment on the strategic plan for Kent
 2. Amend the consultation response attached and submit as amended
 3. Approve the consultation response as attached at Appendix 1
 4. Produce a new response, this would be difficult to draft within the timescale and probably require delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair for sign-off.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to approve the consultation response at Appendix 1 with such amendments as it deems appropriate. This is an opportunity to influence KCC at a strategic level through input into a consultation exercise, not responding would mean missing this opportunity.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the Council's response to KCC's draft 5-year Strategic Plan. The plan has been assessed against our own Strategic Plan to identify any gaps and these have been highlighted in our response. The response takes into account our risk appetite.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Maidstone Borough Council's response to KCC's Draft 5-year Strategic Plan.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The response will be submitted online via KCC's consultation portal. Consultation closes on the 17th of February. Responses to comments received will be published in a "you said, we did" document.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Draft Consultation Response

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

"Your Future, Our Priority" – KCC's Draft 5 Year Plan:

https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/103635/Draft-5-Year-Plan-Public-Consultation-v1_060120.pdf