

This Annual Report provides a commentary on the progress KCC has made over the last 12 months towards delivering better outcomes for the residents, communities and businesses in Kent. KCC continues to make good progress across a wide range of outcomes, against a challenging financial backdrop. However, it recognises that achieving those outcomes is a medium to long term aim and in some cases, achievement is dependent on other organisations, requiring KCC to work in partnership to address whole system issues.

Since 2010, KCC has faced substantial reductions in real terms funding and rising demand on Council services and have successfully delivered £591m of savings over the last seven years, delivering a balanced budget year on year. Despite this, KCC has continued to deliver crucial front-line services which deliver better outcomes for Kent's residents, communities and businesses, prioritised those services which matter most to our communities and made important progress transforming how we deliver those services to ensure value for money. When times are tough it is more important than ever we spend wisely.

Strategic Outcomes Progress

Strategic Outcome 1: Children and young people get the best start in life

KCC is working to ensure young people have a platform from which to flourish through strong and safe environments, good physical and mental health, have confident and ambitious outlooks and are equipped with the learning and skills to match. This will enable Kent's young people to have access to the education, work and skills opportunities necessary to enter the modern workplace and support Kent businesses to grow in an increasingly competitive local, national and international economy.

Raising Schools Standards –

Kent's school's excellent track record in raising standards continues. 89% of Kent schools now have an Ofsted judgement of good or better, compared with 86% nationally, based on latest Ofsted reporting. This means that 200,373 pupils now attend a good or outstanding school in Kent.

Ensuring School Places for Kent Children –

KCC is working hard to ensure that every child and young person secures a good place at a primary or secondary school of their choosing, despite massively increasing demand. For the fifth consecutive year more children than ever applied for a place in a Kent secondary school. Despite this increase, 445 more Kent children secured their first preference of secondary school for September 2018. Similarly, almost 98% of children across Kent started their formal education at one of their chosen primary schools, which is an improvement on last year, and nearly 90% of children (15,426 children) received their first preference of primary school.

Increasing Apprenticeships –

The percentage of 16 to 18-year olds who started an apprenticeship has maintained this year compared to last year, with a reduction seen nationally. The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy has not yet had the impact of increasing apprenticeship numbers however, we are encouraging schools and businesses to utilise the Apprenticeship Levy to attract new recruits and invest in their existing workforce.

Supporting Children and Young People's Physical and Mental Health –

KCC has maintained its better than national average performance in the number of hospital inpatient episodes per 1,000 population aged 0 to 24 and the percentage of Year 6 children with a healthy weight which is in line with national average. This year it has also celebrated 10 years of the Kent School Games which saw over 7,000 young people aged from 4 to 18 compete. Many schools and community organisations are now delivering elements of the HeadStart programme, accessing the tools and resources available via the online Resilience Hub and taking advantage of training and funding. Young people are benefitting from greater support in their schools and communities and those engaged with the HeadStart programme are showing improvements in their resilience and emotional wellbeing. However, the number of children and young people waiting for CAMHS assessment has not improved over 1 year (based on 2017 data) and the average waiting time in weeks from referral to routine treatment for CAMHS has not improved over 1 and 3 years (also based on 2017 data). This

performance reflects challenges seen nationally in delays in assessment due to gaps in provision or blockages in the pathway that children, young people and their families experience when accessing mental health services.

Strategic Outcome 2:

Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life

KCC is working to deliver the infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of our growing communities and support Kent businesses to drive economic growth and deliver new jobs across the whole of Kent. Alongside this, we are ensuring social, cultural, and sporting opportunities are available and our environmental assets are protected, so Kent remains an attractive county in which to invest, live and work.

Delivering infrastructure improvements-

Whilst KCC has delivered important infrastructure improvements over the last year, its refreshed Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) sets out the scale of growth in the county to 2031. Kent and Medway is expected to see 396,300 new people, 178,600 new homes and 170,300 new jobs with a total infrastructure cost of more than £16 billion. As the county grows, demand increases for new infrastructure and pressures increase on the existing infrastructure. With only 76% of the costs of meeting these infrastructure needs secured or expected, the Growth and Infrastructure Framework has identified a shortfall of £3.96 billion. We will continue to lobby government to ensure this funding is available and that Kent has the infrastructure necessary to support business and housing growth.

Investing in Highways Maintenance –

KCC has invested in highways maintenance in the last year to respond to the impact of severe weather and to keep Kent moving. 50,956 potholes have been repaired since March 2018, considerably more than the 36,843 potholes which were repaired between March 2017 and February 2018. This prioritisation is addressing the needs of its communities at a time when the ongoing maintenance of not only our highways but the wide range of our assets, including bridges, footways and traffic signals, is increasingly difficult alongside the pressures from

unprecedented levels of growth at a time of reducing resources. Whilst KCC will continue to prioritise critical maintenance repairs, the growing asset management backlog is a significant medium to long term challenge for both the country and Kent.

Subsidising Public Transport –

We support over 253,000 elderly and disabled residents with concessionary travel bus passes and funded more than 16.2 million concessionary travel journeys in the county. Through our unique Young Persons Travel Pass and 16+ Travelcard we supported 31,000 pass holders to make 10 million journeys. We also subsidised 126 non-profitable bus routes to serve isolated communities, carrying 3.8 million passengers. Whilst we have looked to reduce subsidised travel where there was low uptake at high cost, despite significant financial constraints to the local authority the administration continues to prioritise supporting accessibility for those without an alternative means of travel in rural areas, acknowledging the impact this can have on social isolation. KCC does emphasise the Young Persons Travel Pass is a privilege and not a right, it could be therefore subject to cuts in the future due to the financial commitment of Adult Social Care and Special Educational Needs children.

Supporting Kent's Businesses –

Kent has seen a maintained percentage of business start-ups surviving for over 1 year, in line with the national average and an improving picture of new business registrations per 10,000 population aged 18 to 64 over both 1 and 3 years. Despite this strong improvement the number of new business registrations is below the national average. In 2017- 18 Kent County Council has continued to deliver investment to small and medium sized businesses by providing loans and equity investments. The funding schemes have supported 41 companies and have provided funds worth £7,356,544. The companies have created 394 jobs and safeguard a further 53 jobs during the year. The funding schemes have been in operation since 2012 with over 4,100 jobs created and safeguarded.

Improving Quality of Life –

KCC continues to support social, cultural and sporting opportunities, including a comprehensive library offer both across the county and online with 52,246 more e-books & audio and 13,259

more magazines being accessed over the last year. The percentage of residents who report they have a high or very high level of life satisfaction has improved over 3 years with maintained performance over the last year. The percentage who report a high level of anxiety has improved over 1 year in line with the national average. The percentage of people who think the natural and historic environment is in good / excellent condition has maintained over both 1 and 3 years and remains in line with the national average. The percentage of adults engaged in sports and physical activity at least twice in the last 28 days has also maintained over 1 year and is in line with the national average.

Strategic Outcome 3:

Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently

We are working to secure high-quality services for our residents and supporting choices for people to live independently in our local communities wherever possible. Where people who are less resilient need some support, we are committed to ensuring they can make informed choices so they are well supported, safe, socially included and treated with dignity and respect.

Developing a Sustainable Care Market –

KCC continues to work towards having a care market which is integrated, sustainable and responsive to changing needs. The resilience of Kent's care market is crucial to ensuring its senior and vulnerable people receive quality care and remain safe, an important element of the County Council's safeguarding responsibilities and a key priority for the administration. KCC is working closely with care providers to develop a skilled and sustainable workforce, have developed a care sector workforce strategy, and have secured funding from the Sustainability Transformation Partnership Local Workforce Action Board to implement care sector workforce initiatives. We have also invested in the home care market to ensure workers are paid at the National Living Wage.

Avoiding Unnecessary Admissions to Hospital and Care Homes –

A key principle for its support and services is the aim to make the most of what people are able to do for themselves to reduce or delay their need for

care and provide the best long-term outcome for people. Therefore, it is encouraging that 88% of adult social care contacts provided with advice or equipment did not need ongoing support or comprehensive assessment and we have seen a 4% increase in Older People receiving homecare, allowing them to benefit from the greater independence of living at home rather than in residential care. The increasing number of Extra Care housing units over 3 years also supports people to remain independent for longer. We have maintained the number of older people receiving long term adult social care community services (per 1,000 population aged 65 plus) and have seen a continued positive trend in reducing supported admissions to permanent residential and nursing care per 1,000 population aged 65 and over, during the last 3 years. However, the number for those aged 18 to 64 has increased over one and three years. We have maintained the average number of hospital inpatient episodes per person aged 75 or over over the last year and Kent's performance remains better than the national average.

Supporting Adults with a Learning Disability into Employment –

Kent Supported Employment work with those individuals with a physical or sensory disability.

Supporting People with Mental Health Issues to Live Well –

The score service users give for whether they feel they have seen mental health services enough for their needs has maintained over both 1 and 3 years but remains below the national average. We are helping address people's mental health support needs through moving services towards a greater focus on prevention and early support, for example through The Live Well Kent Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Service. Co-run by charities Porchlight and Shaw Trust, the Live Well Kent service provides services through a diverse range of community network providers and includes advice and support on housing, employment, accessing peer networks, participating in local community groups and the arts as well as environmentally based interventions. These focus on improving a person's mental and physical wellbeing, to help reduce isolation for those experiencing mental health issues. Our new Community Navigation Service from 2019, through an emphasis on social prescribing, will also help link people to sources

of support within the community, providing health and social care professionals with greater options that can operate alongside existing treatments or care packages to improve health and wellbeing.

Conclusions

The report demonstrates the breadth of activity across the council and with its partners and providers to improve outcomes and provides a commentary on particular achievements and significant challenges over the last 12 months. The activity and achievements over the last year demonstrates the Council's progress towards achieving its strategic outcomes, particularly given the scale of the financial pressures on local government. It is also a sign of KCC's continued ambitions for the county and its confidence in the role of the County Council in delivering efficient and effective services to achieve better outcomes for its residents, businesses and communities.

Over the past year your County Councillor, Geoffrey Lymer, has been working to improve outcomes in the Public Health arena for Kent, especially East Kent, concentrating on mental health in adults and children, to improve mental well being, reducing rates of obesity which bring with it other life threatening diseases such as diabetes.

I have been operating over in France at Wimille, the Haute France equivalent of KCC at Maidstone, in a collaboration with their officers to reduce the high rates of pollution on both sides of the Channel created by marine traffic travelling through the English Channel water corridor. The impact of marine diesel engine pollution renders the area and community of Walmer suffering greater pollution and consequential health issues than the area around Trafalgar Square, London. To date we have achieved getting the cross Channel ferries to use an improved quality fuel to reduce pollution. We are now looking at the freight carriers using the length of the English Channel.

I have also been collaborating with agencies at Dover and Calais Ports to attempt to reduce Freight and tourist traffic issues that will rear their heads from time to time, following Brexit. I am liaising with Highways England regularly on this too.

I am very proactive in assisting start up companies, supporting them through their early years providing financial support and advice, through the Kent and Medway Business Funding. This involves my visiting these companies on a regular basis to monitor their accounts and productivity to offer advice and support where necessary.

I chair a company called International Health Alliance which collects information on the most recent innovative developments in diagnosis, treatment and health care and pharmaceutical developments for treating all manner of illnesses and diseases and monitor best practice and outcomes within the NHS comparing them to those in Europe and beyond. The idea here is if Britain has for example better bowel cancer outcomes to that of France, a meeting will be organised between the two leading health authorities so that the nation with better outcomes can identify what the other nation is not doing and then train them to bring them up to the same standard as the lead nation.

This is proving a great success with some cancers and other diseases.

Whilst I have contributed my allocated members grant to most of the 14 parishes I represent over the past year, for this financial year, the Member's Highways grant has been reduced considerably leaving just about £900 spend per parish.

Geoffrey Lymer
Kent County Councillor
Dover West Ward