

Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes



Strategic Statement Annual Report 2017



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To view this document online visit
www.kent.gov.uk/strategicstatement



Underlined text in blue
provides a hyperlink to online
information.



services is the result of a 7 year journey and recognition of the hard work of all our staff. This puts Kent’s children’s services among the top 30% in the country. I was particularly delighted to see Ofsted acknowledge that the vast majority of young people enjoy strong and constructive relationships with our staff and that senior and political leaders are proud to be the corporate parents of Kent’s looked after children and care leavers. We will work hard in the coming year to build on these positives and address those areas for improvement highlighted in Ofsted’s report.

We have continued to attract significant investment into our county including for transport projects, infrastructure, arts and environmental schemes. Through our new Local Transport Plan and ongoing refresh of our Growth and Infrastructure Framework we have identified the strategic needs of the county and have made important progress in improving our infrastructure, highway assets and public rights of way including converting over 63,000 of our streetlights to LED. We have also developed our implementation plan to deliver our priorities within the Kent Environment Strategy and have begun preparation of a Kent-wide Low Emissions Strategy.

We remain committed to encouraging independence through enablement and advice, information and support to ensure older and vulnerable people are confidently equipped to live independently for longer. We have worked to advance the integration of health and social care across Kent, as we seek more effective and efficient use of both our own and health partners’ resources. We recognise the national challenges which health and social care face but also the local opportunities to redesign our health and social care system around the needs of our people and deliver much more integrated ways of working wherever possible. We have to date played an important role in Kent and Medway’s Sustainability and Transformation Partnership which will further advance service integration and make a difference to people’s lives.

We have taken important steps in our progress towards embedding our strategic commissioning authority model. Structural changes, including the creation of a strategic commissioning function, have further placed the authority in a strong position to best achieve

the strategic statement outcomes, strengthening our capacity and capability to effectively deliver. The integration of children and young people’s services and transformation of adult social services have continued successfully, with important decisions to establish the Education Trading Company and progress with phase three of the Adult Transformation Programme. Our innovation across our internal services, our traded services, and our integration with partners, present further opportunities to improve our efficiency, effectiveness and delivery of our outcomes.

These successes have been achieved against a backdrop of unprecedented budget pressures. We face considerable and increasing challenges including growing demand, rising costs and reductions in government funding. Over the last year we have prioritised those services which will achieve our strategic outcomes and matter most to Kent’s residents and businesses. We continue to ensure we utilise our limited resources as effectively as possible to make the biggest difference to people’s lives. The sustained financial pressures mean it is imperative we continue to demonstrate robust financial management, something we have a strong track record in accomplishing.

As a Council we greatly value our staff’s continued dedication to delivering high-quality services and excellent customer service. Further changes for our authority will be required as we adapt our delivery models, including integrating services and progressing our trading companies. Therefore I am pleased our workforce is embracing new ways of working to build our capacity and meet our future business needs.

We are in a strong position to further improve services, address the challenges we face and deliver our strategic outcomes for Kent going forward. I remain confident in our progress and ambitious for the role our County Council plays in achieving better outcomes for our residents, businesses and communities.

Paul Carter Leader, Kent County Council

Foreword

Our Strategic Statement, [Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes](#), set out our ambitions for the county by 2020. These focus on ensuring children and young people get the best start in life, Kent communities benefit from being in-work, healthy and enjoy a good quality of life, and older and vulnerable residents remain safe and supported to live independently. This second annual report provides an opportunity to reflect on our progress towards delivering these outcomes for our residents over the last 12 months.

I am delighted that our overall performance continues to improve with the majority of supporting outcomes maintaining or improving in the last year and improving over the medium term.

The last year has seen some notable successes including 91% of schools now rated good or outstanding by Ofsted and a reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training. The welfare of children and young people is the Council’s top priority and our recent ‘good’ Ofsted judgement of our children’s

Introduction

This annual report details the progress we have made towards the 5 year vision set out in our Strategic Statement—[Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes](#) over the last 12 months from October 2016 to October 2017.

“Our focus is on improving lives by ensuring every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for Kent’s residents, communities and businesses.”

Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes:
KCC’s Strategic Statement 2015–2020

The annual report describes our direction of travel towards achieving better outcomes. Despite the significant financial challenge which is presented from the combination of rising spending demands and costs, reductions in central government funding and restrictions on levying council tax, we have continued to deliver crucial frontline services which make a real difference to Kent’s 1.5m residents and 59,000 businesses. We have prioritised those services which matter most to Kent’s communities. As an organisation we remain focused on our transformation, seeking to work with our customers, partners and providers to deliver services in more efficient and effective ways.

The report provides a balanced picture of our performance against the strategic outcomes committed to in our Strategic Statement, highlighting both successes and challenges over the last year. We have made important progress towards improving the lives of Kent’s residents, communities and businesses, but we recognise there is more to do.

This reflection on our progress not only enables us to take stock of improvements, but also highlights external changes which may impact on our services and identifies areas for further development. These considerations will ensure we continue to remain focused on our priorities for the year ahead, seeking to make a significant difference for our communities and progress against our long-term outcomes.

The Annual Report takes a rounded view of progress, considering:

- Key performance measures against our 20 supporting outcomes (with more detail in our [outcomes measures performance report](#)).
- Frontline activity including service delivery, consultations and evaluations.
- Contextual information including strategy and policy changes, transformation activity and commissioning activity.

This report provides a high-level overview of our progress. We signpost to further information, including detailed [strategies and policies](#) online throughout the report. Underlined bold text in blue provides a hyperlink to online information.

Measuring our progress against outcomes

Achieving our outcomes is a medium to long term aim; therefore this report sets out our direction of travel towards realising these. We have examined trend information to make a judgement on the overall performance direction of travel in the last year and three years of each of the supporting outcomes.

In September 2017, we updated our performance information for the outcome measures against our 2016 position and reflected again on the most suitable performance indicators. We used publicly available data based on national or sector accepted performance measures. The latest performance information for the academic year, calendar year or financial year (2016–17) has been used. The latest available full year result has been included. Where more recent in year performance information has become available, this has been reflected in commentary throughout the report. If the 3 year direction of travel is not available, the 2 year is given. If no trend is available, the overall supporting outcome judgement is based on those available measures.

We will continue to regularly review and adapt these measures to ensure they remain the most relevant reflection of our performance. In some cases achievement of an outcome is dependent on other organisations and requires us to work in partnership to address whole system issues.

Find out more about our performance information in our [outcomes measures performance report](#) which includes data capture points, graphs, statistical confidence intervals (where available), and national benchmarking (also where available).

Our outcomes

Our Vision:

Our focus is on improving lives by ensuring that every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for Kent's residents, communities and businesses

Strategic Outcome 1:

Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life

Supporting outcomes

- 1.1 Kent's communities are resilient and provide strong and safe environments to successfully raise children and young people
- 1.2 We keep vulnerable families out of crisis and more children and young people out of KCC care
- 1.3 The attainment gap between disadvantaged young people and their peers continues to close
- 1.4 All children, irrespective of background, are ready for school at age 5
- 1.5 Children and young people have better physical and mental health
- 1.6 All children and young people are engaged, thrive and achieve their potential through academic and vocational education
- 1.7 Kent young people are confident and ambitious with choices and access to work, education and training opportunities.

Strategic Outcome 2:

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

Supporting outcomes

- 2.1 Physical and mental health is improved by supporting people to take more responsibility for their own health and wellbeing
- 2.2 Kent business growth is supported by having access to a well skilled local workforce with improved transport, broadband and necessary infrastructure
- 2.3 All Kent's communities benefit from economic growth and lower levels of deprivation
- 2.4 Kent residents enjoy a good quality of life, and more people benefit from greater social, cultural and sporting opportunities
- 2.5 We support well planned housing growth so Kent residents can live in the home of their choice
- 2.6 Kent's physical and natural environment is protected, enhanced and enjoyed by residents and visitors.

Strategic Outcome 3:

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

Supporting outcomes

- 3.1 Those with long-term conditions are supported to manage their conditions through access to good quality care and support
- 3.2 People with mental health issues and dementia are assessed and treated earlier and are supported to live well
- 3.3 Families and carers of vulnerable and older people have access to the advice, information and support they need
- 3.4 Older and vulnerable residents feel socially included
- 3.5 More people receive quality care at home avoiding unnecessary admissions to hospital and care homes
- 3.6 The health and social care system works together to deliver high quality community services
- 3.7 Residents have greater choice and control over the health and social care services they receive.

Our Business Plan Priorities:

The cross cutting priorities that will help deliver the supporting outcomes

Our Approach:

The way we want to work as a council to deliver these outcomes

Direction of travel performance summary

Overall, our direction of travel is 'Mixed'

13 of the 20 supporting outcomes are 'Improving' or 'Maintaining' over a 1 year direction of travel

11 of the 20 supporting outcomes are 'Improving' over a 3 year direction of travel

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

Performance direction of travel	1 Year	3 Year
1.1 Kent's communities are resilient and provide strong and safe environments to successfully raise children and young people	Improving	Mixed
1.2 We keep vulnerable families out of crisis and more children and young people out of KCC care	Maintaining	Improving
1.3 The attainment gap between disadvantaged young people and their peers continues to close	Mixed	Improving
1.4 All children, irrespective of background, are ready for school at age 5	Maintaining	Improving
1.5 Children and young people have better physical and mental health	Not improving	Mixed
1.6 All children and young people are engaged, thrive and achieve their potential through academic and vocational education	Improving	Improving
1.7 Kent young people are confident and ambitious with choices and access to work, education and training opportunities	Mixed	Improving

Strategic Outcome 2: Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life

Performance direction of travel	1 Year	3 Year
2.1 Physical and mental health is improved by supporting people to take more responsibility for their own health and wellbeing	Improving	Improving
2.2 Kent business growth is supported by having access to a well skilled local workforce with improved transport, broadband and necessary infrastructure	Mixed	Mixed
2.3 All Kent's communities benefit from economic growth and lower levels of deprivation	Mixed	Improving
2.4 Kent residents enjoy a good quality of life, and more people benefit from greater social, cultural and sporting opportunities	Maintaining	Maintaining
2.5 We support well planned housing growth so Kent residents can live in the home of their choice	Mixed	Mixed
2.6 Kent's physical and natural environment is protected, enhanced and enjoyed by residents and visitors	Mixed	Mixed

Strategic Outcome 3: Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently

Performance direction of travel	1 Year	3 Year
3.1 Those with long-term conditions are supported to manage their conditions through access to good quality care and support	Maintaining	Mixed
3.2 People with mental health issues and dementia are assessed and treated earlier and are supported to live well	Maintaining	Improving
3.3 Families and carers of vulnerable and older people have access to the advice, information and support they need	Improving	Improving
3.4 Older and vulnerable residents feel socially included	Maintaining*	Improving*
3.5 More people receive quality care at home avoiding unnecessary admissions to hospital and care homes	Maintaining	Not improving
3.6 The health and social care system works together to deliver high quality community services	Maintaining	Mixed
3.7 Residents have greater choice and control over the health and social care services they receive	Improving	Improving

Key to performance direction of travel:

- Improving** Overall outcome measures are improving
- Maintaining** Overall outcome measures have not significantly changed and performance is being maintained
- Mixed** Overall outcome measures have mixed performance—for example where 2 of the 4 outcome measures are improving and 2 are not improving
- Not Improving** Overall outcome measures are not improving

*Based on the single outcome measure available

Find out more about our [outcomes measures performance report](#) which includes data capture points, graphs, statistical confidence intervals (where available) and national benchmarking (also where available). Individual performance measures use a 5% variance to determine change, with an aggregation taken at supporting outcome level.

Our operating environment: risks and opportunities

The last 12 months have seen major changes in the national political and legislative landscape alongside growing risks and opportunities at a local level. We will respond to changes to our operating environment to take advantage where possible and stand up for the people of Kent.

Political change: The general election result, alongside Brexit, has led to significant national uncertainty. This has already had an impact on the government’s proposed legislative agenda for local government and it is likely that further changes, delays or cancellations to the government’s programme will continue throughout this parliament. These changes may enable the County Council to further influence national decision-making.

Health and Social Care Integration: Health and social care face the challenge of continually rising demand at a time when the levels of funding have not kept pace. We are coming together with the NHS to plan services as one place-based system to respond to this challenge. KCC is an important partner in the Kent and Medway Sustainability and Transformation Partnership to ensure the patient and service user is at the centre of joined-up services. Mental Health and Learning Disability professionals are working in integrated teams with NHS colleagues, joint discharge planning teams are working closely with acute trusts, and we are involved in developing new models of care as part of the Encompass vanguard in Whitstable.

Social care demand: Overall demand and cost for adult social care services continue to increase due to factors including increasing numbers of young adults with long-term complex care needs and cost pressures due to inflation and the national living wage. This is against a backdrop of government funding reductions, increases in Deprivation of Liberty Assessments, Care Act implementation including the facilitation of a diverse and sustainable care market and longer-term demographic pressures. Local authorities continue to face increasing demand for specialist children’s services, with KCC experiencing additional demand challenges such as those associated with care leavers. The government’s anticipated Green Paper will provide an opportunity to put forward local solutions for the long term sustainability of adult social care.

Protecting vulnerable people: We continue to prioritise our statutory duties to effectively safeguard and protect vulnerable children and adults. We remain committed to good safeguarding practice which promotes and safeguards the welfare and wellbeing of individuals. We play an important leadership role in safeguarding activities, working with key partners including the NHS and Police, to protect vulnerable children and adults, strengthening our corporate parenting responsibilities and supporting services to deliver our statutory Prevent and Public Sector Equality duties. We are also working to identify and respond to emerging areas of vulnerability at the earliest opportunity, such as child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, modern slavery and gangs.

Growth and productivity: The Green Paper [Building our Industrial Strategy](#), set out the government’s proposals to promote growth and productivity. It covered critical issues for local government including skills development, upgrading transport and broadband infrastructure and work with local areas to boost growth. Our response to the government’s consultation highlighted our continuing important role in delivering the growth agenda, emphasised the impact of our activity and noted Kent’s exceptional challenges. The anticipated White Paper will be a further opportunity to engage government on local opportunities for growth.

Embedding a strategic commissioning authority: We have made significant progress toward becoming a commissioning authority. Organisation structural changes are supporting the integration of children and young people’s services and the creation of a single function for strategic commissioning across all phases of the commissioning cycle. The location of Public Health within Strategic and Corporate Services including the Public Health Observatory will enhance our data analysis and intelligence capability. As our traded service companies develop, including Commercial Services, Invicta Law and GEN2 Property Services, they will explore potential markets and grow their future customer base to generate income for the benefit of the whole authority.

Resilience: We have a legal duty to deliver contingency plans to reduce the likelihood and impact of emergencies, ranging from epidemics to terrorism-related incidents. Effectively working with partners is increasingly important following recent security threats, cyber-attacks and severe weather incidents. Building both organisational and staff resilience is critical, particularly supporting workforce health and wellbeing and succession planning. Whilst good progress has been made we need to remain aware of potential threats and ensure we are able to respond effectively to deliver resilient services.

Balancing the books

We are continuing to demonstrate sound financial management, prioritising services for residents whilst delivering the unprecedented levels of year on year savings required from rising service demand and costs and reducing funding.

Continuing our strong track record

The council has an excellent record of delivering a balanced budget; achieving this for the 17th consecutive year in 2017. This has been delivered against a backdrop of ongoing reductions in central government funding, devolution of additional responsibilities (which means the money we do have has to stretch further) and restrictions on our ability to raise council tax, alongside increases in demand and cost for council services. Since 2011–12 we have made annual savings of £80m to £90m per annum each year. These savings now total £515m (on a net budget of £0.9bn), whilst we continue to protect and invest in those services that make the greatest difference to people’s lives.

The challenge over the last year

The overall trend of increasing spending pressures from rising demand for services and rising costs due to inflation and the National Living Wage, alongside reductions in central government funding, have continued. We have seen rising demand for adult social care, increasing complexity in children’s social care cases, including the need to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children, and ongoing education services responsibilities, despite the government removing a large element of the Education Services Grant. Alongside this we continue to have statutory responsibilities across a range of vital services including environment, highways, local community services, public transport and waste recycling and disposal. We have taken action to address these pressures including lobbying the Home Office on the unsustainable financial position regarding asylum seeking children. Despite the savings we have already made, we still have considerable savings to find in future years.

Delivering a balanced budget

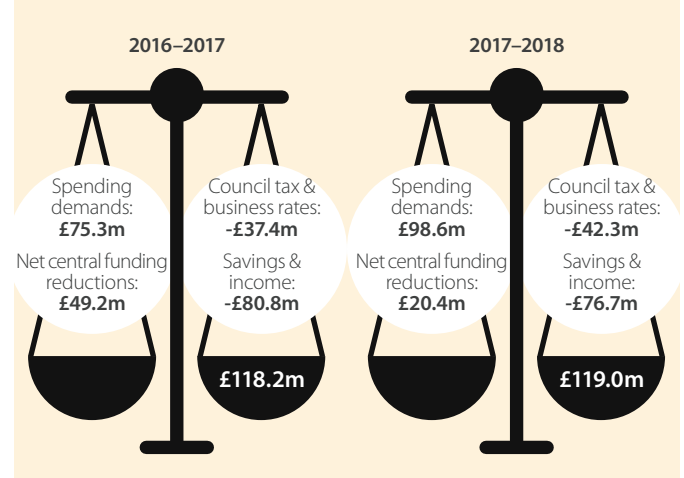
To balance our 2017/18 budget we have had to address a gap of £119m between the amount of money we have and the amount we need to spend to continue to deliver services. We have done this through transforming our services, increasing council tax by 1.99% and, following consultation and engagement with residents, by a further 2% specifically for adult social care, which will raise an additional £12m for social care. However, this still only goes part way towards meeting our adult social care funding pressures which are forecast to be just under £28m next year. The [Spring 2017 Budget](#) announced additional funding of £52.3m for Kent over three years from 2017–18 to 2019–20, with the majority in 2017–18, for use to meet unmet pressures on older people, help stabilise the care market and reduce pressures on health services from delayed transfers of care.

We continue to ensure services are best placed to achieve better outcomes at lower costs, with cumulative planned savings of £115.4m since 2013–14 and further savings planned going forward.

Future challenges

The trend of decreasing financial resources is expected to continue, with substantially “flat cash” funding between 2015–16 and 2019–20. This is a reduction in 2016–17 and 2017–18 followed by a recovery in the latter years and includes assumed council tax increases each year both up to the referendum level and further increases for social care. This represents a substantial real terms reduction as we will have no additional money to cover the increasing cost of providing services or for additional demands. The Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan identified a further £73m of savings for 2017–18, bringing our savings total to £588m over the last 7 years. At the time, options to resolve future year savings required due to the continuing trend of reduced central government funding, restrictions on council tax and rising spending pressures were still to be identified and further developments, such as rising inflation, are likely to increase spending pressures further. With easier options already being taken, budget savings are increasingly difficult to achieve.

FIGURE 1: BALANCING THE BUDGET



Our [Autumn Budget Statement](#) to County Council in October sets out the progress we are making towards identifying options to meet the financial challenge.

Prioritising services for Kent’s residents

As we face a significant financial challenge in the years ahead we will work hard to protect the services which matter most to Kent’s residents and businesses. We will continue to set the Council’s budget prioritising spend on services which will achieve our strategic outcomes. This approach and progress towards becoming a strategic commissioning authority will enable us to target our limited resources where it will make the most difference to people’s lives, making sure that every pound is spent effectively.

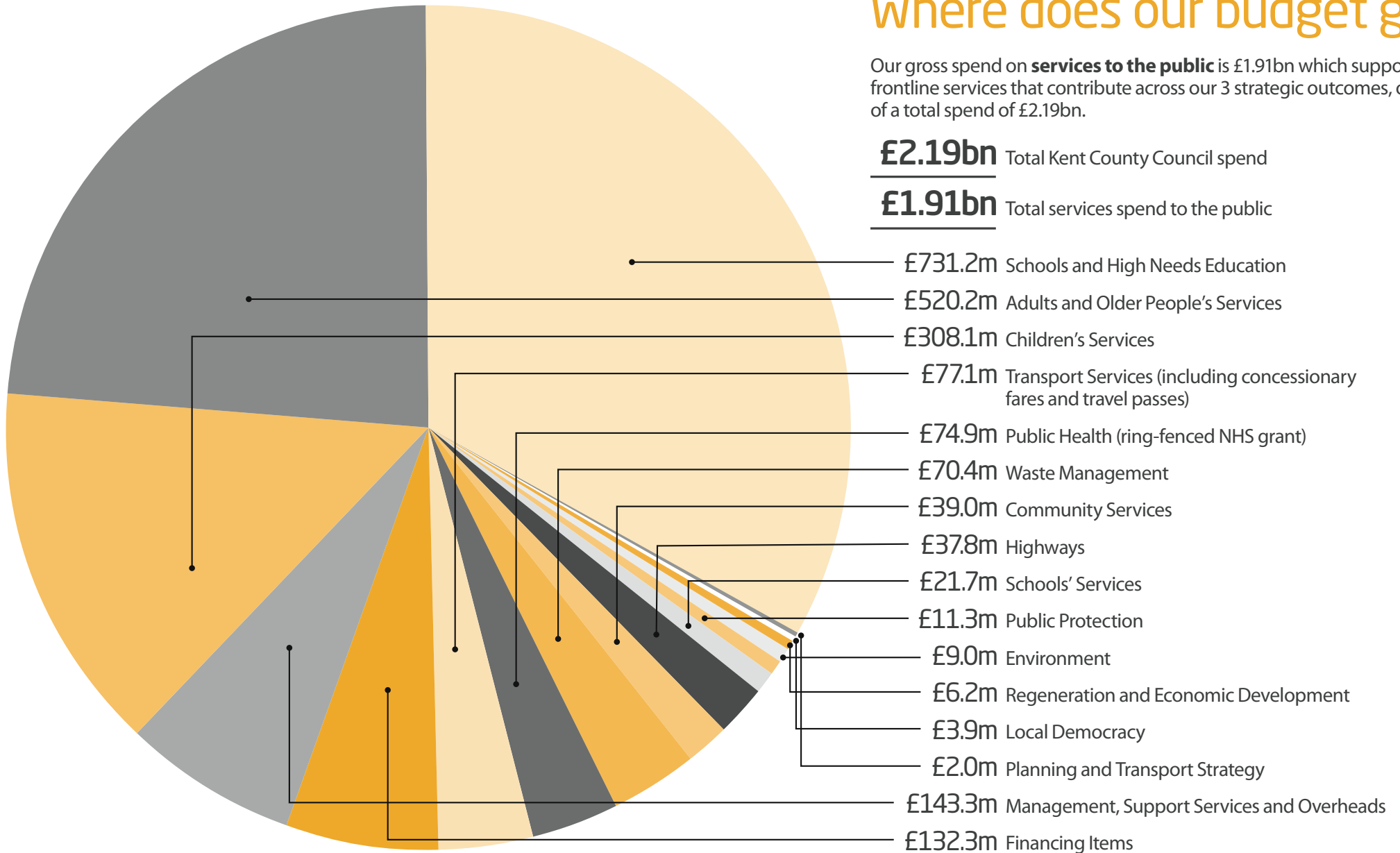
Find out more about the detailed breakdown of our [2017–18 budget](#).
Find out how we are managing the council’s money in our [Medium Term Financial Plan](#), [Budget Book](#) and [Autumn Budget Statement](#).

Where does our budget go?

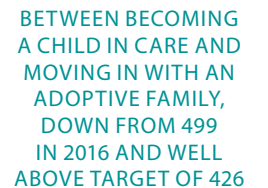
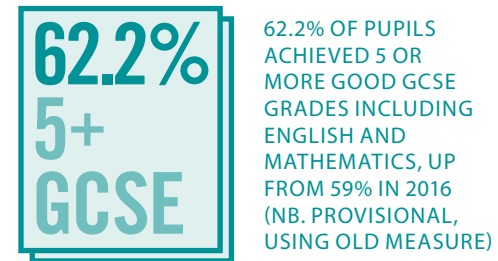
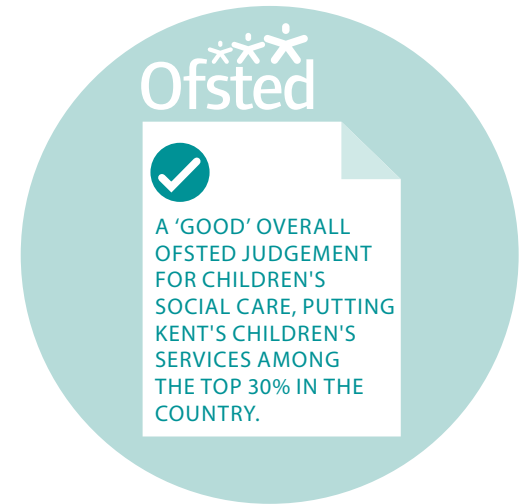
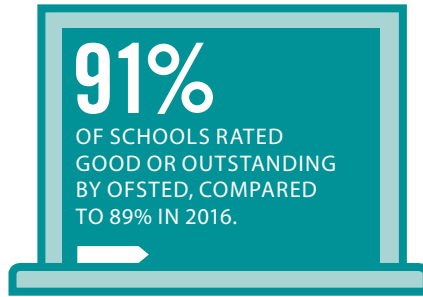
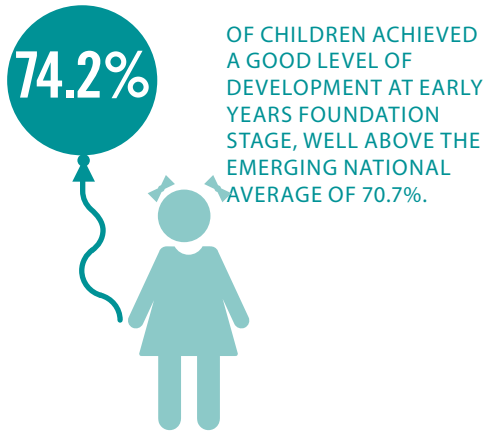
Our gross spend on **services to the public** is £1.91bn which supports frontline services that contribute our 3 strategic outcomes, out of a total spend of £2.19bn.

£2.19bn Total Kent County Council spend

£1.91bn Total services spend to the public



Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life



Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life

Progress on annual report business plan priorities 2017–18

Ensure the attainment gap for disadvantaged children continues to close

Educational outcomes continue to improve and in 2016 were above or in line with the national average at every age and stage. However, it is more challenging for vulnerable learners to narrow attainment gaps. Results for children in need at Key Stage 2 and 4 and for children in care at Key Stage 4 have improved, but we remain below the national average. To close the gaps for pupils on free school meals, SEN pupils and Children in Care, priorities include the development of Pupil Premium toolkits for Primary and Secondary schools, a Pupil Premium best practice conference and support for schools in undertaking Pupil Premium reviews.

Effective contract management for children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing services and reduce waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

A new service model from September 2017 provides more support for emotional health and improves experiences when accessing mental health services. There will be a single point of access, clear pathways and better transition from universal support in schools through to highly specialist care. Our new provider, North East London Foundation Trust, will transform service delivery for tiers two and three, countywide services will be delivered working in partnership with Kent Community Hospital Foundation Trust, and the School Health Service supports pupils' mental health and emotional resilience. The £10m Big Lottery funded [HeadStart Programme](#) is developing an Emotional Resilience model with 134 schools to improve the wellbeing of at-risk 10–16 year olds.

Continue to increase the number of apprenticeships for young people

The percentage of 16 to 18 year olds starting an apprenticeship has increased every year since 2014, with a further expected increase in 2017. We developed the 16–18 apprenticeship campaign with key partners, a [Ready to Work Kent](#) website to develop employability skills, and an [Apprentice Kent](#) website providing advice and enabling employers to advertise apprenticeship vacancies. By June 2017, 705 vacancies have been posted with 2,210 young people registering their interest. The successful 'Made in Kent' campaign continues to support employers and young people. Our [14–24 Learning, Employment and Skills strategy 2017–2020](#) aims to double the number of apprenticeships in the next 2 to 3 years.

Activity this year

Children's services Ofsted Inspection

Our Early Help and Specialist Children's Services received a 'good' rating following an [Ofsted inspection](#) in March 2017. This represents significant progress since the last inspection and puts children's services in Kent among the top 30% of authorities in the country. Ofsted highlighted that staff have meaningful relationships with children, identified good quality social work with effective achievement of good outcomes for children and noted appropriate step down panels with families experiencing a smooth transition. Our services were graded as 'good' across all areas, with the exception of help and protection and the Kent Safeguarding Children Board where improvements are required. The report's recommendations are being addressed in an ongoing practice development plan.

School Ofsted outcomes and pupil attainment

There has been year on year improvement in the percentage of schools with an Ofsted judgement who are rated as good or outstanding since 2014. Kent continues to do well in educational attainment with the proportion of children achieving a good level

of development at Early Years Foundation Stage remaining in line with 2016 outcomes and above the emerging national average. At Key Stages 1 and 2, outcomes improved across all indicators and are above the developing national averages for the majority of subjects. At GCSE it is not possible to make direct comparisons with 2016 due to the new grading system, however provisional results show 62.2% of pupils achieved 5 or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics which is above last year's 60.8% performance and 2016 national average of 57.7%.

Focusing on children in care and care leavers

To help meet our corporate parent responsibilities and improve the outcomes for children we look after, we have reduced the Qualified Social Workers vacancy rate to 3.4%. Ofsted have recognised our high aspirations for our care leavers, particularly the 'good' support and outcomes they achieve and our clear focus on ensuring children achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity. We ensure children who are long-term fostered are carefully matched with the right foster carers to meet their needs and our foster care placement stability service provides short breaks and respite for fostering families. A newly commissioned service will provide emergency clinical psychology support at times of crisis for those with mental health difficulties. For those children for whom adoption is most suitable, we have provided timely adoption placements and orders to achieve permanent adoptions.

Education Services Company

In March 2017 Cabinet agreed to implement the Education Services Company to support long-term sustainability of education services and respond to the changing education landscape. This involves close partnership working to achieve good outcomes for schools, children, young people and families. It allows us to maximise income opportunities from traded services to reinvest in service delivery, whilst continuing to meet our statutory responsibilities. The Company is currently in shadow form with a 'go live' date of April 2018.

Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life

Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)

We have made progress in reducing 16 and 17 year old NEETs from 3.0% in 2016 to 2.8% in January 2017, in line with the national average. Activity has included a 'Ready to Work' offer in each district providing alternatives to school or college and targeted collaborative work between our Early Help and Preventative Service, Virtual School Kent and the Care Leavers service. Alongside partner organisations, we remain committed to continuing these improvements towards a 2.5% target for NEETs.

Engaging children in care

The recent Ofsted inspection noted the positive relationships our children in care have with our staff and that our well-established [Children in Care Council](#) ensures children are involved in helping develop services. Children are engaged in attending council meetings, interview panels, and arranging events, such as activity days. To encourage young people to take part in their care reviews and express their aspirations for the future we have worked with the [Young Adult Council](#) to develop a short film highlighting how looked after child review meetings work and how young people can get their voices heard.

Social Mobility and Education

In March 2017 we [reported](#) on the good progress to deliver the 2016 [Social Mobility and Grammar Schools Select Committee](#) recommendations. This includes information for schools targeting low income families who may hesitate to register for the Kent Test, the work with schools to identify those most academically able pupils and a review of our transport policy. The report has influenced the government's ['Educational excellence everywhere'](#) White Paper. Out of Kent's grammar schools, 17 now ensure provision for Pupil Premium or Free School Meals eligible children within their admission arrangements, with other Grammar schools able to consult on changes from October 2017.

Challenges

Continuing the integration of children's services

From April 2017 we integrated all Children's services into a single Children, Young People and Education Directorate. Together with the 'Front Door' for all Early Help notifications and Social Care referrals, a more coherent whole system approach will support children and young people, working in partnership with schools. The 'Front Door' will be operational in autumn 2017, creating a single access system of assessing referrals to ensure a safe and efficient transfer of cases from Specialist Children's Services to Early Help. This will help determine more appropriate support for young people, reduce demand and effectively manage resources.

Education funding changes

We face significant financial pressures in education. The government's consultation on a proposed national funding formula for schools was followed in July 2017 by an [announcement](#) that local arrangements would continue for 2018/19 and 2019/20 alongside an additional £1.3bn for schools and high needs. The extra monies are expected to increase the basic amount that every pupil will attract and protect funding for pupils with additional needs. Whilst this is yet to be quantified for each local authority, further information and the government's consultation response is expected in September 2017. We remain concerned that the additional funding will not fully compensate existing and future pressures, including historic underfunding, anticipated growth in high needs pupil numbers, and the required expansion of schools.

Delivering school places

Between 2015–16 and 2022–2023, 23,000 extra pupil places are required. Over the last year, we have delivered over 3,375 school places, including the expansion of 25 primary schools, and our [Commissioning Plan for Education Provision](#) sets out how we plan to meet future need, providing sufficient good quality

provision across all types and phases of education, in the right locations. However, providing additional school places is reliant on an appropriate level of government funding and dependent on the Education and Skills Funding Agency's timely and effective delivering of free schools. This has financial implications with a £130m gap and potentially insufficient school places in the future, limiting parental choice. We have raised our concerns with the Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency regarding delays in bringing timely provision on stream and continue lobbying over place planning issues and funding shortfall, whilst also identifying contingency arrangements.



Signposting

- [EYPS Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017–2020](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Strategy 2017–2019](#)
- [Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017–2021](#)
- [14–24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2017–2020](#)
- [Early Help and Preventative Services Strategy and Three Year Plan \(2015–2018\)](#)
- [Children and Young People's Framework 2016–2019](#)
- [Kent Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17](#)

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

9,061

POTHLES REPAIRED, WITH 96% REPAIRED WITHIN 28 CALENDAR DAYS AND AN ADDITIONAL 1,200 POTHLES FILLED AS PART OF THE POTHOLE BLITZ



£3.4m

EXTERNAL FUNDING SECURED TO HELP FUND ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEMES

REMOVED OR PREVENTED £9,788,501 OF ILLEGAL/UNSAFE GOODS ENTERING THE MARKET SINCE JANUARY 2017

£9.79m

£11m

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND GRANT FUNDING SUCCESSFULLY OBTAINED FOR 12 ART PROJECTS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

16,921

VISITS TO LIBRARIES PER DAY

210,237

CUSTOMERS ATTENDING EVENTS IN LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

42,000

OVER 42,000 NHS HEALTH CHECKS DELIVERED IN 2016/17, UP FROM 37,000 IN 2015/16

SECURED

£27.3m

OF LOCAL GROWTH FUND INVESTMENT, WITH

£147.4m

IN TOTAL ACROSS THE THREE ROUNDS WITH

£420m

OF MATCH FUNDING UNLOCKED

869

FTE JOBS CREATED OR SAFEGUARDED THROUGH REGIONAL GROWTH FUND IN 2016/17

£80.3m

OF SECTION 106 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SECURED TOWARDS KCC DELIVERED SERVICES, 97% OF THE AMOUNT REQUESTED

63,367

BY MARCH 2017 63,367 LED STREETLIGHT CONVERSIONS COMPLETED WITH A CARBON FOOTPRINT REDUCTION OF 1,374 TONNES

719,363

TONNES OF WASTE (98% OF KENT'S TOTAL WASTE) DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL, AN INCREASE FROM 94% (674,905 TONNES) IN 2015/16

1.65m

ANNUAL VISITORS TO KENT COUNTRY PARKS WITH AVERAGE CUSTOMER RATING OF 9.25 OUT OF 10, UP FROM 1.6M VISITORS IN 2015/16



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

Progress on annual report business plan priorities 2017–18

Tackle obesity, particularly in Kent's deprived areas, through engagement in sport and physical activity

Our new [Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity](#) will further drive engagement and promote healthy active lifestyles. Sport and physical activity programmes saw 3,620 young people taking part and 1,712 previously inactive children completed a Sportivate course. We supported 1,400 active outdoors events, 21 new outdoor gyms and 199 Satellite Clubs. 104 previously inactive adults committed to increasing their physical activity in the Workplace Challenge. Promoting the Change4Life campaign and the [One You Kent](#) website is helping people manage their weight, get active, and improve their wellbeing. Our [Active Travel Strategy](#) also aims to make walking or cycling an attractive, realistic choice for short journeys.

Agree our Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock for 2016–2031 and develop an effective delivery plan

Our [Local Transport Plan 4](#) was approved in July 2017, with a delivery plan now being developed, as a critical tool to facilitate appropriate growth and attract investment for priority transport schemes. The plan brings together strategic and local transport priorities and is aligned with the same timescales as the [Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework](#). A public consultation was undertaken with over 500 responses received, informing a 'You Said, We Did' document which sets out the changes made as a result of the feedback.

Increase the percentage of Kent's working-aged population with level 3 NVQ equivalent qualifications

Kent faces a long-standing skills issue with qualification skill levels at level 3 and 4 lower than the national average. Whilst those qualified to level 4 increased to 37% in 2016, those qualified to level 3 remain static at 54%. The [Adult Learning Employment and Skills Strategy](#)

[2015–18](#) aims to achieve 60% and 40% of the population qualified for levels 3 and 4 respectively. We created five Adult Skill Forums and eight Employer Guilds to mobilise education and training providers, employers and other stakeholders, to improve skills levels. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership released £23m of Skills Funding for Kent and Medway to combat unemployment and upskill the workforce to 'higher skills' (level 3 and above). The co-ordinated approach and additional funding should have a significant impact on adults achieving the higher levels.

Activity this year

Kent and Medway Business Fund

A new [Kent and Medway Business Fund](#) has facilitated interest-free loans for small and medium-sized enterprises to support jobs and business growth, stimulate innovation and improve productivity. The fund will recycle loans from the Expansion East Kent, TIGER and ESCALATE schemes with £39.5m available to 2021, or £5–7m per year, for reinvestment. These schemes created or safeguarded 869 jobs in 2016/17 and leveraged almost £16m of private finance.

Transport Infrastructure Improvements

The M20 J4 and Maidstone Bridges Gyratory road infrastructure improvement projects were completed in 2016/17 on time and budget, at a total cost of £10.55m. The Gyratory scheme was delivered to improve journey time reliability, air quality and ease congestion. The new scheme opened in December 2016 to support businesses over the Christmas period and continues to realise the planned benefits. Successful delivery was achieved through engaging local partners and communities, keeping residents informed with 'real time' information on social media.

Section 106 Developer Contributions

This year, 92 section 106 agreements were completed; securing £80.3m towards KCC delivered services. This is 97% of the amount

requested from developers; the highest conversion rate to date. At Chilimington Green in Ashford section 106 developer contributions have helped meet our identified need in the [Growth and Infrastructure Framework](#), ensuring 5,750 new homes are supported by four primary schools, a secondary school, a park, extensive green space and significant highways improvements.

No Use Empty

Our [No Use Empty](#) scheme has brought back 581 homes to use this year, with £1.2m investment unlocked from increased district councils' support, following the success of the [award-winning](#) No Use Empty Shepway Top Up Loan scheme. Work continues on redundant commercial properties which have permission for conversion into residential or mixed residential/commercial units, which will help raise additional Business Rates, Council Tax and New Homes Bonus.

Tackling potholes

In the last year, we repaired 9,061 potholes with 96% filled within 28 calendar days. Customer satisfaction remains extremely high at 91%. In 2016/17 a 'Pothole Blitz' across the county repaired an extra 1,200 potholes and over 50,000m² of patching repairs. The successful Pothole Blitz has been repeated in 2017/18, with an extra £2.4m being spent to repair local roads, funded by KCC and the government's Pothole Action Fund.

Volunteer Support Warden Scheme

Volunteer support wardens have worked alongside community wardens as part of a successful pilot, enhancing the service to residents and creating more resilient neighbourhoods. The scheme was developed with the Kent Association of Local Councils, Kent Community Safety Partnership, 11 Parishes and one Town Council. The scheme is now being rolled out across 23 Parish and Town Councils with the first cohort of new volunteers beginning their training this summer.

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

Keeping Kent Clean

We led a countywide campaign to encourage people to take part in the national Great British Spring Clean by joining or setting up their own local litter picks. More than 130 litter picks took place across the county, organised by the public and local councils. Our community wardens and country parks teams organised litter picks, while our Highways team cleared vegetation, repainted white lines on the highway and cleaned road signs. In all, 2,106 bags of litter were collected and our [Keep Kent Clean Facebook page](#) attracted more than 4,500 campaign supporters.

Kent's Environment

The [Old Chalk New Downs project](#), as part of the [Kent Environment Strategy](#), covers 10,000 hectares between Kemsing Down and Detling. The project, which is mostly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, aims to reconnect people with their natural environment and improve access through enhancing 18 Public Rights of Ways paths and raising participation in conservation activities. This will restore important downland habitats and link up isolated patches of chalk grassland.

Public Health

We delivered a series of campaigns to increase awareness of public health issues and direct people to sources of support. The [One You Kent](#) website has received over 33,000 visits since its launch, the Release the Pressure suicide reduction campaign saw 6,468 people visit the website, and a 75% increase in male callers to the helpline. We launched the 'What The Bump?' pilot on Sheppey seeking to reduce smoking in pregnancy. 20,144 residents also visited our webpages during February and March to find out about safe levels of drinking as part of the Know Your Score campaign, with over 9,000 people assessing their levels of drinking online. The campaigns have received positive public feedback and been recognised by the Local Government Association and Public Health England.

Challenges

Asset management

We manage 5,400 miles of roads, 2,700 bridges and structures and 4,381 miles of public rights of way, with £19.5bn of highway network assets and £100m of public rights of way assets. We are facing significant challenges in maintaining safe and reliable networks during a time of diminishing resource, ageing assets, growing backlogs and increasing public expectation. To address this, we adopted a new Highway Asset Management approach to maximise the impact of every pound spent. We developed an Intelligence Investment Tool, reflecting the Public Rights of Way Assessment Management Plan and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, to help prioritise schemes which deliver the greatest benefit to the public and most reflect our strategic priorities.

Waste Tonnage

We made excellent progress towards our household waste disposal targets by decreasing the percentage of waste sent to landfill from 6% in 2015/16 to 2% in 2016/17. We have already met our target of less than 10% by 2020 and 2017/18 performance is less than 0.5%. However, significant challenges remain with projected population growth of 17% from 2015 to 2031, potential increases in waste per dwelling, fluctuations in market value for recycle, and sustained budget savings required. Whilst existing EU environmental laws and recycling targets will be carried over into UK law prior to Brexit, the detail of future legislation remains uncertain. Through our [Kent Waste Disposal Strategy](#), we will deliver efficiencies and maximise income however our ambition may require significant funding and capital investment. We continue to work in partnership to encourage waste prevention, reuse and recycling and maintain sustainable services.

Infrastructure funding gap

The 2015 Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) showed a significant gap between the funding required and

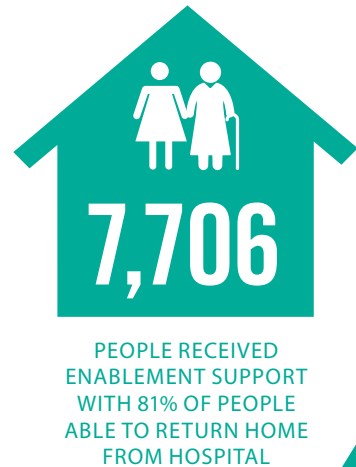
that anticipated from government, developer contributions and other investment to meet predicted levels of housing, economic growth and infrastructure needed to support this. Of the £6.74 billion investment needed, a third (£2.01 billion) was still required for the predicted 158,500 new homes, 293,300 new people and 135,800 new jobs in Kent up to 2031. A comprehensive update of the GIF is underway, which will enable the provision of a county-wide picture of growth and infrastructure, using up-to-date population and housing forecast figures. Current work indicates that the significant infrastructure challenge remains.



Signposting

- [Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016–2031](#)
- [Inspirational Creativity: Transforming Lives Everyday, our cultural ambition for Kent](#)
- [Kent Environment Strategy and Implementation Plan 2017](#)
- [Active Travel Strategy](#)
- [Country Parks Strategy 2017–2021 \(draft\)](#)
- [Kent Waste Disposal Strategy 2017–2035](#)
- [Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework](#)
- [Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2017–2022](#)
- [Towards An Active County—A Strategic Framework for Sport and Physical Activity 2017–2021](#)

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



Progress on annual report business plan priorities 2017–18

Continue to work with our partners to reduce delayed hospital discharge by ensuring people have the right support at the right time

Progress has been made on early discharge planning, integrated discharge teams and the discharge to assess service, with increasing numbers of enablement and rehabilitative care services and effective occupational therapy expertise playing an important role. We have maintained the number of delays we are responsible for in comparison to a significant rise in the national average. The reasons for delays include availability of domiciliary care packages, nursing and residential placements. Measures designed to reduce delayed transfers of care are a central part of the Kent Better Care Fund plan and the social care new monies mean 'High Impact Changes' to reduce delayed transfers of care remain a key priority.

Reduce the number of hospital and care home re-admissions following enablement support

In 2016/17, 7,706 people received enablement with 81% able to return home. The [Kent Enablement at Home service](#) resulted in fewer people receiving a higher package of care, with 62% requiring no further support. We are able to work with more people being discharged from hospital and offer support where the market is unable to provide a service. The [Kent Enablement and Recovery service](#) works with people with mental health difficulties to identify their strengths, needs and aspirations, enabling daily living activities, promoting wellbeing and participation in social activities, education and employment. In 2016/17 we worked with 1,631 people, with 48% of interventions successfully completed by April 2017.

Make it easier for vulnerable and older individuals, their families and carers to access advice, information and support

Our Area Referral Management service provides initial information, advice and signposting to voluntary organisations and other community based services, with 72% of people successfully supported in 2016/17. Kent Advocacy provides a single point of access for all advocacy services. Our commissioning of the independent advocacy service has been acknowledged as [national best practice](#) and provides a simple, accessible referral process. The Prime Provider works collaboratively with partners to ensure that inclusive advocacy is delivered. In 2016/17 3,590 people were supported with advocacy to have their voice heard and their wishes considered when decisions were being made about their lives.

Activity this year

Working with health to develop the Local Care Model through the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP)

Our ambition is for a Local Care Model that promotes people's independence and helps them to look after themselves, avoiding unnecessary hospital admission and treatment. For example, to reduce the chance of older people falling we are working with our STP partners to create an integrated care service to identify and act upon factors that contribute to people falling including their physical and mental health and home environment.

Extra Care Housing

Extra Care housing is designed for people who need housing with care and support to help them with support such as personal care available on site 24 hours a day. Extra Care housing is self-contained accommodation and helps provide greater choice and availability in place of long-term residential and nursing care home accommodation, where eligible. This year we have significantly increased availability of Extra Care Housing from 649 to 900 flats. The accommodation often has assistive technology built in,

such as telehealth and telecare, helping residents maintain their independence for longer, and a range of facilities designed to reduce social isolation for the community. New schemes have opened, all with affordable rents, in Tenterden, Ramsgate, Hawkhurst, Dartford and Dover as part of a PFI funded scheme with West Kent Housing Association; and in Aldington with Housing and Care 21 with some flats offered with affordable rents and others shared ownership.

Multi-disciplinary working

We are working with health and social care partners across a range of projects and models of care to further integrate, reduce duplication, and improve outcomes. We have adopted the models of 'discharge to assess' and 'home first' which, together with our enablement service, are designed to help move more people on from acute hospital care. In June 2017 an outcome-based care pilot began, with homecare provider 121 Care and Mobility, designed to improve a person's outcomes and experience and help maintain their level of independence. To date, over 50% of the people reviewed could benefit from a different intervention which could reduce social care involvement or duplication.

Sensory and Autistic Spectrum Conditions

For the first time in the UK, we have trialled an Occupational Therapy-led specialist enablement provision to 33 adults with higher functioning autism, which has been afforded National Social Care Research status. Short-term Occupational Therapy approaches in learning disability and educational services help people on the spectrum improve their quality of life and meet personal goals. Following assessments, we provide direct skills training for independence from 20 to 60 hours depending on the client's needs or trialled aids, clothing, apps and equipment. This has significantly reduced support packages, successfully met personal outcomes, increased self-esteem and supported carers. The research will help evidence the need for a new core offer of enablement.

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

Live Well Kent

[Live Well Kent](#) is a network of mental health and wellbeing organisations, co-run by charities Porchlight and Shaw Trust, which support residents to manage their mental health and physical or emotional wellbeing. Jointly commissioned by KCC and the seven NHS clinical commissioning groups, it provides support ranging from sport therapy to groups based around shared experiences, services for people feeling isolated and ways to help people into employment. In its first year, 39 different organisations have taken part with 5,378 people being referred and 4,023 formal sign ups since April 2016.

Delivering the Good Day programme through libraries

Following its £650,000 refurbishment, Dartford library is an example of the Good Day Programme working with libraries to provide opportunities for vulnerable adults. The building is fully accessible by public transport, close to local leisure and fitness activities and has an accessible changing place. Facilities mean that meal planning and cookery activities, sensory activities, our new Stepping into Employment pilot, access to computers, and links with the local dementia awareness group all operate from the library alongside the wider community.

New Lifespan Pathway

The new Lifespan Pathway within the Disabled Children, Adults Learning Disability and Mental Health division went live in April 2017. This will ensure children, young people and adults with a disability have better transition at all stages, help young people achieve their ambitions and improve their outcomes. The reorganisation of our services has strengthened our joint working arrangements to ensure that disabled children and young people continue to receive seamless support into adulthood.

Challenges

Ensuring a sustainable and quality care market

We are dependent on a buoyant market to achieve best value for money and give service users optimal choice and control. The introduction of the National Living Wage, potential inflationary pressures and uncertainty over care market workforce status in light of the vote to leave the EU mean that the care market is under pressure. We are mitigating these risks and shaping the care market through our [Accommodation Strategy](#), developed with key stakeholders, regularly exploring joint commissioning opportunities with partners, and engaging with provider and trade organisations. The Social Care new monies will support care homes and invest in homecare and other community support activity.

Domiciliary care recruitment and retention

Increasing costs and competition from the London job market make it difficult for many providers to attract and retain a sufficient quantity and quality of staff. The introduction of the National Living Wage, whilst contributing to making work in the sector more attractive, has added significantly to the costs faced by providers and by extension to us. It is expected that the impact of this on our care providers will continue up to 2020. The homecare sector is particularly affected as, with relatively low infrastructure costs, a higher percentage of their costs are due to staff wages. We are working with the sector to support the growth and development of their workforce and training will be a particularly important aspect.

Embedding Transformation

Benefits from Phase 1 and 2 of our transformation programme include an additional 3,500 people per year accessing enablement and £36m cashable savings. We have delivered new services including [Kent Pathways Service](#), [Shared Lives](#), [Your Life Your Home](#) and [Live Well Kent](#). Embedding these changes will provide a sustainable platform for further integration and deliver our

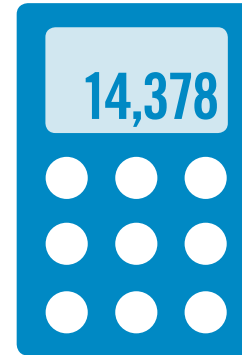
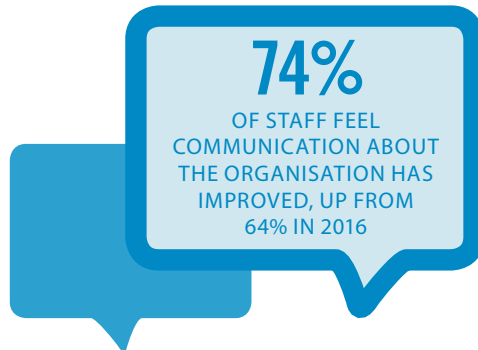
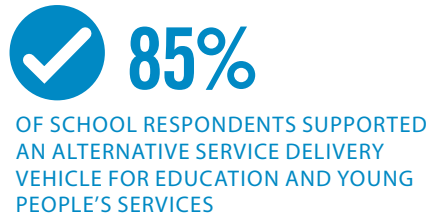
[adult social care strategy](#). We continue to improve services for Older People and Physical Disability and Disabled Children, Adults Learning Disability and Mental Health including through our commissioning, purchasing and performance structures. Phase 3 of our transformation has identified a further £15.5m per year of potential savings. It is crucial that changes are embedded into practice and are aligned with the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership and wider integration agenda.



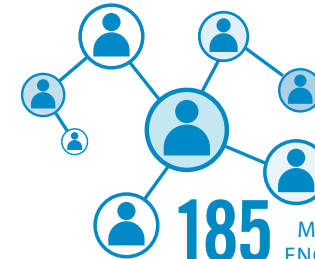
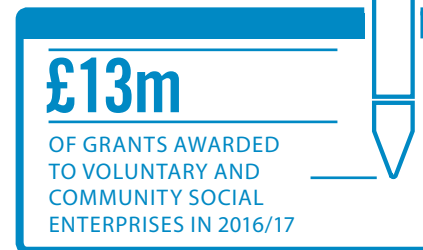
Signposting

- [Your Life, Your Wellbeing—a vision and strategy for Adult Social Care 2016–2021](#)
- [Strategy for Adults with Autism](#)
- [Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report \(2016–17\)](#)
- [Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Strategy 2015–2020](#)
- [Kent and Medway Sustainability and Transformation Plan](#)

Working better together



VISITS TO OUR
BENEFITS CALCULATOR,
DELIVERED JOINTLY
WITH KENT'S DISTRICT
AND BOROUGH
COUNCILS, TO HELP
RESIDENTS FIND OUT
WHAT FINANCIAL
SUPPORT THEY ARE
ABLE TO ACCESS



185 MORE THAN 185 STAFF
ENGAGED THROUGH THE
COMMISSIONING NETWORK
TO SHARE BEST PRACTICE AND
PRACTICAL TOOLS

5,060,000

VISITS TO KENT.GOV, UP FROM
4,700,000 IN 2015/16



SILVER

AWARDED THE MINISTRY
OF DEFENCE EMPLOYERS
RECOGNITION SILVER
AWARD FOR OUR SUPPORT
FOR EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL
AND RESERVISTS

Working better together

Progress on annual report business plan priorities 2017–18

Improve customer engagement activity, so that learning can enhance customer insight and service delivery

Customer engagement case study

We continue to adapt and change the way we deliver our services. Public consultation and engagement are central to delivering positive customer outcomes. We have reviewed consultation practice, and worked with services to plan for the consultation activity that will take place throughout 2017. Adult Social Care have worked extensively with partners, providers and service users to understand patterns of demand and design ways of working that focus on the life a person has, not only the service they use. Gathering insight from consultation on the [Your Life Your Wellbeing Strategy](#) has helped change the way we describe what we do and why. We have engaged with provider networks and service users to understand what is important to customers about the way key services are delivered. Growth, Environment and Transport have examined how those who live, work and travel in and around Kent use the resources available to them, making it easier for customers to get in touch to report a fault on a highway, access a library service or participate in a country park event. In March 2017 over 75% of all potholes were reported through an improved online reporting tool. We are developing a protocol for public engagement that will help the council and its partners to understand how public conversations link with our strategic objectives and support residents and communities to engage with us.

Collectively work with all partners to improve openness and share information

Kent Integrated Dataset case study

Public sector data has traditionally been used inconsistently to support strategic commissioning decisions and to create a single picture across services. The Kent Integrated Dataset integrates data held by public services to provide a holistic picture of the Kent population at the individual level for the first time. It is an important step in overcoming silo-based approaches of separate services or organisations, comprising data from primary care providers, community health providers, mental health services, acute hospitals, public health services, adult social care and palliative hospices across Kent and Medway. It links data from health and social care together providing valuable insight into activity and progress towards outcomes. The tool will enable better commissioning through greater monitoring and influence of commissioning plans and integrated service planning. It has been recognised by the Local Government Association as a [best practice example](#) to improve intelligence and pathway analysis. We are working closely with NHS clinical commissioning groups to improve local information management and data quality, sharing information to support local service planning. These relationships are helping identify the resources, skills and datasets across organisations and will allow more targeted use of public resources. This puts Kent at the forefront of evidence-based commissioning and will support population-level trend and outcome analysis, the integration of health and social care services, and the evaluation of our services to influence future commissioning decisions.

Improve the effectiveness of our contract performance monitoring and develop a more open dialogue with providers

Strategic Commissioning case study

We have made strong progress towards maturing our contract management arrangements, with an emphasis on skills development and strengthening the network of commissioners across the authority. A commissioning toolkit is in place to support the development of key commissioning knowledge, skills and good practice and training has been delivered for both members and officers in procurement and contract management. The new Strategic Commissioning function will drive significant value for money, with a Strategic Commissioner overseeing the delivery of strategic commissioning expertise, enhancing evidence based decision making, performance reporting and analysis. Integration of teams from commissioning, procurement and strategic business development and intelligence will provide commissioning and commercial advice to further improve the quality and discipline of KCC's commissioning practice. To strengthen the impact of our contract management, a continuous review programme, using a National Audit Office best practice maturity assessment, is assuring the Council that the right activities are being undertaken consistently to the appropriate standard. This, alongside Internal Audit's focus on major contracts and assurance plans, will help improve contract discipline and ensure all contracts are properly managed. As alternative service delivery vehicles develop, we have established client-side functions to oversee effective commissioning, with clear processes in place to monitor standards, quality and performance. We are continuing to strengthen our relationships with providers to address issues early and develop our business models to enhance service delivery.

Working better together

Activity this year

Customer Service Programme

Digital Inclusion has been firmly embedded into Growth, Environment and Transport's digital transformation activity, to ensure accessibility and high quality online services. Improvements have been made to encourage people to [report a problem on the road or pavement](#) online and via smartphones which 70% of our customers are using to report pothole and street lighting issues. Tourism South East have delivered Exceeding Visitor Expectations training to our [Country Parks](#) teams, designed specifically for front-line staff to help sustain a first class welcome to all our customers.

Capturing customer feedback

A new system, i-casework, has been procured to help capture customer complaints, comments and compliments. This will help bring consistency in the way we record and respond to feedback. Training will help staff use feedback to identify areas for improvement. Due to more vigorous reporting and the inclusion of new services we have seen increases across all types of feedback in 2016/17 including an increase of 31% in compliments.

Ashford District Deal

The Ashford District Deal supports close working between KCC and Ashford Borough Council and enables piloting of new ways of working across services, focusing on key projects including the M20 junction 10a and Chilmington Green development. The refresh of the District Deal commits to completing the 'Big 8' projects, delivering operational priorities, and progressing two further ambitious strategic projects—Conningbrook Park and Newtown works.

Collective lobbying for Kent

Some London Boroughs procured large sites to place residents in temporary accommodation into Kent. This potentially creates significant pressures for local communities and public services.

Working with District Councils and Medway, we built an evidence base to engage with Kent MPs, the Housing Minister and London Councils. This enabled a united Kent voice to lobby persuasively to deter future similar placements, and where they are unavoidable, establish guiding principles to ensure they are appropriate with well-managed and resourced transition and information-sharing.

Supporting our staff towards cultural change

Our people are our most important asset and we are supporting a healthy, engaged and resilient workforce to take full advantage of new ways of working. Introducing efficient ways of working will maximise our potential for cultural change. Appropriate business support will meet changing needs and enable a workforce focused on outcomes. This must be supported by strong leadership and management capability, personal responsibility, and employee engagement. We will champion self-sufficient managers, providing the right tools and advice to appropriately reduce demand for corporate support. Our new [People Strategy](#) will enhance staff's personal resilience, support workforce health and wellbeing, improve capacity and capability.

Empowering staff through ICT tools

Our Tools for Success programme is part of our commitment to achieve a 'digitally enabled workforce' and 'digitally inclusive services'. It provides Office 365 tools and Skype for Business to improve collaboration, Power BI and BigData analytics to improve service planning and delivery, and a single online 'Citizen Identity' to join up access to Regional Digital Public Services. Stronger utilisation of tools like Cloud, Skype and Office 365, will maximise flexible and home working and improve our productivity.

Information Governance

In May 2018 General Data Protection Regulations come into effect that introduce increased obligations on the Council around information governance and data protection, with potentially substantial financial implications for serious breaches. Actions to

prepare for the regulations include a review and update of privacy notices, a review and revision of procedures to comply with new enhanced individuals' rights and an update of protocols for investigating and reporting data breaches.

Giving a voice to Kent's communities

We have supported the development of a physical disability forum, working with Healthwatch and NHS commissioners, to ensure that people who have a physical disability and those who care for them have a strong voice and can influence future commissioning. The forum creates a network of support and influence for positive change. The Mind of My Own app enables young people to give effective feedback on the services we provide, with an Express app specifically designed for children and young people with learning disabilities receiving very positive early feedback.

Integrated commissioning for domestic abuse support

Working with partners including the Police and Crime Commissioner, Kent Fire and Rescue, and District and Borough Councils we commissioned a new Domestic Abuse Support service from April 2017. Our new approach will help ensure consistency of support, as well as introducing new elements of support to strengthen our response and ensure that vulnerable adults and children get the support they need, when they need it.



Signposting

- [Equality and Human Rights Policy 2016–2020](#)
- [People Strategy 2017–2022](#)

Find out more

You can find out more about how we are increasing opportunities and improving outcomes on our website:

www.kent.gov.uk/strategicstatement

This includes:

Easy Read

An Easy Read summary of progress against our 3 strategic outcomes.

Outcome Measures Performance Report

More details about our outcome performance measures, including graphs, statistics and comparisons against the national average.

Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes

Read the original Strategic Statement, published in March 2015.

Further information can be found at www.kent.gov.uk including:

Strategies and Policies

Find out more about the detailed strategies and policies that will help put the outcomes into practice.

www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies

Facts and Figures

Find out more about Kent, including demographic changes.

www.kent.gov.uk/research

Alternative Formats

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