

Cabinet

26 August 2025

Get Kent and Medway Working Plan

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Harinder Mahil, Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment

Report from: Adam Bryan, Director of Place

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Summary

In the Get Britain Working White Paper, the government made a commitment to support all areas to develop local Get Britain Working Plans and to convene local partners to work together to deliver these. Plans are intended to set out an analysis of the economic inactivity challenge in each local area and highlight the actions that could be taken to improve outcomes for the local population and local employers.

Local Get Britain Working plans are central to the Government's ambition for a thriving labour market where everyone has the opportunity for good work and to get on in work and where we achieve the ambition of an 80% employment rate.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. Cabinet is recommended to approve the Get Kent and Medway Working Plan and to delegate authority to the Director of Place for any required amendments.

2. Suggested reasons for decision

- 2.1. The Get Kent & Medway Working Plan fulfils the brief from government, exploring key themes that can be barriers to economic activity. It takes an evidence driven approach with a clear action plan for next steps to help increase economic activity. Consultation has taken place with a wide variety of stakeholders and partners. Other partner organisations – Kent County Council, the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board and Job Centre Plus will be taking the plan through their own approval processes.

3. Budget and policy framework

- 3.1. The work fits within the Council Plan, notably priority 2 'benefiting from good education, quality jobs and a growing economy' and priority 4 'improving

health and wellbeing for all'. There are several sub priorities that this work actively supports:

- Work with business partners to ensure education and skills development supports children, young people and adults to lead successful lives, and secure employment opportunities, with targeted support for the unemployed and vulnerable groups.
- Develop a strong mixed economy which provides training and work opportunities that support career development, increasing high value businesses and expanding high quality employment.
- Empowering people to achieve good health and wellbeing through prevention, with access to local activities and services that will enable and support them to lead independent, active and healthy lifestyles.
- Work in partnership with communities and organisations to address the issues that negatively affect health and wellbeing, making sure everyone has the opportunity to live long, healthy lives.

3.2. The GKMWP is also closely aligned to the aims and ambitions of the Skills & Employability Plan for Medway and the Work & Health Strategy led by Public Health.

4. Background

4.1. The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) wrote to Medway Council on 28 February requiring the Council to work with Kent County Council (KCC) as the accountable body to develop the Get Kent & Medway Working Plan (GKMWP). The requirement is for the plan to be produced by July 2025 and formally signed off by KCC, Medway Council, the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board and Jobcentre Plus with endorsement from wider partners and stakeholders.

4.2. The plan is to cover - labour market analysis, drivers and causes of economic inactivity, the current system and offer, working with partners, systemic changes, priority actions and longer-term goals and governance, local engagement & future iterations.

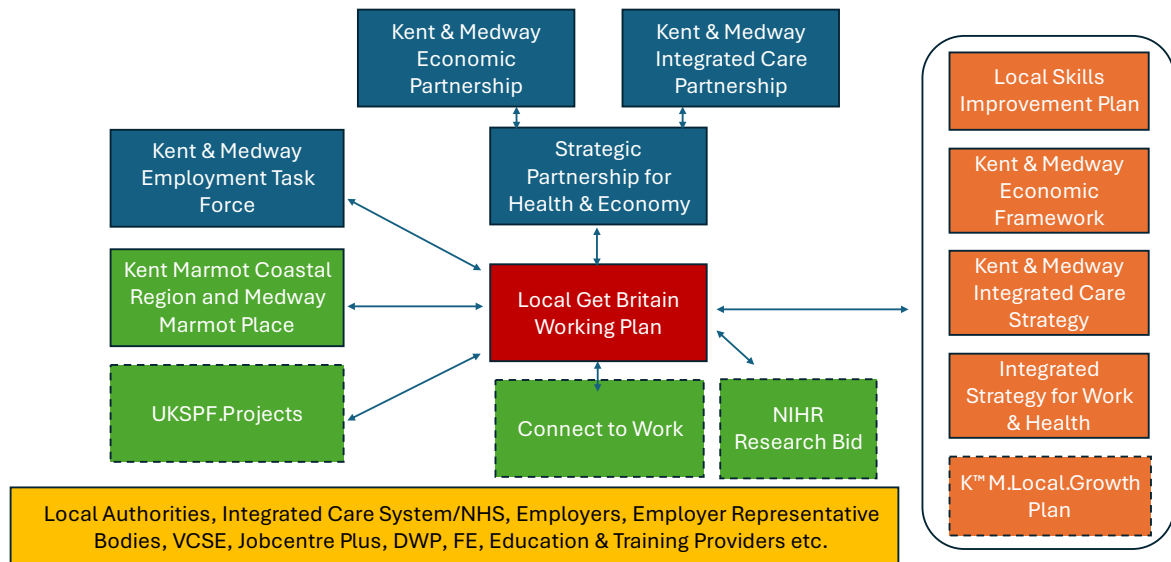
4.3. The overarching theme of the plan is to contribute to Government's ambition for an 80% employment rate. Plans were also asked to consider; how to increase real earnings in non-retired households, how to reduce health related economic inactivity, how to reduce disability related economic gap, how to reduce 18-24 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEETs), how to reduce employment gaps between single and coupled parents and how to increase the female employment rate.

4.4. The plan is designed to pull together existing strategies and bodies and seeks to work across the Kent & Medway Employment Taskforce, the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership, the Strategic Partnership for Health & Economy and the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Partnership, whilst taking into consideration key strategies like the Local Skills Improvement Plan, the

Integrated Strategy for Work & Health and the Kent & Medway Economic Framework.

4.5.

Where does it fit?



4.6. Consultants Shared Intelligence and Cambridge Econometrics were commissioned to help produce the plan. Work started with a literature review of related strategies and plans, completed alongside data review and labour market analysis. A range of stakeholder interviews and workshops were conducted alongside a provider survey. Activities were also undertaken to understand the lived experience of system users to ensure the plan was incorporated real experience. All of this work has culminated in the Get Kent & Medway Working Plan.

5. Options

5.1. Option 1 – Approve the plan and delegate authority to officers for minor revisions.

5.2. Option 2 – Request for more significant revisions to be made.

6. Advice and analysis

6.1. The plan covers the requested elements from DWP and provides a framework for action whilst setting the key areas that may require further exploration. The plan has incorporated key strategies from across the work and health sectors, integrated the views of a wide variety of key partners and stakeholders and taken into consideration lived experience. It is evidence and data driven exploring labour market analysis and the drivers and causes of labour market issues. The plan covers a broad range of subjects and doesn't provide in depth analysis on every single issue, rather provides the starting point of what challenges and opportunities should be explored. The plan

contains clear actions linked to each theme, addressing the key issues and drivers listed throughout the plan. Some actions are focused on collaboration within existing resource and others will involve asks to Government.

- 6.2. The focus areas are young people, women who are unemployed, those with long term conditions and those within the criminal justice system. The themes for actions are, focus on the individual, focus on employers, influence training and work supply, influence the wider determinants of health and operate as a system.
- 6.3. A Diversity Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report as Appendix B.

7. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Lack of engagement from partners	Working with partners is essential to the delivery of the plan, without working together it can't be successful.	Partners have been actively engaged throughout the process, with interviews and workshops taking place. One of the actions in the plan is to hold consider an annual system summit to bring partners together.	CII
Lack of funding	Some of the actions within the plan require funding from central government. If this doesn't come forward it will limit the impact of the action plan.	Look to maximise actions that can be delivered together with partners and stakeholders, taking a joined-up system wide approach.	BIII
Governance	It is important that the appropriate governance is in place to ensure the plan is driven forward in partnership with the right stakeholders.	Utilise the existing strategic groups to drive forwards activity. (figure 4.5).	CIII

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
National Policy	National policy may change and the plan will need to adapt to it.	Keep up to date with changes to national policy, be ready to adapt work as appropriate.	BIII

For risk rating, please refer to the following table (please **retain** table in final report):

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate IV Minor

8. Consultation

- 8.1. Consultation with stakeholders and partners has been extensive, with a full list of those involved in Appendix I of the GKMWP. Organisations involved have been from DWP, Local Authority, NHS, Further Education, Higher Education, Voluntary Sector and more. There have also been 4 lived experience sessions. Consultation has taken place in the form of interviews, workshops and surveys.

9. Climate change implications

- 9.1. There are no climate change implications.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. The development of the plan has been funded by DWP with funds distributed to KCC to fund staff time and the consultancy work to develop the plan. The future implementation of the strategy's action plan has no current funding allocation from Medway Council or its partners, but it is anticipated that future funding for government programmes will support delivery activity based on the evidence base, and actions detailed in the plan. External partners, KCC and Medway Council may wish to align current and future funded activity with actions outlined in the plan where this achieves benefits for local businesses and residents.

11. Legal implications

- 11.1 There are no legal implications.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix A – Get Kent & Medway Working Plan

Appendix B – Diversity Impact Assessment

Background Papers

None