

By: Mr K A Ferrin, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste
Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Supporting Independence

To: County Council – 14 December 2006

Subject: Climate Change

Summary: To receive and comment on the Select Committee report: Climate Change and note and approve the response of the Cabinet working group which has considered the recommendations of the Select Committee report.

Introduction

1. (1) The Strategic Planning Policy Overview Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2005 established a Select Committee to look at the issue of climate change.

Select Committee Process

Membership

2. (1) The Select Committee commenced its work in February 2006. The Chairman of the Select Committee was Mr C Wells. Other Members of the Committee were Mrs C Angell, Mr A Crowther, Mrs T Dean, Mr C Hibberd, Mr D Hirst, Mr G Horne, MBE and Mr T Maddison.

Terms of Reference

(2) The Terms of Reference for this Select Committee Topic Review were:-

- to consider the impact of climate change in the short, medium and long term for Kent's economy, society and environment. This will include any related impact of extreme weather conditions.
- to consider Kent County Council's community leadership role in regard to mitigating and adapting to the identified impact of climate change. This would include recognising ways that Kent County Council can directly and indirectly use its influence to reduce our contribution to climate change and deal with its impact. The Executive Summary of the Select Committee's report is attached for all Members of the County Council. If you wish to see a full copy of the report then please contact Angela Evans on 01622 221876 or email her at angela.evans@kent.gov.uk. Copies are available in the Information Point and in the Members Lounge.

(3) The Cabinet received the Executive Summary and a presentation from a cross-party group of the Members who served on the Select Committee at its meeting on

16 October 2006. The Cabinet established a working group to consider the Select Committee's report and a proposed response.

(4) The report of this Cabinet working group is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

(5) One of the Select Committee's recommendations was that KCC should adopt a new statement of water policy reflecting current concerns about climate change. As this was already in progress, a proposed statement is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

Recommendations

The County Council are asked to

- (i) thank the Select Committee for producing a relevant and balanced report;
- (ii) note and approve the response by the Cabinet working group in addressing the issues raised by the Select Committee in its report; and
- (iii) note and approve the statement of water policy for KCC which immediately takes forward recommendation 3.4 of the Select Committee report.

Mr KA Ferrin

Cabinet Member for Environment,
Highways & Waste

Mr R Gough

Cabinet Member for Regeneration &
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Background Information: Include ALL background information taken into account in preparing the report. (This does not include previous Committee Reports)

RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

The report of the KCC Select Committee on Climate Change was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 16 October 2006. Cabinet thanked the Committee and the many witnesses who gave evidence to it for their efforts, and we reiterate those thanks here. Cabinet also agreed to produce a response to submit to Council for debate on 14 December alongside the report. This paper constitutes that response.

Cabinet welcomes the Select Committee's report as a thorough, balanced and timely contribution to the debate about climate change. It comes at a pivotal moment and the way in which we respond to the recommendations will set a course for the future not just for the County Council, but for Kent as a whole. We commend the Select Committee for its report, and we broadly accept its recommendations. We also recognise the urgency of the challenge and the need to develop workable and effective solutions. Indeed, we are already committed to taking action which will enable us to put many of the recommendations in to practice, as illustrated in Annex 1 to this report which sets out in detail our initial response to each recommendation in turn.

Some aspects of the report need a more considered and ongoing response and will require the involvement of partners and the community as a whole. We have therefore established a working group on Climate Change to ensure that as well as making an immediate start in implementing the recommendations, we are also able to develop our response in discussion with our partners, and that the issues are given due consideration at a high level.

In commending the report to Council, Cabinet would emphasise the following:

- That the issue of climate change represents a major opportunity for KCC to demonstrate community leadership, and we accept and welcome that challenge.
- That while there may be costs associated with our response to climate change, these will be insignificant compared to the costs of doing nothing.
- That some climate change is already unavoidable, and will require us to adapt to the inevitable as well as reducing emissions to minimise future climate change.
- That uncertainty about the future extent of climate change is no excuse for inaction, and that building flexibility into our approach to accommodate a range of future scenarios will be vital.
- That KCC has a critical role in helping Kent's businesses, communities and individuals understand and prepare for the impacts of climate change, as well as playing their part in reducing those impacts.
- That the implications of climate change cut across all areas of the County Council's work and services, and as such require an organisation-wide response.
- That KCC has a special responsibility to lead by example and ensure that emissions arising from the delivery of our services are minimised, and that the impacts of climate change on those services are being taken into account.

Many challenges lie ahead in taking forward the recommendations in the report, not least those with major resource implications given the current need for financial restraint. However, we believe that with the commitment of political and corporate will signalled by this response, we can ensure that the issue of climate change is given the very high level of priority which it clearly deserves.

Appendix 1 - KCC initial response to Climate Change Select Committee recommendations

Recommendation 1- Corporate acceptance of climate change	
<p>The Select Committee recommends KCC explicitly acknowledges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Climate change over and above that which can be explained by natural variation is happening and accelerating.2. The impacts of climate change pose significant risks to the services provided by KCC and to Kent's communities.3. KCC has a responsibility for Kent's residents and future generations to adapt to and mitigate climate change	<p>We recognise that climate change is happening and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• KCC has a critical role in helping Kent's businesses, communities and individuals understand and prepare for the impacts of climate change, as well as playing their part in reducing those impacts;• the implications of climate change cut across all areas of KCC's work and services, and as such require an organisation-wide response;• KCC has a special responsibility to lead by example and ensure that emissions arising from the delivery of our services are minimised, and that the impacts of climate change on those services are being taken into account; and that• some climate change is already unavoidable, and will require us to adapt to the inevitable as well as reducing emissions to minimise future climate change. <p>We will ensure that KCC staff are aware of the relevance of climate change for all our services and activities.</p>

Recommendation 2 - Climate change adaptation (service provision)	
<p>The Select Committee recommends:</p> <p>1. KCC's Chief Officers Group should commission a study looking ahead to the 2020's, 2050's and 2080s to comprehensively assess the implications of climate change for all services currently delivered by KCC.</p> <p>2. This study to be conducted by KCC staff and led by a cross-directorate steering group of senior officers using the UK Climate Impacts Programme recommended tools to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Key impacts on services. ii. Appropriate adaptive measures. iii. Accountability for taking these measures forward. iv. Opportunities for reducing emissions in the delivery of services 	<p>We recognise that climate change is happening and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC has a critical role in helping Kent's businesses, communities and individuals understand and prepare for the impacts of climate change, as well as playing their part in reducing those impacts; • the implications of climate change cut across all areas of KCC's work and services, and as such require an organisation-wide response; • KCC has a special responsibility to lead by example and ensure that emissions arising from the delivery of our services are minimised, and that the impacts of climate change on those services are being taken into account; and that • some climate change is already unavoidable, and will require us to adapt to the inevitable as well as reducing emissions to minimise future climate change. <p>We will commission a study which will incorporate pragmatic targets that are realistic and affordable.</p> <p>Business plans for 2008/09 should reflect the findings of the report.</p>
<p>3. These outputs to be reflected in future business plans of all directorates to ensure that climate change becomes a mainstream consideration in KCC's work.</p>	<p>Business plans for 2008/9 should incorporate the actions needed to deliver the outcomes identified in the report.</p>

Recommendation 3 - Adaptation (Flood risk, water and emergency planning)

The Select Committee recommends that KCC should:

1. Strongly support the Environment Agency's efforts to promote sustainable approaches to flood risk management, to restrict building in areas at high risk of flooding and to ensure that flood resilience is built in to new development.

2. Ensure that where development in the indicative flood plain goes ahead it is concentrated in well-defended areas at higher densities.

3. Ensure that development pressure is not simply transferred from high flood risk areas to lower risk areas which may face other environmental constraints, climate-related or otherwise.

4. Adopt a new statement of water policy, emphasising the importance of demand management and reflecting current concerns about water resources and long-term concerns about climate change impacts.

We will work closely with the Environment Agency to promote greater understanding of the challenges ahead and explore with them the scope for new initiatives to tackle them. This will include pressing government to fund and build the flood defences required for the Thames Gateway programme.

We will work with our partners to ensure that Local Development Frameworks adequately reflect these recommendations.

A revised statement of water policy addressing the need for a climate conscious approach will be put before Council for approval on 14 December.

We will convene a follow-up summit with water companies.

<p>5. Immediately review Kent's emergency planning framework to ensure that the latest evidence on climate change is fully taken into account.</p> <p>6. Call a high level meeting of the emergency services, local authorities and the Environment Agency to identify potential climate related emergencies and ensure that they are being adequately planned for.</p> <p>7. Ensure that specific emergency plans for climate related emergencies, such as evacuation plans for those areas of Kent facing high flood risk, are in existence and up to date.</p>	<p>We will ask officers to initiate a review and report to the working group on climate change.</p> <p>A meeting should be held in good time to allow views to feed in to the report on emergency plans by April 2007.</p> <p>A detailed report, including specific plans for areas at highest risk should be prepared by April 2007, with revised plans for priority areas in place by October 2007. This report will reflect the need for additional funding from government and appropriate agencies to provide the flood defences and other measures to handle the impact of climate change.</p>
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Recommendation 4 - CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION - sustainable energy advice

The Select Committee recommends KCC:

1. Offer funding to energy advice centres such as Creative Environmental Networks (“CEN”) to extend promotion and delivery of their free energy advice service and the projects indicated below.
2. Endorse and advertise this service prominently and aggressively through KCC publications and the kent.gov.uk website.
3. In conjunction with the project provider, consider creating a specific fund for the retro-fitting of domestic energy efficiency measures to achieve carbon dioxide emission reductions, with the wider aim of promoting the impacts of climate change

As a first step, we will ask officers to:

- identify opportunities to access appropriate EU funding streams for energy efficiency projects (e.g. Interreg and new Objective II competitiveness programme which include headings on energy efficiency);
- involve energy advice agencies (including CEN) in discussions to consider how best to implement such projects

We will ensure that KCC’s website includes information about energy efficiency and signposts to further detailed advice.

4. Partner with the Kent ECO-Schools team and other stakeholders to produce a county-wide “school pack” on climate change.

We will ask officers to:

- incorporate climate change into the Big Green Fair to be held in Spring 2007
- ensure a detailed school pack is ready for use by September 2007

Recommendation 5 –Mitigation - Biomass and biofuels	
<p>The Select Committee recommends KCC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake feasibility studies for the use of locally-produced biomass across the KCC estate, including schools, care homes and all new build sites. 2. Use Bio-ethanol or Bio-diesel from certified sustainable sources to fuel its own fleet of vehicles where possible. 3. Consider installing wood-chip or wood-pellet biomass boilers where oil-fired boilers are due for replacement and infrastructure and space already exists for fuel delivery and storage. 	<p>We are already carrying out survey work in a proportion of schools. Officers will submit proposals for a rolling programme of feasibility studies by March 2007.</p> <p>Since August 2006 all the KCC fleet vehicles operated by Commercial Services have been supplied with diesel including 5% bio-diesel (the maximum level that the fleet vehicles warrantees will currently allow). An action plan has already been agreed to take forward our Towards 2010 commitment to reduce the impact of our vehicles even further. The pilot will be completed and a report with recommendations for action will be submitted to Cabinet by March 2007.</p> <p>A stock-take report will be ready in Jan 2007. Replacement boilers will be installed in 10 pilot schools in time for the 2007/08 heating season.</p> <p>We will continue to support and invest a further sum in the Energy Loan Fund which will lever in more external funding that will be invested in energy savings and renewable energies across the KCC estate.</p>
Recommendation 6 – Mitigation - Energy consumption and micro-renewables in the KCC estate and the Kent ECO-Schools initiative	
<p>The Select Committee recommends KCC :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commit to the BREEAM “Very Good” standard and adopt a clear timetable to move to the BREEAM “Excellent” standard or its equivalent for all new school and other buildings and major refurbishments. 	<p>As our Towards 2010 objectives make clear, we are committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring that new KCC buildings set an example by delivering the best possible standards of construction, by applying a pragmatic approach to sustainability using energy-efficient, robust and built-to-last materials; and • reducing the impact of KCC’s buildings and vehicles on the environment, including trialling the use of bio-fuels and other new technologies

<p>2. Identify targets to significantly increase the retrofitting of existing school and other buildings with energy efficiency measures and renewable energy installations.</p>	<p>Work is being carried out on an asset replacement policy, linked to Kent Design. We should like to see a report on this, with suggested targets, by July 2007</p>
<p>3. Write into procedures governing the management of school estates key energy saving practices.</p>	<p>We shall ask officers to review this in parallel with work on 2.</p>
<p>4. Review the targets for carbon reduction in KCC's Carbon Management Plan with a view to setting more ambitious targets and ensure that adequate resources are in place for their delivery.</p>	<p>Proposed revised targets that are affordable and achievable will be put before Council for approval in Spring 2007.</p>
<p>5. Ensure the Kent ECO-Schools initiative is adequately funded and staffed to achieve delivery of this initiative to all Kent schools.</p>	<p>Core-funding has been agreed for the ECO-Schools officer's post.</p>
<p>6. Strengthen the focus on sustainable operation in the induction, training and performance regime for school governors and those who manage the KCC estate.</p>	<p>Pilot training of school caretakers and site managers has been completed. A further 8 sets of 2 days being planned for 2007 to cover around 100 schools. Officers will review Facilities Management training programme and Governors Training by March 2007.</p>

Recommendation 7 – Mitigation - Transport policy	
<p>The Select Committee recommends KCC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review its approach to transport policy to put reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from transport as a foremost objective. 2. Re-prioritise transport schemes within its Local Transport Plan to bring forward those which are likely to deliver absolute reductions in emissions. 3. Lead Kent’s residents and businesses to a better understanding of the total costs of transport and use its influence as planning and highways authority to deliver real reductions in emissions. 4. Lobby central and regional government about the current and future contribution of transport to climate change and the need for national and regional solutions where local ones alone will not work. 	<p>Transport is one of the most challenging areas: while it is clear that overall emissions from transport make a significant contribution to the problem, we cannot ignore that it is difficult to provide low carbon solutions to meet all travel needs in a widely dispersed county like Kent. Our vision for transport in Kent – as set out in the Local Transport Plan published in March 2006 – is:</p> <p><i>“To provide good accessibility to jobs and services for all sections of the community in Kent and to improve the environment by reducing congestion and pollution, widening the choice of transport available and by developing public transport, walking and cycling.”</i></p> <p>The following Towards 2010 objectives will help relieve congestion and thereby reduce carbon emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards introducing a Kent Youth Travel Card to give free public transport for all 11-16 year olds, by piloting schemes in Tonbridge & Tunbridge Wells and in Canterbury District • Pilot staggered school hours to relieve rush hour congestion • Tackle urban congestion and reducing peak journey times between and within towns by 10% using methods such as intelligent traffic light management systems and congestion busting teams will reduce congestion and thereby carbon emissions • work with bus and train providers and lobby government to improve public transport services in Kent

<p>5. Raise the existing target to increase commuting by KCC staff by public transport, walking and cycling, and set a new target to reduce overall business mileage travelled by KCC Members and Staff.</p> <p>6. Review the lease car scheme for KCC staff to prioritise the use of low carbon dioxide emissions vehicles and eliminate the option to select vehicles with high carbon emissions.</p>	<p>We already have a Travel Plan for KCC staff at County Hall and have recently introduced a Car Club (car pool/leasing scheme) which is also open to other Maidstone town centre employers and residents in the ME14 postcode area on evenings and weekends.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8 – Mitigation - Making more efficient use of land and meeting higher standards of sustainable construction via the planning system.</p>	
<p>1. The Select Committee recommends that KCC's development control function give high priority to climate change specifically to :</p> <p>i. Ensure that proposals include measures to minimise emissions, through energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in line with government advice that at least 10% of energy needs should be met from renewable sources.</p> <p>ii. Ensure that they have considered adaptation to climate change impacts, using the criteria set out in the <i>Adapting to Climate Change: Checklist for Development</i> produced by the South East Climate Change Partnership.</p> <p>iii. Ensure that these principles and others relating to sustainable construction are reflected in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework</p>	<p>We will ask officers to consider how best to take this forward in collaboration with the district councils and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draw up a policy statement to reflect these principles; • set up a workshop/forum for county and district planners in Spring 2007 to explore the implications of the forthcoming draft Policy Planning Statement 26 on climate change; • ensure that the final version of the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework takes account of these principles.

2.The Select Committee recommends that in making representations on the South East Plan KCC:

i. Continue to express concern about the volume of development facing Kent, as it will increase both our contribution to climate change and our exposure to its impacts, most notably in terms of water stress and flood risk.

ii. Lobby for the strictest possible tests for new development in respect of greenhouse gas emissions and resilience to climate impacts

iii. Call for re-insertion of the policy for all new development to meet the BREEAM 'very good' standard for sustainable construction and set a clear policy framework for moving rapidly towards carbon neutral development.

3. The Select Committee recommends that, in working with Kent's district councils to develop their Local Development Frameworks, KCC should:

i. Seek to ensure that Kent and Medway Structure Plan policies to build at higher densities and meet brownfield development targets are rigorously observed and improved upon where possible.

ii. Insist on new development meeting the BREEAM 'very good' standard as a minimum, and, within this the 'excellent' standard for the energy and water elements of the assessment.

iii. Set targets for creating and linking natural habitats based on the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan, along with clear action plans for their delivery.

We will continue to look for opportunities to reiterate our concerns about the impacts of a large volume of new development, both in contributing to climate change and also in exacerbating the difficulties we face in adapting to the effects of the unavoidable climate change already with us.

The actions proposed in response to recommendation 8.1 are also relevant.

We will invite the Biodiversity Action Plan partnership to submit a scoping report (including advice on synergy with current research work being carried out by English Nature) in the Spring 2007.

Recommendation 9 - COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP: POLICY, COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

Climate Change Action Plan for Kent

The Select Committee recommends:

1. KCC, with the Kent Partnership, develop a Climate Change Action Plan for Kent as a key supporting document to the Vision for Kent. This will set out how KCC and our partners can reduce contribution to and prepare for impacts of climate change. This needs to be consulted on widely and in a quick timeframe.
2. KCC to adopt and publish clear targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in both the wider community and its own estate and reflect these in the Climate Change Action Plan.
3. These targets to be at least as challenging as national targets and reflected in strategic documents and commitments such as Local Area Agreements and Public Service Agreements.
4. KCC's Analysis and Information Team to identify and monitor appropriate climate change indicators for Kent and develop a Kent Local Climate Profile

We will lead the Kent Partnership and the Public Service Board in setting up Steering Groups or Task Forces which will be charged with developing a Climate Change Action Plan for Kent. We hope that these Groups/Task Forces will:

- **by March 2007**, commit to developing an Action Plan along the lines recommended by the Select Committee and invite contributions to this work from partners and the wider community;
- issue a formal draft consultation document by **October 2007**; and
- launch the action plan with the revised Environment Strategy in **March 2008**

As a first step, revised carbon management targets for KCC estate will be put before Council for approval early in 2007. We will ask the Steering Groups/Task Forces to develop draft proposals for wider community targets as part of the work on the Climate Change Action Plan for Kent.

We will ask officers to draw up a Kent Local Climate Profile and propose draft indicators against which we can assess weather patterns in Kent over the medium to long term.

Recommendation 10 - Climate Change Communications Programme	
<p>The Select Committee recommends:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. KCC to develop a programme which will communicate the positive action that can be taken to reduce the risks of climate change and to prepare for that change which is already inevitable. 2. This must be co-ordinated with the production of a Climate Change Action Plan for Kent. 	<p>We will ensure that the KCC website is updated in January 2007 to include more information on climate change.</p> <p>We will ask the central communications team to develop ideas for a communications programme in discussion with the Steering Group/Task Force drawing up the Climate Change Action Plan for Kent. We suggest they consider: some publicity for an early statement of principles, a spring one day event; and a rolling programme of local publicity during summer 2007 leading up to major publicity for launch of consultation document in October 2007.</p>
Recommendation 11 - Political and Managerial Leadership	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a leading member of the Administration to be responsible for climate change policy. 2. Ensure climate change is included in corporate risk planning, business continuity and all directorate plans and policies. 3. Challenge management arrangements for addressing climate change within KCC to ensure directorates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise climate change is an issue for all. • Dedicate resources to climate change issues. • Co-ordinate climate change activity Communicate to staff the impact of climate change and the need to adapt and mitigate 	<p>We have set up a working group on climate change, chaired by the Deputy Leader, to monitor the implementation of our response to the Select Committee report and to drive forward continuing action. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for environment, highways and waste will take lead responsibility for climate change policy. The Managing Director for Environment and Regeneration will provide the lead official support.</p> <p>As mentioned in response to earlier recommendations, we wish to ensure that all KCC staff are aware of the relevance of climate change for all our services and activities.</p>

Recommendation 12 - Education	
<p>The Select Committee recommends that:</p> <p>1. KCC raise climate change awareness within and beyond young people to show what they can do to reduce risks to future generations to adapt to the changes which are coming.</p>	<p>We expect this recommendation to be taken forward in conjunction with – and to the same timetable as - the communications strategy (see recommendation 10) and would therefore hope to see some initial ideas by March 2007.</p>
<p>2. The Children, Families and Education directorate produce a report to Cabinet on how climate change education can best be advanced in Kent's schools.</p>	<p>We will ask officers to submit an initial report by April 2007 (taking account of the work undertaken in context of recommendation 4) and to consider by July 2007 the options for using from September 2007, the detailed school pack mentioned in the response at section 4. Further reporting requirements will be determined at a later stage.</p>

Appendix 2

Draft Kent County Council Water Policy Statement

KCC recognises the fundamental importance of a healthy water environment in Kent to the maintenance of a high quality of life, good public health, a thriving economy and a rich natural environment. KCC further recognises the pressures arising from:

- **Above average levels of domestic water consumption**, and unsustainable levels of abstraction from the water environment in many parts of Kent
- **Climate change**, which is likely to increase flood risk, threaten water quality and reduce the availability of water in the environment and for public supply
- **New development**, which will put pressure on already scarce water resources
- **Pollution**, as existing sources of pollution such as run-off from agriculture, roads and development will be amplified if water availability decreases

Supporting efforts to ensure the maintenance of a healthy water environment is therefore central to KCC's community leadership role. As such KCC will seek to observe the following principles in all its decisions and reflect them in the management of its own operations and estate and lobby government, the water companies and developers to ensure that new house-building does not threaten Kent's water supplies:

Water availability

- KCC will use its direct and indirect influence to seek to ensure an **adequate supply of water in Kent to meet environmental, social and economic needs**. Where these needs come into conflict, our policies and decisions will reflect the fact that our society and economy both rely on the maintenance of a **high quality water environment** and the **sustainable use of water resources**.
- KCC will adopt and adhere to a '**water policy hierarchy**' which seeks to reduce the use of water and leakage as a first priority. When considering proposals for re-cycling water or developing new resources, KCC will support those options which offer the best practicable environmental outcome.
- KCC recognises that **investment in new infrastructure** is likely to be needed to meet the forecast demand from housing and commercial growth, and calls for further work to compare the feasibility and sustainability of options including water re-use, strategic water transfers, new reservoirs and further investment in leakage reduction.
- In considering options for water resource development, KCC will take full account of energy, land use, transport and environmental implications and give priority to those options which perform best against the tests of **sustainable development**.
- KCC will ensure that its **policy, planning and procurement decisions** make efficient use of water, and that our own decisions and those of others are '**climate proof**' in that they take account of the likely impact of climate change on water resources over their lifetime.
- KCC will promote the **efficient use of water** in domestic and commercial environments, and develop its public awareness and advisory services in partnership with the Environment Agency, water companies and other partners.

- In promoting strategies for reducing water use KCC will seek to ensure that the interests of **vulnerable groups** are protected.
- KCC will use its powers, directly and indirectly through the planning system, to achieve the highest possible levels of water efficiency **in new commercial and residential development**, during both construction and occupation.
- KCC will work through Kent Design to ensure that the **Kent Design Guide** reflects the very best practice in water efficiency and that strenuous efforts are made to ensure that this is reflected in all new development.
- KCC recognises that reducing demand for water in new development is unlikely to be enough to respond to future pressures, and will therefore identify and seek to implement measures to improve **water efficiency in existing development**.

Water quality

- KCC recognises the need to comply with the **EU Water Framework Directive** requirements to reach 'good' ecological status in terms of river water quality, quantity and physical habitat by 2015 and will support efforts to achieve this.
- KCC will support the Environment Agency in ensuring comprehensive protection of major aquifers and water catchments and avoiding development which would threaten the **integrity of Kent's groundwater sources**.