

To all Members of the Regeneration and
Economic Development Policy Overview Committee

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Date: 21 September 2009

Dear Member

**REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE -
THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2009**

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Thursday, 24 September 2009 meeting of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Overview Committee, the following reports, which update the information published under Item B6 in the original papers.

Agenda No Item

B6. Draft Annual Performance Report 2008/09 (Pages 1 - 56)

Yours sincerely



Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership

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By: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services
and Performance Management
Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive

To: Regeneration & Economic Development POC – 24th September 2009

Subject: Draft Annual Performance Report 2008/09

Classification: Unrestricted

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the draft Annual Performance Report 2008/09 (APR) and attaches a draft of the report for Members' information.

FOR INFORMATION

1. Introduction

Up until this year, KCC was required by central government to produce a Best Value Performance Plan (the "KCC Annual Plan"), reflecting on the previous year's performance and setting out priorities and targets for the following year. This requirement has now been abolished.

In its place, this year KCC is publishing an Annual Performance Report, which summaries key activities and outcomes for 2008/09, in an easily accessible format.

2. Summary

The APR is a short document, built around the themes of *Towards 2010*. It provides highlights of KCC's key activities and outcomes from 2008/09. Detailed performance information is reported elsewhere. Each section of the report outlines KCC's proposed achievements for each T2010 theme, the activity that has taken place during the year towards this and outcome-based case studies that demonstrate what we are achieving on the ground.

The latter marks a departure from the standard format of performance reporting and helps to illustrate where we have made a difference to the lives of people in Kent.

3. Amendments

This is a dynamic document and drafts are being continuously updated. Attached is the latest version. Key amendments from the previously circulated version are:

Section 3 – additional information ICT and the Better Work Places programme included
Section 4 – additional information on PEF included

Section 5 – additional information on adult education included and some changes to figures in line with more recently available data
Section 7 – case study on Kent Youth Theatre Festival updated
Section 10 – additional information on tackling health inequalities included
Section 11 – additional information on personalising services included

4. Approval process

The draft Report will be taken to each September Policy Overview Committee for information.

The draft Report will be discussed at Cabinet on 12 October prior to being taken to County Council for approval on 15 October.

4. Recommendation

Members are asked to NOTE the attached draft.

Accountable officer:

Robert Hardy, Head of Improvement & Engagement, Chief Executive's Department
01622 221343.

KCC ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2008/09

DRAFT

This document is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages. Please call (*insert contact*) on (01622 XXXXXX) for details.

About this document

This Annual Performance Report provides highlights of Kent County Council's (KCC's) key activities and outcomes during 2008/09. It sets out:

- KCC's long-term goals
- The key activities of 2008/09
- The difference these have made to people's lives in 2008/09

It is one of a suite of performance reporting documents produced by KCC this year.

Detailed information on KCC's performance during 2008/09 can be found in the *Business Plan Outturn Monitoring for 2008/09*.

Detailed information on performance against the *Towards 2010* targets can be found in the *Towards 2010 Annual Report*.

Detailed performance information on the work of the *Kent Partnership* is reported to the Kent Public Service Board.

DRAFT

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Section 1: Local and National Priorities

1.1 The strategic direction

Kent County Council (KCC) continues to work towards the county's clearly stated objectives as set out in the *Vision for Kent*. This document, agreed between Kent's public, private and voluntary sectors, sets out how KCC and its partners will work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the county over the next 20 years.

Towards 2010, a vital document designed and developed in 2006, defines KCC's priorities in terms of the *Vision* and gives the business strategic direction.

At the heart of *Towards 2010* are KCC's agreed aims. These are designed to achieve:

- Increased prosperity for Kent through business growth and job creation
- Transformation in education
- Reduced traffic congestion
- Improved health and quality of life
- Quality homes in a well-managed environment
- A safer Kent
- Continued improvements in services while keeping council tax down.

The *Kent Agreement 2* is the county's Local Area Agreement and Public Service Agreement with the Government, signed by KCC and its major partners in Kent.

The *Kent Supporting Independence Programme* continues to play an important role in achieving the *Vision for Kent*, *Towards 2010* and *Kent Agreement 2* targets. Of particular importance is its focus on key groups such as young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and its multi-agency approach to helping people move from dependency into employment and more fulfilling lives.

To make sure KCC's resources line up with its priorities, it has a *Medium Term Financial Plan* that looks ahead to the next three financial years. Its main purpose is to identify and estimate resources available over this period.

1.2 National priorities

One of the key tasks of every council is to achieve a balance between national and local priorities. There has been a government drive over the past few years to help councils deliver improvements in services to local people. Initiatives aimed at delivering these improvements have included:

- The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) regime, which was introduced in 2009 as a replacement for the old Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) system. CAA takes an area-based approach to assessment, looking at how well councils are working together with other public bodies in their local area to meet the needs of local people
- The Gershon Review, which required councils to improve efficiency and reduce bureaucracy

- The Varney report on service transformation, which included recommendations for a cross-government identity management system. This would enable greater personalisation of services and reduce duplication across government by, for instance, only requiring people to make one notification when their circumstances changed instead of notifying each public body separately
- *Every Child Matters*, a radical reform of children's services prompted by the Children Act 2004 aimed at bringing together the work of the health sector and local government and improving the delivery of health and social care for children and young people
- The *Children's Plan* a ten-year strategy to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up, which places families at the heart of Government policy. The Plan aims to improve educational outcomes for children, improve children's health, reduce offending rates among young people and eradicate child poverty by 2020
- *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*, a White Paper that sets out a radical agenda focussed on the following four overarching goals for health and social care:
 - Providing better prevention services and earlier intervention
 - Giving people more choice and a louder voice
 - Tackling inequalities and improving access to community services
 - Providing support for people with long-term conditions.
- *Putting People First*, the national vision for adult social care, which supports the Government's commitment to independent living for adults and aims to ensure every local area has a single community based support system focussed on the health and wellbeing of the local population
- *Sustainable Communities - People, Places and Prosperity*, a five-year strategy setting out the Government's vision for sustainable communities, with a focus on vibrant local leadership, resident engagement and participation and improved service delivery and performance
- Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are non statutory, multi-agency partnerships, which match local authority boundaries. LSPs bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors; allowing different initiatives and services to support one another so that they can work together more effectively.

1.3 The economy

This year has seen economic turmoil unmatched in recent years. In April 2008, most forecasters were still expecting growth in the year ahead, and despite the impact of the credit crunch, economic fears focused on rising commodity prices and the prospect of increasing inflation. Yet by March 2009, UK GDP had shrunk by 4.3%, and interest rates had been cut to a record low in an effort to encourage demand.

Looking to the future, current forecasts¹ suggest a further contraction in the national economy of 4.3% in 2009, before a weak return to growth in 2010. KCC's support for businesses and employment through the downturn is reflected in its commitment to *Backing Kent Business* and the promotion of a closer relationship between KCC and the business community highlighted in the *Regeneration Framework*. However, the challenges of recession will also be reflected in increased pressure on public spending.

¹ HM Treasury (August 2009) *Forecasts for the UK Economy*

For KCC, this is likely to mean increased demand on services and greater pressure on the budgets available to provide them.

1.4 The duty to involve

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out measures for councils (and other Best Value authorities) to engage local people, lead their communities and find new and more effective ways to deliver high quality services with their partners.

Section 138 of the Act contains a new duty to involve local representatives and came into force on 1st April 2009 for all councils. The duty seeks to ensure that local people have greater opportunities to have their say. The aim of the new duty is to embed a culture of engagement and empowerment across all the work of a council.

The duty requires councils to take those steps they consider appropriate to involve representatives of local persons in the exercise of any of their functions, where they consider that it is appropriate to do so. It specifies the three ways of involving that need to be covered:

- **providing information** about the exercise of the particular function
- **consulting** about the exercise of the particular function
- **involving in another way**

KCC will build on existing engagement tools to ensure that it meets the requirements of the duty from 2009 onwards.

1.5 Personalising services

KCC is committed to personalising services to ensure they meet the needs of the people of Kent. This means continuing to innovate and improve by:

- Giving individuals and communities a stronger voice in the design and transformation of services
- Ensuring improved access through innovative projects such as *Gateway* and the self-assessment website so that services are accessible to all
- Continuing to find new and innovative ways of offering more choice and individual control in order to meet and surpass public expectations
- Making the most of technological innovations to personalise services
- Getting the simple things right first time and ensuring an excellent customer experience for all.

KCC's Personalisation and Engagement Board, chaired by the Managing Director of Kent Adult Social Services, supports the council in meeting these aims by championing improvements in community engagement, identifying and communicating good practice within KCC and maintaining a clear focus on improving the customer experience.

1.6 The older population

People in Britain are living longer than ever before and the population is ageing. This pattern can be found in developed economies worldwide and will have a very significant

impact on the future of public services. It is essential that KCC plans for the impact this will have.

This year saw the publication of Kent's Policy Framework for Later Life, *Living Later Life to the Full*, which sets out how people in Kent want to live their later lives and what they want from public and community services and facilities.

Following extensive consultation, seven key priorities have been developed to reflect the issues and concerns that are important to the older people of Kent:

- To ensure communities are designed to be “age proof”, stronger, safer and sustainable
- To improve transport and accessibility
- To enable people to lead healthier lives and have better access to healthcare
- To support people's citizenship, learning and participation in community life
- To ensure those people who need support to live independently have choice, control and good quality care
- To encourage people to plan for a secure later life
- To promote a positive image of later life and dignity and respect for older people.

Targets have been drawn up under each of these priorities, and are set out in the Policy Framework. A mapping process has been carried out to identify and collate all the action public services in Kent are taking and planning for older people. This will publicise the existing projects that people may not be aware of, and will also highlight key areas that require strategic and collective actions in the future.

Section 2: Customer Satisfaction

Kent County Council's (KCC's) customers are everyone in Kent, not just the people who directly access its services. KCC constantly tries to listen to what people have to say and uses this feedback to improve its performance.

The council considers the views of Kent residents to be very important. In October and November 2008, Ipsos-Mori carried out a face-to-face survey on behalf of KCC with over 1100 Kent residents, to get their opinion on living in Kent.

The results from the survey were positive, with 89% saying they were satisfied with their local area and 74% saying they felt that they belonged to their local neighbourhood. Both of these are above the national average.

The survey showed that the score for overall satisfaction with KCC increased from 46% in 2006 to 51%, although the different methodologies used mean that direct comparisons should be treated with caution. KCC will work hard to improve on this in the coming year.

KCC wants to give everyone a first class service, but recognises that sometimes it don't always get it right first time. That's why this year, following consultation, the council has revised its complaints process and leaflet.

This revision is one part of the developing strategy to transform customer service by listening to what customers want and expect. The aim is to reduce the bureaucracy involved. This strategy includes reducing the number of formal stages and changing the culture within KCC by encouraging staff to deal with complaints speedily and sympathetically, apologising when things go wrong and taking action to resolve the source of complaints by learning lessons from what causes them.

KCC has developed a whole range of forums and engagement tools which enable people to express their views, which are then fed into the appropriate service development processes. This provides people will alternative avenues to let the council know what is wrong, rather than resorting to making a complaint.

Section 3: Connecting with Communities

3.1 Why it matters

People are at the heart of everything KCC strives to achieve. It has an excellent track record of engaging with service users in the design and delivery of services. However, there has been relatively less success with the wider Kent public, with decision-making felt to be quite remote from local people.

KCC wants to ensure that in the future it connects with local people both as individuals who use its services and as residents and members of local communities. KCC wants residents and service users to know that when they say something it not only listens but responds – operating the simple ‘you said; we did’ principle.

3.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- The wider Kent community regularly engaged with by KCC in a meaningful and constructive way, helping to inform all policy and service developments and decision-making
- The most vulnerable and least heard communities in Kent actively engaged in policy and service design
- Joined-up public services which are convenient and easy-to-access for all sections of the community
- Strong relationships between KCC Members and their local communities

3.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Seeking people’s views

Throughout 2008/09 KCC has consulted with Kent residents on major policies and service issues. These range from using the views of disabled children and their parents to design a new respite centre to consulting the wider public on the revision of the *Kent Public Health Strategy*.

In partnership with the Kent Messenger Group, KCC has established a new *Kent and Medway Citizens’ Panel*, enabling it to seek the views of a large number of Kent residents aged 16 or over. This is the only citizens’ panel in the country to be run jointly by a local newspaper and a local authority. So far two surveys have been undertaken; the results have been used to inform policy development, such as the *Backing Kent Business* and *Backing Kent People* campaigns.

Membership of the Panel at the end of March stood at around 700, which is still some way below the intended target of 5000 by 2011. KCC will continue to recruit new members in 2009/10.

Consultation and participation with children and young people continues to develop.

Over 45,000 children and young people took part in the 2008 *Kent Children & Young People’s Survey*, up from 42,000 in 2007. Findings have been used to inform the planning of children’s services at a county, local and school level and also used to produce a needs assessment. In early 2009, Ipsos-Mori undertook 16 “mini focus groups” with young people in Kent to follow up on issues such as bullying and health that came out of the Survey.

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The *Children and Young People's Plan* was reviewed in 2008 and was subject to extensive consultation with children and young people, including a series of focus groups with seldom heard children. The design and wording of the summary version was led by a group of young people.

The *Kent Youth County Council (KYCC)* remained highly active during 2008/09 and is well-supported by young people in Kent with 30,921 young people voting in the November 2008 elections. KYCC has continued to play a strong role in giving a voice to young people in Kent and informing the work of KCC, influencing the decision to extend the Freedom Pass and being asked to inform KCC's Policy Framework for Later Life: *Living Later Life to the Full*.

The Framework for Participation with Children and Young People in Kent has been produced, agreed by the Kent Children's Trust and distributed widely to organisations in Kent. An inter-agency workshop in February 2009 identified further actions to take forward the work on participation and to revitalise the strategy.

Kent's Children's Social Services has actively engaged service users in their recruitment processes.

KCC has ensured that pupils and parents have been fully engaged in the *Building Schools for the Future* programme and have been able to influence the changes made to their school. A workshop for over 150 year 6 - 13 students was held in June 2008, which aimed to capture students' ideas about how and where they would like to learn in the future and to integrate these ideas into the development of new school facilities planned through the BSF Programme.

Public access and technology

KCC recognises that public access in the 21st century is changing and that the way we deliver services across the whole public sector needs to change accordingly, particularly the way in which we use technology.

Critical to improving the customer experience and physical access to services is the *Gateway*, which offers increasingly convenient public service points in a retail format in high-street and town centre locations. Gateway delivers this by using innovative technologies and working with key public, voluntary sector and private sector organisations to shape services around people's needs.

During 2008/09, KCC began work on simplifying access to public services in Kent via the *Gateway Multi-Channel* programme. This is being led by KCC in partnership with other local public sector organisations and the private and voluntary sector. The programme has seen the expansion of Gateway from a face-to-face project to a multi-channel project incorporating face-to-face, phone and web. This will deliver joined-up web and telephone access across the non-emergency public sector in Kent.

"This is a great idea - to have advice, housing advice and general help under one roof, close to the town-centre. Brilliant."
Customer at Tunbridge Wells Gateway

Linked to Gateway is KCC's *Better Work Places* programme, an office transformation programme that aims to ensure that KCC has the right buildings in the right places for

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the 21st century - for contact with Kent residents and for staff, in conjunction with partner agencies, and to deliver real efficiencies. This year discussions have taken place between KCC, district councils and health trusts across Kent about sharing office and building space. Local arrangements for flexible working have been encouraged where these can be done at minimal cost – for example in Shepway KCC adult social services are due to shortly begin operating out of premises owned by the Romney Marsh Day Centre, a local charitable organisation.

Gateway continued to be rolled-out across Kent in 2008/09 with 3 new town-centre Gateway locations opening in Maidstone, Tenterden and Tunbridge Wells. Services available within Gateway have increased during 2008/09, and currently exceed 40 agencies working in partnership under the Gateway banner. These include Post Office services through the Tenterden Gateway, the successful piloting of health prevention programmes for diabetes and blood pressure at the Ashford Gateway, Citizens Advice Bureau, West Kent College, migrant helpline, and RBLI pathways to work.

Kent was selected as a Pathfinder for the Department for Work and Pensions-led *Tell Us Once (TUO)* initiative, which aims to vastly improve the process of telling statutory organisations that a loved one has died. The highly innovative and effective approach the Gateway service team and KCC Registrars have taken has resulted in a very effective service being redesigned, enabling Districts staff to fully engage in TUO.

ICT has a crucial role to play in improving the way public services are delivered. The *Kent Connects* Partnership offers the expertise and resources to help partner organisations deliver real change in the way public services are delivered. It aims to tackle the barriers to the joining up and sharing of public services through the application of leading edge technology.

In July 2008 KCC commissioned the *Kent Public Services Network (KPSN)*, a single Wide Area Network replacing KCC's existing corporate and schools network. This is now in the final stages of installing the connections to over 1,100 public service sites serving 14 councils, Police and Fire authorities as well as providing connection to the secure Government Gateway. KPSN is one of 3 aggregated solutions in the UK and the only one to achieve 100% participation of all councils in the region.

Access to technology is also important in helping communities to connect with each other and the wider world. KCC's *Connecting Kent* programme has been working to support community broadband groups since 2002. 2008/09 saw the start of the Broadband Grant scheme, which makes up to £50,000 available to a "not spot" area (a group of houses and businesses with no access to broadband services) through the local Parish Council. This one-off capital grant pays for the installation costs for a broadband service, and the subscribers then meet the on-going monthly charges. The "not spots" helped in 2008/9 were Barham, Sutton-by-Dover, Tilmanstone and Ulcombe with at least 2 more (Iwade and Selling) planned for late 2009.

Kent TV, the KCC-funded broadband community channel, underwent a substantial refresh in April 2008 to make it easier to use. The refreshed site has become more interactive, with voting ability, and it has become easier to upload comments and video content. The site is widely used by both Kent residents and businesses to showcase their own content and there are now over 2000 videos available on the site, encompassing a wide range of topics from business, education, history, and sport to

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tourism. At the end of March 2009, visitor numbers for Kent TV reached 1.5 million, far exceeding the 250,000 target.

Co-designing services

Through the work of the *Social Innovation Lab for Kent (SILK)* KCC has sought to place the person at the heart of service design, both within KCC and in partnership with others.

In 2008, SILK worked with low-income families, to gain an insight into the daily lives and the ways in which they manage to survive. This has informed a number of additional projects in order to address the issues raised, including one to create a bulk-buying model in the Parkwood area of Maidstone. SILK also undertook focused work with the Sheerness Children's Centre to find new ways of engaging fathers in family life, leading to the creation of the local 'GO' community card for parents.

In March 2009, SILK worked with Gateway frontline staff to co-design 'Insight to Idea' – a structured process for groups to reflect on customer needs, map their journey of interaction with the Gateway, and generate creative solutions for better services. 'Insight-to-Idea' is now being used as part of a team building day for the roll out of new Gateways around Kent.

Member engagement

KCC with its partners continues to pilot a range of models for community engagement. Building on the first successful pilot of *Neighbourhood Forums* in Dover, discussions have continued across the county with partners to establish which model of community engagement which is appropriate for each of our partners.

During 2008/09 productive discussions have taken place, which have resulted in the creation of three Neighbourhood Forums in Gravesham based on the Dover model. In Swale the Borough Council and KCC have established Local Engagement Forums which have created a stronger link to the Swale Local Strategic Partnership. In Tonbridge and Malling and Canterbury, KCC is joining existing models of community engagement which were set-up by the District Councils.

In 2008/09 the *Member Topic Review Programme* included three select committees on: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Provision of Activities for Young People and Passenger Rail Services in Kent. Each review resulted in a number of recommendations designed to address issues identified by the research carried out. Topic reviews have a doubly beneficial effect, both in that the process itself tends to catalyse positive action and the effects of the recommendations themselves. Since the topics chosen for review are often highly significant, cross-cutting and can sometimes involve radical change, the benefits are designed to be far reaching and 'medium to long range' rather than of the 'quick fix' variety.

KCC operates three *community grant schemes* (Member Community Grant, Local Schemes Grant and the Small Community Capital Projects Fund) which empower local County Councillors to give awards to deserving projects which will benefit their local community. These schemes provide more than £1.7 million each year directly to community projects. In 2008/09 a total of 1,152 awards were made across Kent. Recipients included Town and Parish Councils and small local voluntary groups and

projects supported ranged from a community centre to a project to engage young people through fishing.

3.4 How this made a difference

Engaging Fathers

Seashells, a Children's Centre in Sheerness, initiated a project with the Social Innovation Lab for Kent (SILK) to look at what kind of support fathers require and how they could provide it.

To answer this, a user centred approach was adopted that involved actively engaging fathers both inside and outside the Seashells centre. Placing a core group of 12 fathers at the centre of the work made them feel welcomed and encouraged them to take part. Talking to the fathers enabled Seashells to understand how they wanted to spend time with their children and how they view their role within the family.

As a result of the project, a full-time dad's worker has been appointed at Seashells, to act as a continued advocate for dads and ensure that their views are heard.

Member Grants

Local Members in Gravesend and Dartford have given funds to support the work of mediation in North Kent (MiNK). MiNK is a voluntary organisation that provides a mediation service for the general community, providing a free, impartial and confidential service for people involved in a neighbour or community dispute.

Through funding from Member community grants in 2008/09, MiNK has recently been training both primary and secondary school children across Dartford and Gravesend in conflict resolution techniques to help resolve disputes in their own schools. Pupils who have become peer mediators have found it a rewarding experience. A Dartford pupil said: "It is good to know that you are trusted by children and adults. We never tell anyone what is told to us unless it is serious and then we have to tell a teacher. Being a mediator is a great experience".

Gateways

In early 2009 Brett and Chelsea were the first customers to use the new Housing Plus service at the Ashford Gateway and found it invaluable. They returned to the UK after Brett's building work dried up in Spain and had no idea where to start in terms of building a new life in Ashford. Brett's Dad suggested they visit the Ashford Gateway and through Housing Plus they were able to sort out the majority of their problems, from claiming benefits and using the internet to look for jobs, to finding a Sure Start children's centre just a few minutes walk from their home.

The couple are now much happier and settled in the area and were amazed at how much help they received so quickly. Chelsea says: "I don't know where we would have found all this information if it hadn't been for Housing Plus. It seems like they have made sure they are in contact with all the local organisations a person might need and have found out how they can help you. They look at the whole picture not just say, benefits, or job seeking and if Housing Plus can't help you directly it seems they always know someone who can. We can't thank them enough for all their help".

Section 4: Economic Success – Opportunities for All Supporting business, creating jobs

4.1 Why it matters

Successful local businesses matter to us all. Kent County Council must do all it can to help our business community; the wealth it creates helps pay for good public services and the jobs it provides are key to a happy and successful life.

Kent has a unique opportunity to take full advantage of the busiest 'gateway' to the UK between Europe, London and the rest of the country to bring more employment to the county. KCC will support school leavers and the workforce to develop the right skills to access the jobs and opportunities that a thriving business sector brings. KCC will also capitalise on Kent's proven strengths in construction, land-based industries, pharmaceuticals, technology, tourism and biodiversity.

4.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- Long-term sustainable economic growth in Kent
- Long-term regeneration of Kent's coastal towns
- A thriving rural Kent economy
- More jobs created and businesses moving to Kent
- Kent regarded as a premier UK tourist destination

4.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Regeneration

In January 2009, KCC published the draft of *Unlocking Kent's Potential*, KCC's Framework for Regeneration. This takes a long term view of the main challenges and opportunities affecting Kent, promotes a closer relationship between KCC and the business community and provides a basis for putting economic development and regeneration at the centre of everything KCC does.

KCC has carried out targeted regeneration work in the coastal towns of Margate, Dover and Folkestone. Work this year has been disrupted by the economic downturn affecting partners and funding availability. However there have been some notable successes, including the securing of £7.75m from the CABI Sea Change Programme to deliver substantial improvements to Dover waterfront and Castle facilities.

In Margate the start of work on the *Turner Contemporary* site (see Section 7) has created greater confidence in the future of the town. There have been a number of new shops, cafés and creative spaces opening in Margate's Old Town in anticipation of the gallery's opening, such as on the Harbour Arm, although the full benefits will be realised closer to or post opening.

The University Centre and new Adult Education Centre opened in Folkestone in 2008, and the Performing Arts and Business Centre, which includes business incubator space, opened in March 2009.

KCC also supports regeneration through the *Property Enterprise Fund*, which realises capital from the disposal of non-operational property, and acquires property for future use, regeneration and income generation opportunities. KCC has undertaken a vigorous disposal strategy for non-operational assets. As of March 2009, 131 properties

had been sold for a total receipt of £12,288,050 with the money in turn being re-invested through acquisitions, such as Manston Business Park in Thanet.

The rural economy

In 2008/09 KCC has continued to provide support to rural businesses and communities across Kent. The *Kent Action for Rural Retailers* initiative provided specialist retail advice to 54 independent village retailers in 2008/09 to help them remain in business. The *Kent Rural Access to Services* programme has supported the creation of one community shop at Barham, which has also saved the village post office. This shop is due to officially open in August 2009 and three more community shops are currently in development for next year.

“This is a great day for our community and just shows what can be done by individuals with a common purpose who will work together to effect change. We took up the challenge in Barham and now the shop is open it makes all the effort worthwhile” *Liz Minter, Chair of Nailbourne Community Store*

The *LEADER+*, *Kent Rural Towns* and *Rural Revival* programmes have now delivered funding to over 200 rural community-based regeneration projects and assisted a range of community-led projects, including *Funding Buddies*, which was recently awarded over £300,000 of

lottery funding to be rolled out to rural communities across Kent.

Tourism

Tourist related business supports approximately 50,000 jobs in the Kent economy, which is 7% of total Kent jobs. KCC has undertaken a number of campaigns through *Visit Kent* to support tourism-related business in Kent and increase visitor spend.

A European campaign aimed at France, Netherlands, Belgium and Germany secured over £1 million Euros worth of bookings to Kent via Dutch tour operator “House of Britain” during 2008/09. The *Other Boleyn Girl* campaign, based around the Hollywood film and delivered in partnership with the Kent Film Office brought in around £1m worth of visitor spend and PR in 2008/09.

The value of on-line bookings for accommodation in Kent’s *Destination Management System* has increased slightly from £300K in 2007/09 to around £370K in 2008/09, although this is below the intended target of £500K. This is partly due to the economic climate and partly due to an increase in the number of large-scale commercial competitors within this market. In 2009 KCC will review its role in this market to see if it can realistically compete and where it adds value.

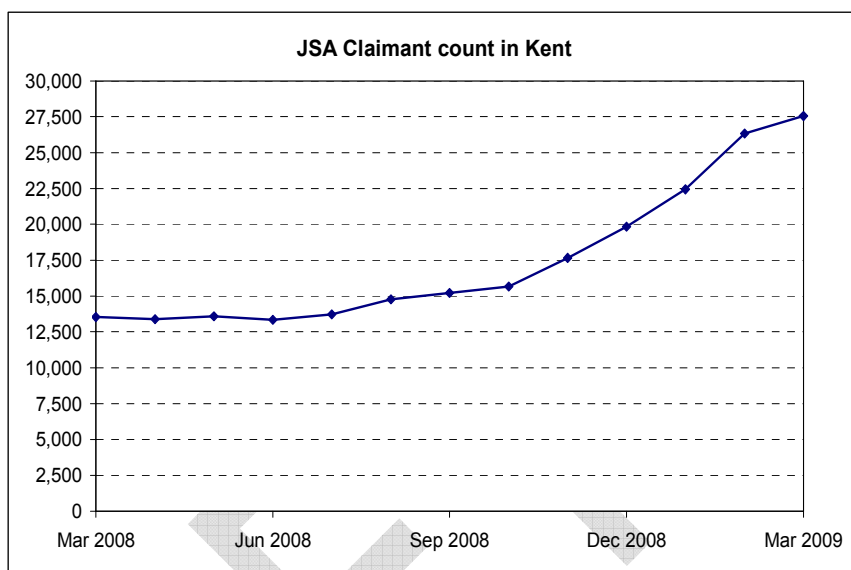
Economic growth

Despite the tough economic climate, through *Locate in Kent* (LiK) 3,786 jobs were created or safeguarded in 08/09, exceeding their target, and 70 new companies invested in Kent, meeting their target.

KCC’s *Backing Kent Business* campaign was launched in December 2008. This focuses on ten commitments by KCC to help Kent businesses through the recession. These include paying businesses supplying KCC within 20 days rather than 30. On average, 78% of businesses have been paid within 20 days. This is up from 44% prior to the launch of the campaign. KCC will look to build on this further during 2009/10.

KCC has continued to provide support to the film and television industry in Kent in line with the *Kent Film and Television Strategy*, mainly through the work of the *Kent Film Office (KFO)*. This year the KFO has managed over 700 filming days, taking the total income generation into Kent to £13m since 2006.

Obviously, any activity in 2008/09 has been in the context of severe economic turbulence. The effects of global recession have been felt in Kent, as they have across the world. After fifteen years of falling or static unemployment, numbers claiming Jobseekers' Allowance in Kent more than doubled in 2008/09, although at 3.3% of the working age population remains below the national average (4%).



The coming year will prove challenging for Kent as it recovers from recession. It will continue to be dependent on changes in the national and international economic climate. KCC will continue to promote Kent's significant structural economic advantages and ensure that the necessary physical, skills and social infrastructure is in place to keep Kent an attractive location in which to live, visit and invest.

4.4 How this has made a difference

Kent Film Office

The Kent Film Office (KFO) has been dedicated in the promotion and development of the creative industries in Kent, which includes the training of young people. The unit has helped local production company Maeve Films obtain funding to set up the *Kent Film Foundation* which aims to give young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to find their way back into education and/or employment through work on their own films. So far the company has hosted a film school for 3 autistic young adults and 3 autistic young offenders and is hosting a further 6 places for young offenders during summer 2009. It is hoped that they will be able to set up a long term film school for young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds, in conjunction with Thanet Works and Thanet College.

Elaine Wickham, Producer at Maeve Films is grateful for the help she has received from KFO. She says "The Kent Film Office is invaluable, not only because they offer production support and advice, but because they're totally committed to film training in Kent. They are dedicated to creating and collaborating on film initiatives that support college and university graduates, as well as young disenfranchised youth, which I think is commendable".

Marlow Innovation Centre

Marlowe Innovation Centre opened in September 2008. It is the first Innovation Centre in the UK to be located on a school campus, at the Marlowe Academy in Ramsgate and was built there as a key part of the regeneration strategy for Thanet.

The Centre provides space for 6 light industrial units and 19 offices and is already nearly full. Tenants are provided with free support, including monthly Innovation and Business Support clinics and banking advice as well as the opportunity to network with fellow tenants. One tenant, Sarah Wallace, the owner of Clinical Litigation Services, has found moving into the Centre to be a real benefit to her business. She says "it's a fantastic interactive place to work, there are all these different businesses in one place, it is very dynamic, and it means that you are forward looking and share experiences".

All tenants agree to some kind of contact with Marlowe Academy students. Sarah mentored a student from the Marlowe Academy who had a particular interest in law. Asked about the connection with the Marlowe, Sarah said "That is something that I feel quite strongly about and I think it is a very positive thing. I think it is good for the school because there are role models here for the school children. The older pupils can see that there are thriving businesses in the Centre, and work is actually quite exciting if you are doing something that you enjoy. I think that it is a great idea to bring business and education together."

Wealden Wheels

Wealden Wheels is a KCC-funded community transport operation run by volunteers to improve rural access to services in the five parishes of Pluckley, Charing, Egerton, Challock and Smarden.

It provides the opportunity for the housebound to get out and socialise, attend medical appointments, or just have a day out. Without Wealden Wheels, they would either have to rely on individuals to transport them or in many cases simply would not leave their homes.

Users of the service find it invaluable and come from all age ranges. A local care home had this to say: "We have been able to book the transport for all our outings a year in advance. The drivers are always very helpful, polite and professional. The tail lift enables us to take residents whose disabilities do not allow them to sit safely in ordinary seats".

Alan Davies, the treasurer of Wealden Wheels is grateful for the part KCC has played in keeping this service running during 2008/09. He says "I think KCC should be properly recognised for the major contribution they have made to Wealden Wheels. Last year, after our LEADER+ funding ended, KCC made a major donation to support our running costs and it was this that kept us going through 08/09".

Section 5: Learning for Everyone

Getting it right from the start

5.1 Why it matters

Providing our youngest children with the very best start in life is crucial. Early years and nursery education has an enormous impact in developing a child's readiness to learn from an early age, along with building essential social skills and good behaviour. With these key skills, a child's appetite for learning is considerably improved.

KCC acknowledges family and education as the most important factors in ensuring that children grow into adults who are able both to look after themselves and to contribute to society as a whole. The council is convinced that education, skills, learning and well-being are key to personal success and fulfilment and to the future prosperity and quality of life in Kent. KCC is determined to improve the quality of education received by every child in every school and setting and to protect and improve the life chances of the most underprivileged and vulnerable children in our community.

5.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- Higher quality early years education across the whole of Kent
- Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results improving faster in Kent than the national rate
- No disruptive behaviour, bullying or vandalism in any of our schools
- Children in need in Kent, particularly the most vulnerable, fully supported to deal with the problems they and their families face
- Adults in Kent given opportunities to improve their numeracy and literacy skills

5.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Early years

Kent recognises that good quality early years provision is crucial in developing a child's receptiveness to learn, building essential social skills and encouraging good behaviour. Since 2005, KCC has sought to increase access to early years settings through doubling the number of maintained nurseries linked to primary schools to 70, creating over 12,000 new childcare places and establishing 72 Children's Centres with a further 30 planned in areas of deprivation.

The Parklife Centre in Herne Bay, the result of a partnership between KCC, Canterbury City Council and The Gap, was opened in January 2009. It features the Poppy Children's Centre for children up to 5 years and the Sparks Youth Centre for 13 to 19 year olds, making it the first in the county to offer services for residents from birth to their late teens.

In September 2008 a new Communication, Language and Literacy Development project was established within the Gravesham Local Children's Strategic Partnership, developing joint working across schools and early years settings through training and exchange visits. This has seen improvements for children in Kent above the national and regional averages for this project.

There was further improvement in Foundation Stage Profile data in 2008. Out of the thirteen aspects of learning that are assessed at the end of the reception year, twelve demonstrated improvement. Kent's performance in the percentage of children achieving the expected level in Foundation Stage was better than nationally in eight out of the

thirteen areas. However, overall this was slightly below the national average, at 46% compared to 49%. Work to improve this further will be undertaken in 2009/10.

Getting results

Kent is committed to ensuring that attainment results for Key Stage 1 and 2 in its schools improve faster than the national average.

This year has shown above average increases in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in Key Stage 1 for reading and writing, with an increase of 2% from 82% to 84% for reading and an increase of 1% from 79% to 80% for writing. This is in contrast to the national rates, which have remained static at 84% and 80% respectively. This has been helped by initiatives such as the 23 reading recovery teachers trained as part of the *Every Child a Reader* programme.

The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in Key Stage 1 for mathematics remained the same at 90%, in line with the national rate. This year KCC piloted the *Numbers Count* project, as part of the *Every Child Counts* programme, which aims to improve achievement in mathematics for 7 year olds. Statistics indicate that children's progress was accelerated by average gains of 14.4 months from 20 one-to-one sessions. KCC will be looking to roll the pilot out across Kent from next year.

“Reading Recovery has raised the profile of reading in the school. People are talking about children's reading all the time at every level”. *Carole, Kent Headteacher*

The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above for *both* English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 tests increased by 2% from 67% to 69%, which is remains slightly below the

national rate of 73%. Work to improve this will be undertaken in 2009/10.

From September 2008, a differentiated programme of support was implemented in target schools. 19 schools were engaged in the *Raising Achievement in Your Schools* project, which provides an enhanced package of adviser support and challenge for schools that in 2006 had been below 65% in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 for four years. Six of these exceeded the government's base line of 65% in at least one subject whilst others improved their performance. 20 schools were engaged in the *Intensifying Support* programme and 57 in the *Ensuring Success* programme. Both programmes showed improved performance, particularly in mathematics. Further differentiated support is planned for 129 schools from September 2009.

Attainment at GCSE level also continues to improve. In 2008, 49.7% of students achieved 5 or more GCSE A* - C grades including English and Maths compared to the national average of 47.6%. The proportion of young people leaving care with five or more good grades at GCSE was 11.4%, which was an improvement on the year before and in line with the national average.

More students in Kent achieved passes at 'A' level or equivalent with 93% receiving 2 or more A -E grades, a 1% increase on last year. The quality of performance by students increased to 206 average point score per 'A' level entry, up from 202.7 the previous year.

Tackling bullying

Kent Safe Schools has developed, in partnership with the Kent Anti-Bullying Strategy Group, a ground breaking *Anti-Bullying Accreditation Scheme* which is being rolled out across Kent. Currently over 130 schools have or are working towards anti-bullying accreditation, which is set to increase as the scheme expands.

An on-line survey about bullying took place with more than 8,000 children and young people in November 2008. Results from this showed that 85% of pupils felt that their school were good at dealing with bullying (up from 77% in 2007) and only 12% said that they were being bullied, a significant reduction from 25% in 2007.

Supporting families

KCC and its partners continue to focus on preventative strategies, making sure help is available at the earliest possible opportunity to respond to families in need and those who are vulnerable.

Growth in the number of *Children's Centres* in 2008/09 to 72 has enabled improved local access to services and a range of support for families of children from 0 to age 5.

KCC has expended to 240 the number of *Family Liaison Officers* (FLOs) and *Parent Support Advisers* (PSAs) working to support parents and enhance relationships and communication between parents and schools. This has led to an increase in the number of families accessing the most appropriate support from agencies and engaging with schools and with their children's learning. Over 12,500 parents accessed advice through their FLO or PSA this year.

"Thank you for the wonderful services you give. I had two lovely ladies come to visit me regarding my son who has Aspergers and ADHD which has created behavioural problems. 'X' has been absolutely fantastic, she has guided me and encourages me to have the confidence to manage my son's behaviour and that I can do it." *Parent*

In addition, following consultation with parents, KCC is running a pilot programme in Dover, Gravesham and Maidstone,

appointing 3 PSAs to work with families of excluded children, families of those at risk of exclusion and families with children out of school. These PSAs are currently working with over 30 families.

This year has seen increased participation in family learning and parenting programmes, Kent Adult Education Service has had just under 7,000 learners engaged on family programmes this year, with another 4,000 engaged through family programmes with *Kent Children's University* and *Children's University in Schools*. As a result, parents have reported increased confidence in their own parenting abilities and improved relationships with their children.

Supporting vulnerable groups

Protecting children and keeping families together is KCC's overriding priority. It continues to take robust action with partners and through the *Kent Children's Safeguarding Board* to protect children and develop a wide range of preventative services, ensuring children are supported in their families and the need to remove children becomes a rarity.

The Safeguarding Board continues to work hard to achieve good outcomes for children. The Child Death Review Panel has been put into place and other recent achievements include promoting safe recruitment within the third sector and the broadening of the Kent E-safety strategy to include awareness-raising for parents and carers.

The *Kent Pledge* articulates KCC's commitment to children and young people who become looked after by KCC to ensure that they enjoy their life and achieve their potential, taking good memories of their time in care into the future. During 2008 KCC developed the framework for delivering effective corporate parenting in Kent, including the corporate parenting forum and the children in care council. The Kent Freedom Pass was also extended to KCC care leavers up to 21 years of age.

As part of the national *Aiming High for Disabled Children* programme, KCC together with Eastern and Coastal Kent and West Kent PCTs, is developing a range of new services to give children with disabilities the opportunity to experience enjoyable and valuable activities away from their parents and carers and give parents the chance for a break from caring. An example is an overnight activity weekend held at the Bewl/Swattenden centre, which provided disabled youngsters with their first night's stay away from home. As well as activities such as sailing and football the children were responsible for making their own beds to assist them in developing independent living skills.

Windchimes, a new resource centre for disabled children from East Kent was opened in July 2008. Children with the most complex needs can stay there for up to seven nights, providing parents with respite and children the opportunity to undertake a range of fun activities and socialise with other young people.

Adult skills and learning

There are numerous adult learning opportunities offered throughout Kent. The *Skills Plus* initiative is offered free to adults wanting to improve their numeracy and literacy and is available through the Kent Adult Education Service. Courses are run at dedicated Skills Plus centres across Kent mornings, afternoons and evenings so studies can be fitted around family life and other commitments. As at July 2008, 2474 learners had enrolled on Skills Plus courses. In addition, 266 adults with learning difficulties or disabilities were helped last year to develop the skills they need to become more independent in their daily lives and active members of the community through the *Independent Living Skills* programme.

5.4 How this has made a difference

Every Child a Reader

Every Child a Reader is an initiative which aims to tackle the literacy difficulties that blight many children's lives, particularly those of children living in poverty. It part funds the salary and training of highly-skilled Reading Recovery teachers in targeted schools, to provide intensive help to children most in need. Of the 386 lowest attaining children in Kent who received Reading Recovery programmes during the academic year 2008/09, 300 (78%) successfully caught up with peers and in line with national averages. The majority of the remaining children made at least twice the expected rate of progress.

Pauline, a Kent Reading Recovery Teacher, says: "I've been a successful teacher for 35 years and I didn't know how to teach reading until I did Reading Recovery. To see

these children who were always left behind catching up with their peers and going on to make the same progress is fantastic.”

Anti-Bullying Accreditation Scheme

Kent Safe Schools launched a pilot project two years ago to provide a county wide accreditation for schools in anti-bullying work. The scheme is designed to ensure that all aspects of anti-bullying work, including preventative work and awareness-raising for the whole school community, are at the same high standard. The work is supported by Kent Safe Schools project officers, who provide training in peer mentoring, mediation and restorative approaches. The anti-bullying co-ordinators work with school leaders to ensure that the impact is strategic and impacts at all levels throughout the school.

One school in Dover took part during 2008/09. The school was formed through a merger between two schools and the Year 6 pupils were having difficulty mixing. Kent Safe Schools worked with the Year 6 teachers and pupils throughout the academic year, including intensive work with the whole school during Anti-Bullying week, to great success. Kate Winspear, KCC anti-bullying co-ordinator says “The final test for me was the last week of term. I was invited in to the school to say goodbye to the Year 6 pupils. I watched as they rehearsed their play, full of good fun and enjoyment, all working together. One child, who had won the poster competition, told me that ‘*Year 6 had just got better and better*’”

Family Support

The *Children and Families Project (CAFE)* was set-up in 2006 as a 6 month pilot project to develop a service to support the children and families of offenders. Following its success, largely to the involvement of a voluntary sector partner with experience of working with excluded families on a London housing estate, the project was continued with funding from KCC and Canterbury Community Safety Partnership and expanded to other areas. Positive outcomes from the project include stable accommodation, parental employment and enhanced family relationships and parenting skills.

The project has helped young women such as BW develop a stable family relationship. BW was referred by her partner’s Probation Officer when she had a 2 year old child and was expecting another shortly. She was living in unsuitable accommodation and facing eviction. Her partner had an older son with ADHT who lived with them and they had bad finance and debt problems. The CAFE project worker helped them to negotiate with their debtors to resolve these problems. She also helped them to liaise with the older boy’s school to recognise his special needs. With CAFÉ’s support, the family moved into more suitable and stable accommodation and BW started as a volunteer with a young families group last summer. Her partner’s elder son is more settled at school with considerable improvement in his attitude and behaviour. BW believes that the CAFE support has “kept them together and made them stronger as a family”.

Section 6: Preparing for Employment

Making education relevant to all our young people

6.1 Why it matters

Although Kent's overall GCSE and 'A' level results are significantly above the national average and the county is a national leader in improving secondary education, too many students leave school with insufficient careers advice to fulfil their potential or make the right choices for entry into employment, post-16 education or university. Too many students drop out because they make ill-informed choices and too many businesses say there is a significant skills deficit in the young people they employ. Vocational courses that are tailor made to the needs of industry, matching skills to market requirements, and the provision of first-class careers guidance for young people are pivotal to KCC's vision.

All school and college leavers should display the hallmarks of employability – knowledge, discipline, motivation, reliability and respect.

6.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- More young people gaining relevant vocational skills and using these to gain employment
- All young people provided with high quality impartial careers advice to help them make the right career choices
- Fewer young people becoming NEET
- More young people being awarded apprenticeships through the Kent Success programme and going on to permanent employment

6.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Vocational learning

Kent's *14-24 Innovation Unit* enjoyed great success in 2008/09 engaging with young people through its range of skills and training programmes, including vocational Master Classes in partnership with organisations such as the Royal Ballet and the Fifteen Foundation.

The number of young people engaged in the 14-16 vocational programme continues to increase. In September 2008 over 5,000 learners opted to join a vocational course, and most courses are over-subscribed. Of those attending a vocational course during 2008/09, 98% felt that it was having a positive effect on their lives.

NEETs

KCC runs a number of programmes aimed at young people who are, or are in danger of becoming, NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). From April 2008, KCC has commissioned the delivery of Connexions Services to the Connexions Partnership Kent & Medway.

The *Skill Force* programme provides innovative courses for young people aged 14-16 who feel disengaged and uninspired by the traditional school curriculum. The Institute of Education at the University of London has evaluated Skill Force as providing "a unique service to schools (and is) successful in meeting the needs of many disaffected students, improving their motivation and social skills". In September 2008, 400 young people enrolled on Skill Force. Also in September pilot courses for post-16 students

started. The *Skill Force Leadership Award* is designed to engage Year 12 students who traditionally have been in danger of becoming NEET. The pilot has been highly successful and will be expanded into a full programme from September 2009.

KCC ran two *Brand You Experience* sessions during 2008/09, in Dover and Maidstone. This five-day 'out of school' programme is aimed at supporting vulnerable students who are in danger of becoming NEET. It is designed to raise aspirations, provide direction, raise confidence, increase motivation, and introduce the skills of success. 84% of those that attended these sessions stated that they had found them "potentially life changing" and more are planned for 2009/10.

"I didn't realise until now that anything is possible", *Brand You Experience Participant*

The Kent Community Programme (KCP) is a 3-month programme for those who are already NEET, which combines community-based voluntary work with learning life and employability skills. At

the end of March 2009, KCP had worked with 116 young people (all previously NEET) across Kent, undertaking projects such as renovating Murston Community Centre gardens and assisting in the build of a barn in Dover. Positive routes of progression for the young people are a priority for the KCP project teams. So far, 78% of the young people involved have been guided and supported into either further education, employment or an extended work placement.

Kent has taken a strategic approach to preparing groups of particularly vulnerable young people for post 16 pathways. The NEET County Strategy Group has representation from the Youth Offending Service, Alternative Curriculum, Looked After Children, Unaccompanied Minors and Children's Social Services. In 2008/09 the percentage of those aged 16-19 who were NEET and were disabled or had a learning disability was 8.2%, reduced from 10.3% in 2006. In 2008-9 the percentage of young offenders in employment, education and training was 69.8%.

Overall, the percentage of those aged 16-18 in Kent who are NEET decreased from 5.2% to 4.7% in 2008/09, significantly ahead of the national average of 6.7%.

Careers guidance

High quality impartial careers advice and guidance is vital for school children to ensure that they make the career choices that suit them. Providing this information is a priority for KCC. During 2008/09, KCC has worked with leading careers advice teachers to develop a Kent Careers Education Curriculum Framework, due to start in schools in September 2009 and funded the development of nine lead teachers to focus on Careers, Education and Guidance developments, who were appointed in January 2009.

Fostering good relationships between schools and local businesses is a key way of raising students' awareness of job opportunities and helping them to understand what type of career they would be interested in pursuing. Through *Kent Works*, KCC arranged work-related learning activity for over 7,000 young people across Kent in the 2007/8 academic year. This included interview days, career awareness work, and preparation for work experience and enterprise.

Apprenticeships

The *Kent Success* apprenticeship programme has enjoyed another successful year. The programme is now a formal employment route of entry into KCC. It is regarded as an integral element of KCC's wider workforce development strategy and KCC recruitment procedures have been re-designed to make it easier to recruit apprentices into permanent posts, in line with KCC's wider strategic workforce goals of employing more young people.

"After spending 7 months on Job Seekers Allowance, I honestly believe completing a Kent Success Apprenticeship was the best life choice I've made to date."
Alex Ellis, former Kent Success apprentice

As at March 2009, 228 apprentices had been taken on by KCC. Of those that have completed the programme, around 70% have remained permanently employed by KCC, 20% have found employment with other

private or public sector organisations and the remainder are being supported to ensure that they move forward positively into employment and further training opportunities.

In 2009/10, priority focus will be given to increasing the establishment of apprenticeship schemes across the wider Kent public sector and work is already underway with the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative and the contractor for the Turner Contemporary project in Thanet to provide apprenticeship placements.

6.4 How this has made a difference

Swale Skills Centre

The Swale Skills Centre opened in September 2008 and is funded by KCC, the Kent and Medway Learning Skills Council and Department for Communities and Local Government.

This unique state-of-the-art Vocational Centre is designed to deliver training in construction, engineering and green sustainable technologies to all those 14 years and above. The Centre has been purposely positioned on the Eurolink Business Park to be in the heart of industry.

120 students from schools across Swale attend the skills centre one day a week as part of their GCSE option or vocational training. The number of young people taking part in a construction or engineering course there is expected to double in September 2009. As well as school age students, the centre also caters for post-16 studies and employers use the facilities to train their apprentices.

Master Classes

In 2008 Kent Works joined with Brand You to facilitate a series of Master Class conferences across Kent, aimed towards year 10 and 11 students, nearing the end of compulsory education. These events are designed to introduce young people to key employability skills ranging from teamwork to business & customer awareness. They also ran Master Class Taster days aimed at year 9 pupils, which were industry specific sessions run by enthusiastic professionals, covering sectors such as engineering, media and retail.

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Feedback from young people and teachers attending these events has been very positive. One teacher said ““They enjoyed the environment and conference facilities, it was out of their comfort zone, but raised their aspirations”. Student feedback included: “I think this could really help someone who is not sure what they want in life” and “Today has inspired me”.

Kent Success

Kent Success is KCC’s internal apprenticeship programme, which enables young people aged 16 to 19 to achieve an accredited qualification in a supported work placement across a wide range of vocational skill areas. In addition, the programme provides young people with an extensive range of life and employability skills.

Chris Mitchell found out about Kent Success at his local job centre. “I got fairly average results at school, so I was finding it hard to get into work and to get into the work mode. I had a few part time jobs, like working in the local chip shop. Then at the job centre I saw the KEY training services leaflet and I thought the scheme sounded quite good.”

Chris is now in a finance assistant job role at KCC, having realised during his apprenticeship that finance was the area he was interested in. Summing up his experience as an apprentice Chris says, “it was a good stepping platform, I made some friends through it, and it was a good move forward.”

DRAFT

Section 7: Enjoying Life **Kent, a great place to live and work**

7.1 Why it matters

How we spend our leisure time is crucial to enjoying life in Kent. Kent has a unique heritage, beautiful countryside and great choice of leisure activities. Opportunities are all around us and there is a huge variety to suit all interests.

KCC must ensure that residents and visitors can discover what this county has to offer and can participate in enjoying life in Kent.

7.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- Kent established as a centre for the arts
- Continued growth in local sport across Kent
- A modern library service fit for the 21st century
- More young people engaged in cultural activities across Kent
- A network of volunteers to support sport and cultural events across the county

7.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Culture

KCC has worked hard to support arts and culture across Kent in 2008/09. The first Kent Cultural Strategy Summit was held in February 2009 and was attended by over 130 partners from across the county. The event helped to establish agreement on the value of culture and strengthened Kent's position and profile as a developer of the arts. Following the summit, a Kent Cultural Strategy is being developed, to be launched in early 2010. This will align with the KCC regeneration agenda, in terms of recognising culture as a driver or contributor to regeneration and community cohesion.

KCC supported several nationally-recognised arts events held in Kent during 2008/09, including the *Folkestone Triennial* and *Whitstable Biennial*. It also helped to secure £40,000 of investment for the *Light Up Open Up* event held in Dover to launch the Cultural Olympiad in the South East.

Opportunities have been created for more young people to get involved in theatre activity across Kent. The *Kent Youth Theatre Festival* was successfully staged for the first time in March 2009, based on extensive prior consultation of organisations in Kent and wider research. The resulting energy and consensus has enabled the start-up of new initiatives to drive forward youth theatre development.

Considerable progress has been made in 2008/09 in preparation for the completion of the *Turner Contemporary* Gallery in Margate by 2010. Kent-based contractor Durnells were appointed in October 2008 to build the gallery and work at the site began in November 2008. The gallery building programme has made noted improvements to the whole of the eastern seafront area of Margate, such as the de-dualling of Fort Hill, completed in Autumn 2008.

The Turner Contemporary Project Space occupied the former Marks and Spencer building on Margate High Street from February 2008, helping to build audience capacity

and generate further interest in the project. A varied artistic programme will continue in the period prior to the gallery opening.

Sport & Leisure

Local sport across KCC has been helped to grow through practical help and support, including administering grants and helping organisations to secure funding. During 2008/09 KCC's Sport, Leisure and Olympics Service levered over £4 of external funding for every £1 spent on the service.

KCC has continued to support sports clubs in gaining nationally recognised accreditation through the *Clubmark programme*. KCC's Sport, Leisure & Olympics Service became registered in summer 2008 to run a local Clubmark licence scheme with district councils, in order to support clubs from minority sports through the

"Clubmark identifies the club as a flagship within our community and for parents to see that we are safe and accessible" *Sheppey Rugby Club*

accreditation process. So far, 150 sports clubs across Kent have received Clubmark accreditation.

We have worked with district councils during 2008/09 to establish 10 local

Community Sports Networks with voluntary sector sport representation, so that the local voice of sport can feed into local plans, alongside other partners. This is below the target of 13, due to a lack of interest in some parts of Kent and reduced emphasis from Sport England, but more work will be done to further this in 2009/10.

Kent's work to secure a legacy from the Olympic and Paralympic Games was nationally recognised in 2008 and awarded Beacon Status. Through the *Kent Free Access to National-level Sportspeople* scheme, during the last 3 years over 700 national level sportspeople have had access to free sports facilities across the county as well as discounts on equipment, clothing and physiotherapy services. In 2008/09, 20 top performers, both disabled and non-disabled, have been directly supported by KCC and a further 5 performers have been supported through P & O Funding.

This is starting to show real results for Kent sportspeople, including bronze and silver medals in Rhythmic Gymnastics at the Youth Olympic Festival in January 2009, 6 swimming gold medals in the DSE Junior Nationals 2009 and a top 10 world table tennis champion who participated in the Beijing Paralympics Games in 2008.

As part of KCC's *Kent Pledge* to children and young people who become looked after by KCC, arrangements have been established for free access to certain leisure facilities in 5 districts in Kent: Ashford, Dover, Maidstone, Thanet and Tonbridge and Malling.

Kent's *Library Services* enjoyed another good year. Overall issues are up 2.8% on 2007/08 and visitors to libraries have increased by 9%.

KCC has sought to improve the user experience through its *Library Modernisation* programme, with libraries in Ramsgate, Tenterden, Hadlow, East Peckham and Marling Cross undergoing modernisation during 2008/09. The programme seeks to find new ways of working, co-locating with other partners to deliver an improved, seamless service to customers, such as locating libraries in the new Thanet and Tenterden Gateways and. This has helped the service reach many more customers, with issues at

the newly-refurbished Ramsgate and East Peckham libraries increasing by 67% and 11% respectively compared to 2008.

The number of young people involved in activities and borrowing books has increased at modernised libraries. On average children's fiction issues at these libraries have increased by 4.09% and children's non-fiction by 4.6% compared with 2007/8.

"Love the look and feel of the new library.
Peaceful and welcoming."

"Lovely, bright, modern. Loads of new books"

Customers at Hadlow Library

In Kent, the National Year of Reading was launched in April 2008 under the banner, "Kent: a Great Place to Read". It has acted as a catalyst for numerous projects and initiatives such as the *Doorstep Library* in Sheerness, where volunteers from Seashells Children's Centre read stories to children in streets and in their homes.

Volunteering

KCC has sought to build a strong partnership with statutory, voluntary and business organisations to support volunteering across Kent. The *Kent Voluntary Advisory Group* is able to identify good practice as well as barriers to volunteer engagement and seek ways to work together to increase involvement. For example, Kent Police worked with Kent Volunteers to develop opportunities for volunteers across their services. Now some 330 are engaged, with a sizeable waiting list.

KCC launched the *Kent eVents Team* (KET) project in May 2008, a network of people willing to volunteer for one-off sport, leisure and cultural events. This has been developed jointly with Kent's volunteering networks. At the end of March 2009 just under 500 people had registered with KET as volunteers and 29 sports events had been supported. We will look to build on this next year to ensure we meet our intended target of 2,500 ahead of the 2012 Games.

Ashford Volunteers are located in the Tenterden Gateway, and have seen a significant upturn in the number of people applying for volunteering projects since its opening.

KCC employee volunteering continues to grow. 35% of KCC staff have volunteered with many more using the encouragement we provide to volunteer in their own time. Benefits include personal and team development and evidence of making a difference to projects and the community. One example was the work conducted by Kent Highway Services Staff from Gravesend, who took part in volunteering days at the Rare Breeds Centre near Woodchurch. The Centre is run by the Canterbury Oast Trust, which changes the lives of people with learning and physical disabilities, creating opportunities for those who would not be able to look after themselves outside a safe and supportive environment.

7.4 How this has made a difference

Supporting future Olympians

KCC is working in partnership with a number of other organisations to support Kent sportsmen and women to compete at a national level in the run up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This year KCC has provided enhanced support to 20 of the county's top performers. These sportsmen and women were selected across a range of sports, and include disabled and non disabled performers. The ambitions of all of the performers include selection for GB at future Olympic and Paralympic Games and International events.

One beneficiary is Alek Makucewicz a 17yr old international fencer from Dartford. KCC funding has enabled Alek to work closely with a sports scientist at the University of Greenwich, a nutritionist and a sports psychologist. Through FANs Alek has made regular use of his local Sports Centre to train. Alek's coach recently contacted KCC to say: "all this support over the last few months has made a significant improvement in Alek as a fencer, he is fitter and a lot more confident, and this is reflected in a significant improvement in his results over recent months. Once again thank you for all your help and support".

Kent Youth Theatre Festival

The first Kent Youth Theatre Festival was launched on 22nd March 2009 and involved over 200 young theatre practitioners, facilitators, youth theatre leaders and supporters. The young people involved were aged between 11 -18 years of age, from diverse backgrounds and with varied levels of experience in theatre. 12 theatre groups attended, 2 of which were inclusive groups for young people with disabilities.

All young people participated in a range of workshops that would not usually be available to them including special effects make-up, musical theatre, mask theatre, physical theatre and acting for screen. They also had the opportunity to perform in front of their peers, invited VIPs and professionals giving them new experiences in terms of performance.

Feedback from both the young people and the organisations that took part was positive. One youth theatre leader said: "This was such a wonderful opportunity for similar minded people to get together and share our visions; the young people behaved impeccably and had such a good time, encouraging and congratulating each other without any competitiveness. It just shows the power of the arts on young people."

Hadlow Library

Hadlow Library is one of the latest KCC Libraries to undergo refurbishment as part of the Library Modernisation programme and the transformed building opened in April 2008. As Hadlow is set in a rural location, it has a fairly restricted customer base and visitor numbers had been in decline. Since the modernisation, visits are up around 13%, adult issues 13% and children's issues 52%.

As well as transforming the building, KCC has sort to change the way in which the library is used by the local community, including setting up a new reading group, arranging author visits and allowing the library to be used out of hours by local community groups. Caroline Wetten, one of Hadlow library's regular users, said "I think the modernisation is a good idea. People tend to view libraries as stuffy places, but it is now light and airy, and is easy to walk around. It helps that the staff are always friendly too, even though they haven't changed. There are new things going on that you wouldn't see in older libraries. I use the computers at the library now as well as the books."

Section 8: Keeping Kent Moving

Tackling congestion

8.1 Why it matters

Traffic congestion is the bane of everyone's life, whether they travel by car, bus or train. It causes frustration and pollution in equal measures, slows down economic development and hampers efforts to bring inward investment into Kent.

Further investment is needed for Kent roads and the council will continue to press the Government to give Kent its fair share of funding for new roads and improvements. KCC will also press for the building of a third lower Thames crossing and to reduce the impact on Kent of *Operation Stack*.

8.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- High quality public transport available for all
- Better journey times and less congestion around Kent's major towns
- Greater public satisfaction with Kent's roads and pavements

8.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Improving public transport

KCC has an excellent record of working with bus providers to improve public transport in Kent. This is reflected by year on year increases in the number of people using Kent bus services. In 2008/09 there were 55.2 million passenger journeys, a 6.8% increase over the year before.

The Ashford *Quality Bus Partnership* was launched in February 2009. This included the introduction of 10 brand new low floor easy access buses, which are now running on Ashford's A line route. The buses were funded through a KCC *Kickstart* grant, with Stagecoach providing additional funding and marketing to increase patronage. Around two thirds of the total bus fleet in Kent are now easy access, low floor entry.

KCC provides financial support to around 200 bus services and seven *Kent Karriers*. These provide 'dial-a-ride' accessible services to disabled people and those living more than 500m from an existing bus route. A successful re-tendering of around 25% of all bus services supported by KCC has been completed within budget, ensuring services can be sustained during 2009.

KCC is providing additional funding to the *Kent and Medway Concessionary Travel Scheme* for over 60s. This has enabled the scheme's start time to be returned to 9.00am and for disabled companion passes to be valid across Kent.

During 2008/09 the *Kent Freedom Pass* was rolled-out to schools beyond the original pilot areas of Canterbury, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge. In June 2008 it was extended to Maidstone, Malling, Dover and Shepway and in January 2009 to schools in Swale and Thanet. The pass will be offered Kent-wide from June 2009.

The scheme has proved very popular and 12,800 passes had been issued by end March 2009.

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As well as the obvious benefits for young people, the scheme has had a positive effect on congestion, with KCC surveys indicating a 2-6% reduction in journey times near schools with a high take up of passes and a big shift from car users shortly after the introduction of the Pass.

On the rail front, lobbying of Eurostar by KCC and others was successful in getting services between Ashford and Brussels restored. A new timetable for domestic passengers comes into operation in December 2009 which will improve connections between Kent and London with more trains running from most towns in Kent. Overall, Southeastern will be operating 200 more services from mid-December – a 5% increase in capacity.

Reducing congestion

Through the *Traffic Management Centre*, KCC has enabled improvements in the management of traffic to reduce congestion in Maidstone. Average peak journey times on key routes in Maidstone have reduced and the situation is being monitored.

A series of health checks at key locations in the network were carried out throughout 2008/09. These have resulted in a programme of over 50 “quick win” improvements ranging from adjusting traffic signal timings to renewing white lines, which have helped to improve traffic flows.

During 2008/09, Kent Police agreed to devolve some powers to ‘congestion busting’ teams, known as *Kent Traffic Officers (KTOs)*, who will be able to deal with traffic issues such as obstruction and will have powers to move vehicles on where appropriate. Extensive training has taken place throughout the year and all those participating have passed the required examination in order to receive the delegated powers. The KTO scheme is due to be officially launched in June 2009, once it has received approval from Kent Police.

Improving roads

This year Kent Highways Services (KHS) has made improvements to the way in which it repairs roads and pavements across the county.

KHS is providing twice as many road patching crews as in April 2008 and this will be sustained throughout 2009/10.

Extra funding of approximately 35% has been provided to enable a significant increase in carriageway surfacing schemes, with nearly 1,000,000 m² of road intended to be resurfaced in 2009.

“I would like to thank Kent Highways for how fast they responded to a request for service. Within 30 minutes of the problem being reported to the police, Kent Highways came out and fixed the problem. I was so impressed with how polite the engineer was and how quickly Kent Highways sorted this problem out to stop any danger.” Mrs A, Margate

The cold weather in early 2009 caused havoc on Kent’s roads, with frost creating major damage and potholes. To cope with this KHS provided additional crews for repair, peaking at 70 at the end of February 2009. During this cold spell around 3,000 potholes a week were being repaired. In the period January to March 2009 over 12,000 potholes were repaired.

These improvements are having a positive impact on our customers. Net satisfaction of residents with the condition of roads in Kent has steadily increased from 5% in 2006/07 to 19% in 2007/08 and 29% in 2008/09.

This is a significant improvement and compares very favourably with national surveys by Ipsos-Mori, which show net satisfaction with road maintenance remaining static at around 6% since 2006/07. KCC will look to build on this momentum into 2009/10 and beyond.

Closer links are now in place with all Parish/Town Councils and KCC Members, who all have a designated named Liaison Officer. Good relationships are being built and KHS is engaging positively with local communities.

8.4 How this has made a difference

Kent Freedom Pass

The Kent Freedom Pass (KFP) arose out of the views expressed by the Kent Youth County Council (KYCC) that young people needed better access to buses. The KFP was introduced as a pilot in 3 areas and following its success is now being rolled-out across the county.

Achieved through a partnership between KCC, Kent's bus operators and Kent schools, the KFP allows young people in academic years 7–11 to travel free at the point of use, on any public bus in Kent, at any time of the day, week or year, for a one-off annual fee of just £50. Due to the KFP young people across Kent now have the independence to travel to and from school or evening and weekend activities, as well as throughout the school holidays.

KCC undertook a questionnaire survey of young people in May 2008 in conjunction with KYCC. Responses demonstrate the range of benefits the project brings. These included:

"It has helped me to get to school early and I have been able to see my friends at weekends" *Katrina Rootes, Angley School*

"It gives me freedom to have a social life beyond school" *Thomas Ashby, Herne Bay High*

"I have used it to get to school and I have started to use it to help to get to my part time job" *Stuart Smitherman, Herne Bay High*

Keeping Kent Moving through the Snow

The 20 October marked the beginning of winter for Kent Highway Services. From that date the winter service plans came into effect and KHS were ready to work to ensure that Kent's roads were kept safe during the winter months.

The planning that had taken place enabled the 'ice-busters' to respond quickly and efficiently when the snow arrived in early 2009. More than 20,000 tonnes of salt had been ordered and was stored throughout Kent in preparation for the severe weather.

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The 53 salting crews worked throughout the nights to keep the main roads safe and passable, covering about a third of the county's road network, over 1500 miles.

Residents across Kent got in touch with KHS to express their thanks at the way in which the roads were kept clear during the winter. These included Mr E from Meopham who said: "Thank you for your excellent response to my request to grit our road. I phoned your service desk reporting that our road was like a skating rink. Within 2 hours our road and the road leading to us had been gritted. I was very impressed with this level of service, especially in the very inclement weather we have experienced over the past week".

Traffic Management Centre

The Traffic Management Centre (TMC) was designed and built to enable Kent Highway Services (KHS) to more effectively manage the road network within the Maidstone area. The successful development and use of systems such as Automatic Number Plate Recognition, closed circuit television cameras, variable message signs, vehicle detectors and a KHS database called 'Cutlas' enable the TMC operators to provide 'hands-on' management of Maidstone's traffic systems.

This has enabled the TMC to ensure that when large-scale public events are held in Maidstone, such as the Radio 1 "Big Weekend" in July 2008, minimal disruption is caused to traffic and roads. The TMC has had a positive effect on congestion and journey times in and around Maidstone. A 5.6% reduction in travel time into Maidstone was recorded from Summer 2008 through to December 2008.

Section 9: Environmental Excellence & High Quality Homes

Future generations will judge us by the quality of the environment they inherit

9.1 Why it matters

At the heart of KCC's approach will be a renewed pledge to protect and enhance the beauty and diversity of our countryside. The housing growth agenda enforced by central government presents enormous challenges for Kent. KCC's challenge is to manage this growth sensitively so that it results in the construction of quality housing with the minimum environmental impact. KCC will continue to ensure that new and existing public buildings (such as schools and offices) are as environmentally friendly as possible.

9.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- A clean and protected natural Kent
- All people in Kent able to access and enjoy the Kent countryside
- Sustainable new housing growth across the county
- Long-term empty properties brought back into use across Kent

9.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Enjoying the environment

The *Kent Countryside Access Improvement Plan* sets out a clear strategy to protect, manage, enhance and promote access to Kent's countryside and won the "most innovative and enterprising improvement plan" in the country award in March 09.

"Thank you for getting the bridleway sorted out. For the first time in years I am able to enjoy hacking out without worrying about having to turn back because of badly hung gates. Because of my disability, I am unable to mount if I have to get off to open gates and it was bliss to go round Dry Hill the other day and really enjoy the ride"
H Owen – Crippenden

The Plan includes new design standards to improve the quality of the furniture on the *Public Rights Of Way* network (gates, stiles, bridges etc). The standards were recognised in "Country Walking Magazine" as leading the way nationally in improving access to the countryside.

In 2008/09 15 routes to schools were substantially improved and are now providing a facility for *walking buses* of school children to use, relieving traffic congestion at peak times in those areas.

A new Countryside Education Pack was launched in February 2009 and distributed to all primary schools in Kent. The pack gives teachers lesson and activity ideas tied into the National Curriculum for junior school children. They cover topics like travel to school, the Countryside Code, public rights of way, and who looks after them.

This year, KCC has also worked hard to improve the popular Country Parks, and new play areas were installed at four sites which all received very positive customer feedback.

KCC has sought to protect and enhance Kent's valuable man-made heritage and in 2008 the *Historic Fortifications Project*, supported by Interreg funding, was completed. In the last four years this has helped deliver £2.5m for conservation and promotion

projects including accessible trails, interpretation panels, audio-visual displays and educational projects.

Housing

Housing growth in Kent must be sustainable, with the right level of infrastructure in place to support it. Through the Kent Partnership, KCC is involved in the development of a new *Kent Housing Strategy*, which is reviewing evidence on housing need and mix in terms of type, size and tenure and how planning policies might be deployed to address imbalances in the type and size of housing accommodation.

KCC is committed to ensuring that where feasible new housing development is carried out on previously developed land. Housing completion rates and the contribution of previously developed land to this remained high until early 2008. However the severe downturn in the housing market associated with the credit crunch is affecting both the level of new development and its composition in the short term.

With regards to existing property, the *No Use Empty Initiative* continued to enjoy success during 2008/09, with 728 long-term empty properties brought back into use in East Kent, exceeding its target figure of 511 properties by around 40%. Following success of the Initiative in East Kent, it was rolled-out across the rest of the Kent districts in Spring 2008.

A key achievement was the enforced sale of 77 Eastern Esplanade, Cliftonville, Margate which had been in disrepair for some 20 years. Town & Country Housing Group worked with No Use Empty and Thanet District Council to bring the property back into use as affordable housing, with the first unit becoming occupied in January 2009.

9.4 How this has made a difference

Faversham Walks

2008 saw the launch of a ground-breaking LEADER+ funded project to develop Faversham as a 'centre of excellence' for walking.

KCC and the Faversham Enterprise Partnership established a new partnership with Swale Borough Council, the Faversham Area Tourism Association, a consortium of local businesses, including Shepherd Neame Brewery, and local volunteer groups.

Together they developed and promoted four new circular walks, supported by a voucher scheme offering visitors discounts at many local businesses. Significant investment was made in improving Faversham's public rights of way network.

Laurence Young, Faversham Enterprise Partnership Manager says: "The Faversham project has made a tangible, positive difference to the local area. Businesses such as eateries and B&Bs are reporting increasing numbers of walkers using them, good news for the local economy. Local people have also been using the routes for leisure, health and education benefits".

Linda Harrison the leader of the walk group in Faversham regularly uses sections of the Faversham Walking Project routes. She says: "Many of my walkers have completed the

walks and are full of praise for their excellent presentation. I know that the project has inspired people to make more of their surroundings, and to benefit their health by walking on a more regular basis, and I feel that it has been tremendously valuable in this respect."

The Shorne Archaeology Project

The Shorne Archaeology Project began as part of a Heritage Lottery Fund HLF funded Project in 2006, to identify, investigate, interpret and conserve some of the many different archaeological sites within Shorne Woods Country Park, focussing in particular on the remains of Randall Manor. Starting as a one week community dig, for the last two summers this has been extended to a three week excavation, with events tied into the nationwide Festival of Archaeology.

The project specifically set out to engage local communities and in 2008 involved hundreds of people from a wide age range, including local primary schools, archaeology clubs, brownie groups and a school for children with special needs. The open nature of the site enables people to get up close to and be inspired by their local heritage. Feedback from people who took part has been very positive. Comments included: "Thank you for the open day on Sunday which my children greatly enjoyed, my 6 year old daughter has now decided that she's going to dig up bones and find treasure when she's a grown up!" and "the archaeology weekend was brilliant, many thanks to whoever organised it".

No Use Empty Initiative

The No Use Empty Initiative is a partnership between KCC and district councils, which aims to improve the physical urban environment in Kent by bringing empty properties back into use as quality housing accommodation.

This year the Initiative has supported the renovation of a Victorian warehouse situated in Dover Town Centre, which had been derelict for 10 years. The Initiative provided an interest-free loan to meet the cost of turning the building into 8 residential units, which were due to be marketed in June 2009. Owner of the property, Philip Bigio, said: "The No Use Empty Initiative has been a tremendous support in the re-development of the building. We have been able to move quickly, carry out the renovations in under a year, and the net result is a cluster of new apartments in a prime location in the centre of town."

Section 10: Improved Health, Care & Well-Being: Staying Healthy **An essential part of life is staying healthy**

10.1 Why it matters

Good health matters to all of us. Obesity, teenage pregnancy and smoking can all result in poor health and a lower quality of life. Kent County Council has a responsibility to give people support to make 'healthy lifestyle' decisions.

10.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- More adults and young people taking part in regular physical activity
- All Kent schools achieving Healthy Schools status
- Young people in Kent supported to make healthy lifestyle decisions
- Reduction in health inequalities between the best and worst wards in Kent

10.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Keeping Fit

The *Kent Healthy Weight Strategy* promotes the key messages of more physical activity in everyday life and healthy travel through walking and cycling.

Cycling and walking to school is being actively encouraged with enthusiastic take up by pupils. There was a 1% shift to sustainable modes of travel to school in 2008/9 (against 2006/07 school census base data). In addition, as of March 09 114,000 school-run journeys had been saved through walk to school initiatives. In 2008/09 The Sustrans *Bike It* project in Ashord, part funded by Kent Highway Services, saw a 7.8% increase in the number of children who cycle to school every day and a 14.6% decrease in the number of children who never cycle to school.

Naturally Active and *Walking for Health* programmes are delivering hundreds of country walks within Kent's country parks. *Naturally Active* has attracted well over 400 people in Dartford and Gravesham.

There are now 30 *Activmobs* across Kent, extending the fitness of people through a variety of different activities ranging from dancing to gardening and even dog training.

The number of Kent adults who participated in sport for at least 30 minutes 3 or more times a week has increased slightly in 2008/09 to 21.2% from 20.5% last year but still remains just below the national average (21.5%). More work will be carried out in 2009/10 to increase this.

KCC has had more success in increasing activity levels of young people during 2008/09, with the percentage of pupils taking part in at least 2 hours PE and school sport per week increasing from 87% in 2007/08 to 88%. In addition, the number of out of school hours sports programmes stood at 121 at end March 2009, up from 113 a year earlier.

KCC has worked with the School Sport Partnerships, local authorities and Extended Schools Managers to co-ordinate a successful bid for over £1million from Sport England to run a *Sport Unlimited Programme* as part of the 5 hour offer for young people to participate in PE and sport per week. In 2008/09 approximately 100 schemes were funded, providing opportunities for nearly 6,000 young people to take part in a wide

range of sports opportunities. There are plans to increase this number to over 10,000 young people in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The finals of the *Kent School Games* took place in June 2008, involving over 500 schools and 30,000 young people taking part in over 23 different sports. The Games have acted as a catalyst for additional competitive sport in Kent, which are becoming embedded within the schools competition structures, ensuring increased competitive opportunities for young people in schools.

Healthy Eating

The Kent *Healthy Schools* programme has had a 100% sign up in Thanet, which is Kent's most deprived area, and is on target to reach 100% of all Kent schools by December 2009.

Further work has been undertaken in 2008/09 to help children and families with healthy eating and community healthy eating pilots have been launched to increase the uptake of healthier school meals. Funding has been provided for two community chef programmes in Swale and Dartford, launched in May and July 2008 respectively.

"The fruit and veg scheme encourages them to eat good meals, not takeaway; they reckon everyone's obese don't they. It's nice for children to have a home cooked dinner and enjoy it. It's all fresh" *Parent, Vale View Community School Dover*

Lack of access to fruit and vegetables has been identified as a barrier to healthy eating and as a result four fruit and vegetable bag schemes were launched in areas of Kent with accessibility problems. The first bag scheme was launched at the Riverside Centre, Gravesend in May 2008 in

conjunction with Gravesend Borough Council. It runs weekly on Wednesdays and bags are sold for £3. After just 4 weeks of operation an impressive 100 bags were being sold weekly before the scheme had been formally promoted.

The latest available data shows that obesity levels in children (in years R & 6 combined) reduced by 0.4% in 2007/08 from the initial baseline set in 2006/07. Whilst this is cause for optimism, the coming years will establish the trend as the data is gathered from different cohorts of children each year.

Tackling inequalities

KCC is working with its partners to narrow the gap between the most and least healthy wards in Kent and undertaking a wide range of projects and initiatives.

In light of growing health issues linked to poor diet and a lack of awareness about how to cook, the *Food for Families* programme is aimed at young mums or potential mums-to-be who are living on a low income. This 8 week course covers many aspects of food including practical sessions in the kitchen followed by meals shared together with the children, how to cook healthily on a budget and safety in the kitchen. The programme has been so successful that the young women are requesting an advanced course or other community food projects.

Access to health care is one of the key considerations and criteria for investment in Quality Bus Partnerships. The *Thanet Loop*, accessing the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother hospital site in Margate, has now become an essential hospital link for many

people living in Broadstairs, Margate and Ramsgate through the provision of low floor, easy access vehicles which provide good access for wheelchairs. This enables more effective co-ordination of the public health functions which will promote the health and wellbeing of Kent residents.

Work is also underway to help raise people's awareness of particular health issues, such as the *Books Can Help* scheme, whereby GPs prescribe relevant reading materials for patients who then present the prescriptions at libraries and receive help in choosing appropriate books. KCC has also worked in partnership with Kent and Medway Cancer Network, and Macmillan Cancer Support to provide a comprehensive collection of cancer-related books, leaflets, tapes, CDs and DVDs, together with specialist items for children, black and minority ethnic communities and people with learning disabilities, in the 13 main libraries in Kent.

As well as these targeted approaches to tackling health inequalities, KCC also seeks to ensure successful take up of opportunities by those that need to access them through adopting a "whole population" approach, to stimulate buy in and then bias the interventions to those that need them most. This approach has been adopted by ActivMobs and the innovative *HOUSE* programme, which aims to give young people impartial health advice.

10.4 How this has made a difference

Kent School Games

With its partners KCC held the first Kent School Games Finals in June 2008 over a two week period. There is great enthusiasm for the establishment of the Games, mirroring the County's commitment to building a long-term legacy for young people from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

During the finals there were 52 separate events held resulting in 12,000 medal winners. The finals went down well with the pupils taking part in the Games. Didi Enonuya, a medal winner said: "I started as a girl who wanted to try something new and ended as a gold medallist. I was representing Dartford Grammar School for Girls, which was a huge honour and an even bigger honour was representing Team Dartford. I started the shot putt competition just hoping it was enough and in the end I found out that I had won. It was an amazing feeling. I am so happy that I tried something new which has brought me so much success."

Community chef

In May 2008, a Community Chef was recruited to the Isle of Sheppey Healthy Living Centre to work with families and children to give them confidence about food skills and cooking, a better understanding of nutrition and improve their health and diets.

Ten different targeted groups, including young people and one-parent families have had the opportunity to take part in an eight-week cooking and food skills programme, which is based on the British Nutrition Foundation's basic life skills cooking programme.

Mike Spackman, a trained chef, stated "you have to get involved with them- how to cook, share and eat good food that's affordable. Give people the confidence that cooking for yourself can be fun. They need to be able to stand on their own two feet, and look after themselves well."

One of the ladies attending the class said “we thought kebabs tasted nice, but coming here and tasting cooked food from fresh ingredients is so much better. My favourite dish to cook is chicken curry. I never knew how to cook anything like that before. Knowing that it hasn’t come out of a jar and that we made the sauce ourselves, made it taste so much better”.

HOUSE

HOUSE is a set designed as 4 rooms of a house in a series of temporary shops in 12 town centres. The set includes a dance machine, Wii, music, internet access and is a friendly, informal and safe place for young people to hang out. The environment was designed by young people to create a space conducive to them listening to health information and receiving help and support on their own terms.

HOUSE is hugely popular with over 50 young people attending per day. Many of those who attend are young people who are not currently known to our services and young people are reporting a positive change to lifestyle attitudes and behaviours as a result of HOUSE.

In 2008 a young man of 16 visited the first HOUSE in Gravesend. After about a week or so he started telling the HOUSE staff about a range of problems he had – drinking, smoking. The friendly and informal way that HOUSE operates, with no-one forcing help or services on people, led to this young man coming back again and again until he felt able to explain what was happening in his life and get the support he needed to find a better place to live, training for employment and eventually a job.

Section 11: Improved Health, Care & Well-Being: Maintaining Independence

Helping older people and those with disabilities to be independent

11.1 Why it matters

People are living longer. This provides major opportunities as well as challenges. KCC will encourage people to plan for their health, social and economic well-being in old age and champion senior citizens. KCC will lead by example to promote a positive image of older people and the value their contribution makes to community life.

The majority of older people want to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible and this is also true for younger people with disabilities or mental health problems. KCC will move away from traditional care models towards providing greater choice and control, giving people the support to lead their lives as they want, in their own homes.

11.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- More older people and people with disabilities living independently
- Fewer avoidable admissions to hospital
- Carers of all ages supported
- More people, and particularly older people, in receipt of Direct Payments

11.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Promoting independence

In 2008/09 the number of people supported by community based services provided by Kent Adult Social Services to live independently rose to just over 35,000, an increase of around 2,500 from the year before.

In partnership with Eastern Kent and Coastal PCT, KCC was successful in bidding for the £1.5 million Partnerships for Older People Project. Out of this has sprung the *Independence through the Voluntary action of Kent Elders* project. The project is designed to give older people greater independence, enhance self-management through choice and control and reduce hospital admissions. Feedback and initial research suggests that the project has been a success to date and the project is about to be extended in East Kent.

“We were very grateful for the way you respected my father’s dignity and treated him with such dedicated care and compassion throughout”, *P Family, Newham*

KCC was one of only 3 authorities selected by the Department Health to be a *Whole System Demonstrator (WSD)*, which was officially launched in April 2008. The WSD project has enabled

KCC to offer to more people its innovative preventative technology services *TeleHealth* and *Telecare*, helping them to remain in their own homes. The intended outcome is for 1,000 extra people to be offered Telecare and 1,000 extra people to be offered TeleHealth by July 2010.

A key feature of enabling people to continue to live independently is to ensure they have choice and control over the support they need. The development of Direct Payments has made a significant contribution to this. In March 2009, 2342 people were in receipt of Direct Payments. Over 740 of these are for older people compared to only

9 older people in 2002. A range of innovative actions has supported the increasing take up of Direct Payments, including the *Kent Card*, which was being used by 831 people as at end March 2009.

Personalising services

KCC has continued the implementation of *Active Lives for Adults* with a focus on *Self-Directed Support*, whereby people can self manage their support or, if they choose to, have somebody else manage it for them. This is a programme of total transformation for all of Kent Adult Social Services whether directly provided or commissioned from other agencies, which is underpinned by a shift in culture focussed on personalisation. The focus of the transformation has been to give people more choice and control over their support. It will also put KCC in a better position to deal with increased need and an ageing population.

This has seen the development of new services such as *Enablement*, an intensive, short term service of three to six weeks designed to offer support to people who, by reason of injury, frailty, illness or disability wish to regain or extend their independent living skills. Enablement is an essential element of Self Directed Support and feeds into the assessment process.

KCC has also implemented *Personal Budgets*, an essential part of delivering personalisation. A Personal Budget is a clear allocation of funding and all new eligible clients will have one from April 2009. This will enable them to have greater choice and control over the support they receive, so they can live their lives as they want.

Supporting carers

KCC is working to strengthen support available to people caring for relatives or friends. A Kent Adult Carers Strategy was due to be launched in July 2009, to be delivered via multi-agency joint commissioning plans.

The *Kent Carers Emergency Card Scheme* was launched in December 2008. The scheme aims to provide carers with peace of mind when away from the person that they care for by offering them as much support as necessary to complete their emergency plan. Currently there are over 750 carers signed up to the scheme and the number is growing steadily. Feedback regarding the scheme has been positive.

A young carers strategy *Invisible People* was launched in June 2008. As part of the strategy, Children's Social Services allocated £20,000 to each of the five young carers' projects across Kent to enable them to work directly with local schools. Young carers are increasingly identifying themselves as a result of targeted work in schools and more are taking part in local projects. A range of support is being developed in mainstream and specific settings to meet young carers' needs. In 2007/08, through the voluntary sector we were supporting 600 young carers across Kent. At the end of 2008/09 this figure had increased to 950.

Awareness has been raised, particularly within schools, of the needs of young carers. A group of young carers have helped to produce a DVD that highlights their caring responsibilities and the physical and emotional impact on them. The DVD is being used as a training aid in schools. 160 young carers were funded to join leisure centres in their locality, others attended residential camping weekends. The young carer provider organisations have increased their out of school activities for young carers through services commissioned by the Local Children Services Partnerships.

11.4 How this has made a difference

Voluntary Action Maidstone

As part of the KCC-funded *Brighter Futures Group* project, VAM operates a supported shopping service for older people, working with a local major supermarket which includes transport, lunch and staff support to complete supermarket shopping. This service helps people to maintain their social contacts, good nutrition and mobility and is available to individuals who do not meet eligibility criteria for care management intervention.

Mrs H came to use the service after her husband died, as she could not get to the shops on her own. Through the service Mrs H was able to remain independent and go out shopping on her own. It also enabled her to socialise and not become isolated at a time when she was very vulnerable. Mrs H said “that the scheme makes you feel ‘part of something’ and you don’t realise what a great comfort this is to someone when they are alone”.

Thanet Day Opportunity Service

Thanet Day Opportunities Service aims to support people with learning disabilities to lead full and purposeful lives within their own communities and develop a range of friendships, activities, relationships, skills and experience.

The service works with the Job Centre and with parents and carers to help each person fulfill their aspirations and promote their independence within the community. The service offers job profiling and job coaching to service users and to the employer. Giving this support helps to encourage service users become independent individuals.

Steven works in the Day Opportunities Centre kitchen. He attended Thanet College where he gained his certificate in food hygiene. Steven came to the team to help him find employment. With help from the Job Centre and job coaching from Thanet Day Opportunities Service Steven now works part time at a cafe in Broadstairs.

Steven says; “I’m happy to be working, I meet lots of people and I’m learning all the time. I feel good and I’m being paid”. Steven, a resident of Cleveland House in Broadstairs, manages his own flat and pays rent. Working has made him more independent. The manager of Cleveland House said “it’s fantastic Steven was given the opportunity to work. It has made him feel he is a valued member of the community”.

Kent Young Carers Kearsney

This year, 88 young carers aged 6 – 11 years old took part in an overnight camp at the Kearsney campsite near Dover. A total of 2640 respite hours were provided for the young carers, many of whom had never been away from home overnight been camping before. Activities included arts and crafts, sports, team games and challenges, scavenger hunt, face painting, drama and an African drumming workshop.

The weekend was a great success, with positive feedback from all who attended. Comments included “It was really cool and very funny” and “I really enjoyed meeting new friends”. The most important aspect for the young carers themselves was being able to make new friendships and having the opportunity to develop social skills and access activities and social lives outside of their caring roles.

Section 12: Stronger & Safer Communities

We must make sure that everyone feels safe in their communities

12.1 Why it matters

Although there is much less crime in Kent than in most parts of the country, the 24-hour society, high and increasing traffic volumes and lack of confidence in the criminal justice system have all brought concerns to the people of Kent. KCC's work with Kent Police, the Kent Community Partnership and Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) are key to solving these issues.

Crime and antisocial behaviour is often worse in areas that are economically deprived, isolated or in need of regeneration. Vandalism, graffiti, litter, abandoned cars and fly-tipping all degrade communities. Alcohol and drug-related crime is also rising. It is important to promote a strong sense of pride in local communities as well as working with the police to provide services to reassure local people and reduce the fear of crime.

KCC is committed to helping to maintain Kent's low level of burglary and car theft and to working with off-licence, pub and club owners to reduce alcohol-fuelled crime and disorder, antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse. KCC will work with the police to tackle crime and with local people to create stronger communities.

12.2 What KCC wants to achieve

- Continued reduction in levels of crime and anti-social behaviour across Kent
- People in Kent feeling safe and less fearful of crime
- Less alcohol-fuelled anti-social behaviour, particularly amongst young people
- Fewer young people entering the criminal justice system

12.3 What has happened in 2008/09

Reducing crime and fear of crime

Crime and anti-social behaviour across Kent remains at a relatively low level and is reducing. Between 2006/7 and 2008/9 there was an approximate 17% decrease in crime across the KCC area. In particular, domestic burglary per 1,000 households has decreased to 8.2% from 8.5% in 2007/08 and car crime per 1,000 population has reduced from 8.6 in 2007/08 to 7.8 in 2008/09.

People's fear of crime in Kent has also reduced. The percentage of people worried about burglary has decreased from 56% in 2006/07 to 36% in 2008/09 and fear of 4 specific crimes - domestic burglary, car theft, mugging/robbery & physical attack - in Kent has reduced from 44% in 2006/07 to 28% in 2008/09.

Kent has worked with statutory partners such as Kent Police to establish a managed and safe *Night Time Economy*. Across Kent between 2007/08 and 2008/09 Night Time Economy crime² has shown a 22.7% reduction, making Kent a safer place for its residents. This is reflected in the Kent Crime and Victimisation Survey which shows that since 2006/07 feelings of safety at night (at home alone and walking alone at night) in Kent, have increased from 74% to 81% by the end of 2008/09. In particular feelings of

² crimes committed by offenders under the influence of drink or drugs between the periods of 8pm and 4am Monday to Sunday

safety walking alone at night are at their highest for the last three years rising from 55% in 2006/07 to 66% currently.

KCC has worked with its partners to help raise awareness of and disrupt the activities of rogue traders. In 2008/09, Kent Trading Standards intervened 57 times, supported 141 victims and also significantly disrupted the activity of 20 rogue traders. Kent Trading Standards operates an alert system to local communities to bogus trading practices, which is sent to 246 local partners, including parish and town councils. These messages are used as articles in newspapers / parish magazines. In 2008/09, 94% of recipients found the messages 'useful' and 86% found them 'easy to understand'.

KCC also supports legitimate Kent businesses through the *Buy with Confidence* scheme and there are now 102 approved businesses across Kent.

The *HandyVan* scheme provides improved home security to better protect against burglary and reduce the fear of crime for vulnerable people. The remit of the service has expanded with a wider range of services offered to make homes more secure, including the installation of hand rails and minor adaptations. At end March 2009, 7,765 safety checks had been made by the service since 2006. This is slightly below the 2008/9 target of 8,100 due to the changing remit of the service and the greater focus on spending more time with people to make them feel safe, although the service is on course to achieve the 10,800 target over the 2006-2010 period.

"Thank you for making such a difference to my peace of mind and well-being"
HandyVan client

The 5th *HandyVan* has been targeted in the North Kent area since August 2007 and following a number of initiatives and a partnership focused approach, domestic burglary in Gravesham reduced by 40% between 2006/07 and 2007/08 and continued to decrease in 2008/09 by 3.5%. In addition, there has been a huge change in the percentage of residents who are worried about being burgled in Gravesham which has decreased from 70% at the end of 2006/07 to 45% at the end of 2008/09

Dealing with drug and alcohol problems

The multi-agency *Kent Community Alcohol Partnership* was launched in November 2008, aimed at changing the attitudes to drinking among young people and supporting retailers to reduce sales of alcohol to underage drinkers. Local community groups are also being engaged to get their point of view and youngsters are being educated about the dangers of alcohol and diverted into alternative activities. The scheme is currently being piloted in Canterbury, Edenbridge and Thanet and is intended to be rolled out across Kent at a later date.

In May 2008, KCC supported Gravesham Borough Council and North Kent Police's high profile week-long campaign to increase awareness of the role alcohol plays in health problems, crime and anti-social behaviour. It aimed to spread the word about drinking, especially under-age drinking – and encourage a safe, sensible and social approach. Trading Standards Officers undertook a series of enforcement measures across the borough during the week,

The *Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team* (KDAAT) multi-agency partnership works to deliver the national drug and alcohol strategies at a local level in Kent. KDAAT **achieved**

a 13.5% increase in the numbers of problem drug users in effective treatment for the 12 months to the end of December 2008, the highest in the south-east region.

Building strong communities

KCC Community Wardens continue to make a positive impact in their local areas. The 101 Wardens in 128 local areas were originally envisaged as a visible uniformed presence to tackle anti-social behaviour, but have developed a much broader remit, working with a wide range of other authorities and services. Their operations range from walking buses through to providing intelligence to the Police which has led to a variety of arrests.

The Wardens facilitate a number of activities and events within their communities, both big and small to engage with the local residents. The largest of this is a countywide 7-a-side football tournament, the finals of which were held in summer 2008. Over 1,000 'hard to engage' young people, both boys and girls, were involved in this positive diversionary activity. The event was a great success and another one is being planned for next year.

Since 2006, Wardens have provided awareness training to over 9,500 people against the dangers of bogus callers, helping the elderly and vulnerable to remain safe and secure in their own homes.

The environment which people live in makes a big difference to their quality of life and their perception of their local area. The multi-agency *Clean Kent* programme has encouraged citizenship and environmental responsibility with, for example, the Street-Wise Educational Project being nationally recognised as good practice.

With its partners, KCC has taken a firm enforcement line against fly-tippers, which has seen 17 people receive a criminal conviction and over £12K of fines imposed. Since last year, four of the then top 20 fly-tipping hot spots across Kent have been resolved and are no longer subject to fly-tipping. This list is dynamic with sites being added as they become a target for fly-tipping and KCC will work hard over the next year to tackle the existing hot spots.

Tackling youth offending

The Youth Offending Service and its partners have worked hard to establish a prevention-led approach to tackling youth offending. This has resulted in fewer first time entrants to the youth justice system from 2020 per 100,000 10-17 population in 2006/07 to 1660 per 100,000 10-17 population in 2007/08. Current estimates show that this is on course to drop again to around 1480 per 100,000 10-17 population in 2008/09, although final figures will not be available from the Department for Children, Schools and Families until November 2009.

In 2008/09, a refocus of prevention activity led to the creation of *Youth Inclusion Support Panels* (YISPs) in each of the 12 Districts. The aim of the YISPs is to contribute to a reduction in the number of children and young people entering the youth justice system, which they will achieve by receiving referrals about young people thought "at risk" of offending and co-ordinating relevant services to match their needs and risks.

KCC and its partners have also engaged young people in a range of diversionary activities during 2008/09. These include the Challenger Troop, offering an Army Cadet

type approach to youth activities and a partnership, with the English Rugby Football Union to increase sports participation amongst those most “at risk”.

Increasing road safety

Kent Highways Services has continued to work to improve safety and reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) on Kent roads. KCC’s approach has been to integrate the known benefits of education, enforcement, engineering and evaluation. A programme of countywide publicity campaigns, proactive press features and public engagement projects using road safety officers has proved effective, as has the drinking and driving campaign in the run up to last Christmas, which contributed to the lowest recorded number of road crash fatalities in December for over a decade.

KCC’s approach appears to be working, as the 2008 KSI casualty figures represents a 13% reduction in KSI casualties compared with 2007. It should be noted that the 2008 KSI road traffic casualty figures are exceptionally low, 627 compared with 723 in 2007 and represents a 5% greater reduction than the KHS target figure for 2008. This ongoing work in casualty reduction appears to be maintaining the downward trend in KSI casualties, however outside factors, such as fuel prices, may have influenced the excessive reduction in 2008.

12.4 How this has made a difference

Streetwise

The multi-agency Clean Kent Campaign aims to make Kent a cleaner county. It takes a bold and creative approach to communication and education in order to positively influence behaviour across all sectors of society and has forged strong links with Kent schools.

Street Wise is an innovative theatre-in-education project for year 8 and 9 pupils delivered in schools, which centres on the issues of anti-social behaviour and restorative justice as its main themes. It uses actors, including a serving prisoner from a re-settlement prison, to demonstrate through theatre how relatively small acts of anti-social behaviour such as littering / graffiti can escalate to criminal activities.

A teacher at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar school in Faversham, who experienced one of the sessions stated: “I don’t think it came across really as a way of giving information. There was an information exchange. It didn’t seem the children thought they were having something done to them. There were some really dramatic moments when Sean came in, the whole hall was quiet and still and it was really quite dramatic and powerful”.

Feedback forms from the school showed that session had a good impact, with pupils stating that it had made them aware that “small things can have big consequences” and that they were less likely to drop litter or set rubbish on fire in the future.

Buy with Confidence

Kent Trading Standards has joined with the other local authority Trading Standards Services in the South East to set up a scheme called Buy with Confidence (BWC). The scheme helps protect consumers from rogue traders and promotes legitimate local businesses.

Version 0.7
17/9/09

Trading Standards Officers vet applicants for trustworthiness and to make sure they comply with consumer protection laws. Only traders that pass stringent checks are accepted on to the scheme and are able to display the Buy with Confidence logo. Approved businesses are constantly monitored by Trading Standards to ensure their standards remain high.

Vicky Marks and her husband Darren run Headway Doors & Windows Limited and recently joined the scheme. Vicky says: "When we applied to the scheme we had no idea how vigorous their vetting procedures would be. It ranged from contacting many customers for references and criminal record checks, to checking our complaints procedures and internal systems. After many months we were accepted and can now proudly say we are approved and recommended by trading standards, a real achievement with no better recommendation."

The scheme has grown to over 100 businesses and more and more consumers are using the scheme and feeding back favourable comments through customer feedback cards.

Peer-led Support Groups

Gravesham Addiction Striving 4 Progress (GAS4P) is a peer-led support group supported by the Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team (KDAAT), in partnership with its commissioned service providers.

In 2005, GAS4P was the first peer-led support group of its kind in Kent, since then its success has led to two other groups forming in Sheerness and Folkestone.

All of the GAS4P team have experienced problems with substance or alcohol misuse. This allows them connect to members on a personal level which is vitally important as many vulnerable people can be intimidated by professional staff.

The group offers advice and support for anyone with drug or alcohol misuse problems, while also providing information on local treatment services.

Zena Watson, Team Leader at service provider Turning Point, supports the peer-led support groups and finds the benefits and energy within the groups inspirational. "It's amazing to see the impact these groups have within their local communities. GAS4P helps those who may not be ready to access professional services and allows them to still have access to important information. For people currently in treatment the group provides a safe haven and new social or supportive networks."

Section 13: The Finances of Kent County Council

Finance

During 2008/09, KCC faced significant challenges and was still the only County Council to score 4 stars for four years in a row in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment undertaken by the Audit Commission. They said, “Kent County Council is improving strongly,” and “the Council continues to provide excellent value for money. Strong leadership and capacity, coupled with a consistent and effective approach to performance management and improvement planning, ensures the Council is well placed to sustain its strong track record and deliver future improvements.”

Our annual financial statements for 2008/09 have been approved by our external auditors the Audit Commission.

The net underspend of £7.5m (excluding £16.2m delegated schools overspend) will be added to future years’ budget to help the Council’s to achieve key priorities and service improvements.

The finances of a large authority like KCC are complex and are complicated by the uncertainties surrounding future government funding. One of the key issues is the growth of demand for services such as adult social care because of the growing elderly population. There is also pressure in children’s social services resulting from the tragic events in Haringey.

What follows is a summary of our financial statements. The table below shows that the Council is spending more each year on improving front-line services, with efficiency savings contributing significantly to the funding of these improvements.

Income & Expenditure Account for 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009:

Service	Gross spend	Income	Net spend in 2008/9	Net spend in 2007/08
	£million	£million	£million	£million
Regulatory Services and Emergency Planning	10.3	-3.3	7.0	6.6
Court Services	3.1	-0.4	2.7	2.9
Arts & Libraries	32.9	-3.0	29.9	26.7
Waste Management	62.7	-5.0	57.7	55.3
Environmental, Planning and Other Services	55.1	-27.7	27.4	42.8
Children’s and Education Services (including schools)	1,487.3	-1,300.1	187.2	119.9
Highways, Roads and Transport Services	113.8	-8.5	105.3	92.4
Adult Social Care	471.9	-140.9	331	286.5
Corporate and Democratic Core	26.1	-15.3	10.8	12.7

Non-distributed costs	32.0		32.0	17.3
Net Cost of Services	2,295.2	-1,504.2	791.0	663.1
Loss (gain) on the disposal of fixed assets			-6.1	65.2
Precepts and Levies			0.6	0.6
Surplus on trading activities			-6.4	-4.6
Interest payable			56.3	55.6
Interest and investment income			-14.8	-16.4
Impairment on Icelandic Investments (1)			10.6	0
Interest Receivable on Icelandic Investments			-2.5	
Other			31.9	9.7
Net Operating Expenditure			860.6	773.2
Funded by:				
Government grants			-268.4	-228.7
Area Based Grant			-61.6	0
Council tax funds			-536.6	-513.1
Net General Fund surplus (-) deficit (+)			-6.0	31.4
Amount required by statute to be debited/(credited) to the General Fund (2)			6.0	-31.4
Increase in General Fund balance for the year			0	0
General Fund balance brought forward			-25.8	-25.8
General Fund balance carried forward			-25.8	-25.8

Note to the Income and Expenditure account

1. The impairment loss of £10.6m has been calculated by discounting the assumed cash flows at the effective interest rate of the original deposits in order to recognise the anticipated loss to the authority until monies are recovered. The 'real' loss to the Council is currently calculated to be around £4.5m. The situation is still very fluid and there have been developments since the 31 March 2009, however, these are not material to the accounts and therefore no adjustments have been made.
2. This figure comprises the reversal of items of spend which must not impact council tax, e.g. depreciation charges and transfers to and from reserves.

The balance of our general reserves of £25.8m represents the amount of money the Council has set aside to deal with unexpected events that otherwise might cause the

budget to be overspent in any future year(s). The amount reflects 'best practice' guidance for local authorities and is equivalent to less than two weeks spend on services, excluding schools.

In addition to general reserves, the Council has a number of earmarked or specific reserves. These sums have been set aside to fund projects that are known to be happening in the future. This avoids uneven changes in council tax levels each year. These reserves are clearly shown in the notes to the full balance sheet, from which the extract below has been taken:

Kent County Council Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2009:

	31 March 2009		31 March 2008	
	£million	£million	£million	£million
Operational assets (1)	2113.8		2041.7	
Non-operational assets (2)	434.2		345.3	
Other fixed assets	3.6		3.6	
Long-term assets (3)	159.2		194.9	
Total fixed and long-term assets		2,710.8		2,585.5
Current assets (4)		473.9		447.0
Current liabilities (5)		-462.7		-375.1
Total assets less current liabilities		2,722.0		2,657.4
Long-term liabilities				
- Long-term borrowing (6)	-998.4		-1017.2	
- Pensions liability (7)	-742.1		-571.7	
- Other long-term liabilities	-262.5		-264.9	
Total long-term liabilities		-2,003.0		-1,853.9
Total assets less total liabilities		719.0		803.5
Reserves and provisions:				
- Cash reserves		-191.2		-191.7
- Notional reserves (8)		742.1		571.7
- Capital accounting reserves (9)		-1,269.9		-1,183.5
Total reserves and provisions		-719.0		-803.5

Notes to the Balance Sheet

- 1 Operational assets includes land and buildings, roads, and vehicles, plant and equipment, worth a total of £2.1 billion
- 2 This is mainly due to capital projects that were 'work-in-progress' at the year-end
- 3 Money owed to KCC that will not be repaid within the next 12 months
- 4 Includes cash and bank balances, investments, and debts that will be paid to the Council within the next 12 months
- 5 Mainly represents amounts owed by the Council to service providers, most of which will have been paid within 30 days of the year-end

- 6 This is the amount outstanding from monies the Council borrowed to fund capital expenditure. Funding to repay most of these loans is part of the Government grant settlement each year. The Council has also borrowed other money (included in the £998.4m) under the 'prudential' scheme based on its ability to repay the debt
- 7 The figure of £742.1m is a notional valuation provided by the Council's pensions actuary
- 8 This balances the pension liability as detailed in note 7
- 9 The capital accounting reserves figure includes some notional reserves such as the revaluation reserve which holds the value of the change in property valuations and capital receipts reserves which hold grants, contributions and income from sales of property to fund capital expenditure in future years.

The people of Kent are entitled to know about the financial position of the County Council, but the full Statement of Accounts is a detailed and complex document. This summary is designed to give you an insight into how much we spend (income and expenditure account) and our assets and liabilities (the balance sheet).

For further information, or if you would like to comment or make suggestions on how we can improve the understanding of the Statement of Accounts, please contact Cath Head on 01622 221135 or email cath.head@kent.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can view the full Statement of Accounts at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/financialpublications>.

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