

By: Paul Carter, Leader of the Council
Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Finance
Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive
Andy Wood, Head of Financial Management

To: Cabinet - 6 February 2008

Subject: Medium Term Plan 2008-11 (Incorporating the Budget and Council Tax Setting for 2008-09) – Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report updates the Draft Medium Term Plan 2008-11, published on 21 January, with more recent information. The new information consists of:

- The final Local Government Finance Settlement figures announced by Central Government on 24 January 2008.
- The final tax bases agreed by the Kent District Councils as at 31 January 2008.
- The surplus or deficits announced on the District Councils' Collection Funds as at 31 January 2008.
- A draft summary of the outcomes of debate on the Medium Term Plan and Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2008-09 following discussion at the following meetings, as shown as Appendix B:
 - Communities Policy Overview Committee on 24 January 2008;
 - Corporate Policy Overview Committee 25 January 2008;
 - Adult Social Services Policy Overview Committee on 29 January;
 - Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee on 30 January 2008;
 - Environment and Regeneration Policy Overview Committee on 31 January 2008;
 - Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 1 February 2008;
- Business Consultation Forum on 4 February 2008 (Oral report).
- In addition there will be the Budget Consultation meeting with Trade Union and Professional Body Association representatives on 7 February 2008.

Introduction

1. Kent County Council published its Medium Term Plan 2008-11 (incorporating the Budget and Council Tax Setting for 2008-09) for consultation on 21 January 2008, in line with the agreed process.
2. However, there were three main areas of potential change which are now dealt with in this update:
 - (1) Central Government announced the Final Settlement on 24 January, which replaces the information received at Provisional Settlement on 6 December. This provides KCC with the final Formula Grant figure for 2008-09, and provisional figures for 2009-10 and 2010-11. KCC will receive £0.263m more grant in 2008-09 compared with the Provisional Settlement.
 - (2) District Councils are obliged by legislation to calculate and notify their preceptors of their tax base by 31 January. KCC's calculation of council tax depends upon the number of Band D equivalent properties (or "taxbase") within its area.
 - (3) District Councils must also calculate and notify their preceptors of any surplus or deficit on their Collection Funds. This amount is shared on a pro rata basis between all preceptors and must be used when calculating the Council's overall budget and council tax requirement.
3. It should also be borne in mind that income due under the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme (for which we have provided for budgeted income of £3.2 million in 2008-09) has yet to be confirmed by Central Government. This is due to the basis of allocation being reviewed following successful challenge, under Judicial Review, of the current operation of the LABGI scheme.

Consultation

4. KCC carried out extensive consultation on the "Vision for Kent". This has helped to identify service priorities and has been a key influence in setting out the key targets for action for "Towards 2010". The fifth Annual Report (covering 2006-07) was presented to County Council on 18 June 2007.
5. The annual budget process provides formally for consultation with the public, Trade Unions, the Business community, opposition members and professional organisations. Meetings with business leaders and meetings with staff representatives have taken place or will take place on 4 and 7 February respectively, whilst Policy Overview Committees considered the budget proposals during the week beginning 21 January. Feedback from the Policy Overview Committees was reported to Cabinet Scrutiny on 1 February, where overall budget strategy was considered. Feedback from the Policy Overview Committees is provided in Appendix B to this report.
6. As last year, two public consultation workshops were run in September 2007. These all day events invited a representative sample of resident council tax payers to consider spending issues facing the county and possible council tax

increases for the forthcoming year. Participants were invited to set their own level of council tax within a budget model. That budget model was developed and presented as a “game” but was closely modeled on real pressures facing the council. In addition, a separate consultation workshop took place with young people as part of activities based on and around 11 Million Takeover Day in November 2007.

7. Formal feedback has been received from market research firm MORI on KCC’s study of public attitudes to expenditure priorities and Council Tax levels. A summary of the main report is attached at Appendix A.

Final Settlement

8. The Final Local Government Finance Settlement was announced by central Government on Thursday 24 January. There are changes to the floor damping from the position reported to Cabinet on 14 January.
9. Details of the Final Settlement for KCC, as compared to the Provisional Settlement are as follows:

Component	Provisional Settlement 2008-09 £m	Final Settlement 2008-09 £m	Change from Provisional Settlement £m
Relative Needs	268.2	268.2	0.030
Relative Resource	-164.6	-164.6	0.000
Central Allocation	163.1	163.1	- 0.002
Floor Damping	-7.6	-7.3	0.235
External Funding	259.1	259.4	0.263
Like-for-like cash change	+ 3.7%	+ 3.4%	

Component	Provisional Forecast 2009-10 £m	Provisional Forecast 2010-11 £m
Relative Needs	276.5	284.4
Relative Resource	-170.6	-176.4
Central Allocation	171.4	179.5
Floor Damping	-10.1	-11.8
External Funding	267.2	275.7
Like-for-like cash change	+ 3.2%	+ 3.2%

10. It should be noted that the headline increase in grant for 2008-09 is 3.4%, no longer the floor funded minimum, as has been the case for the past 2 years. The headline figure for 2009-10 falls to 2.0% when the removal of LABGI grant is taken into account.
11. KCC’s Final Settlement for 2008-09 has increased by a headline £0.263m compared to the Provisional Settlement. But the percentage grant increase on

a like-for-like increase has reduced from 3.7% to 3.4%. Most of this results from the Ministry of Justice's proposed revision of Public Law Family Fees from April 2008. The Provisional Settlement did not include the impact on local authorities of new full-cost fees for childcare proceedings. The Final Settlement makes a prior year adjustment to 2007-08 which has increased upper tier grant to all floor funded authorities and reduced the need for other authorities to contribute to the floor. As a result KCC has gained £0.263m Formula Grant. However, KCC's estimated share of the full-cost fees is assumed by Central Government to be £0.860m. It is quite clear that no financial provision has been made in 2008-09. This does appear to be contrary to the New Burdens Doctrine which is meant to ensure Local Authorities are recompensed for such changes.

12. The consequences to the budget of the above are as follows:
 - (1) An increase in Children, Families and Educational Achievement Portfolio of £0.860m for Public Law Family Fees.
 - (2) An adjustment to the Finance Portfolio to fund the net shortfall in Formula Grant by rolling forward under spend from the Finance Portfolio in 2007-08.

Surplus / Deficit on Collection Funds

13. District Councils must calculate any surplus or deficit on their collection funds. These most frequently arise when the District Council over or under performs against its projected level of tax collection. This amount is shared on a pro rata basis between all preceptors and affects the council tax calculation.
14. Information now received from the districts indicates an overall deficit from their Collection Funds, of which KCC's share payable in 2008-09 is £0.2m. This deficit compares to last year's surplus of £1.5m. It must be borne in mind that these are annual, one off figures and both surpluses and deficits can arise on the Collection Funds.

Tax Base

15. KCC's calculation of council tax depends upon the number of equivalent Band D properties (or "taxbase") within its area. District councils are obliged by legislation to notify its preceptors of this figure by 31 January.
16. The actual figure notified by District Councils is 535,857.71. This includes the tax base changes arising from the reduction in discounts which district councils were able to make from April 2004 in relation to second homes. The taxbase also includes the impact of the additional taxation capacity from the districts' discretion to reduce the discount granted on empty properties. Overall this means the tax base is 1.0% higher in 2008-09 than in 2007-08.

TABLE 4 – TAXBASE USED FOR TAX SETTING					
Band D equivalentents	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Ashford	41,972.10	43,206.80	43,736.00	44,533.00	44,555.50
Canterbury	49,371.00	50,186.00	50,603.00	50,904.00	51,275.00
Dartford	31,501.77	32,117.49	32,434.30	32,874.94	33,507.59
Dover	37,590.97	38,771.34	39,030.59	39,483.81	39,795.66
Gravesham	33,674.02	33,953.37	34,134.99	34,765.31	34,947.82
Maidstone	55,806.90	56,304.70	56,754.80	57,738.10	58,514.80
Sevenoaks	48,398.47	48,697.76	48,914.04	49,187.56	49,705.82
Shepway	38,585.35	38,890.06	38,965.06	39,125.37	39,373.38
Swale	43,964.13	44,403.95	45,148.28	45,772.01	46,379.34
Thanet	44,559.21	44,533.82	45,261.76	45,600.57	46,179.22
Tonbridge & Malling	44,908.12	45,356.60	46,071.78	46,709.13	47,350.82
Tunbridge Wells	42,454.35	43,092.19	43,646.73	43,854.52	44,262.76
Total	512,786.39	519,514.08	524,701.33	530,548.32	535,857.71
% increase	1.5	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.0

Conclusion

17. In summary, the following changes have been made since the draft Medium Term Plan was published on 21 January 2008:
 - Final Grant Settlement for 2008-09;
 - Tax Base notification by districts;
 - Overall tax surplus from district Collection Funds payable to KCC.
18. There is a one off £0.2m chargeable to KCC as a result of the Collection Fund net deficit. This should be allocated as follows:
 - (1) To the Finance Portfolio, to be funded by roll forward of under spending from 2007-08.
19. The additional tax yield of £0.1m, from a higher than anticipated taxbase, and updated calculations of precepts by other bodies should be reflected as follows:
 - (1) In the Finance Portfolio to reduce the amount of the net shortfall caused by the change to Formula Grant and Public Law Family Fees.
20. Overall, the effect of the changes described in this update, is that policy proposals are unchanged from those published on 21 January, and the KCC element of the council tax increase for 2008-09 is 3.9%, subject to satisfactory resolution to the Asylum funding issue.
21. The revised calculation of the proposed Council Tax for 2008-09 is as follows:

TABLE 5 - CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX	
	£000
Budget Requirement 2007-08	741,729
Spending increase (net of adjustments)	115,289
Budget requirement 2008-09	857,018
Financed from:	
Formula Grant / Area Based Grant	- 320,446
Council Tax collection deficit	+ 245
Precept requirement from Council Tax	536,817
Divided by tax base (Band D equivalent)	535,857.71
Basic Amount	
Tax rate for Band D property 2008-09	1,001.79
Tax rate for Band D property 2007-08	964.17
Increase	£37.62
	+ 3.9%

22. The final position on the Children, Families and Education Directorate in relation to the estimated Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) will be subject to the remaining recommendations from the Schools Forum. The recommendations on this need to be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills (CFE). Final DSG should be known in June 2008.

Recommendations

Members are reminded that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to any meeting where consideration is given to matters relating to, or which might affect, the calculation of Council Tax.

Any Member of a Local Authority who has not paid Council Tax for at least two months, even if there is an arrangement to pay off the arrears, must declare the fact that he/she is in arrears and must not cast their vote on anything related to KCC's Budget or Council Tax.

23. Cabinet are asked to endorse the following proposals for submission to County Council on 19 February 2008:
- (1) the Revenue Budget proposals for 2008-09;
 - (2) the budget requirement of £857.0m;
 - (3) a total requirement from Council Tax of £536.8m to be raised through precept to meet the 2008-09 budget requirement. This assumes that there is a satisfactory conclusion to the Asylum funding issue;

(4) a Council Tax as set out below, for the listed property bands;

Council Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	667.86	779.17	890.48	1001.79	1224.41	1447.03	1669.65	2003.58

being a 3.9% increase over 2007-08;

(5) the Capital Investment proposals, together with the necessary use of borrowing, revenue, grants, capital receipts, renewals and other earmarked capital funds and external subject to approval to spend arrangements;

(6) the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix B of the Medium Term Plan.

24. Cabinet is also asked to endorse the following recommendations to County Council:

the revenue and capital proposals as presented for:

- Operations, Resources and Skills (CFE);
- Children, Families and Educational Achievement;
- Adult Social Services;
- Environment, Highways and Waste;
- Regeneration and Supporting Independence;
- Communities;
- Health;
- Corporate Support and External Affairs;
- Policy and Performance;
- Finance.

25. That final recommendations in relation to the School Budgets and the Dedicated Schools Grant be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills (CFE).

Background documents:

- *Autumn Budget Statement – Cabinet 17 September 2007*
- *Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2008-11 – 6 December 2007*
- *Budget 2008-11 and Medium Term Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11: Update on Provisional Local Government Settlement (6 December 2007) – Cabinet 14 January 2008*
- *KCC consultation response to Provisional LG Finance Settlement –8 January 2008*
- *Draft budget 2008-09 and Draft Medium Term Plan 2008-1 – Cabinet 21 January 2008.*
- *Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2008-09 and Provisional Settlement 2009-11 – 24 January 2008*

Appendix A - Budget and Council Tax Consultations in Kent 2008/09

Key findings from discussion days
held on Saturdays 22 and 29 September
2007 for Kent County Council



September 2007

Extract from main report compiled by KCC

Summary

As part of the Kent County Council's budget setting process, the annual Public Consultation took place on two Saturdays in September 2007. The Council commissioned Ipsos MORI to coordinate the event and write the report, and this summary details the main findings of the workshops.

54 residents were selected at random by Ipsos MORI (there was a predetermined quota to ensure all ages, genders, ethnicities and classes were represented). No participants had previously been involved in any qualitative data, and knew nothing of the subject matter beforehand.

They took part in what is essentially a game, and knew that ultimately councillors have other issues to take into account when setting the budget and council tax. They were told there had to be a 3% unavoidable increase due to inflationary pressures. Upon arrival, initial questionnaires were completed, and residents listened to a presentation on the budget and what the day would entail. Participants were then split into 3 age groups (Young, Middle and Older groups) and given different budget options regarding each of the directorates. At the end of the day, participants were brought together to compare their decisions, and an overall council tax level was agreed upon. The initial questionnaire was also re-administered twice during the day to see if any views had changed.

The day allowed participants to engage in the process, and see that the council really do want to listen to their views. In turn, the council could identify what the most important services were to residents, and which ones they would be willing to prioritise and trade off.

At the start of both workshops, many residents admitted they did not know too much about the budget setting process. They also voiced that they would avoid an increase in council tax if possible. By the end, many participants had agreed to a slight increase in the tax, and many indicated they felt more informed about the budget process than at the start of the day.

At the beginning of the workshops, the 6 groups (3 from each workshop) identified their top priorities. Both Young and Middle age groups prioritised Education as being important. Areas of improvement that were easily decided upon included roads, pavements, social services and waste management. When asked about the council tax level they would like to pay next year, most strongly opposed any increase, in order to allow people to save, or because they could not afford any more. Some did accept a small increase, providing it resulted in improved services.

The directorate that saw the largest area of spend overall was **Children, Families and Education**. Whilst allocations of resources to

Education were seen as sufficient, it was viewed as one which plays a pivotal role in shaping young people's early lives, so further allocation of funding was provided.

The **Adult Services** directorate received the second most amount of funding from participants. All options received slightly more funding, as residents felt it was not only important there were more occupational therapists, but also that older people were supported to stay in their homes with home adaptations.

With regards to **Communities**, the funding and support of the voluntary and community sectors was seen as important, but at the same time participants did not believe it was entirely down to the council to fulfil the responsibilities of the third sector. As with the last two years, no groups elected to spend any more on *Increasing Archive Opening hours*. Overall, the provision of libraries and cultural opportunities was not seen as a relative priority.

The directorate to see the smallest increase in funding was **Environment and Regeneration**. Whilst roads and waste management were seen as priorities, the improvements to country parks, the 'reduce waste campaign' and the support for Parish Council's were not as popular. Only one group from the young age category spent more money on the budget options, suggesting this service is not a high priority for this age range.

Participants felt that they would like to see more innovative ways of informing the public about council tax, and the success of these workshops indicates they would be receptive to such information. For example, many did not realise the council tax has to increase by the same amount as public sector inflation in order to achieve the same amount of spending as last year. They also were keen to see more long term benefits to fund certain initiatives, such as making investments.

The resistance people have to council tax increases was in part because they did not know what the Council does and does not do, although they admit they are in part to blame for this. Were this knowledge improved, KCC's profile as an efficient and transparent authority could be raised, and people may more readily accept increases in council tax.

Consultee Cabinets' 'decisions'

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, EDUCATION	KCC budget option	Sum agreed (average across all groups)
	£m	£m
Three secondary school teachers per district	1.2	0.50
Two primary school teaching assistants per district and 18 new primary school assistants	1.2	0.95
New books for schools (£1,000 per primary school)	0.5	0.17
Sports equipment and encouraging children in sport (£1500 to each school)	0.9	0.15
Extra staff:		
- for the Specialist Teaching Service and	0.6	0.50
- for each Joint Commissioning Team	0.6	0.30
Social services:		
- 12 staff to cope with referrals and	0.4	0.27
- cost of 'looking after children in care above affordable level'	2.0	0.83
SUB-TOTAL	7.4	3.67
ADULT SERVICES		
Three new occupational therapists per district	1.2	0.77
Two new staff per district to visit older people, lonely and on their own	0.6	0.05
Home adaptations	0.6	0.60
Encouraging benefit take-up	0.5	0.23
SUB-TOTAL	2.9	1.65
ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION		
Improvements to 20 county parks and 6,900km rights of way	0.6	0.10
10 more county lengthsman	0.3	0.20
Reduce Waste Campaign	0.3	0.00
Grants to parish councils	0.3	0.00
Increase regularity of some socially necessary bus and public transport services	0.5	0.47
Appointment of four new fly-tipping enforcement teams	0.4	0.20
SUB-TOTAL	2.4	1.07
COMMUNITIES		
Two new community wardens per district	0.8	0.20
Two new handy vans	0.2	0.05
Two new Home Safe vans	0.2	0.08
Three new staff to the Kent Drag and Alcohol Action Team (KDAAT)	0.1	0.16
Libraries		
- more books	0.7	0.12
- increase archive opening hours	0.15	0.00
Community Youth Tutors and grants to youth clubs	1.0	0.42
Sports:		
- Five grants of £2,500 per district for local clubs	0.15	0.10
- Three additional staff members to help prepare for Olympics	0.1	0.02
Forty grants of £5k to arts organisations	0.2	0.30
SUB-TOTAL	3.6	1.18
GRAND TOTAL	16.3	7.46
SUMMARY		
TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENDITURE		7.46
Resultant council tax increase		1.5%
Unavoidable council tax increase		3.0%
TOTAL COUNCIL TAX INCREASE		4.5%

Item 4 - Appendix B

By: Head of Democratic Services

To: Cabinet – 6 February 2008

Subject: **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2008-11
BUDGET 2008/09 COMMENTS FROM POLICY
OVERVIEW AND CABINET SCRUTINY
COMMITTEES**

Classification: Unrestricted

Introduction

1. The Policy Overview Committees and the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee considered the budgets that related to their current areas of responsibility. This report provides a summary of the comments on the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2008-11 and Draft Budget for 2008/09 made at the following meetings:

Communities Policy Overview Committee – 24 January 2008
(Appendix 1) (Pages 13-18)

Corporate Policy Overview Committee – 25 January 2008
(Appendix 2) (Pages 19-21)

Adult Social Services Policy Overview Committee – 29 January
2008 (Appendix 3) (Pages 22-23)

Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee –
30 January 2008 (Appendix 4) (Pages 24-27)

Environment and Regeneration Policy Overview Committee – 31
January 2008 (Appendix 5) (Pages 28-31)

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 1 February 2008 (Appendix 6)
(Page 32)

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Background Documents: *None*

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

**COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE –
24 JANUARY 2008**

**BUDGET 2008-09 AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2008-09 TO
2010-11**

*(Item B4 – Report by Mr Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services
and Ms A Honey, Managing Director)*

1. The Committee considered the Communities Directorate's Draft Budget proposals set out in the Draft Budget 2008-09 and the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2008-2011 and also the report which was circulated specifically relating to the key areas of these documents for Communities.

2. The Cabinet Member and Officers introduced each section of the Revenue Budget and Capital Budget for the Communities Directorate and answered questions raised by Members of the Committee.

3. Mr Hill, Ms Honey, Mr Shipton, Mr Crilley, Ms Slaven, Mr Bainbridge and Ms Edwards answered questions from Members about the following issues:-

MTP 2008/09 to 2010/11

(a) Base Budget Transfers to and from other Portfolios

4. In a response to a question from Mr Christie, Mr Shipton confirmed that after the start of 2008/09 it would not be necessary to transfer funds from other Portfolios to Communities as the transition to the new Communities Directorate would be complete. In reply to a question from Mr Law, Mr Shipton confirmed that £92,000 transfer for 2008/09 was a net figure which included gross expenditure and income.

5. In response to a question from Mr Maddison, Mr Shipton confirmed that the loan to the Adult Education service for the 2006/07 over spend was an internal arrangement between the Finance and Communities portfolios

(b) Pay and Prices

6. In response to a question from Mr Christie, Mr Shipton explained that 2.5% had been provided for in the 2008/09 Budget for all pay groups (including staff in the Kent Scheme and national schemes) and in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2% has been provided for 2009-

2010 and 2010-2011. The amount for 2010/11 is more than 2009/10 to take account of the cumulative effect.

(c) Service Strategies and Improvements

7. In response to a question from Mr Chell, Mr Shipton confirmed that for the specific grants transferring into the main grant settlement i.e. food hygiene, enforcement of intellectual property rights, and animal feed, officers had only been able to identify the same amounts as received in the current year. There was no increase for inflation or additional responsibilities. In relation to enforcement of intellectual property rights, Mr Bainbridge confirmed that nationally £5m of grants were allocated in the current year and the Government has stated this will be increased to £7m next year. However, it has not been possible to identify any additional money in the Revenue Support Grant settlement. There was also meant to be additional money to implement energy performance certificates but it has not been possible to identify this either.

8. In response to a question from Mr Christie, Mr Shipton explained that the cost of early retirements following the restructuring of the library service have been netted off against the saving while the early retirements following the restructuring of the Cultural Development Unit are shown separately. He explained that the reason was the Library saving represented a reduction in net expenditure for the portfolio while the Cultural Development saving was offset against reduced income and was no net saving. He agreed to consider how savings from restructuring and costs of early retirements are presented in future Medium Term Plans to ensure greater consistency.

(d) Income Generation

9. Members were concerned that the proposed increase in fees for Adult Education courses would result in reduced student numbers and therefore have a detrimental affect on gross income. Ms Honey confirmed that the service has carried out an enormous amount of detailed work in this area and agreed to bring a report to the Committee which set out the strategies for Adult Education tuition charges. Mr Shipton agreed that a more accurate wording in relation to Adult Education fees would be "to increase the yield from tuition fees".

10. In response to a question from Mr Christie, Mr Shipton confirmed that some registration fees are statutory and are set by Government, for example, birth and death certificates. Mr Bainbridge confirmed that the proposed increase in fees mainly related to wedding ceremonies conducted in County Council premises and explained the different types of service that the Registration Service was able to provide. In the main the increases relate to ceremonies in Kent's six main Registry offices with the aim of making these self funding over the

next few years. This would require significant increases in fees over time. The proposed increases in fees in KCC venues work out at approximately 47 – 50%, and the proposed increase for commercial venues are 10-11%. Research had shown that KCC venues were popular and therefore it was reasonable to ask people to pay more to ensure the costs of the service were covered. It was noted that there were still a number of choices available to people in relation to wedding venues.

11. In a response to a question from Mr Koowaree, Mr Bainbridge stated that in relation to the registration of births, this service cost more to provide than the County Council was able to get back in statutory fees.

12. In response to a question from Mr Law relating to the figures for income generation for the Youth Service, Mr Shipton confirmed that in the past we have only shown KCC's net contribution towards the running cost of Youth centres. Under the budget proposals for next year it is planned to show the gross cost and all the income generated by centres.

13. In response to a question from Mr Law relating to the figures for income generation for the Youth Service, Mr Shipton confirmed that these were net costs and did not show the increase in gross expenditure and gross income. They only showed KCC's net contribution to the centre. In future the gross costs and income would be shown.

14. Ms Slaven, in relation to a question from Mr Law explained that a room in the Whitstable Youth Centre was used during the day time by the Young Persons Substance Mis-use Team the Young People service (KDAAT) is grant funded and only use the premise core during office hours.

15. In relation to the question on the Youth Offending Service, Ms Slaven replied that the national grant from the Justice Board and the amount the local authority contributed was reflective of the national agreement for the funding of Youth Offending services and no significant change had occurred.

16. Ms Slaven reaffirmed that officers were passionate about increasing the amount of provision for young people. The target of increasing income by the letting of youth centre premises would not be achieved at the expense of reducing the time that young people could use centres. A recent survey of young people had shown that they wanted their centres open for longer periods of time and discussions were being held with colleagues in District Councils and others in order to try to achieve this.

17. Officers agreed to brief Mr Law outside the meeting to clarify the issues he was raising in relation to the Youth Service and Youth

Offending Service and a reconciliation statement on the proposed and presentation changes to income will be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

(e) Efficiency Savings

18. In response to a question from Mr Northey regarding use of computers in libraries, Mr Shipton confirmed that libraries operate an open access policy and that consideration has been given to charging for excessive use but rejected as it would cost as much to collect the charges as the amount raised. Mr Crilley undertook to look at the issue that Mr Northey raised in relation to computer use in a library in Canterbury.

19. In response to a question from Mr Christie, Mr Hill explained that the £120,000 in grants that the Community Safety Unit provided to CDRPs (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships) towards Community Safety Projects and the £60,000 towards Warden projects were something that had been introduced when CDRPs were first set up. At that time CDRPs were poorly funded but now they receive significant funds and therefore this small amount of money put in by KCC was no longer appropriate. He reaffirmed that KCC's priority is the Community Warden Scheme at a cost to KCC of over £3m a year. He confirmed that every CDRP area has its share of Community Wardens which represents a significant contribution on the part of KCC.

20. In response to a question from Mr Chell, Mr Hill confirmed that whether or not the Warden Service received financial assistance from the CDRP depends on the decisions of the individual CDRPs.

21. In response to a question from Mr Christie, Mr Bainbridge confirmed that the Registration Service for births and deaths had a number of sub-offices and it was intended to examine opportunities to relocate services into other Communities facilities e.g. Adult Education centres, thus delivering efficiency savings not reducing the footprint of KCC services. It was a question of looking at the number of offices that we had, where they were located and where it was possible to rationalise. He noted that all registration staff were now KCC employees and KCC thus had more influence over their deployment.

22. Mr Bainbridge also confirmed that the Registration Service has invested in new software which will enable the service to deliver some staffing efficiencies as well as premises savings.

23. In response to a question from Mr Christie, Mr Shipton confirmed that the savings figures for 2009-10 of £2.684m and 2010/11 of £812k were indicative figures only and that the actual figures would need to be agreed as part of the annual budget process for those years.

(f) Budget Book 2008/09

24. In response to a request from Mr Christie, Mr Shipton undertook to supply a comparable figure for Strategic Management in 2007/8. He confirmed that in the 2007/08 budget book the costs of Strategic Management had been apportioned to individual services and that the changed presentation enabled consistent comparison with other portfolios.

(g) Capital Budget

25. Mr Hill undertook to bring a paper on all of the Portfolio's Capital Plans to this Committee within the next six months.

(h) Kent History Centre

26. In response to a question from Mr Law, Mr Hill offered to give a presentation to Policy Overview Committee Members as soon as possible taking into account any commercially sensitive issues at the time.

(i) Village Halls and Community Centres – Capital Grants

27. In response to a question from Mr King, Mr Hill explained that the figure for Village Hall and Community Centres Capital Grants had been £300,000 for a number of years, it had then been increased four years ago to £450,000. However, experience had shown that there had been insufficient applications resulting in an underspend since this figure had been increased, and therefore it is proposed to reduce it back down to the £300,000 per year. Mr Shipton added that the reason only £173k of spend was shown for 2007/08 and £529k planned for 2008/09 was due to slippage of actual payments.

28. Concern was expressed by Members that the high cost of building a village hall and the difficulty of attracting funding from other bodies meant that the £100k cap on KCC contributions resulted in many schemes becoming unviable. Ms Honey agreed to circulate the criteria to Members.

(j) Risk Assessment – MTP Page 54

29. In response to a question from Mr Christie, Ms Honey confirmed that there were a large number of staff within Communities who were employed for less than half time of the time of a full time equivalent, particularly in areas such as the Youth Services, Registration and Adult Education.

30. RESOLVED

- (1) that the Budget 2008-09 and Medium Term Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11 for the Community Services Portfolio be noted along with the responses made to the questions from Members;
- (2) that the Managing Director of Communities and her staff be thanked for their hard work in achieving this proposed budget.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

**CORPORATE POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE –
25 JANUARY 2008**

**BUDGET 2008-09 AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2008-09 TO
2010-11**

(Item B2 –Mr P Carter, Leader, Mr A King, Deputy, Deputy Leader, Mr N Chard, Cabinet Member for Finance, Mr G Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Health, Mr P Gilroy, Chief Executive, Mr A Wood, Head of Financial Management and Mr D Honey, Finance Manager were present for this item))

1. The Committee considered the Chief Executive's Directorate Draft Budget proposals as set out in the Draft Budget 2008-09 and the Draft Medium Term Plan 2008-2011 and also the report which was circulated specifically relating to the key areas of these documents for the Chief Executives Department.

2. Mr Carter, Mr Chard, Mr Gilroy, Mr Wood and Mr Wale answered questions from Members which included the following issues:-

(a) Public Health Budget

3. In a response to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr Wood explained that there was funding for LINKs (Local Involvement Networks) in the Area Based Grant and the increase in public health in the Medium Term Plan was shown on page 105 as a base budget adjustment. Mr Gilroy clarified that £492,000 would be received from Government to establish a contract for the LINKs and the administration had put £300,000 in the budget for signposting Health Watch.

(b) European Affairs Group

4. In response to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr King confirmed that the funding for the European Affairs Group included all international activities such as those relating to China and the USA that KCC were currently aware of.

(c) Dedicated School Grant

5. Mr Wood in response to a question from Mr Smyth explained that a proportion of the dedicated school grant went to the Corporate Centre to cover the support that it gave the Children, Families and Education Directorate, and therefore schools in a variety of ways. This was at the same rate as last year.

(d) Strengthening Communications

6. In response to a question from Mr Smyth, Mr Wood explained that the £175,000 pressure for strengthening and enhancing communication on page 106 in the Medium Term Plan related to the line on Corporate Communications on page 39 of the Budget book which showed an increase in budget from 07/08 to 08/09.

(e) Gateways

7. In response to a question from Mr Simmonds, Mr Gilroy explained that the Gateways Programme was being evaluated as it was rolled out and that it was developed as a 50/50 split between KCC and the district councils with involvement from 40 other partners.

8. Mr Gilroy offered produce a report for the March meeting on Gateways setting out data on their effectiveness and the way that they were evaluated. He also issued an invitation to Members to contact him if they would like to visit one of the Gateways and be shown around.

(f) Localism

9. In response to a question from Mrs Dean relating to the £345,000 in the draft budget for supporting localism, Mr Carter referred to the enhanced Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's) and the Local Area Agreement and emphasised the importance of making sure that there was real partnership working and in order to do that it was necessary to have appropriate officer support. There would be fundamental review of localism and how it was supported.

Mr Wale referred to the visits that the Leader had made to each District Council to discuss localism with their Chief Executive and Leader. He expressed the view that the localism agenda could continue to be delivered by Local Boards or a derivative of them such as Neighbourhood Forums or other ways that District Councils would be happy with.

(g) Reserves

11. In response to a question from Mrs Dean on the adequacy of the levels of reserves, Mr Chard referred Members to the last sentence in Appendix F, page 133 of the Medium Term Plan and stated that the Director of Finance was not recommending any changes in the level of general reserves and the reasons for this were set out in the Medium Term Plan.

(h) Development of Savings for Corporate Support

12. In a response to a question from Ms Harrison, Mr Wood stated that year upon year it became harder to deliver the 3% efficiency

savings. What had been done in Corporate Support was to look at a range of savings in line with the request put to the Policy Overview Committee in November. It had been decided that to assist the process of identifying savings, a peer review of each of the budget areas would be carried out with a peer from another service area looking at an area within Corporate Services with the Financial Support Unit providing data. The process had worked very well and helped to shape savings across the Directorate. The peer review also looked at possibilities of income generation within business units.

13. Mr Gilroy referred to Mr Wild's success with income generation in Legal Services. In the current year he was on track to generate £1m of income.

15. Mr Gilroy explained in more detail about the peer reviews that had been carried out across the authority as part of the building of the budget and invited Members to come and see him if they would like him to explain this in more detail. He also reminded Members that a full "root and branch" review of the authority had been carried out during the restructuring three years ago.

16. RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the Budget 2008-09 and the Medium Term Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11 for the Chief Executives Directorate be noted along with the responses made to the questions from Members;
- (2) that it be noted that a report giving data for the effectiveness of Gateways would be submitted to the March meeting of the Committee.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

**ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
29 JANUARY 2008**

**BUDGET 2008/09 AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2008/09
TO 2010/11**

(Item B2 – Report by Managing Director, KASS)

(1) Mr Lynes praised the excellent work of the KASS staff at headquarters and the frontline over the past year and said how proud he was of them and their work. He emphasised that, despite the £6m efficiency savings the Directorate had had to identify in the Budget report, at a time of great and increasing demand, both he and KASS remained passionate about service delivery and customer care and Members needed to enable them to carry on delivering an excellent service.

(2) Mr Lynes highlighted the achievements of the Directorate over the last year. Kent Adult Social Services was one of only four local authority Adult Social Services Directorates to retain 3-star status every year since the star ratings began, and had retained 'moderate' eligibility criteria for another year when most other authorities had not. Part of Kent's success was its excellent working relationships with partners in Health and the private and voluntary sectors and the joint working initiatives which were in place. KCC had been successful in a number of bids – the Urgent Care Demonstrator, Brighter Futures, POPPs and the Whole System Demonstrator – but it was important to bear in mind that money won via bids was time-limited. He expressed grave concern about the sustainability of these excellent schemes and initiatives once funding for the pilot schemes came to an end. The POC had also commissioned two Select Committees – Transitional Arrangements and Carers in Kent – whose excellent reports would guide and shape future service delivery.

(3) Staffing Levels

In response to a question put by Mrs Green, and concerns raised by Mrs Green and Mrs Newell, Mr Leidecker explained that it was difficult to give a detailed account of all staff vacancies being held across the County at any one time. Staffing situations in the districts varied, but he assured Members that no one district or team would be holding more than one or two care management vacancies at any one time. The Directorate operated a monthly traffic light system to monitor vacancies and sickness levels within each team. These are assessed by senior managers and used to inform recruitment decisions, with 'red' seen as critical. Mr Mills added that, to ensure maximum capacity, the four acute hospitals in the county, at which KASS care managers were employed in-house, were excluded from any management action.

(4) Legal Costs of PFI arrangements

In response to a question from Mrs Newell, Mr Lynes explained that KCC was working together with district councils on a PFI Initiative 'Better Homes, Active Lives'. As the time had approached for the final PFI agreement to be signed, some districts had become reluctant to share in the unknown level of risk ahead and so, to avoid jeopardising the future of the project, KCC had taken on a greater share of the risk.

(5) Maximising Benefits

In response to a question from Mrs Newell, Mr Leidecker explained that the likely savings to the KCC arising from maximising benefits for Kent residents was very difficult to estimate. KCC and its partners had initiatives in place to support Kent residents to claim maximum benefits available; Age Concern, for example, had started clinics to give benefit advice. Miss Goldsmith added that the Internal Audit were due to start an audit on maximisation of benefits. It was anticipated that this would evidence the effectiveness of the work being undertaken on this, and would also show up the effectiveness of the KCC's message. Pilot schemes between KCC and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) were in place, using DWP staff seconded to KCC. The problems of identifying and maximising benefits were attached only to existing service users. New service users would have their benefits maximised from the start of their involvement.

(6) Domiciliary Care Charging

In response to a question from Mrs Newell, Mr Mills explained that, once the new domiciliary care charges had been in place for a whole financial year, they would show up as part of the regular base budget and not as a "change".

(7) RESOLVED that the Budget proposals for the Directorate be noted and agreed, and Members' concerns (on staffing levels) expressed in paragraph (3) above be taken into account when preparing the final Budget for ratification by the County Council.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION POLICY OVERVIEW
COMMITTEE**

30 JANUARY 2008

**BUDGET 2008-09 AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2008-09 TO
2010-11**

(Item B2 –Mr P Carter, Leader, Mr M Dance, Cabinet Member – Operations, Resources and Skills, Mr C Wells, Cabinet Member – Children, Families and Educational Achievement, Mr G Badman, Managing Director – Children, Families and Education, Mr K Abbott - Director, Finance and Corporate Services and Mr G Ward – Director, Resources were present for this item)

1. The Committee considered the Children, Families and Education Directorate's Draft Budget proposals set out in the Draft Budget 2008-09 and the Draft Medium Term Plan 2008-2011 and also a report circulated with the agenda which specifically related to the key areas of these documents for Children, Families and Education Directorate.

2. Mr Carter, Mr Dance, Mr Wells, Mr Badman, Mr Abbott and Mr Ward answered questions from Members which included the following issues:-

(a) Income 2008-09

3. In a response to a question from Mr Law on why the income for the two portfolios had not grown in comparison with the gross figure for funding, Mr Abbott briefly explained that one of the key issues with the Dedicated Schools Grant was that the creation of academies reduced this figure. Mr Abbott undertook to supply a detailed response to this.

(b) Council Tax

5. In response to a question from Mr Law, Mr Abbott explained that the majority of funding for education came from the Dedicated School's Grant and therefore there was no top up from the Council Tax.

(c) Dedicated Schools Grant

6. In response to questions from Mr Vye, Mr Abbott confirmed that in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant for the next three years, officers had been advising schools for over a year that this round of funding would be challenging. He stated that the teachers pay award

would probably mean a 3%-4% increase on the pay bill which may vary locally. Mr Abbott went on to explain that the Ministerial Priorities money would be directed to schools in line with DCSF aims. He expressed the view that the funding for schools would be tighter in 2009/10 than during 2008/09 and he anticipated the need to work with schools to make sure that they did not go into deficit in the second year.

7. Mr Dance stated that the Schools Funding Forum was still considering how funds were to be divided and he undertook to let Members have the information from the Forum when it was available. In relation to Ministerial Priorities, he stated that these were more flexible this year which was helpful.

8. Mr Badman expressed disappointment that the Ministerial Priorities funding was not hypothecated as it was an important tool to drive change.

(d) Strategic Management and Managing Directors Officer and Democratic Services

9. In response to a question from Mr Hart, in relation to the figures for Strategic Management for 2008-09 of £1.8m on page 6 of the Budget Book and Managing Director's Office and Democratic Services of £1.949m on page 13 of the Budget Book, Mr Abbott explained that the Senior Management Team figure the budget for Cabinet Members support, Occupational Health recharge to support schools. As part of the Revenue Budget Medium Term Plan process, officers were always looking for options for savings and as part of the normal monitoring process, these back office areas were particularly kept under review.

10. Mr Wells stated that Members had to bear in mind the size of the educational operation which was run and supported in Kent. He stated that he believed that in relation to the size of the budget, the figure for strategic management was not out of proportion.

(e) Development Opportunities

11. In response to a question from Mr Newman relating to how much of Capital Receipts arising from the sale of school land went to the school. Mr Ward explained that 100% of the money made from these sales (excluding fees and charges) went to the specific school to reinvest. He informed Members that in the past schools had the luxury of being able to borrow money from the local authority to enable them to replace facilities before the disposal of land took place. This was in effect an interest free loan to the school there was now an expectation that if money needed to be borrowed in relation to the scheme, interest would be charged to the school or the local authority as relevant.

(f) Sponsorship of Academies

12. In response to a question from Mr Newman, Mr Ward referred Members to page 11 of the Budget Book which listed the different levels of sponsorship for the academies.

13. In response to a question from Mr Maddison on Dartford College Campus and the joint working between the Children, Families and Education Directorate and Communities Directorate in relation to the youth facility remaining on the site, Mr Carter confirmed that the new school would be happy to share their facilities when they were completed. He stated that 100% of the capital receipt from the Youth Centre site would go to Communities Directorate. It had been difficult to find a solution for the Youth and Community Centre and therefore the development of the school had to go ahead without this being resolved.

(g) Broadband Connectivity

14. In response to a question from Mr Harrison, Mr Ward confirmed that the Government grant for Broadband Connectivity had changed and it was no longer necessary for matched funding to be provided. Funding had been made available to the authority to offer a core free broadband package to all schools. KCC had decided that to offer all schools a free core broadband service with the option to pay extra for more capacity. Therefore, to the school this level of service was provided free by KCC utilising a Government grant of approximately £5m per annum.

(h) Events Officer

15. In response to a question from Mr Harrison, on the dedicated events office support that the Directorate had rather than using the Corporate Events team, Mr Badman gave details of the level of conference's that the Directorate supported by the Children, Families and Education Directorate which required dedicated support.

(i) Academy Projects – Page 11 – Budget Book

16. In response to a question from Mr Desmoyers-Davis, Mrs Hodges replied that the process for establishing an academy was defined by the DCSF and no decision would be made on the establishment of any academy until the consultation and feasibility process had been carried out. There was no guarantee that the academy would be established until the Minister actually signed the funding agreement. Mr Ward stated that as the authority was aware of various proposals to establish academies that were going through their feasibility stage and there it was prudent to include provision for these in the budget.

(j) Portfolio Plans

17. In response to Mrs Angell, Mr Wells stated that he would look with his Cabinet colleague at ensuring that reference to the Every Child Matters outcomes, was reflected in both of the CF&E portfolio statements in the Medium Term Plan.

(k) Children Centres/Sure Start Funding

18. In response to a question from Mrs Angell relating to funding for the nine existing Sure Start Centres, Mr Wells stated that the original nine Sure Start Centres were well funded by Government and KCC were currently in a transition period of moving to a large number of children's centres which would not so generously funded as the original Centres. Mr Badman stated that as there were other children's centres in the area of the original Sure Start Centres, it was appropriate to spread the funding across all of the centres which would deliver integrated services including, for example, advice from the Department of Works and Pensions. Mr Badman mentioned that the Council had put £7m into the budget in addition to the Capital Grant received from Government to provide children's centres

19. RESOLVED

(1) that the Budget 2008-09 and Medium Term Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11 for the Children, Families and Education Directorate be noted along with the responses made to the questions from Members;

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION POLICY OVERVIEW
COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2008**

**Budget 2008-09 and Medium Term Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11 and
Financial Monitoring Update 2007-08**

Item B1

(Mr K A Ferrin, MBE, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste, Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence, Mr A Wilkinson, Managing Director Environment & Regeneration, Mr B Gould, Strategic Finance Advisor and Mr N Caddick, Resource Manager were present for this item)

(1) Members had before them the draft 2008/09 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2008/09 to 2010/11 together with an update of the current position in the current year.

(2) The report specifically covered the Cabinet Member portfolios for Environment, Highways and Waste and Regeneration and Supporting Independence.

(3) In introducing the report Mr Gould referred to the last meeting of the Policy Overview Committee which outlined the Medium Term Plan priorities. This report showed the revenue gross expenditure, income and net expenditure, as contained in Appendices 1 and 2. It also included the Capital Investment Programme in Appendices 3 and 4.

(4) The Committee were informed that the 2008/09 draft Revenue Budget for Environment, Highways and Waste reflected nearly a 15% increase on the current financial year on a "like for like" basis. Attention was drawn specifically to the £5 million injection into Highway maintenance works and a £4 million injection for the expansion of the current year pilot of the "Freedom Pass".

(5) The Committee noted that within the 2008/09 draft Revenue Budget for Regeneration and Supporting Independence there was a transfer in of the Supporting Independence Programme budget of £1 million including Towards 2010 target funding.

(6) Within the Capital Medium Term Financial Plan the Local Transport Plan settlement from government offered a £37m programme of capital maintenance and integrated transport, though with a marked reduction in grant. The proposals before the Committee reflected a full take up of the offer. The programme also reflected a substantial investment in Waste Infrastructure (some £30m over the

Medium Term Financial Plan) and expected starts on East Kent Access Phase 2 and schemes in the Kent Thameside Growth Area.

(7) Turning to the current year's budget the Committee's specific attention was drawn to the underspend in the Revenue Budget on Waste which was due to the non operation of the Allington Plant. Paragraph 9 of the report before the Committee explained the movements in budget heads since the report to the Cabinet on 3 December 2007 which was attached as Appendix 5. The current underspend forecast was £2.465 million. It would be necessary to make further calls on the corporate centre's Emergency Conditions Reserve due to the gales and floods in recent weeks.

(8) With regard to the Regeneration and Supporting Independence portfolio there had been little movement in the budget heads from that reported to Cabinet on 3 December 2007.

(9) The Committee noted that the Capital Programme had seen significant rephasing into future years, as reported to Cabinet. The latest position indicated that further rephasing would be necessary. Every effort was being made to reduce the rephasing on Highways work programmes.

(10) For the Regeneration and Supporting Independence portfolio the forecast showed an increased spend from the report to Cabinet and that expenditure related to the EuroKent spine road.

(11) Mr Gough informed the Committee that much of the regeneration activity goes on through other portfolios. Part of the new Regeneration Strategy and associated restructuring was to ensure better co-ordination of these activities

(12) Mr Ferrin, Mr Gough and Mr Wilkinson then responded to a number of questions from Members which included the following issues:-

Produced in Kent

(13) Mr Gough informed the Committee of the Joint Venture with Hadlow College around 'Produced in Kent'

Current Financial Year Capital Programme

(14) In response to a question about the £2.117m underspend on this financial year's Highways Maintenance and Integrated Transport Scheme Capital Programme the response was that every effort will be made to reduce this re-phasing in the current year.

Congestion

(15) Several Members asked questions about the priorities for reducing congestion across Kent. The Committee noted the work which had been undertaken in Maidstone and the continued work on the Maidstone bridge gyratory system which would need some re-siting of assets owned by EDF Energy. Acknowledging the work already undertaken to reduce congestion in Maidstone town centre the question was asked whether there was any likelihood that the town centre would become an air quality management area.

(16) Priorities after Maidstone were Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells.

(17) After Tunbridge Wells the expected priorities were Thanet and Dartford and Gravesham. The Committee noted that Dartford and Gravesham would be treated as a single area.

(18) The Committee were informed of the ongoing dialogue with the Department of Transport regarding the A2 slip roads at Canterbury and the impact that this would have on reducing congestion within Canterbury city centre.

(19) The inclusion of Kent Thameside in the list of priority plans to reduce congestion was welcomed but the comment was made that much of the problem in this area was relating to roads which were managed by the Highways Agency and not the County Council.

(20) In acknowledging the list of priorities for addressing congestion issues for particular urban areas the question was raised when other areas would be included in the list, for example Sittingbourne and Dover.

Freedom Pass

(21) Members asked about the robustness of the financial figures in terms of the number of persons using the Freedom Pass and whether the scheme when extended across the county would become even more popular. The response was that estimates for the take up of the Freedom Pass as a pilot had far exceeded what was anticipated and that included estimates made by the transport operators for the pilot areas as well. However, the volume increase within the pilot had not created a comparable cost increase. It was therefore felt that the County Council could expect to see an uplift in the use of the Freedom Pass. The Committee noted the synergy between the Freedom Pass and the potential to reduce congestion.

Economic development

(22) One Member expressed the view that the budget was not as substantive for economic development as maybe it should be and

cited a number of countywide initiatives where he felt that the activity could be co-ordinated more effectively through an economic development function.

(23) In response the Committee noted that economic development had for a long time been undertaken by the County Council as a discretionary function. The Committee noted that economic development was planned to be a statutory duty in the future.

RESOLVED:-

(24) That the draft Budget for the Environment, Highways and Waste and Regeneration and Supporting Independence portfolios for 2008/09 and the Medium Term Plan 2008/09 to 2010/11 and the forecast position for the current year's revenue and capital budgets be noted together with the responses made to the questions from Members of the Committee.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1 FEBRUARY 2008

Draft Medium Term Plan 2008-11 (Incorporating the Budget and Council Tax Setting for 2008/09)

Item 3

(Mr N J D Chard, Cabinet Member for Finance; Mr A Wood, Head of Financial Management; and Mr B Smith, Group Manager, Financial Planning and Budget, were present for the discussion on this item)

RESOLVED that:-

(a) Mr Chard, Mr Wood and Mr Smith be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Members' questions; and they and the staff concerned be thanked for the work put into the preparation of the Budget, and congratulated on producing it in such a clear and easy-to-read form.

(b) The Council be congratulated on achieving Level 4 in the Audit Commission's recently-published Use of Resources Assessment.

(c) The Council be congratulated on its entrepreneurial initiative and innovative ways of increasing income, which had allowed Council Tax and charges to clients to be kept to a minimum.

(d) The apparent increases in "strategic management" costs in many Directorates be noted and the Cabinet Member for Finance be requested to provide a detailed breakdown of those costs.