

To: Cabinet

From: Keith Ferrin, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways, and Waste,
Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting
Independence,
Adam Wilkinson, Managing Director of Environment &
Regeneration

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Subject: **Environment & Regeneration Directorate Review**

Classification: Unrestricted

This paper provides an update on the ongoing organisational review of Environment and Regeneration.

1. Introduction

As outlined in a previous paper to Cabinet, entitled *Regeneration Strategy for KCC*, it is intended to produce a KCC strategy for regeneration to be published in April 2008.

This strategy will build on the strong existing commitment to economic development and regeneration outlined in existing policy documents. At the same time it will respond to strong external influences currently being exerted on the economic development agenda.

In particular the sub-national review (SNR) of economic development provides an opportunity to reassert sub-regional influence at the County level and considers:

- the degree to which existing sub-national delivery arrangements have contributed to regional economic performance and regeneration goals;
- the most appropriate level to locate responsibility for intervention on economic development, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal;
- the need to reduce overlap and improve co-ordination between national, pan-regional, sub-regional and local agencies and,
- the institutional barriers currently hindering more effective co-ordination of policy decisions and service delivery.

The timing therefore of this organisational review allows maximum advantage to be taken of the changing policy landscape. In particular it is about being fit for purpose in terms of responding to the proposal to “empower all local authorities to promote economic development and neighbourhood renewal”:

- through statutory economic duty;
- increased financial incentive;
- increased delegation of funding from RDAs to local authorities and,
- building local authority capacity to deliver these responsibilities.

2. Context of future structure

Central to the future is to maintain and strengthen the interface between the Directorate, other parts of KCC, District Councils, the Regional Development Agency, and other agencies such as Locate in Kent and Kent Tourism Alliance. Economic Development services are only the tip of the regeneration iceberg. Mainstream services – such as, planning, education, transport, leisure, arts & culture, housing etc can play a crucial role in fostering or sustaining economic vitality for people and places. Similarly, council's policies and practice in purchasing goods and services, and in managing their considerable assets, have an economic impact.

What does this mean for Kent in 2008? Economic development and Regeneration has to be positioned as a paramount corporate objective which every Directorate needs to understand and sign up to from their own perspectives and every Directorate has to deliver against.

Putting regeneration at the centre is therefore a challenge for KCC, not just a challenge for the Environment and Regeneration Directorate. It is a challenge that needs to start with articulating greater clarity about regeneration objectives for Kent. And then being clear about the contribution KCC will choose to make in achieving those objectives and the funding and resources that will be made available. Only then can a conclusion be reached about how best to package services to give the most efficient and effective way to ensure focussed and consistent delivery.

3. Restructure Proposals

In order to increase Environment & Regeneration's strategic capacity, it is proposed that a new **Regeneration Division** be formed. This new Division will strengthen the Directorate's existing strategy and policy functions and will play a key role in positioning Kent at the forefront of regeneration at regional, national and international level. The Division will provide a strategic overview of all regeneration activity across Kent and will be accountable to the proposed KCC Regeneration Board¹, regularly reporting KCC's progress in delivery of the Regeneration Strategy for KCC. Acting in a client role, Regeneration Division will operate a programme management approach to ensure effective project delivery within both Environment & Regeneration and elsewhere in KCC.

A new **Development Division** will be tasked to deliver the key catalytic regeneration projects which cannot readily be handled within the Directorate's two operational divisions (see next section) or elsewhere within KCC. The Development Division will operate on a primarily spatial basis aligned to the Regeneration Strategy. Teams will typically be multi-disciplinary with professionals coming together from development, planning, legal, procurement and others as appropriate and will consequently rely heavily upon full and effective support from other KCC Directorates. The projects being handled by the existing Regeneration & Economy division are being reviewed in the light of the emerging priorities of the Regeneration Strategy for KCC.

The Directorate will have two major operational divisions – *Environment & Waste* and *Kent Highway Services*. The focus of these divisions will be to provide excellent front-line service delivery to the people of Kent. These divisions will have a vital role in delivering overarching objectives of the Regeneration Strategy for KCC. The primary focus is on enhancing the overall natural and built environment, improving the health and safety of Kent's residents and reducing the fear of crime through their mutually complementary activities in Kent's streets and countryside. Through their combined local community engagement and strong presence, these operational divisions will work closely with District and other partners to engender citizen pride of place. In due course, a re-branding strategy will be evolved to ensure high visibility of both Environment and Transport operational teams across Kent. An internal review of all units is underway to determine where there are synergies between particular teams, which might result in moves of units between the two new divisions.

To support the functional restructuring of the Directorate described above, at the heart of Environment & Regeneration will sit a new Resources division. All resource functions currently located within divisions will be managed centrally in terms of their overall co-ordination to assure equity and consistency of approach and to improve resource allocation across the directorate. Performance and quality management, business support, finance and procurement capability will be reviewed and strengthened.

A new organisational development programme was initiated during November 2007. It will build on the existing good practice of the corporate programmes that are currently embedded in the work of KCC across the board. Excellence in Everything will refine the Directorate's central methodologies and processes based on best practice in the areas of marketing and communications (including community engagement and consultation), equalities, health & safety, learning and development, quality management (including business improvement and value for money) and ICT.

4. Financial Implications

The intention is to absorb any costs arising from the restructuring of Environment & Regeneration within the Directorate's existing budget.

5. Timeframe

The intention is to have the new structure in place by May 2008, in parallel with the publication of the new Kent Regeneration Strategy and its first annual action plan.

6. Recommendations

Cabinet members are asked to note this report and to actively support the functional restructuring of Environment & Regeneration Directorate.

Contact

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Background Documents

Department for Communities & Local Government (July 2007) *Review of sub-national economic development & regeneration*, HM Treasury