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To: Corporate Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 24 September 2010

Subject: Core Monitoring Report

Classification: Unrestricted

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform members on key areas of performance and activity across the authority.

FOR INFORMATION

1. Introduction

The first Core Monitoring report was reported to Cabinet on 13th September. The report includes graphs and commentaries on a wide range of indicators, covering key activity and performance relating to the main services provided by the council.

Each Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee is receiving the section of the report relevant to their remit.

2. Core Monitoring Information

Indicators within the Core Monitoring report are presented with historic trends shown by graph, a RAG (Red/Amber/Green) status, a DoT (Direction of Travel rating) and a commentary.

A summary of the RAG ratings by indicator is provided at the start of the Core Monitoring report in the contents and summary pages, along with an explanation of how the RAG ratings and DoT ratings are arrived at.

The RAG and DoT ratings are always based on the quarterly data except where the indicator is only provided with annual figures.

To show how the position has changed from the most recent quarter compared to the previous quarter, RAG ratings and DoT ratings for the previous quarter are also shown, although this information has not previously been reported.

For most indicators the data presented in the Core Monitoring shows two graphs, these being in most cases :

- a. Performance trends on a financial quarterly basis with up to three year's historic data shown
- b. Annual performance with comparison to national benchmarks with up to five year's history shown.

Other graph formats are used for some indicators where it is not possible or suitable to use the above format. For example, information relating to academic results at schools can only be presented with annual data and other schools-related information is reported on a termly basis rather than by financial quarter.

The commentaries provided with each indicator are intended to help clarify the information presented in order to assist interpretation.

3. Data Quality and Interpretation

Much of the quarterly data included in the Core Monitoring has the status of management information, which has generally not been put into the public domain before.

Please be aware that data for the most recent quarters is provisional and may be subject to revisions at a later date. However, in all cases the most recent data presented is of sufficient accuracy to provide a reliable indicator of trends either positive or negative.

In some cases it is not possible to present data for the most recent financial quarter (end of June 2010) within this report. In all cases the most recently available data is shown.

Where annual data is presented with national benchmarks, in all cases this information is taken from nationally published information already in the public domain. Sources for this information are generally government departments, such as the Department of Education for pupil attainment, and such data usually comes within the remit of National Statistics.

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

4. Future Reporting

Further Core Monitoring reports will follow on a quarterly basis.

Presentation of this data in this format is new and we are interested in what people have to say on it. It is part of our transparency agenda so it is important that it provides clear understanding.

We will develop more meaningful comparative data in future reports that includes the most relevant comparator groups. We will also include a full set of data tables to aid better understanding and clarity on the graphs.

The content of the Core Monitoring will also need to change in the future to reflect the priorities in 'Bold Steps for Kent' which is current under development.

5. Recommendation

Members are asked to NOTE this report.

Contact officers: Sue Garton & Richard Fitzgerald, Performance Management, Chief Executives Dept