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To: Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee 10th September 2008

Subject: CPA Corporate Assessment outline improvement plan

1. Summary

In response to the CPA Corporate Assessment report, published on June 3rd 2008, a draft Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) following the comments and conclusions of the CA report will be considered by the Corporate Policy Overview Committee on September 26th. That report (as amended following the meeting) will then be considered by the full County Council meeting in December.

A copy of the Corporate Assessment report is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Overall assessment

Despite the CPA Corporate Assessment framework having been made a 'harder test' by the Audit Commission, Kent County Council emerged with an overall score of 4 out of 4 – one of only two County Councils to have done so in both rounds of Corporate Assessment – Hampshire being the other. The Lead Inspector from the Audit Commission stated that in effect a 4 in 2002 was worth only a 2 under the 'harder test', so KCC's 2008 score is a reflection of continued improvement over the last 6 years.

The Executive Summary of the report begins with:-

Kent County Council (KCC) is performing strongly. It has, with its partners, been early and active in developing clear and appropriate ambitions and priorities to meet the strategic challenges facing the county. The Council often leads beyond the norm for local government and is an outstandingly effective advocate for Kent at all levels including internationally. Well-established partnership work is bringing real improvements to quality of life for local people. Ground-breaking recent pilot projects embrace new technology and aim to personalise services. The Council has for ten years been seeking excellence and its organisation is impressive, high-quality, responsive and gives good value-for-money.

Throughout every section of the report there are comments and conclusions on the strengths of KCC, of the vision, drive, ambition and delivery, not just of KCC but of its work with partners. Nevertheless there are always ways in which KCC can improve what it does, as was acknowledged in KCC's self assessment and in the evidence shared with inspectors.

3. Building on Success: the Performance Improvement Plan

The draft PIP will set out in summarised form the inspectors comments and the proposed response, including the means of monitoring future progress. It will not confine the 'areas for improvement' solely to those shown on page 8 of the report

under that heading, in reflects comments made throughout the body of the report (in each case referring back to the specific paragraph in which the comment is made).

In the majority of cases, the proposed actions and monitoring relate to existing commitments and processes so as to avoid additional bureaucracy solely for the purpose of responding to the report.

Many of the inspectors' comments reflect issues which KCC identified as requiring improvement and the PIP provides a simple means of tracking progress. Detailed implementation will be set out in the relevant service unit business plan or strategy, with overall progress monitored via the PIP.

The PIP will be set out under a number of themes and in each case distinguish between improvement work which is established or ongoing and areas where fresh action is required.

In the most cases, action under the themes listed below will support preparations for the introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) from April 2009 and so the PIP is not simply reacting to the Corporate Assessment, it anticipates the demands of CAA.

Areas for Improvement

The comments and recommendations of the inspection team are grouped under seven themes:-

1. **Community engagement**
2. **Communications**
3. **Relationship management**
4. **Member roles**
5. **Workforce development**
6. **Corporate practice/processes**
7. **Service improvement**

In 6 of the 7 themes the comments and actions do not relate to a single service Directorate, they require action by KCC as a whole, led sometimes by the Chief Executive's Department, sometimes by one of the services Directorates.

In each theme the PIP tables distinguish between:-

A - Monitoring	<i>Work currently being done where the changes suggested affect how that work is monitored</i>
B - Improvement	<i>Work currently being done that needs improving to be more effective</i>
C - New	<i>Work that isn't currently underway or planned</i>
D - In hand	<i>Work that KCC already has underway or has completed since the assessment took place</i>

Throughout the PIP there will be a commitment to increased reporting on performance, progress and impact to the relevant POC, although detailed proposals in relation to this will need to take account of the reports of the Informal Member

Group on Information to Members and of the Select Committee on Accessing Democracy.

As the preparations for CAA develop there will also be further proposals on the role of KCC POCs in relation to the performance of the Kent Partnership and its Working Groups, which as this stage are not proposals in the PIP as the final framework for CAA is still under consultation.

4. Recommendations

Members are asked to note this report

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