

Kent County Council

Core Monitoring Report

Extract from Paper presented to Cabinet 29 November 2010

**Including Information up to the end of
September 2010**



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General notes on interpreting the data included in this report

A wide selection of indicators for the core areas of activity and performance of the council is included in this report, as well as some contextual indicators relating to the Kent economy. Indicator values are shown by graph and data tables, including Direction of Travel and RAG ratings (see tables below for a key to interpreting these).




A range of presentation styles are provided for different indicators depending on the information available. In some cases we provide the most recent results for the last four financial year quarters, while for other indicators we provide annual data for the last few years with the most recent two quarter's data also shown.

Where relevant and available, the indicators are provided with comparative data showing national averages or other suitable benchmark information. See the Appendix for more information on the comparative benchmarks used.




It should be noted that annual data provided in this report (ie a full financial year up to and including financial year 2009/10 which ended on March 2010), is generally validated data which is public domain and available in many cases within the remit of national statistics.

However, quarterly data provided in this report and all information subsequent to March 2010 is classed as provisional local management information which in some cases is provided on an estimated basis. This data is likely to be subject to future revisions.

Key to RAG (Red/Amber/Green) ratings

		RAG Ratings
Green		Performance exceeds local targets where set or is significantly better than the most recently published national average/benchmark
Amber		Performance not significantly different from most recently published national average or close to but not exceeding local targets
Red		Performance significantly behind local targets where set or significantly worse than the most recently published national average
N/a		Data not available in order to assess performance

Key to DoT (Direction of Travel) ratings

		DoT Ratings
		Improvement in performance or change in activity levels with a positive impact on budgets and resources
		Fall in performance or change in activity levels with a negative impact on budget and resources
		No change in performance or activity levels

KCC Core Monitoring

Group Managing Director's Commentary

This is our second Core Monitoring report for 2010/11. It provides information for the second financial quarter up to the end of September 2010. As well as the key indicators reported each quarter, this report also provides a mid-year stock take on some key projects and actions within our service business plans.

The publication of this report is part of our transparency agenda, making the information and data we use as an organisation more open to public scrutiny. We are interested to hear what residents think of this information and how we could improve it to make it more relevant and easy to understand.

Some key highlights from this quarter's report are:

Customer Services

- Residents are making good use of Kent's new Gateway facilities to access public services. Transaction levels at our 7 outlets continue to increase each quarter.
- Our contact centre and location switchboards answered more than 85% of the 270,000 calls received within 20 seconds. This is slightly down from last quarter but well ahead of target.
- The number of complaints received this quarter was lower than last quarter, but still higher than last year. See the 'You said - We did' section of our web site for how we have improved our services in response to customer feedback.

Services for all residents

- Our Find & Fix highways repair programme has now completed. This means that a significant backlog of pothole repairs have now been dealt with. Pothole response times for the quarter show as very long, due to the data including a backlog of repairs from much earlier in the year.
- Recycling levels in Kent are not showing any increase but diversion of waste from landfill continues to improve.
- The level of serious injury due to road traffic accidents continues to reduce.
- The level of library visits has held up well despite a number of temporary closures to various libraries due to refurbishment as part of our modernising libraries programme, but book issues are down.

Children and young people

- Kent children are now performing extremely well at Foundation stage and for GCSE their performance continues to exceed the national average.
- We continue to experience increasing rates of referrals to children social services.
- Children's social worker vacancy rates continue to reduce.
- We have exceeded our target for take up of Apprenticeship offers.
- Continued reduction in the number of young people becoming involved in crime and being referred to the youth justice system.

Services for adults and older people

- Adult education enrolments continue to exceed target, although levels have dropped this quarter.

- We continue to deliver more personalised adult social services with the successful roll-out of Self Directed Support, giving people control and choice over the support we provide, through the allocation of Personal Budgets.
- We are experiencing upward demand to support older people who require nursing care but this is within affordable budgeted levels, and expected due to demographic changes.
- Similar pressures are being experienced for clients with learning disability who require residential care.

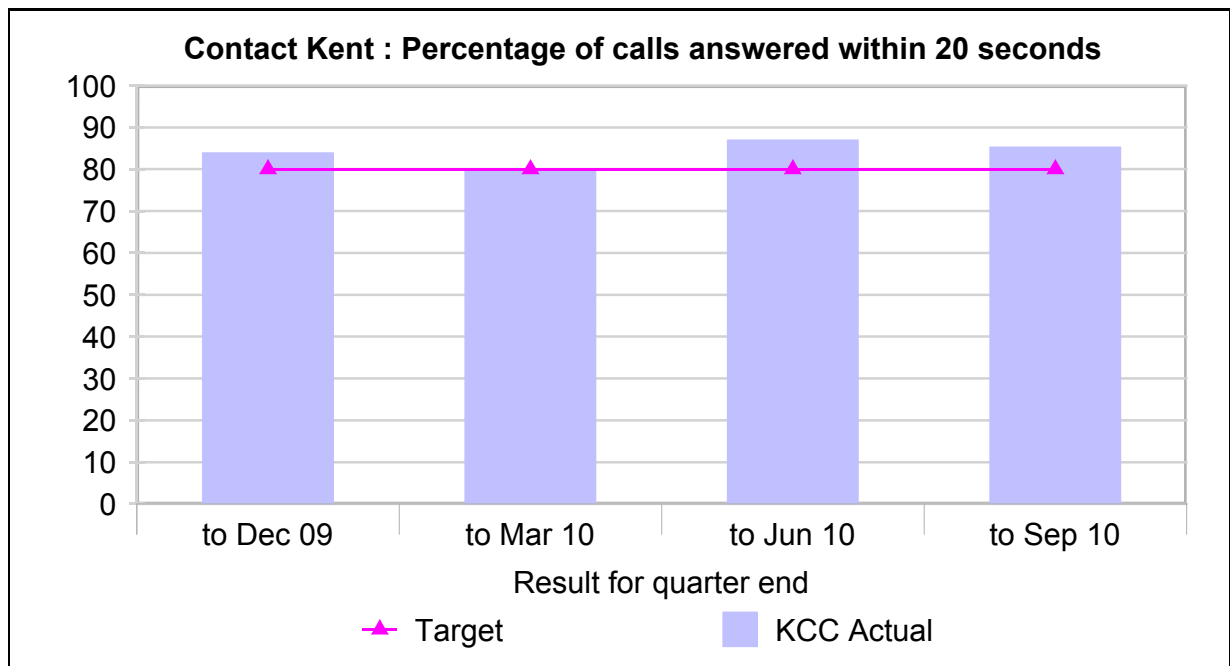
Support for Businesses

- We continue to work hard on our Backing Kent Business campaign to help support local businesses through the worst recession seen in decades.

Environment

- We have made good progress in reducing carbon emissions from our direct estate but emissions from school buildings have been increasing.

**Katherine Kerswell
Group Managing Director
Kent County Council**



Higher value is better	Quarter end Dec 09	Quarter end Mar 10	Quarter end Jun 10	Quarter end Sept 10
KCC Result	83.9%	79.6% ↓	87.0% ↑	85.3% ↓
Target	80%	80%	80%	80%
RAG Rating	★	●	★	★
Calls received	269,000	304,000	261,000	270,000

Contact Kent currently supports 87 different services on a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year basis. The range of services provided includes library book renewals, reporting pot-holes, arranging temporary housing for Maidstone residents and handling reporting of child protection concerns for both new and existing cases. This requires a high level of customer service skills, dealing with different needs and conversing with a wide range of callers. The services with the highest volumes of calls received are Libraries, Highways and Registrations.

Contact Kent continues to perform well with 85.3% of the 270,000 calls received in the last quarter being answered within 20 seconds.

Detailed performance information is as follows :

	2009 Full year	2010 To date
Percentage of calls that were answered	94%	95%
Average wait time	15 seconds	12 seconds
Average abandon time	57 seconds	1 min 2 sec

Gateways

Transactions	Jul - Sep 09	Oct – Dec 09	Jan – Mar 10	Apr – Jun 10	Jul – Sep 10
Ashford	8,893	8,461	8,829	11,126	12,958
Dover	5,944	8,239	11,514	11,780	11,735
Maidstone	12,035	10,576	13,244	12,652	16,742
Tenterden	5,291	4,534	4,633	6,030	4,987
Thanet	25,152	21,835	29,807	33,586	32,385
Tonbridge	10,381	9,246	15,991	17,640	21,029
Tunbridge Wells	14,720	11,927	17,516	13,409	11,999
TOTAL	82,416	74,818	101,534	106,223	111,835

Variations between quarters reflect seasonal variations and other changes to services offered/advertised at any given time.

Footfall	Jul – Sep 09	Oct – Dec 09	Jan – Mar 10	Apr – Jun 10	Jul – Sep 10
Ashford	16,341	16,607	17,495	22,103	24,735
Tenterden	47,883	59,653	61,209	56,940	63,672
Thanet	116,483	99,386	109,813	104,764	121,012
Tunbridge Wells	Not available	27,840	34,018	30,952	28,407
TOTAL	180,707	203,486	222,535	214,759	237,816

The Tunbridge Wells footfall counter was installed in September 2009. Counters are not currently installed at Maidstone, Dover or Tonbridge. Thanet and Tenterden Gateway footfall includes library visitors but library transactions are not counted under Gateways.

Gateways have had a busy quarter with transaction levels continuing to increase. Many transactions are processed through the Meet and Greet function (26%) or as routine transactions (27%). The benefits section takes the most specific enquires (36%).

Gateway is working with Gravesham Borough Council to develop the Gravesend Gateway at the Civic Centre, which is expected to open in autumn 2010.

Complaints Monitoring

Service area	Apr – Jun 10	Jul – Sept 10	Current year Apr - Sep	Previous year Apr - Sep
Kent Highway Services (KHS)	534	532	1,066	328
Adult Social Services	139	126	265	213
Children, Families & Education	131	104	235	229
Environment & Waste	103	102	205	193
Risk Management & Insurance	96	49	145	41
Community Learning & Skills	32	49	81	17
Other services	31	29	60	65
Commercial Services	11	27	38	33
Libraries & Archives	45	25	70	235
Youth Service	5	12	17	57
Supporting People	8	12	20	15
Total	1,135	1,067	2,202	1,426

During 2009/10, lessons learned from complaints received have been published within the '**You said, we did**' section of the kent.gov website to illustrate the changes that are made as a direct result of complaints

The total number of complaints received for the quarter to September was slightly down from the previous quarter with the risk management and insurance section showing a large drop in the number of complaints being now being received in relation to delays in processing insurance claims for pothole damage.

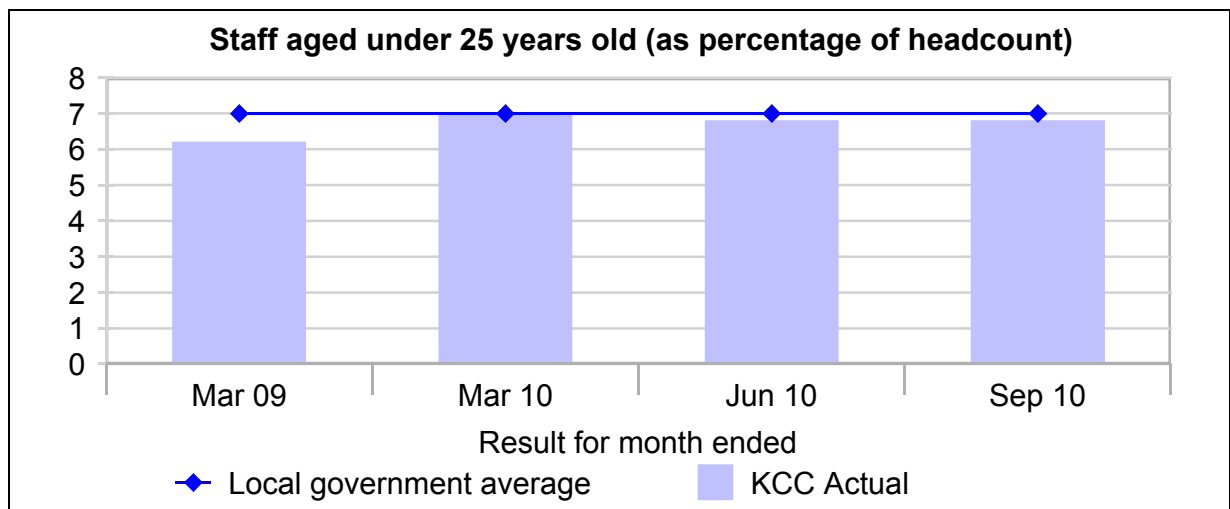
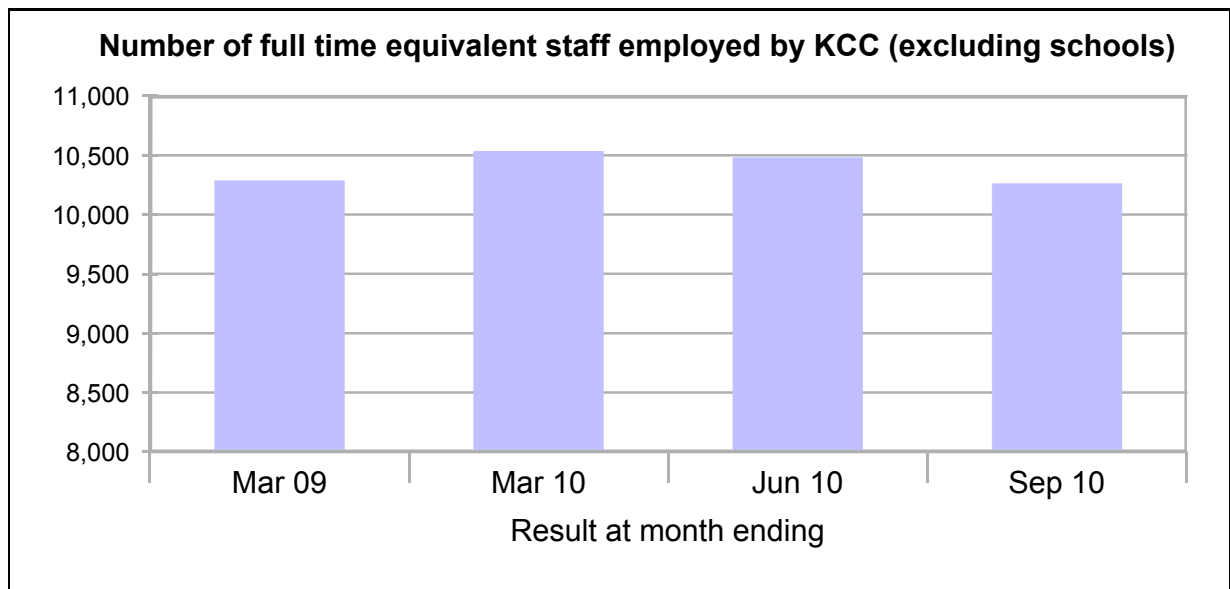
So far this financial year we have received 54% more complaints than for the same period for last financial year, although some services are seeing less complaints. However the number of complaints is currently lower than it was during the last winter (2,475 complaints in the six months October to March).

In part the increased level of complaints this year will be down to initiatives such as 'You said, we did' where we actively encourage residents to make complains to help us improve our services. However the main cause for the increase in complaints has been in relation to problems with the condition of the roads as explained below.

KHS received over 1,000 complaints during the first half of this financial year from over 90,000 enquiries received. This compares to 328 complaints in the same period last year from 50,000 enquires. The increase was primarily as a result of the extremely harsh winter conditions that led to severe damage to the road network and fuelled concerns from residents about the time to repair potholes and dealing with the significant increase in insurance claims.

KHS have now addressed the backlog of faults which led to the increase in complaints, through the winter pot hole damage Find & Fix programme. This should reduce the number of complaints, although another harsh winter could again cause significant damage to the highways in Kent.

Services with reduced numbers of complaints this year include Libraries and the Youth Service.

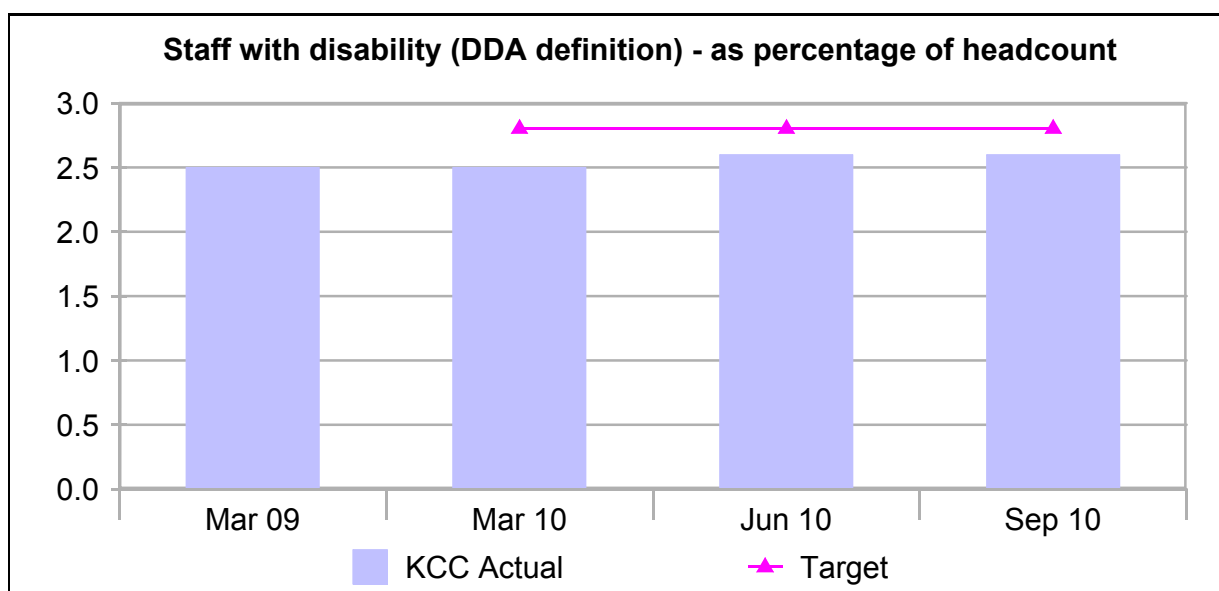
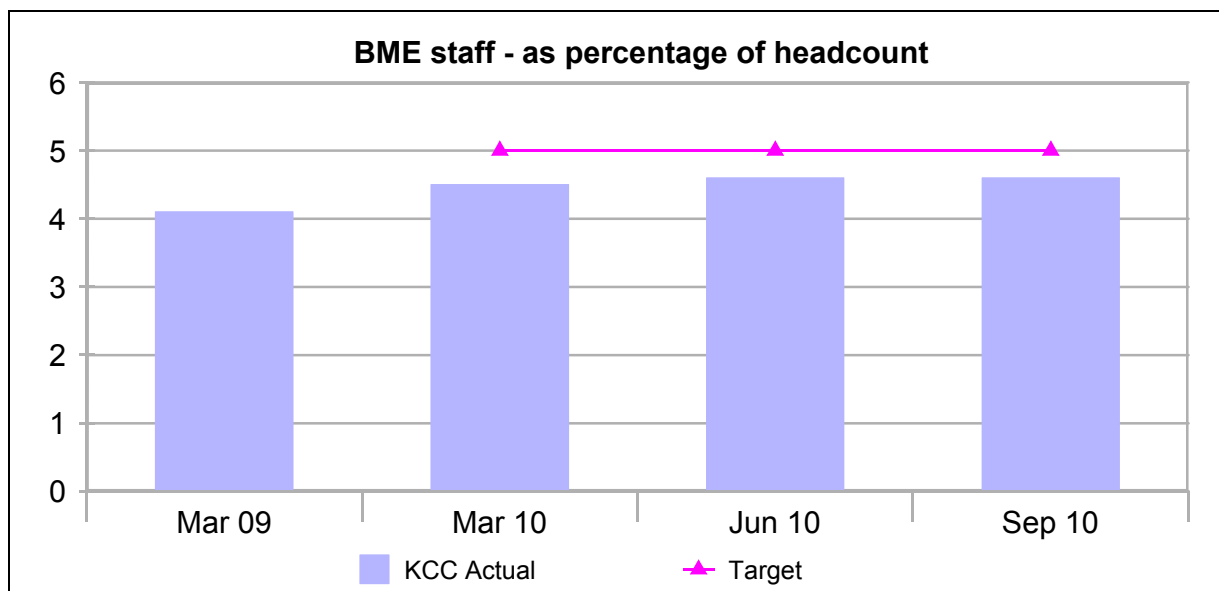


	Mar 09	Mar 10	Jun 10 Provisional	Sept 10 Provisional
Staffing levels – FTE	10,285	10,531	10,477	10,259
KCC Result – staff aged under 25	6.2%	7% ↑	6.8% ↓	6.8% ↔
Local government average	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%
RAG Rating	▲	●	●	●

The current financial year shows a drop in staffing levels as funding becomes reduced and the council prepares for further funding reductions in the years to follow as government reduces its budget deficit.

The council has performed well in attracting younger people into the workforce, including young apprenticeships. Kent now performs close to the local government average of 7% of staff aged under 25 years old.

At least 350 additional apprenticeships will be taken on over the next four years.

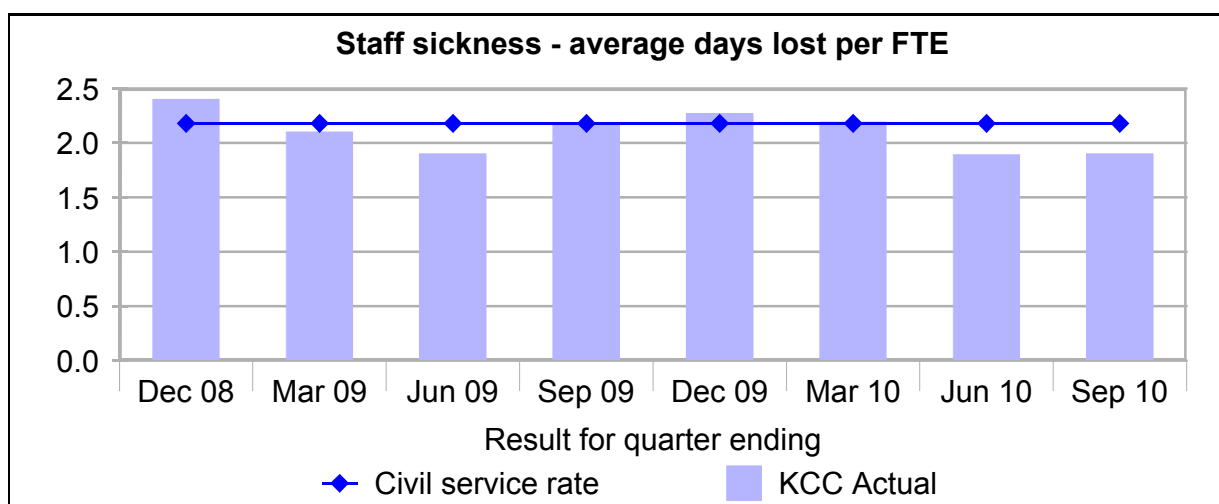
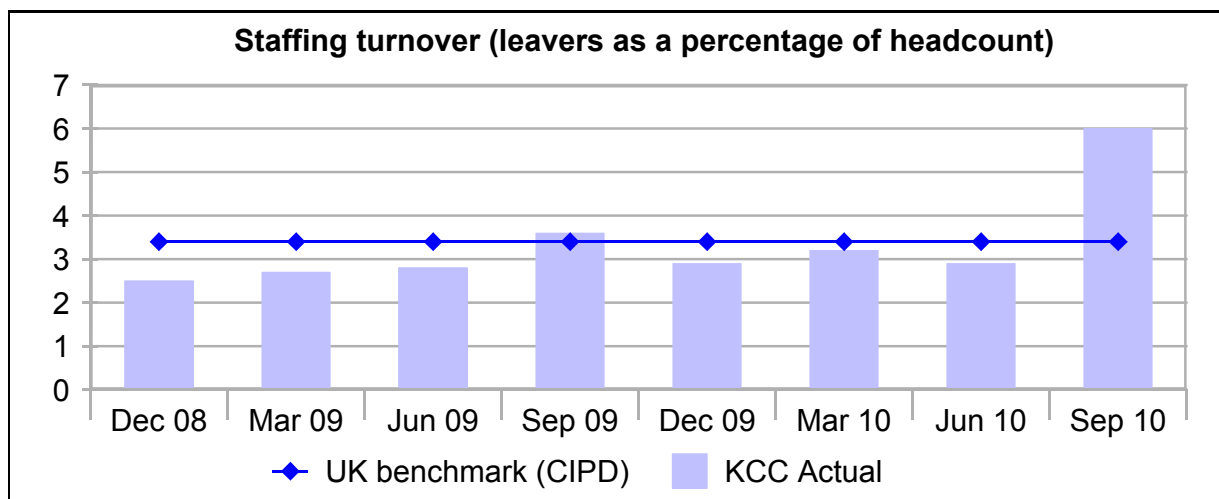


Higher value is better	Mar 09	Mar 10	Jun 10 Provisional	Sept 10 Provisional
BME staff actual	4.1%	4.5% ↑	4.6% ↑	4.6% ↔
Target	5%	5%	5%	5%
RAG Rating	▲	●	●	●
Staff with disability actual	2.5%	2.5% ↔	2.6% ↑	2.6% ↔
Target	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%
RAG Rating	▲	▲	●	●

Progress is being made on attracting and retaining staff from black and minority ethnic groups with numbers continuing to increase.

Less progress is being made in relation to staff with disability with numbers not changing significantly in the last two years. Performance has however improved marginally since March 2010

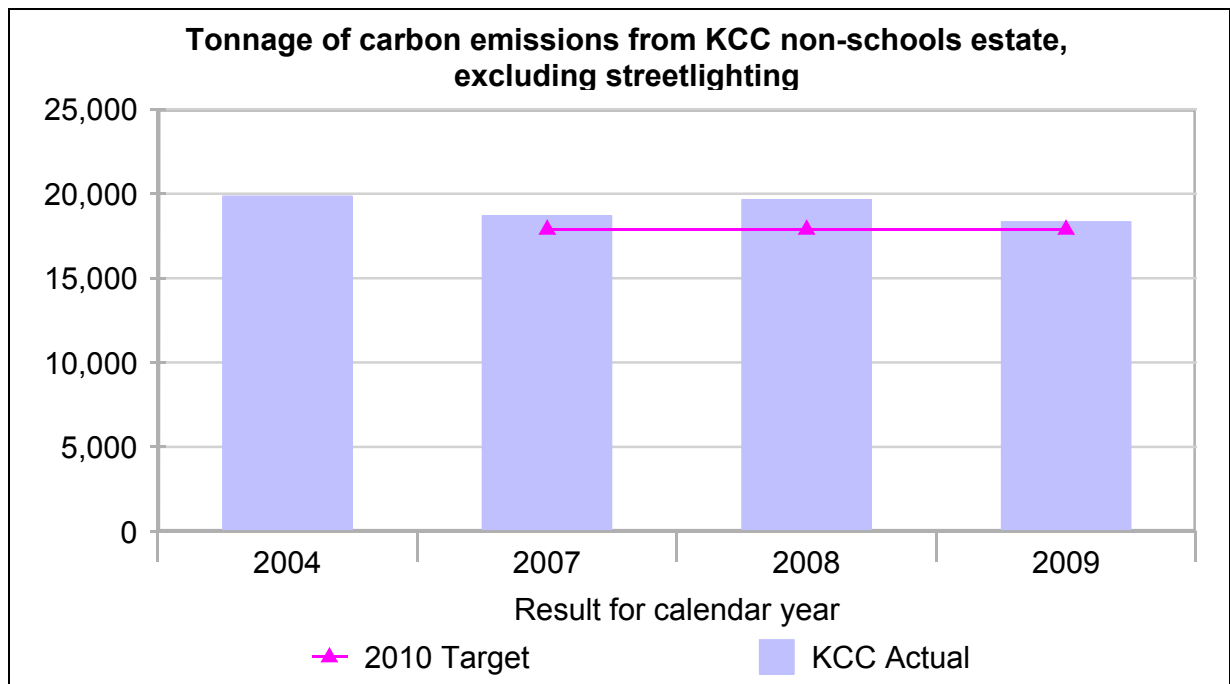
Results for both indicators could be erratic in future quarters due to staff turnover levels.



Lower value is better for sickness	Quarter to Dec 09	Quarter to Mar 10	Quarter to Jun 10 Provisional	Quarter to Sept 10 Provisional
Staff turnover actual	2.9%	3.2%	2.9%	6.0%
UK Benchmark	3.4%	3.4%	3.4%	3.4%
RAG Rating	Not rated – ideal is to be close to the benchmark over the medium term			
Staff sickness actual	2.3	2.2 ↑	1.9 ↑	1.9 ↔
Civil service rate	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
RAG Rating	●	●	★	★

The number of staff leavers has been high in the last quarter. This was a result of restructuring within services for Children, Families and Education where some posts were lost as well a result of some funding streams coming to an end. It is expected that high figures will continue to be reported over the next few years as funding cuts result in fewer staff being employed by the council.

Sickness days in the last 12 months have averaged 8.3 per full time employee which is down from previous figures, due to low levels in the last two quarters.



Lower result is better	2004 Baseline	2007	2008	2009
KCC non-schools result	19,900	18,700 ↑	19,700 ↓	18,300 ↑
Target		17,900	17,900	17,900
RAG Rating		▲	▲	●
Schools result (not graphed)	66,000	69,700 ↓	76,700 ↓	75,700 ↑
Target		59,400	59,400	59,400
RAG Rating		▲	▲	▲

The target for a 10% reduction in emissions from 2004 levels by 2010 is not being met although good progress has been made for the non-schools estate.

There has been an increase in emissions at schools including a 50% increase in electricity use. The increases are due to :

- Increase in physical estate (additional school buildings) e.g. Children's Centre Programme
- Significant increase in use of ICT in schools (ongoing)
- Longer 'hours of business' across KCC e.g. Extended Schools Programme
- New schools with higher energy use than those they replace

More than ever, a step change approach is now needed in energy and carbon management if the upward trend in energy demand and carbon emissions is to be reversed or even stabilised. Further options to take renewed action for the future are currently being explored including different funding mechanisms.

A plan of focused support for schools consuming large amounts of energy is underway and we are continuing to invest in energy saving projects where the payback is under 5 years.

Appendix : Comparative Benchmarks

In most cases the data is presented with the national average as the comparative benchmark. The national average will refer to data for all English councils.

We are developing the report to include more comparative information where relevant. For some services, the outcomes and performance will be correlated or related to various factors which are different in different places. Often the social and economic background of a local authority area will have a significant influence on the outcomes that are reported for key service areas. There are different comparators for different service areas and these are known as statistical neighbours.

For indicators for children, families and education we have included the average performance for the relevant statistical neighbour list, which is made up of the following local authority areas:

East Sussex
Essex
Lancashire
Northamptonshire
Nottinghamshire
Staffordshire
Warwickshire
West Sussex
Worcestershire
Swindon UA

For indicators relating to libraries we have provided a comparative benchmark for all county councils, as no agreed statistical neighbour lists exists but county council areas have similar geography to each other in terms of rural communities, whereas cities and metropolitan areas will have very different factors influencing the delivery of the service.

In relation to staffing data comparative benchmarks for local government and the civil service are used. These are used as workforces are similar in terms of size of organisation, age profile, gender balance and occupation. For example, staff sickness levels are highly influenced by age profile and gender balance of the workforce, the size of the organisation and the type of work. The nearest statistical neighbours for staffing matters such as sickness are therefore organisations which are similar on these characteristics such as other local government bodies and the civil service.