

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

Departmental Overview

“Leading the authority forward”

1. Introduction

In Kent, the customer and resident will continue to drive all that we do. Our services have undergone massive transformation in recent years reflecting our drive to embrace new technologies and techniques to offer the very best services to Kent residents. The Chief Executive's Department provides vital support in delivering this cycle of continuous improvement and change.

The over-riding objective of the Chief Executive's Department is the development and delivery of public services in the county and the provision of dynamic support to Cabinet Members in leading the Authority. It must be recognised that within the Directorate rests **ultimate democratic accountability** through the elected Leadership and **ultimate statutory responsibility** for services and resources through the Chief Executive and Director of Finance.

Through its individual business plans, the Chief Executive's Department will:

- **Deliver visible strategic leadership** for the County, modernising the operation of the authority and its democratic processes;
- **Support continual improvement of core services**, delivering the very best service quality and responsiveness for customers, both internal and external – the Chief Executive's Department provides the corporate “engine room” of the authority;
- **Pioneer innovation and change** across local public services through new forms of partnership working, transformational change and seamless service delivery; and
- **Manage public resources effectively**, at all times providing the very best value for money to Kent residents.

2. Working with Members

In delivering its objectives, the Chief Executive's Department is led and guided by the Leader, Deputy Leader, KCC Cabinet Members, the Chief Executive and the Chief Officers.

Working with its Cabinet Members, the Department determines Business Plan priorities in line with overall Corporate Strategy, allocates resources and balances core service activity with new initiatives and innovations. The relationship between Members, Directors and Staff is a vital dynamic in delivering the excellent functions of the Department and in ensuring that it achieves its challenging objectives.

3. Current Performance

Kent is a high performing county with a reputation for excellence, innovation and efficiency, delivered by exceptional people. It has maintained high performing services whilst making significant efficiency savings and achieving high levels of public satisfaction. In meeting increasingly diverse and personalised service demands and the distinctive social, economic and financial challenges that we face, our journey of transformation will continue, driven in major part by the Chief Executive's Department.

In the Chief Executive's Department, recent performance has also been high. Individual services have achieved impressive national recognition:

- KCC's Finance team is top nationally for "use of resources" as rated by the independent Audit Commission;
- KCC Legal Services is acknowledged as the one best teams in the country, attracting significant media interest; and
- ISG is recognised as a "top employer" nationally by a leading private sector publication.

KCC's reputation for innovation draws upon highly successful corporate initiatives including:

- The Gateway network - enabling seamless access to local public services;
- The Kent Purchase Card – empowering individual service users and delivering real choice in service provision;
- The Kent Film Office which is bringing income into the county and providing opportunities for local people to gain important skills and employment;

Corporate performance in 2008/09 will continue to be fundamental to the delivery of our challenging MTP and to the retention of KCC's excellent 4 Star rating by the Audit Commission.

4. Chief Executive's Department - Business Units

The Chief Executive's Department spans 8 Business Units: Property Group, Personnel & Development, Finance, Legal & Democratic Services, Commercial Services, Strategic Development Unit, Policy & Business Solutions, and Public Health. The Chief Executive also chairs the South East Centre of Excellence, whose Director reports to him. The Units report to the following Cabinet Members:

Paul Carter, Leader

Business Solutions & Policy
Legal & Democratic Services, Localism
Procurement
South East Centre of Excellence

David Cockburn
Geoff Wild
Lynda McMullan/Nick Vickers
Peter Gilroy/Andrew Larnar

Alex King, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support & External Affairs

Personnel and Development	Amanda Beer
ISG	David Cockburn/Peter Bole
Corporate Communications	Tanya Oliver (<i>Interim</i>)
Strategic Development Unit	Tanya Oliver
International Relationships	Across Directorates – the framework for how we do this is centrally managed

Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Finance

Commercial Services	Kevin Harlock
Corporate Finance	Lynda McMullan
Property Group	Mike Austerberry

Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Public Health

Public Health	Meradin Peachey
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Effective Member engagement and drive remains vital to effective service delivery, directly responding to customer and resident demand. As such, the Chief Executive's Department is firmly committed to providing the very best Member support and development.

5. Chief Executive's Department – Broad Priorities

As defined in detail in individual Unit Plans, major priorities of the Chief Executive's Department, set against our statutory service obligations across the directorates and the County Council's priorities, include:

- The innovative application of **information technology** enabling change, flexibility and freedom for front-line managers;
- Forward thinking **policy development** to influence change in the interests of Kent residents and businesses;
- Continuous improvement driven by robust **performance measurement**;
- **The Supporting independence Programme** to help people lift themselves from benefit dependency and to reduce welfare spend across the county;
- Delivery of a multi-million pound return to KCC through **Commercial Services**
- Ensuring decisions of Members and officers are both **legal**, and effectively implemented through the democratic processes;
- **Increasing awareness** and understanding of KCC's role and services amongst Kent's residents and businesses;
- Planning, managing and reporting upon KCC's **financial resources** totalling some £2.2billion in revenue and over the next three years £1.2billion in capital;
- Effective management of KCC's **property assets** valued in excess of £1billion;

- Promotion of **Public Health** amongst Kent's residents to encourage healthy living and healthy lives;
- Acting as a catalyst of change and achievement through **strategic development** and innovation; and
- Making KCC a **great place to work** through KCC's "Strategy for Staff".

6. Medium Term Plan – The Challenge of Change

KCC must continue to act locally in pursuit of the County's clearly stated objectives. Through its monitoring, policy and partnership activity, the Chief Executive's Department will provide this leadership.

The "Vision for Kent", agreed between Kent's public, private and voluntary sectors, sets out how we will improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the County over the next 20 years and provides the overall policy context for KCC operations. Designed and developed across the Council, "Towards 2010" now defines KCC's major priorities in terms of the Vision, and gives strategic direction to our business. At the heart of "Towards 2010" are our agreed aims to achieve:

- Increased prosperity for Kent through business growth and job creation;
- Transformation in secondary education;
- Reduced traffic congestion;
- Improved quality of life;
- Quality homes in a well-managed environment;
- A safer Kent; and
- Continued improvements while keeping council tax down.

These priorities are further supported by the "Kent Agreement", with its associated reward grant, which concludes in 2008. This year's performance will be vital in achieving the stretching targets agreed and in winning the additional funding for local public services. The second Kent Agreement is being finalised to begin in June 2008.

Reflecting these priorities, KCC's Medium Term Plan heralds a new approach to financial planning, cementing the significant progress made in recent years to align funding to the priorities of the elected KCC administration and the residents of Kent. Its aim is to strengthen the link between policy and finance still further to ensure that KCC funding is directed towards the priorities of the Authority and of Kent residents. The Chief Executive's Department has the fundamental role of managing this process and is responsible for delivering its success.

In terms of the Chief Executive's Department, the 3 challenges for future financial planning as set out in KCC's Medium Term Plan are addressed below:

i) Policy Led Budgeting

KCC aspires to be wholly policy-led. As one of the top performing Councils in the country, we have had considerable success in achieving this. However, the increasingly harsh financial climate in which KCC operates offers new challenges to ensure funding reaches the priority front-line services demanded by Kent's customers and residents. If an activity is not a local priority or a statutory necessity, its priority for spending must be reconsidered. Equally, value for money in terms of delivery is vital on both discretionary and statutory services.

This process is approach, "Delivering Coherence: Policy Led Budgeting" has been developed as the key model to build an even closer relationship between strategic resource allocation and policy priorities. Alongside this is the continuous review of Value for Money is crucial. Newly installed "Inphase" software will allow more rigorous collection and diverse presentation of performance data to continue to embed this approach

Through the Medium Term Planning process, the Chief Executive's Department will manage and lead this process. This will include:

- Definition of an agreed MTP implementation process for the Cabinet and Chief Officer Group;
- Improved challenge and alignment of spending to corporate priority
- Profit/Loss assessment by Cabinet Portfolio providing vital data to deliver improved impact for local residents; and
- Value for Money challenge to ensure maximum impact and efficiency.

ii) Integrated Financial & Performance Management

Our existing financial and performance systems are highly regarded. This has helped us to make the case to the Government against increasing the weight of central performance measures.

Building on the "Staying Excellent" report and associated monitoring processes, the Chief Executive's Department will further strengthen its nationally-recognised performance monitoring to:

- Further define a framework of local outcome measures reflecting local priorities, drawing from the "Staying Excellent" report and "Towards 2010";
- Consolidate its move towards exception reporting in both corporate performance and risk assessment wherever practical and possible; and
- Wherever possible, continue to free individual service units from any unnecessary corporate performance reporting.

iii) Service Transformation

Our business relies on our people – it is our staff who are truly transformational. In defining how services will be delivered, Business Unit

operating plans provide the vital link between the strategic challenges and priorities of the Medium Term Plan and individual work programmes.

The Chief Executive's Department will support and deliver transformational change by:

- Driving further value for money through the operations of the Commercial Services and Finance teams, as well as other income generation opportunities such as Legal Services and Personnel & Development and through the implementation of the MTP process;
- Freeing front-line managers through IT modernisation and innovations such as the Kent Purchase Card;
- Working in partnership with the family of local public services in Kent and the South East to increase efficiency and impact of services through the second Local Area Agreement;
- Offering seamless public service access through Kent Gateways;
- Supporting new forms of engagement and personalisation of services;
- Providing robust corporate evaluation, measurement and support to inform delivery of front line services and policy priorities;
- Modernising member and democratic services to increase access and accountability; and
- Devolving and delegating delivery of services to lowest appropriate level.

7. Risk Management

In terms of Risk, it must be recognised that within the Directorate rests ***ultimate democratic accountability*** through the elected Leadership and ***ultimate statutory responsibility*** for services and resources through the Chief Executive and Director of Finance.

By effectively managing our risks and the threats and opportunities that flow from them we will be in a stronger position to deliver our business objectives, provide improved services to the community and achieve better value for money. Risk management is therefore at the heart of everything we do. Our approach to risk management aims to be forward looking, innovative, comprehensive and demonstrate leadership in the community.

The Chief Executive's Department Management Team keeps the Directorate's risk register under review and maintain their awareness of risk within their service units and how they are being managed.

8. Additional Undertakings

In line with all KCC Unit Plans, the Chief Executive's Department endorses the following:

- That the Chief Executive is authorised to negotiate, settle the terms of, and enter agreements/projects relating to stated Departmental responsibilities.

In line with financial regulations, this will be subject to a prior "gateway review" by the Project Approval Group and in consultation with the Leader";

- That business objectives are monitored to ensure they will be delivered. Risks associated with potential non-delivery, and the controls in place to mitigate those risks, have been assessed and documented as part of the annual operating plan process. A risk action plan has been developed as necessary; and
- That under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, the Department works to reduce crime and the effects of crime by supporting activity that reduces anti-social behaviour.

9. A "21st Century Authority"

Innovation, change and modernisation are central to the life of our business. Only by embracing and extending new approaches and delivery methods can we offer greater choice, responsiveness and value for money across our portfolio of public services.

The Chief Executive's Department will act as a catalyst for change. It will continually challenge, innovate and support service improvement across the organization in order to deliver the 21st Century public services that Kent residents rightly demand.