

**Environment & Regeneration
Managing Director's Introduction
2008/9**

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

2008/09 is a year of transition for the Environment & Regeneration Directorate, its staff, its services and its customers. The Directorate was formed after local government reorganisation in 1998 and has, for the past ten years, served the people of Kent by providing a wide range of direct and strategic services. We are proud of what we have achieved in those ten years. However, we need to ensure that Kent has a sustainable and vibrant future and to recognise that what Kent needs in the future is not necessarily the same as what it has needed in the past. The economic, social and environmental landscape is changing fast and we need to adapt and respond to it.

For this reason we are reviewing what we do and how we work with our many partners, both inside and outside KCC. We have done some initial analysis and this has informed our thinking to date and enabled us to focus on areas that we feel are in need of additional focus such as the coastal action zone, social mobility, community enterprise, transport connectivity and skills. The next stage will involve a wide-ranging consultation with our partners, our staff and the communities we serve.

While the new regeneration strategy will provide the framework for the future we will of course continue to deliver the services the people of Kent need today – such as repairing and improving our roads and pavements, protecting our environment and heritage, recycling and disposing of Kent's household waste, and working actively in the growth areas, particularly Ashford and the Thames Gateway. This business plan sets some of the objectives the Environment & Regeneration Directorate will be pursuing in 2008/09 and how will strive to move 'beyond excellence' in all that we do.

Looking more internally the Directorate has achieved ISO 14001 accreditation and is committed to continually improving its environmental performance. Improvement objectives have been included in divisional operating plans which focus on reducing our most significant environmental impacts. In addition, the Directorate will actively support the implementation of the revised KCC Environment Policy and as a priority identify opportunities to reduce the impact of our buildings and transport on the environment, in support of the Towards 2010 Target 42.

The KHS Alliance with Jacobs, Ringway and TSUK is now well established with the Alliance Board fully operational and the reorganisation of KHS will be completed in April 2008. Together the partners deliver services that touch everyone in Kent on a daily basis. An agreed set of key performance indicators (KPIs) is reported to the board and all KCC Members on a monthly basis. These KPIs measure, for the first time, the combined efforts of the Alliance and ensure that all the parties are focussed on the same key targets. Detailed service plans are being developed for each of the seven new service heads and these will identify key performance metrics and continuous improvement targets.

KHS will continue to engage fully with its customers through consultations carried out with the public, Members, Local Council liaison, an Annual Tracker Survey, Focus Groups with community representatives and call back surveys where a sample consisting of 100 members of the public are surveyed every month to ascertain their views on the service.

In 2007/8 Environment & Waste undertook a number of mystery shopping exercises and face-to-face customer surveys including Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and Country Parks. These surveys will continue in order make specific improvements on sites and to develop services. The Regeneration & Economy division will be undertaking a range of consultations with businesses and local communities including Post Office closures and the Empty Homes Initiative.