

By: Paul Carter, Leader of the County Council
Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive

To: Cabinet– 18 June 2007

Subject: Consideration of Draft KCC Annual Plan 2007/08 and Process for
Publishing the Final Annual Plan

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report sets out the background and process for publishing the KCC Annual Plan 2007/08. A copy of the latest draft is attached.

FOR INFORMATION AND DECISION

1. Introduction

The Local Government Act 1999 introduced the statutory requirement for authorities to produce a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). The contents are strictly prescribed. Kent's BVPP is known as the KCC Annual Plan. The statutory deadline for publication is 30 June.

The principal audiences are KCC's staff and Members as well as groups and organisations with an interest in our activities. It is nevertheless a public document and potentially an important means of communicating with local people directly.

2. Purpose of the KCC Annual Plan

The KCC Annual Plan goes further than the statutory minimum BVPP content requirements. It brings existing KCC planning processes together in one document and is an important mechanism for incorporating elements of Towards 2010, Kent Agreement, Supporting Independence Programme, Vision for Kent and other Directorate priorities, for example.

It acts as a bridge between KCC's strategic objectives and corporate priorities and its service and financial plans, and avoids duplicating large amounts of detailed information contained elsewhere. It reports upon progress made against many priorities for the previous financial year as well as setting new targets for the current year and beyond. Much of the information included is therefore taken from existing Member approved information sources.

The KCC Annual Plan is also a central part of the Authority's performance management processes bringing together performance information and comparing KCC with other authorities. This year the Annual Plan will follow the Towards 2010 format with Directorate and Portfolio information being allocated under Towards 2010 headings. Previously the Annual Plan was set out under Next Four Years headings.

3. Completion of the Plan

The KCC Annual Plan 2007/08 is fairly close to completion. There are some small gaps within the performance indicator (PI tables) but these will be completed shortly.

The document will be proof read and a 'plain English' check undertaken prior to publication. This year the Annual Plan will be published on CD. The CD will also include Vision for Kent, Towards 2010, The Kent Agreement and the Supporting Independence documents. A published hard copy of the Annual Plan will also be available on request.

4. Approval process and Member involvement

The Constitution states that the Leader shall submit a draft Annual Plan to County Council. The date of this meeting is 21 June. This date is fixed to allow Members to see as full a draft as possible prior to its publication at the end of June.

A copy of the draft KCC Annual Plan 2007/08 will be made available to a special meeting of Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee (POCC) on 7 June 2007 for their comment prior to County Council on 21 June.

The terms of reference of Governance and Audit Committee require it to check compliance of the KCC Annual Plan with statutory requirements prior to its publication. Authority to do this has been delegated to a small, cross-party group of Governance & Audit Committee members on 7 June, as there is no suitable date for this to be undertaken by the full committee prior to the end of June. County Council will be orally informed of their view.

The approved Annual Plan will be submitted to each Policy Overview Committee (POC) in July. This will enable each committee to focus specifically on the parts of both documents which are the responsibility of their committee in relation to the policy objectives and performance targets set.

To summarise the formal arrangements, the KCC Annual Plan 2007/08 will be provided to:

- POCC (7 June)
- Governance and Audit Committee Group of Members (7 June)
- Cabinet (18 June)
- County Council (21 June)
- POCs (July)

5. Publication

Copies of the KCC Annual Plan are sent to all Members of the County Council, the Authority's principal partners and relevant voluntary organisations, senior KCC managers and our external auditors, amongst others. Hard copies will also be sent to all libraries and KCC offices open to the public as in previous years.

A copy will be available on KCC's web-site before the end of June. This will be a web-based version to enable better access to the public and other interested parties. A copy is also available on KNET to allow access to all our staff.

6. External Audit

The requirement for such Plans to be externally audited currently remains and the deadline for this is 31 December. This enables integration with the CPA timetable and feeds into a wider qualitative assessment of the Authority's approach to seeking continuous improvement.

KCC's previous external auditor's, Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), reports on the last seven years Plans have been unqualified with no statutory recommendations in the last six years. An early draft of the Plan will be made available to our new appointed external auditors, The Audit Commission in order to ensure KCC meets statutory requirements prior to publication.

7. Recommendations

To NOTE the arrangements for publishing the KCC Annual Plan 2007/08.

To ENDORSE the KCC Annual Plan 2007/08 for recommendation to County Council on 21 June 2007.

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