

By: Robert Hardy, Director of Improvement and Engagement
To: Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee – 5 November 2007
Subject: CPA Corporate Assessment – Draft Self-Assessment

Summary: This report and its two appendices summarises the process for the CPA corporate assessment and presents a draft of the KCC self assessment for your comments

1. Introduction

(1) KCC last underwent a corporate assessment for CPA in 2002, where we first received the grading as an excellent authority, which we have retained in each of the subsequent years.

(2) In 2008 we will again be the subject of a corporate assessment, this time under what the Audit Commission describes as 'the harder test'.

(3) At the same time a detailed inspection of services for children and young people (the Joint Area Review or JAR) will be taking place and the outcome of that review will also play a key role in the overall assessment of KCC.

(4) Additionally, an audit commission inspection of the KCC Supporting People service took place in September 2007, a full inspection of the Youth Offending Service has begun and an inspection of the youth service features as part of the JAR process.

(5) The key dates for the CPA corporate assessment process are as follows:-

Early November	Audit Commission stakeholder survey
November 27 th	Lead Inspector meets Leader and Chief Executive
December 2 nd	Self assessment submitted
January 7 th 2008	Inspection team's data analysis week
January 28 th to February 8 th	Two-week on-site inspection
March	Draft report from Audit Commission
May	Corporate Assessment report published

2. Corporate self assessment

A critical document which KCC has to submit to the Audit Commission as part of the process is the corporate self assessment. The Audit Commission guidelines for what we need to set out are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

The latest draft of the KCC self assessment is attached as Appendix 2 to this report for your comments, suggestions and observations.

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Guidance for local authorities in completing self-assessments for corporate assessment

February 2006

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Section 1- Introduction

Background

1. The Commission has set out its revised framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) from 2005 in *CPA – the Harder Test*, published in June 2005. The framework and the form of corporate assessment differ from those used previously to deliver CPA, and have been refined and updated in line with the Commission's principles for Strategic Regulation.
2. Self-assessment remains a key element of corporate assessment and the key principles underpinning self-assessment and its format remain broadly unaltered. The new framework however contains a number of changes, in particular to the themes of the corporate assessment key lines of enquiry. The themes have been reduced in number with significant modifications to some – for example the introduction of shared priorities in the achievement theme. The implementation of Joint Area Reviews of services for children and young people also impacts on corporate assessment. The effect of these changes is detailed below to allow you to take them into account when undertaking your self-assessment.

Purpose of the self-assessment

3. Your self-assessment will continue to form the principal reference point for the corporate assessment. The information and evidence it provides will be used to help inform judgements made by the assessment team and decisions regarding the scope and focus of the assessment team's on-site fieldwork.
4. The self-assessment will be used as evidence of the extent of your council's self-awareness of its current position in terms of its local context and its capacity to deliver improved outcomes for local people. It should therefore demonstrate a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities your council faces and a realistic evaluation of its strengths and weakness. In illustrating the current position, you may wish to highlight how you have addressed weaknesses or delivered improvement. In evaluating what you have done or what has improved you should demonstrate what has changed in terms of outcomes for the community and the difference your council is making to local places and local people.
5. You are required to provide a score against each theme in the self-assessment. Section 2 provides more detailed guidance about this.

Key changes to the corporate assessment key lines of enquiry

6. The Commission has published the key lines of enquiry for corporate assessment for CPA 2005. These can be found on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/stcc/stcckloe.asp.
7. The number of headline questions and themes in the key lines of enquiry has been reduced – there are now three headline questions underpinned by five themes. The headline questions and related themes are:

- Question 1: What is the council, together with its partners, trying to achieve? This measures:
 - ambition for the community
 - prioritisation.
 - Question 2: What is the capacity of the council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve? This measures:
 - capacity
 - performance management.
 - Question 3: What has been achieved? This measures:
 - achievement in terms of the shared priorities:
 - sustainable communities and transport
 - safer and stronger communities
 - healthier communities
 - older people
 - children and young people.
8. Each of the five themes is underpinned by a number of key questions. There are criteria for judgement for each key question to help you to score your self-assessment.
 9. There is now increased emphasis in corporate assessment on improved outcomes for users, meeting the needs of diverse communities and user focus in service delivery. There is also increased emphasis on community leadership, partnership and value for money.
 10. A key change underpinning this emphasis is the introduction of shared priorities in the achievement theme. These are intended to provide stronger user focus, especially in relation to cross-sections of society, such as older people, for example, and to focus the community leadership role of councils beyond their service delivery roles. Your council's management of the cross-cutting issues inherent in the delivery of the shared priorities, and their link to local priorities will provide an important focus for the corporate assessment.
 11. There are no key lines of enquiry for the shared priority of children and young people within corporate assessment. The Commission will not undertake the assessment of this shared priority which will be carried out within the framework for inspection of children's services. Where a Joint Area Review (JAR) and corporate assessment are happening at the same time, the judgement about the council's and its partners' contributions to the quality of outcomes for children and young people will be summarised from the JAR report. In the exceptional circumstances where the two processes do not take place at the same time, the Ofsted/CSCI annual performance assessment for children and young people's services will form the basis of this section of the report.

12. You will need to take these changes into account when completing your self-assessment. Section 2 provides more details on how to do this, and the purpose and content of these newer elements.

Supporting evidence

13. Your self-assessment is an early source of evidence for the corporate assessment. It should avoid lengthy description and unsupported statements and focus on key information. It should aim to be evaluative and provide concise assessments and judgements. To assist you in completing your self-assessment we will provide you with a data pack of contextual and performance information profiling your locality and council. This information will also be provided to the Commission's assessment team.
14. We will provide you with a list of the key documents we require for the purpose of corporate assessment. When citing documentary evidence in your self-assessment you should identify the source, relevant sections or page numbers, and cross-reference it where relevant to the core documentation we have requested from you. It is not necessary to provide documents cited as evidence in your self-assessment other than those we have requested. If further documentation is required we will request this prior to on-site fieldwork.
15. You may wish to identify sources of non-documentary evidence such as staff, members or stakeholders whom you think may be useful for the assessment team to speak to during the on-site period.

Support, challenge and ownership

16. We want this to be your self-assessment. Your auditor and relationship manager will provide advice should you need help in understanding the new CPA framework or revised aspects of corporate assessment, although they will not be able to directly support you in contributing to the self-assessment, for example by reviewing content or acting as a critical friend.
17. You are encouraged to ensure a wide-ranging contribution to the self-assessment. The assessment team will interview a range of people during the assessment including members, managers, staff, residents, service users, partners and other stakeholders. You should draw on a range of views from inside and outside the council to help validate and support a balanced picture of your locality and performance when completing your self-assessment.
18. The self-assessment should be approved and signed off by the mayor, or leader, and the chief executive.

Section 2 – Completing the self-assessment

Format of the self-assessment

19. The self-assessment should comprise no more than 25 sides, be submitted in A4, font size 11, and organised into two sections:

- **Context and summary** - outlining general background information and the environment in which the council operates, the key challenges and opportunities it faces, and the impact of these.
- **Corporate assessment** - addressing the three headline questions and five themes in the key lines of enquiry.

Context and summary

20. In this section you should set the scene by providing information about the locality in which your council operates, and information about your council itself, for example its structures and financial resources.
21. The information provided in this section should take account of the changes to the key lines of enquiry. Corporate assessment will now assess how well your council contributes to the achievement of the shared priorities whilst meeting the particular needs of your local communities. The added emphasis on community leadership, diversity, and user focus means that assessment teams will invest more time in understanding the context in which councils deliver service, for example to rural communities or those living in deprivation. The contextual information you provide in this section should demonstrate how well you understand your local area and communities and how this underpins the choices and approach you are adopting in defining and delivering your local priorities within the wider, national agenda.
22. Corporate assessment now contains more emphasis on partnership working. Contextual information about the council should also include key partnerships or frameworks in place for accounting to or engaging with local communities, partners and other stakeholders.

What do you need to provide in this section?

23. Information on your locality and operating context may include:
 - Economic and business opportunities and challenges as well as those relevant to the shared priorities such as health, crime, and transport.
 - Information about any other major initiatives, projects or pilots being undertaken by the council or its partners.
 - Information about the key features of the communities your council is accountable to such as demography, levels of deprivation and diversity; and how this impacts on the council, for instance, in terms of access or service delivery.
24. Contextual information about the council may include:
 - Information on decision-making structures.
 - Information on key partnerships, arrangements or frameworks for joint working or delivery of services.
 - Information that illustrates arrangements for undertaking research, consultation and engagement with service users, residents and other stakeholders.
 - Financial resources, including central government area-based funding.

- New or other areas of work – such as areas of work which do not directly form part of your local or shared priorities but are important in scene setting.
25. These suggestions are indicative of areas you may wish to include in this section and are not prescriptive.
26. The executive summary of each published corporate assessment report will provide clear statements on the following areas:
- Community leadership;
 - Political and managerial leadership;
 - User focus and diversity; and
 - Value for money.

These issues are incorporated and addressed in the corporate assessment key lines of enquiry, and judgement about how well the council manages them will thus contribute to the themes' scores. However you may wish to summarise your council's performance in these areas in this section of your self-assessment.

Corporate assessment

27. This section provides the opportunity for you to set out and score your own assessment of your council's performance using the key lines of enquiry as a guide.

What do you need to provide?

28. You should provide an appraisal of your performance under the headings of the three headline questions and the five themes which underpin them. You should score your performance for each theme using the scoring scale described in paragraph 30 below.
29. Your self-assessment should 'tell the story' of your council and its locality. This section should show how your understanding of your locality, as demonstrated in the context section, is translated into ambitions and priorities for the community; and how the capacity and performance management of the council is being applied to deliver improved outcomes for local people and places. In describing and appraising your current position and performance, therefore, you should focus primarily on the headline questions and themes; using them to identify strong performance and areas for improvement in each.
30. The key lines of enquiry set out the key questions which will be used to determine a scored judgement for each theme. There are criteria for judgement for each key question, illustrative of scores of level 2 and level 3, within a 4-point scale:
- 1 - below minimum requirements – inadequate performance
 - 2 - at only minimum requirements – adequate performance
 - 3 - consistently above minimum requirements – performing well
 - 4 - well above minimum requirements – performing strongly

You should use the criteria for judgement for the key questions in each theme to help you assess your performance and provide an overall score for each of the five themes using the four point scale above. The criteria for judgement are illustrative only – they are not intended to constitute a comprehensive prescription of specific standards, activities or required elements of performance.

The achievement theme and the shared priorities

31. Corporate assessment will examine how councils balance national policy objectives with local priorities, and will assess their achievements against these priorities and plans. The areas covered by the shared priorities are considered sufficiently broad to cover all key areas of council activity. They provide a structure within which local priorities can be considered, but are not intended to dictate what local priorities will be. Different councils will have different priorities both between and within the individual shared priority areas.
32. Your self-assessment should explain clearly how and why you have chosen and determined your own priorities; and the rationale for the way in which you target your resources and activities. Use the key questions in this theme to help you to demonstrate what you have achieved in each of the shared priority areas. Use the 'Summary of Achievement' key question to show what progress you have made in delivering and balancing local priorities and how these are improving community outcomes.
33. Some of the shared priorities in the achievement theme may have long timescales for the delivery or assessment of outcomes (for example in the area of health). The assessment team will seek to establish whether you have done all that might reasonably be expected given your local context and practical limits on timescales for delivering tangible outcomes. In these instances you should demonstrate the approach and progress you are making through effective planning and investment; and the practical implementation of plans, for example, by citing evidence of early key milestones and outputs you may have achieved or delivered.
34. There are no key lines of enquiry for the shared priority of children and young people within corporate assessment. This does not mean that your self-assessment should exclude issues related to children and young people where these have relevance to the other themes or help demonstrate a cross-cutting approach. Outcomes for children may provide relevant evidence in other shared priority themes, for example, sustainable communities; service management in children and young people's services may contribute evidence in the theme of prioritisation or capacity. You should cite relevant evidence where it helps provide a rounded picture of performance. It may also be helpful to cross-refer to the JAR self-assessment where appropriate.

Timescales for submission

35. The self-assessment should be sent electronically to your corporate assessment team leader not less than six weeks prior to the start of on-site fieldwork, or as indicated in the notified programmed timescale for the assessment, whichever is the sooner. It is not necessary to provide hard copies.

Freedom of Information

36. Information that you supply to us will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. Completed self-assessments may have to be disclosed if requests are received under the Act. We will consult with you before disclosing all or part of the information.
37. When submitting your self-assessment you should advise the Commission about any material or information that you believe to be sensitive and possibly inappropriate for disclosure. By marking any documentation as sensitive you will help inform our decision about whether disclosure under the FOIA is appropriate. If a formal request for information is received the Commission's FOI assessors will liaise with the council to discuss how the matter should be handled.

Executive Summary

This page is blank deliberately, as the final version will need a one page executive summary

The numbering system used in this draft is for ease of editing only, and will not necessarily feature in the final document.

Kent County – the place, the people and the organisation

The place

With a resident population of 1,382,900, Kent is widely known for the quality of its countryside and landscape. The county has impressive cultural, leisure and educational facilities and a thriving small business sector. It has no dominant centre of population but a network of 18 small and medium sized towns, the largest of which is Maidstone. Agriculture is still important (although not a significant employer) and 30% of the population lives in rural areas (higher than the national average).

Kent is the main link between the UK and mainland Europe, with two international rail stations, the world's busiest passenger ferry port, two growing airports and the Channel Tunnel. A vibrant and dynamic county, it contains two of the south east's four designated growth areas, but is also home to 19 of the areas designated as being within the 10% most deprived in England. The Bluewater shopping centre in Dartford attracts more than 27 million visitors per year, Canterbury Cathedral is one of England's top 10 tourist attractions, the Gravesend Gurudwara (Sikh Temple) is one of the largest in the UK and Kent businesses contribute £19.3 bn pa to the national economy. HGV traffic through Kent is growing at 8% each year.

The people

The population of Kent grew by 6.6% between 1994 and 2006, above the average both for the south east (5.6%) and for England (4.6%). The population has increased across all parts of Kent over the past 10 years and is ageing. The number of those aged 85 or over is forecast to increase by 65% between 2001 and 2021, while the number of those under 18 is expected to decline by 16% over the same period.

Two-thirds (65%) of Kent's resident working age population is employed. Of the rest, 14.7% are retired, 7.2% look after home and family, 6.1% students 4.4% are permanently sick or disabled 2.8% are registered unemployed and 2.6% are workless for other reasons. Of those who work, most (26.9%) are employed in the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector, followed closely (26.2%) by public administration, education and health.

A quarter of the Kent workforce (25.6%) is qualified to at least NVQ level 4, behind both the national average (28.7%) and the figure for the south east as a whole (31.3%). The percentage of those with no qualifications, at 13%, is higher than for the south east (10.1%) but below the national average of 14.2%.

In the 2001 census, 75.1% of people described themselves as Christian. The next largest group was Sikh (0.6%). Across the county, 41,534 people (3.1%) classified themselves as from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background. Car ownership in Kent, at 78%, is higher than the national average of 73%.

The organisation

“The role of Kent County Council (KCC) is to improve the quality of life of the people of Kent:

- By arranging delivery of services designed solely to serve all Kent residents and council tax payers
- By providing clear and accountable community leadership
- By championing the county's interests, supporting the local economy and enhancing the environment
- By consulting and involving the people of Kent in planning ahead and making decisions on their behalf
- By influencing and working in partnership with other organisations.” (KCC constitution)

Council policy framework

The Council agrees the policy framework and the annual budget and is responsible for a range of regulatory and governance functions which it discharges by appointing committees* which are accountable to it.

Member roles (Do we really need this? – it applies to every authority, & this is about why we are special...)

KCC's 84 councillors (57C/19L/6LD/1Ind) are elected every four years and governed by statutory codes of conduct. The Council elects a Leader at the beginning of each four-year term. As head of the executive, the Leader appoints a Cabinet*, allocates accountabilities and responsibilities and delegates powers, principally for operational services but also for cross-cutting areas such as equality and diversity. The Leader and Cabinet have executive authority over all council functions and activities except those with specific, separate legal status such as planning.

Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and scrutiny committees support the development of council policy; review performance of the county council and other public bodies in Kent; examine decisions made by the Cabinet; establish select committees to conduct in-depth topic reviews using research, requesting information and undertaking public consultation. There are three main strands to overview and scrutiny - Cabinet Scrutiny Committee (chaired by the Leader of the Opposition); a Policy Overview Committee for each directorate and the NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief Executive and officer structure

The council structure* was changed in April 2006 to create four service delivery directorates and a strengthened Chief Executive's department. Managing Directors are responsible for delivering specific services as set out in financial regulations and the scheme of delegations and reinforced by the annual operational business plan process. They sign statements of accountability annually. Managing Directors work together as a Chief Officer Group (COG) which focuses on forward planning, strategic direction, organisational performance, key external relationships and cross-service working. Managing Directors work with the Chief Executive, their respective Cabinet Member(s) and Policy Overview Committee to develop policies and implement actions that reflect the council's strategic aspirations.

Local Boards4 section two

Established in January 2004, Local Boards consist of the councillors for each county division within a district area and are designed to both strengthen their local community leadership role and give residents a strong voice on local issues and services. Each councillor is given a budget of £10,000 to spend on local projects that reflect the community's priorities. This helps put residents at the heart of the county council's role and reflects the Local Government and Health Improvement Bill's focus on the role of front-line councillors. KCC's Going Local report (Sept. 2007) puts forward options for developing Local Boards further.

1. What is the council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?

1.1 Kent's ambitions

KCC continues to pursue the long-term ambitions set out in the sustainable community strategy Vision for Kent (V4K). This document, agreed between Kent's public, private and voluntary sectors and involving 4,000 individual and stakeholder comments, sets out how the county council and its partners will work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the county over the next 20 years.

1.1.1 KCC's Towards 2010 document defines the council's priorities in delivering its responsibilities within V4K. It contains series of 63 individual commitments, designed to achieve:

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

Towards 2010 sets out real priorities that show how the county council will work with its partners to achieve higher standards of service and more choice for the people of Kent. Equipping people with the skills and qualifications they need to create a dynamic local economy, supporting young people and giving them the best possible start in life, promoting better health and increasing independence for all, protecting the environment, ensuring that new housing creates sustainable and safe communities and tackling problems such as traffic congestion are priorities that are being tackled by specific, carefully-thought out policies and new initiatives.

In KCC's case, such priorities are more than just 'good ideas'. More than three-quarters of the similarly ambitious targets set out in the previous policy document Next Four Years were fully delivered, and the council is confident that it can work with its partners to achieve an even greater level of success with its Towards 2010 commitments. To do so it has put in place a framework of agreements, partnerships and programmes as set out below:

1.1.2 The Kent Agreement is the county's Local Area Agreement (LAA) with the Government, signed by KCC and its Kent partners in 2005. It commits all partners to a series of 18 outcomes that (in the main) require a multi-agency solution. It

particularly emphasises improving services and outcomes for children and young people and is, in effect, the multi-agency short-term delivery plan for V4K

Kent was a pilot authority for both Public Service Agreements (PSA) and LAAs. The Kent Agreement was one of the first LAAs to give non-local authority partners such as Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) lead responsibility for delivering targets and to include major spending programmes such as Supporting People in addition to specific funding streams identified by central government.

In 2008 a new LAA, Kent Agreement 2, will continue to promote partnership working and will set out to improve services while maintaining a focus on value for money. Outcomes and targets will be structured around the eight V4K themes to ensure strategic priorities flow through to the local, multi-partner delivery on which Kent Agreement 2 will be based.

1.1.3 Kent Commitment

As well as championing multi-agency partnership work, KCC and the 12 district councils are committed to improving services and achieving significant savings for the people of Kent through the innovative Kent Commitment. This builds upon the strong working relationships already in place and puts residents and service users at its heart by focusing on increased efficiency and better public access to services.

1.1.4 The Kent Supporting Independence Programme* (SIP) continues to underpin KCC's approach to delivering V4K, Towards 2010 and Kent Agreement targets. The programme identifies key dependency groups and areas of high and multiple deprivation in Kent, providing a focus for KCC and other agencies as they work together to improve the lives of people in these areas. It supports a multi-agency approach to helping adults move from welfare dependency into employment and more fulfilling lives using a scheme called Kent NOW. Specific Kent Agreement and Towards 2010 targets improve the lives of adults on incapacity benefit and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

KCC continues to work with the Kent Public Service Board, the Kent Partnership, the Kent Business Forum, Jobcentre Plus and the Department of Work and Pensions to drive forward, through SIP, a wide range of initiatives to secure more flexible work opportunities for individuals currently relying on welfare benefits. SIP priorities are rooted in needs analyses and are also reflected in the way KCC delivers the Supporting People programme across the county.

1.1.5 The Kent Partnership - the county-level Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) - is driving innovative ways of promoting joint work between the public, private and voluntary sectors. It has sponsored specific projects relating to the academies programme and to Kent Works, (the Kent education/business partnership that delivers work placements for young people). In 20xx Kent became the first county in the country to establish a Public Service Board (KPSB), through which public sector agencies that together spend more than £8 billion annually jointly tackle the 18 common outcome targets set out in the Kent Agreement.

This board, which lobbies regionally, nationally and internationally on behalf of Kent, is based around a number of multi-agency working groups - the Kent Children's Trust, the Community Safety Group, the Health and Well-being Group and the Kent

Economic Board. District-led LSPs are represented at the Kent Partnership and there is now considerable alignment between district-level sustainable community strategies and V4K.

1.2 KCC's management priorities

- To deliver the Vision for Kent, the Kent Agreement the Supporting Independence Programme and Towards 2010
- To provide excellent value for money services and continuously improve KCC's performance
- To take better care of the public by communicating more effectively with them and listening and responding to their needs
- To inspire staff and make KCC a great place to work
- To transform the way KCC works by investing in information technology.

While these management priorities rely on vision, partnership, a commitment to listen and to learn and a belief in empowerment and consultation, they also depend on a solid policy framework, quality staff and firm governance arrangements. The guiding principles that help KCC to achieve these long-term goals in an effective and efficient way are set out below.

1.2.1 Value for money

Ensuring value for money in providing services for local people is a key KCC policy which has seen the council deliver 2% annual efficiency savings over the past five years - a total of £xxxm since 2002 – and redirect savings to front line services. The introduction of even tighter government funding arrangements from 2003/04 inspired a further member-led programme of savings as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Annual Efficiency Statement (AES). Between 2004 and 2008 the council expects to save a total of £92m, 171% of the cumulative AES target. During 2006 and 2007 a series of value for money reviews was undertaken by Price Waterhouse Coopers based on a range of factors covering effectiveness as well as efficiency and economy.

1.2.2 Use of resources

The MTFP ensures the council's resources align with its priorities by looking ahead at the next three financial years. Its aim of linking policy and resource priorities over the medium term has been strengthened in response to the CPA 2002 recommendation as illustrated by diagram no. 1. KCC's Use of Resources rating in 2006 was the highest of any county council, demonstrating the excellent way KCC aligns its budget to service priorities.

1.2.3 Corporate Environmental Performance

A cross-party Select Committee on Climate Change inspired a KCC action plan on climate change. It aims to reduce carbon emissions from KCC's properties and activities, ensure service delivery adapts to the impacts of unavoidable climate

change and inspire county-wide action through the Kent Partnership. A corporate environmental performance team helped the Chief Executive's Department and the Environment & Regeneration Directorate to achieve the ISO 14001 environmental management standard in 2007. KCC as a whole (excluding schools) will be accredited by 20xx.

Actions to date include:

- Creating an energy loan fund of £1m for large energy efficiency projects that have already saved xx tonnes CO2.
- Working with the UK Climate Impacts Programme on an innovative approach to developing a Climate Impacts Profile for Kent to help the county make decisions about adaptations.
- Working through the Kent Partnership to share good practice and communicate more effectively on reducing emissions and dealing with unavoidable climate change in Kent.
- Setting up a Low Carbon Communities initiative with the Kent Energy Centre to develop a toolkit for action.

1.2.4 Customer focus

KCC is responding to the changing needs of residents and businesses as consumers of public services. Users increasingly see themselves as customers and expect greater choice, quick and easy access and services that are tailored to their needs and those of their families and businesses. This led to the launch in 2002(?) of the KCC Contact Centre, staffed 24/7 – a key commitment of our Next Four Years priorities.

KCC puts customer care at the heart of the organisation through consultation, communication, standards of service delivery and training. Chartermark standards of customer care are designed to make every interaction with the council a first class experience for residents, whatever channel they use. It has pledged to understand customers' needs by consulting them, encouraging community involvement and developing services people want. It is committed to re-launching its customer charter, responding positively and promptly to compliments and complaints and using feedback to improve and modernise services.

1.2.5 Personalising services

KCC is committed to 'personalising' services to ensure they meet the needs of the people of Kent. This means continuing to innovate and improve by:

- Giving individuals and communities a stronger voice in designing and transforming services
- Continuing to improve access through innovative projects such as Gateways and the self-assessment website
- Continuing to seek new ways of offering choice and individual control
- Making the most of technological innovations to personalise services.

KCC's Personalisation Board, chaired by the Managing Director of Kent Adult Social Services, helps directorates meet these aims by championing improvements in

community engagement, identifying and communicating good practice within KCC and maintaining a clear focus on improving the customer experience.

1.2.6 Coherent community engagement

With front line engagement with service users and the wider community already well established, KCC is focusing on listening to the public as effectively as possible, using a variety of methods to engage with individuals and representatives of Kent's diverse population to provide the learning and feedback that inspires continually improving services. The council has effective systems for learning from complaints and consultation and is piloting ways of connecting feedback to policy-making, review and evaluation and prioritisation processes.

1.2.7 Equality and diversity

KCC's takes an inclusive approach to equality and diversity, going beyond the requirements of legislation. This commitment stems from a desire to deliver high quality, customer-focused services that respond to the needs of the diverse communities of Kent. As an employer, KCC monitors and addresses the extent to which its workforce reflects the diversity of Kent's communities; as a community leader the council works with its partners to promote and inspire change.

Staff and councillors are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment. Our impact assessment process identifies activity that may result in disadvantageous or discriminatory practice in how services and employment opportunities are provided and those that could have high negative impact is prioritised for review. Our commitments and action plans are contained in our published Equality Strategy.

1.2.8 The right staff

It is because delivering KCC's priorities depends on the continuing passion, motivation, skills and abilities of staff that the county works hard to ensure KCC remains "a great place to work". Delivering its Strategy for Staff is a key priority for KCC. It aims to make KCC a place where inspiring leadership, enhanced use of technology and an involving management style enable staff to feel valued, excited and proud about working for KCC, achieve their full potential, treat customers as they would like to be treated themselves, feel equipped and rewarded for what they do and feel encouraged to be innovative in the way they deliver excellent customer service.

Four staff groups support and challenge KCC's diversity ambitions: UNITE (BME staff), Level Playing Field (disabled staff), Rainbow Forum (lesbian gay, bisexual and transgender staff) and Greenhouse (younger staff).

1.2.9 Information and communications technology (ICT)

KCC is developing and exploiting the full potential of ICT to help provide better, more accessible and efficient services. It uses ICT both to underpin new ways of working and to give residents new ways of accessing services. A key priority is to support innovative and modern flexible working practices such as wireless networking,

remote access, mobile working and home working. ICT is also a vital part of Kent Adult Social Services' Whole Systems Demonstrator project that aims to extend Telecare and Telehealth services in support of some of the most vulnerable members of society and is playing a key part in transforming Kent Highway Services.

The county council has commissioned Kent TV, a digital broadband channel available through the internet, and after a successful pilot project is introducing Webjamming – an on-line system for holding live multi-user conversations with staff and/or the public. Kent Connects is a multi-agency partnership developing shared technology platforms across the public sector in Kent. Ideas include virtual call centres, shared disaster recovery arrangements and more efficient procurement.

2. What is the capacity of the council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

2.1 A structure that delivers

A new directorate structure introduced in 2006 put the customer at the very heart of services. It enabled the county council to respond better to local and diverse needs and strengthened partnership working.

2.1.2 Children, Families and Education Directorate (CFE)

The new directorate continues to focus on safeguarding vulnerable children, improving educational attainment and skills and supporting children with additional needs. The directorate protects children and works to keep families together by taking robust action with partners and through the Kent Children's Safeguarding Board (KCSB). The KCSB shows ambition and leadership in bringing Kent's different agencies and professional groups together to protect children from abuse and neglect and ensure good outcomes for children.

The directorate's work has been strengthened by the multi-agency Kent Children's Trust (County Board) established in September 2006. Local arrangements are being piloted through four pathfinders based on school cluster boundaries. Kent's multi-agency Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) aims to improve outcomes for children and young people and focuses on priorities for improvement even where current performance is good.

2.1.3 Kent Adult Social Services Directorate (KASS)

The new directorate and its partners are focusing on the challenges within the White Paper Our Health, Our Care, Our Say. The directorate is establishing a culture of personalisation and choice coupled with a focus on modernisation and innovation while maintaining high standards of service delivery.

Kent Adult Social Services has refreshed and updated its 10-year vision Active Lives following a major programme of public consultation that has reaffirmed the objective: "To help the people of Kent live independent and fulfilled lives safely in their local communities".

2.1.4 Communities Directorate (CMY)

The new Communities Directorate brought together 14 service units with a focus on responding to local needs, providing quality services and building strong communities. Its strategic vision is based on three core principles:

- To continue to improve locally-delivered services
- To involve communities in shaping those services
- To extend the positive impact of those services, particularly in Kent's more disadvantaged communities.

2.1.5 Environment & Regeneration Directorate (E&R)

The directorate's aim is to shape the future of Kent by combining the development of front line services which residents use or enjoy daily with integrated future planning to meet the needs of Kent's increasingly diverse communities. The directorate works in partnership with districts, central government and other public and private sector organisations to deliver quality services in areas including road maintenance, waste disposal and recycling, country parks, public rights of way and support for Kent's businesses.

With considerable housing growth expected in the county over the next 20 years, the directorate is responding to the challenge of ensuring Kent remains a vibrant, attractive, pleasant and sustainable place in which to live and work while providing the jobs, skills, infrastructure and investment it needs.

2.1.6 Chief Executive's Department (CED)

The Chief Executive's Department has a core role in supporting service delivery and leading aspects of modernisation and transformation. Its remit includes finance, personnel and development, property, ICT and commercial services.

2.2 Managing finances

2.2.1 Providing top services for less

KCC's Band D council tax for 2007/08 is the 7th lowest of the 34 county councils. At 4.9% (including the fire levy) the tax increase was the 12th lowest across the country. The achievement was even more remarkable since the county received a government grant that was equal lowest of any county.

At the same time, the services provided to the people of Kent are amongst the best. KCC has the lowest band D council tax level of all the county councils rated both four star and improving strongly. It is in the top quartile for achieving efficiency savings and continues to plough back office savings into front line services. KCC seeks to optimise external funding from all sources and has attracted more than £100m from the EU since 2000.

2.2.2 MTFP and policy-led budgeting

The council is meeting tough government efficiency targets and continues to achieve value for money despite the difficulty of continuing to find new ways to save. KCC faces cost pressures in areas such as labour, raw material and fuel as well as imposed costs in areas such as social care, waste and transport. Inward migration

adds further pressure. Our service strategies aim to balance the public desire for more and better services with lower unit costs.

A high standard of governance is central to KCC, which has a strong record of effective control and innovative review methods to ensure that this remains the case. Internal audit opinion is that there is substantial assurance as to the council's arrangements for corporate governance.

The council's strong performance management system combines robust business planning and strong budgetary control. All service/business units prepare annual budget and operating plans, linking budget, operations and activity to overall council priorities. Developing policy in conjunction with financial strategy is part of a year-round activity that leads to budget submissions in February. All major decisions are scrutinised by appropriate member and officer forums (and school forums where relevant).

Medium term planning and budgeting looks three years ahead and places financial plans in the context of local priorities, statutory duties and targets, together with local and national constraints (including available funding). Within this policy-led approach to budgeting, strategic decisions assess the cost-effectiveness of options in line with stated priorities and long-term implications.

KCC prioritises capital investment in line with broad policy aims as reflected in the V4K, Towards 2010, Kent Agreement, SIP and Kent-What Price Growth? A two-stage capital programme process sees proposals initially included on an approval to plan basis and only given approval to spend after a business case has been made.

2.2.3 Financial and management devolution

KCC operates a highly devolved decision-making and spending framework based on the principle of putting operational decisions as close to the customer as possible. The system is underpinned by policies, standards and targets set out in financial regulations and the scheme of delegations; confirmed through annual business plans. Named officers are accountable for delivering the commitments in Towards 2010 and in business plans.

2.2.4 VFM comparisons

KCC delivers value for money for Kent residents by providing high quality services in conjunction with a low council tax base and stands out as a high performing authority on all major measures of cost and quality. The Audit Commission has consistently commented on the "high quality of services provided and improvements the council has made" and highlighted that the improvements followed targeted investment in line with strategic plans. The council has used its resources wisely to improve front line services and reduce costs.

Providing value for money is central to KCC's service culture and is embedded in key planning documents such as V4K, Towards 2010, Kent Agreement, the SIP, Annual Plan and MTFP. Councillors provide clear leadership on linking service improvements with value for money, individual staff action and personal development plans maintain that focus and the council's Quality Service Awards celebrate the delivery of high quality services.

KCC's approach to delivering value for money services combines:

- Political and managerial leadership
- Strong performance management, effective budgetary control and rigorous business planning
- Innovation in service delivery
- Constant challenge of existing practices, including the use of performance reviews
- Partnership arrangements and external funding that benefits the people of Kent
- Staff that are inspired, motivated and empowered to deliver continuous improvement
- Efficient procurement and effective contract management.

2.3 Managing performance

2.3.1 Performance culture and performance systems

LAA progress reports, the business plan monitoring process and Towards 2010 action plan monitoring show how the council is delivering against objectives. KCC's Annual Plan continues to demonstrate the council's performance against priority outcomes set the previous year - even though this is not a Best Value requirement - because it clearly links commitments to delivery. The council has well-documented plans for providing services for children and young people. Kent's overall GCSE and A level results are significantly above the national average and the county is a national leader in improving secondary education. The Annual Review Meeting process within adult social care provides an external assessment of progress and achievement on goals and targets.

KCC is addressing gaps in its data quality information and is publishing a data quality strategy. As part of its determination to maintain four-star status it produces quarterly Staying Excellent reports to COG and Cabinet members focusing on key Performance Indicators. The number needing focused action is currently lower than ever. Our equality & diversity BVPIs are also monitored through our corporate Equalities Lead Officers group.

2.3.2 Risk management

2.3.3 Feedback from staff and users to drive improvement

As well as using data and research in forward planning, KCC makes a point of listening to public opinion. This was particularly evident in the re-drafting of V4K, which followed a year-long public and stakeholder consultation exercise that is now driving work by KCC and all members of the Kent Partnership. Resident consultation also contributed to the new Towards 2010 targets. KCC led local consultation on the amount of housing earmarked for Kent and other proposals within the South East Plan and holds annual in-depth public consultation on the budget.

The Kent Residents' Panel is asked its views on a variety of topics; from strategic documents such as the South East Plan and Vision for Kent to issues like healthy eating and leisure. The Kent Youth County Council plays a key role in the way KCC listens to the views of young people. As a result of the recent survey carried out by The National Foundation for Educational Research, KCC now has its largest-ever database on the views and lifestyles of young people in Kent (43,000 were surveyed) and will use it to develop the Children's Trust and in other services such as transport planning. KCC is working with KPSB partners and the Kent Messenger Group on a way of pooling and streamline residents' panel activity and survey work across all those agencies. KCC uses focus groups that concentrate on people within SIP archetypes and includes public perception and service satisfaction indicators as key measures within the Kent Agreement.

Consultation is a key part of developing service plans such as Active Lives and in ongoing service delivery. Active Lives was in large part written by service users. The business plan monitoring system ensures actions responding to consultation and feedback are reported to POCs and Cabinet.

Twelve quarterly member-led Local Boards have taken community engagement to an exciting new dimension, allowing local people to play a vital role in the county's plans. A new Local Board website explains how people can obtain funding for local projects. KCC's Going Local agenda will help achieve even closer engagement with the people of Kent and includes plans for four joint KCC/district council Local Boards for a trial one-year period.

Other projects include continuing to develop parish internet 'portals' and participative budget-setting. KCC 'webcasts' council meetings and residents will soon be able to email and text their views during the meetings.

2.3.4 Add description of complaints processes and reporting mechanisms

2.3.5 Reviewing services (inc. user input) – John Wale/Paul Wickenden to input

2.4 Strengthening corporate capacity

Following restructuring in 2006 the council set up a series of Corporate Boards and re-energised some established groups. They allow senior officers and leading politicians to focus on cross-cutting issues and sponsor projects and programmes that help the council provide the right services for the people of Kent. The boards reflect the council's priorities, dealing with VFM, property, ICT, personalisation, equality and diversity, continuous improvement, workforce strategy and environmental performance.

2.4.1 Workforce Strategy Board

KCC's Strategy for Staff is built around commitments to the entire workforce and provides a framework in which the council can recruit, retain and develop high quality staff whose passion, motivation, skills and abilities will enable it to continue to deliver the best possible services to the people of Kent.

The strategy has introduced modern and responsive reward packages, leadership, management and staff development courses, 'work and well-being' initiatives,

occupational health and counselling services and recruitment and other policies that have resulted in a diverse and talented staff. While the benefits for staff are clear, the benefits to the people of Kent in being served by a talented and motivated workforce are even more important.

In 2006 KCC was successfully re-accredited to the Investors in People standard following an externally-led review. The county was first awarded IIP in 19xx and has been as a Two Ticks employer since 2001. The 2007 Stonewall Equality Index ranked KCC 37th in a list of the top 100 employers.

The board also works with partners across Kent on workforce planning, recruitment, retention and training issues.

2.4.2 Procurement Board

With KCC (including schools) looking to spend £2.1bn on goods and services from external suppliers in 2007/8, KCC has been raising the profile of procurement as a major strategic issue. As a first step it analysed expenditure to establish clear responsibility for the seven, service-specific, spend categories that account for nearly 80% of total spend. The three largest areas are social care, highways and buildings. The current MTFP process is looking for procurement savings of £2.5m over two years as part of £10m in savings from cross cutting issues.

The Procurement Board is chaired by the Chief Executive, while a procurement practitioners' group chaired by the Head of Financial Services provides council-wide leadership to procurement staff. The importance of cross- sector procurement issues has been recognised by the creation of a Kent and Medway Procurement Board consisting of KCC, Medway Council and the 12 district councils, the police and fire authorities and the PCTs. This group has also worked alongside the South East Centre of Excellence that KCC has led since 2004. KCC is working with the IDeA to pilot new 'diversity in procurement' guidelines for local authorities.

Kent Commercial Services operates as an independent trading operation to supply the council, schools and other public bodies across the south east with goods including office supplies and equipment as well as energy and transport services. With an impact on £350 million of spending, its scale keeps prices low and allows it to make a significant contribution to reducing council overheads. It also plays an important role in providing competition in locally developing markets.

While supporting the idea of devolved procurement, the board identified three main areas of improvement. The first was to help managers by producing Spending the Council's Money, a comprehensive guide to the procurement process. A Strategic Procurement Unit has been set up to advise managers as well as to maintain corporate strategy and the third area has been recognition of the need to take corporate responsibility for issues such as sustainability, diversity, SMEs, efficiency savings and eProcurement. The council has also agreed to advertise all contracts valued at more than £50,000 on the south east business portal.

2.4.3 Personalisation Board

Personalising services to give users more control and choice is a top priority for KCC. Direct payments and individual budgets for Adult Social Services customers are

transforming both the service and the relationship between users and KCC staff. The council is using technology to provide more personalised services and greater choice in areas such as self-assessment, Telecare and Telehealth, purchase cards, broadband/digital TV and personalised learning. The county believes in using the mixed economy to find the right balance between directly-provided and commissioned services, and in helping people to design their own services to meet their own needs.

KCC has given people more and easier ways to access KCC services and has used the SIP to guide its work with hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups. The council's 24/7 contact centre, its website and its successful campaign to widen broadband access across Kent (now 99.8%) have made huge improvements in accessibility.

In collaboration with other public sector agencies KCC is implementing a Gateway Strategy for Kent to provide convenient and simple access to a wide range of public services through a joint facility located in a modern retail setting. It is complimentary to other service access forms such as web, telephone and home visiting. The Gateway draws on modern retail concepts to create a high value community retail brand connecting with people's daily life and recognised as public service access facility in the same way as some modern retail organisations do.

The first Gateway - in Ashford - attracts more than 6,000 visitors per month. It houses services provided by KCC and 30 other organisations, providing local people with housing advice (Ashford Borough Council), health information (Primary Care Trust), careers advice (Connexions, Jobcentre Plus) free internet access and Social Services help and advice (KCC). A mobile Gateway begins operating in the autumn of 2007, with Margate Gateway due to open in January 2008 and Maidstone in June. There is a programme to create a further 12 Gateways (including 2 more mobile centres) by 2012.

2.4.4 ICT Board

KCC strives to stay at the leading edge of technology in the way it delivers services to the people of Kent. Recent innovations have included trialling the use of bio-fuels and other technologies used in its buildings and vehicles. KCC vehicles are using 5% bio-fuel at the moment and are hoping to move to 30% when it becomes available.

KCC's strategic partnership with Microsoft has maximised opportunities for learners, with the latest developments in ICT enabling access from home and supporting the School that never sleeps initiative. This is an integral part of both KCC's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and its Secondary Strategy. The Kent Community Network (KCN) provides schools with high speed, high capacity broadband that has placed Kent at the forefront of online educational services. It allows video-conferencing without expensive digital telephone lines and allows schools to connect to others in Kent, elsewhere in the country or even abroad.

The KCC-inspired Kent Connects, a partnership that brings together the county council, 12 district councils and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service, has improved electronic access to resources countywide. It is recognised nationally as a strong and successful partnership that has provided internet-based access to services provided by local authorities and other public service organisations in Kent.

KCC's Parish Portals project allows each of Kent's parish councils to produce their own web presence and e-mail facility. It was a national e-Government awards finalist. KCC's other award-winning electronic services include Explore Kent, Cluster Web, online self -assessment and the Kent Card.

With ICT taking a large proportion of any organisation's costs, the council's technology refresh programme is demonstrating value for money through the aggregated procurement of software for 9,000 PCs, laptops and tablets. Renting the equipment has transferred risk to the supplier, allowed the council to use up-to-date equipment at lower cost and avoided the need for expensive disposal arrangements.

2.4.5 Finance Strategy Board

A corporate approach to attracting external funding helps the council deliver its priorities. The board's role is to continue to improve Kent's funding, ensure external funding helps the council achieve its strategic objectives and support partners' strategies and planning to provide more external resources. Seminars, information bulletins, training and other initiatives help other parts of the council achieve value for money and optimise funding.

2.4.6 VFM Board

2.4.7 Property Board

KCC views its asset base as a strategic resource that supports service delivery but which can also act as a catalyst for change. Overall responsibility for asset management policy and practice lies with the Property Board chaired by the Chief Executive. The council's philosophy towards its assets is one of social entrepreneurialism that combines stewardship of the assets it needs for service delivery with a commercial role that recognises assets as resources that consume money, have an opportunity cost and can generate income.

A rigorous process challenges underperforming or underused assets, and the county has raised more than £200m since 1989/90 by selling property. KCC is increasingly working with partner organisations to identify and secure wider opportunities for rationalisation within the public estate both to secure efficiency savings and improve service delivery and access, as highlighted by the Property Enterprise Fund and the Gateway Strategy.

2.5 Working with others

As well as formal partnership working, KCC is fully engaged with a wide range of public, private and 'Third Sector' partners in delivering services.

This would be a good place for examples from the Stakeholder Log to feature

2.5.1 Partnerships that deliver

The Audit Commission has praised the way KCC is identifying efficiencies and strengthening partnership working. Kent's groundbreaking Public Service Board addresses strategic issues and is tackling agreed priorities across public services in Kent. It also oversees the progress of the Kent Agreement and looks at new ways of

coordinating public services in the county to improve service delivery and secure better value for money.

The county is working with the community and voluntary sectors through the Kent Compact to strengthen the infrastructure that helps them work with communities and involve local people. It has also used SIP to foster effective relationships with central government. Officers have addressed key stakeholder events and 'think tanks' focused on disadvantaged groups in Kent.

Following an initial pilot, KCC has agreed with Kent's two Primary Care Trusts that a single Director of Public Health should head up the public health work of the PCTs, working alongside a small strategic team within KCC. A parallel approach has led to the post of Director of Children's Health and the NHS staff team being based within the CFE Directorate.

The Kent Waste Partnership between KCC and the district and borough councils in Kent is the mechanism through which the partners achieve the priorities set out in the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. Kent Highway Services is an innovative 'virtual company' approach to providing Kent's highways and transportation service. The alliance brings together KCC, Ringway, consultants Jacobs and Traffic Signals UK.

2.5.2 Shared analysis, data and knowledge management

KCC has developed, and continues to improve, a range of intelligence and data sharing mechanisms both within the organisation and with partners. KCC's Analysis and Information Team manages intelligence that includes all major comparative data sources, the Land Use Information System (LUIS), innovative Geographical Information Systems (GIS) tools and the Kent Landscape Information System (KLIS). Specialist GIS tools include Kent Crime View, a multi-agency 'intelligence led' approach to meeting community safety objectives. KCC is also developing wider application of MOSAIC social profiling to improve the quality, efficiency and planning of a range of public services. Current innovations include Kent View, a partnership approach to data sharing and intelligence-led decision making, while an internal review into knowledge sharing across KCC concludes in December 2007.

2.5.3 Engaging with local, national and regional groups

KCC participates actively in a number of service-focused learning networks both within Kent and at a regional and national level, for example as a member of national action learning sets in relation to the LAA. (this needs more work to demonstrate our commitment to learning from elsewhere)

KCC has encouraged two-way learning with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) which saw a DEFRA officer spend a year in the Rural Regeneration team supporting Kent's rural community. One of two other DEFRA secondees is currently working on KCC's response to climate change.

2.5.4 International links

An example of the way KCC looks for new benchmarks amongst top performing authorities in other countries is the agreement forged with the US State of Virginia to

share best practice. KCC hopes that sharing information, particularly on performance management, will inspire the county to further improve its performance in this area.

KCC is a founding partner and Executive Board member of the OECD-sponsored PASCAL International Observatory. PASCAL brings together the foremost academics, policy makers and practitioners in the field of regional development, social capital and lifelong learning. In addition to practical benefits in the form of applied research, partnership links and funding, PASCAL gives KCC access to mutual learning from international partners that is changing organisational culture around work within the global context for local benefit.

Needs re-drafting with more substantial examples of what we've achieved

3. Summary of Achievements - To be completed at the same time as the overall executive summary

3.1 A sustainable economy

3.1.1 Partnerships, companies and joint ventures

The Kent Economic Board (KEB) is a private sector-led working group of the Kent Partnership. It focuses on bringing together three priorities for transforming the Kent economy – skills, infrastructure and enterprise - within overall spending and investment priorities. This approach dovetails with the programmes and projects identified in the regional economic strategy and the Kent economic strategy Kent Prospects (a 'daughter document' to V4K) to provide a coherent picture of what needs to be done and by which of the partners.

A number of organisations are responsible for specific parts of Kent's improving economic performance.

- Locate in Kent (LIK) is the inward investment agency that has attracted or secured an average of 2,749 jobs per year since its inception in 1997
- Kent Tourism Alliance (KTA) co-ordinates Kent's tourism industry and ensured that national and international visitors are offered a high quality product
- Produced in Kent (PinK) supports local producers and encourages public sector bodies in Kent to buy local food and drink. A 2005 study estimated that KCC allocated 64% of its spend in this area locally
- East Kent Spatial Development Company is an innovative partnership between KCC, the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and Dover and Thanet District Councils. It uses EU and Government funding to provide utility infrastructure for zoned employment sites in Thanet and Dover ahead of individual developments, removing one of the significant factors that can inhibit development.

Supporting business across Kent

- Managed workspace at the Old Rectory in Dartford is designed to allow small firms to grow
- The county has set up a joint venture company with Thanet District Council to develop a high-quality business park at Manston to stimulate regeneration and job creation in Thanet

- Targeted action is planned for the coming year to support small and medium size businesses
- New academies will include business incubators linked to the school sites
- The council supports XX Enterprise and Innovation Hubs across north and east Kent.

Kings Hill, KCC's long-term joint development project with the Liberty Property Group of Philadelphia, is one of the most successful living and working communities in the south east with xxxm square metres of commercial floor space, growing retail and leisure facilities, a university post-graduate centre and xxxx homes due to be built by XXX.

3.1.2 Regeneration

KCC's regeneration focus is on the growth areas in north Kent and Ashford and on areas identified by the SIP as being in greatest need - in particular Kent's coastal and rural areas. KCC is a key player in town-based regeneration partnerships for Margate, Dover and Folkestone that focus on redevelopment, inward investment, transport links, sports and culture as key elements of building strong local economies.

Achievements to support growth areas:

- A nationally-important development at Ebbsfleet includes a new station to serve international and domestic high-speed rail services plus new homes and jobs on one of the largest regeneration sites in Europe. The first houses are now under construction at Springhead.
- KCC has negotiated a £109m developer contribution to support 6,250 new homes at Eastern Quarry.
- Phase 1 of the new Fastrack public transport system in Dartford and Gravesham has passenger numbers that are 50% above those forecast. In its first year of operation it is showing that 19% of passengers are choosing to use the bus instead of the car.
- Ashford's improved road system is supporting major town centre regeneration. The improvements aim to create a people-friendly public realm and allow the existing town centre to expand.
- The imminent signing of a Section 106 agreement will release £7m developer contributions for community infrastructure at the Templar Barracks housing development in Ashford.

Achievements to support coastal areas:

- KCC has influenced government strategy for coastal towns nationally and helped retain Assisted Area status for parts of East Kent so that they can continue to benefit from these funding streams.
- In Margate, KCC secured £10m of European Commission Objective Two funding to improve access between the Old Town and the eastern sea front. This connects the council's inspirational Turner Contemporary scheme with wider leisure, culture and retail facilities. The four top class architect/development partners for Margate's Rendezvous site will create a vibrant mixed use development that will provide jobs and housing on the seafront.

- Major development schemes are also planned for Folkestone seafront and for Dover, where £40m is to be spent on regenerating the town centre. This complements private sector investment in the harbour area of £300m over the next 20 years. The development of Dover Sea Sports Centre began in 2007.

Achievements to support rural areas:

- The launch of the Kent Rural Delivery Framework in July 2007 represented the first multi-agency action plan for Kent's rural areas. The framework outlines how Kent partners will manage key issues affecting Kent's rural economy, communities and environment.
- The Kent Rural Board will further enhance partnership working across rural stakeholders, join up rural delivery and champion key rural priorities.
- Town Health checks have inspired communities to identify future regeneration priorities under the Kent Rural Town Programme in a process that has seen £1.2m committed to community-led projects.
- A further £5m of investment in rural community priorities has been achieved through the LEADER + and Rural Revival Programme partnerships.
- A multi-agency Bridging the Gap: Engaging Communities prospectus for parish and community planning has helped rural communities contribute to sustainable community strategies, Local Development Frameworks and community policing strategies.

3.1.3 Tourism

In March 2007 Kent Tourism Association (KTA) developed a new 24/7 on-line booking and marketing system, while KCC has used funding allocated as part of the Towards 2010 process to lever in additional resources worth more than £2.5m over the next five years to promote Kent as a premier tourist destination.

In July 2007 Kent took part in celebrations to mark the 400-year anniversary of the founding the first permanent English settlement in North America at Jamestown, Virginia, and attended the internationally-famous Smithsonian Folklife festival. More than one million visitors learned more about Kent as a tourism destination during an event that also helped Kent firms build business links in the US through an associated trade mission.

3.1.4 Kent Film Office (KFO)

KCC's Kent Film Office is raising the profile of Kent as a place in which to film or make TV programmes. The office helps the industry find urban, industrial and countryside locations in which to film, boosting the Kent economy by providing job opportunities and increasing demand for local services. A single TV series filmed in Kent following work by the KFO contributed £2.5m to the local economy.

3.1.5 Skills and Employability

A new '14-24 innovations unit' has been created to bring together the work of a number of service units and 2010 strategic targets. The unit will provide a holistic approach to a range of activity aimed at ensuring our young people have the necessary skills, knowledge and support to become the workforce of the future.

(i) Extended curriculum choice

We aim to maximise the potential and raise the aspirations of all students particularly at post-14 education. We will ensure that Kent students leave secondary education with the relevant skills to play an active part in their communities, lead fulfilled lives and able to contribute to the economy as part of a multi skilled workforce fit for purpose in the 21st century. This will be achieved through the offer of an extended curriculum choice underpinned by the 14 – 19 Strategy, appropriate vocational education, the implementation of the diplomas and the vision which will be articulated in the third phase of the Secondary Strategy. Students will also receive individual careers advice to ensure that they are in a position to make appropriate career decisions. In order to support this aim, CFE is pioneering and developing new vocational and applied learning pathways for all 14-19 year olds. The programmes will be flexible; demand led and will contribute to the long-term transformation of vocational training locally and nationally. The full engagement of local employers and the Skills Sector Councils is seen as crucial to the success of the programmes to provide a motivated and skilled workforce.

(ii) The Kent Community Programme (KCP)

The new Kent Community Programme (KCP) aims to ensure that young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) are given the skills to reach their potential by moving into something positive. The KCP is designed to engage those who have become disenchanted with education and who are either in or likely to fall into the NEET group and promotes independent living and learning. Achievements???

(iii) Kent Apprentices Scheme

Kent Success, KCC's apprenticeship programme, was launched in the autumn of 2006. The council and its partners will provide apprenticeships that enable young people over 16 to achieve an accredited qualification in a supported work placement across a wide range of vocational skill areas. The programme will also give young people an extensive range of life-skills, employability skills and an Apprenticeship Contract of Employment with KCC.

(iv) Kent NOW (New Opportunities for Work)

Kent NOW was launched in the summer of 2006 and is delivering services in Maidstone, Folkestone, Dartford/Gravesham, Swale and Canterbury that include return-to-work advice and guidance, health, happiness and well-being training and support for people once they are in work - both for clients and employers.

(v) EVOLVE

The EVOLVE Development Partnership aims to ensure all adults can access employment and focuses on the most deprived districts in Kent. It promotes the employability of disadvantaged adult groups through vocational training, mentoring and advice and guidance. The aim of the project, led by KCC's Communities

Directorate alongside partners from Adult Education, Adult Social Services, the Prince's Trust, the health service and the MCCH Society, is to help adults build their confidence regarding employment, training or voluntary work. The partners are currently working with 589 people, including lone parents, adults with learning and physical disabilities, those recovering from mental health illnesses and those from ethnic communities.

(vi) Kent Works (Education/Business Partnership)

Kent Works delivers a high-quality education-business service for students, teachers and employers, working with more than 110 schools and colleges.

3.2 Housing

While housing strategy is the responsibility of district councils, Kent is a welcome partner in relation to a number of key housing challenges which Kent faces and which are set out in V4K. KCC's particular roles are to set the policy framework for new housing developments through the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, act as a strategic partner in housing-related PFI projects, provide housing-related support services through the Supporting People Programme and work with partners on innovative projects such as the East Kent Empty Property Initiative

3.2.1 Housing growth

Kent contains two of the Government's four growth areas for housing in the south east, plus one of the eight recently designated growth points. Most of the other districts also face significant housing growth targets within the South East Plan, and ensuring that this growth creates sustainable communities rather than dormitories is one of the key challenges facing Kent over the next 20 years. KCC set out the scale of the investment needed to achieve this goal in Kent – What Price Growth? The county has attracted significant investment from the private sector, particularly in town centres, and KCC's largest-ever capital programme is also contributing to the solution. KCC is asking developers to play their part where it can make a clear and justified case for investment in infrastructure and is urging central Government to contribute more to major transport schemes.

3.2.2 Affordability

With housing affordability a significant issue, KCC is working with district councils to ensure that the right mix of new housing is being delivered and that Kent is maximising its share of government funding to support key worker and shared equity schemes that enable young people, in particular, to find a home. KCC actively pursues opportunities to release any surplus land or buildings for housing development, particularly on brownfield sites.

3.2.3 East Kent Empty Property Initiative (EKEPI)

This Thanet, Dover, Shepway and Swale initiative is on target to exceed its March 2008 target of returning more than 400 empty properties into use as homes. It has already returned 240 empty properties to use within the first two years and works by funding property owners, strengthening district council advice and enforcement

resources and buying and renovating properties. The national Empty Homes Agency has praised the EKEPI partnership as the only example in the country of a 'two-tier' partnership tackling this issue.

3.2.4 Partnership with District Councils

The Kent Housing Group brings district councils, housing associations and KCC senior managers together to oversee the delivery of the Kent Agreement housing outcomes. It sponsors the Affordable Homes in Kent website and is developing a 'choice-based lettings' scheme for social housing tenants and those on waiting lists. The Joint Policy and Planning Board is another example of strong partnership working, this team brings together health, housing, probation and KCC staff from adult social care and Supporting People to deliver single agency assessment processes, housing protocols and county wide strategies covering issues such as a 'move-on strategy' from supported housing.

3.3 Sustainable communities

Kent faces the challenges of managing housing growth, conserving natural resources, promoting exercise and access to the countryside, managing waste, improving the local environment and promoting cultural and leisure activities in its commitment to deliver sustainable communities

KCC has already had considerable success in meeting some of these challenges. Since 2002, KCC has –

- Increased the percentage of household waste recycled and composted from 17.1% to 32.4% in 2006/7
- Reduced waste growth to zero
- Exceeded the target for development on brownfield land (xx% compared to target of yy%)
- Reduced fly-tipping and removed 93% of abandoned vehicles within 48 hours in partnership with others
- Created 23 kilometres of new 'green corridors' and established 593 hectares of new parks and habitats
- Improved 600 kilometres of public rights of way.

The Kent Environment Strategy, launched in 2003 by the Kent Partnership as a 'daughter document' to V4K. This sets out how Kent partners will take action on a wide range of local and global environmental issues.

3.3.1 Planning

The Kent and Medway Structure Plan (KMSP) was adopted in July 2006 and continues to provide the bedrock for strategic planning policies ahead of the introduction of the regionally-based South East Plan in 2008. The KMSP includes a target of using 70 per cent of previously-developed land for new developments plus key policies on transport infrastructure, housing quality and quality of life. KCC has also made robust representation to the Government to retain priority consideration of previously-developed land in assessing future land supply for housing. The county submitted its first batch of minerals development documents to Government in

November 2006. Work is continuing on the Waste Development Framework and a further minerals development document.

3.3.2 Developer contributions

KCC's development investment team achieves significant developer contributions but also plays a wider role in shaping new developments in terms of design, social inclusion, learning and skills, health, social care and quality of life. Working with partners, the team's influence begins at the planning stage and continues through to site-specific negotiations in partnership with district councils. KCC also takes a partnership approach in responding to government consultations on tariffs and other land value taxation proposals.

3.3.4 Quality design

KCC's determination to see high quality new buildings across the county led to the publication of the Kent Design Guide and the decision to retain award-winning architect Piers Gough as Kent's design champion. KCC sponsors the annual Kent Design Awards and appointed internationally-recognised David Chipperfield Architects to its landmark £15m Turner Contemporary project. The Water on Tap project in Ashford addresses major concerns about water supply issues in Kent in an award-winning partnership between KCC, Hillreed Homes and Mid Kent Water that deals with designing-in water conservation measures at the earliest possible stage.

3.3.5 Household waste

The total volume of household waste produced in Kent continues to fall, while public satisfaction with household waste recycling centres rose from 72% in 2003 to 88% in a survey conducted in autumn 2006.

3.3.6 Clean Kent - Urban Neighbourhood Response Teams

These three teams are working to reduce fly-tipping, littering and graffiti in line with an innovative agreement between KCC, district councils and Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) as part of the Clean Kent initiative. This complements the work of district councils in protecting and improving the street scene environment.

3.3.7 Roadside litter

KCC worked alongside the Highways Agency (HA) in 2006 on a successful and well-publicised roadside litter campaign that raised awareness of fixed penalty notices, litter as a hazard to road users and the antisocial behaviour involved. The HA, supported by district councils, held 13 exhibitions across the Kent network and handed out 25,000 car litter bags to encourage a change in behaviour and more responsible road use. This partnership approach, along with improved monitoring and cleansing regimes has resulted in cleaner roads.

3.3.8 Environmental Education

More than 3,800 primary school children took part in the Lost in Litter workshops run in conjunction with the Eco-schools project and the Clean Kent campaign to challenge attitudes and behaviours towards litter, graffiti, dog fouling and fly-tipping amongst year 5 and 6 pupils. KCC has also helped develop a secondary education package to target young people between 12-14 years and turn them away from antisocial behaviour and street crimes. Following a successful pilot programme, it will now be rolled out to all secondary schools in Kent.

3.3.9 Promoting sport

With preparation well underway for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games, KCC has made well-considered bids to host preparation camps in the county. The British Judo Association is set to use the Dartford Judo Centre as its pre-games training camp and a brochure and website highlights Kent's benefits in relation to the 2012 games. KCC has also produced an electronic guide designed to help small and medium-sized businesses become 'fit for the games'. More than £4 million of external funding will boost sport in Kent in 2006/07, including disability sports projects that will develop a wide range of opportunities for disabled people in Kent.

3.3.10 Countryside access

Users and residents have helped develop KCC's Countryside Access Improvement Plan and its seven key priorities. To ensure footpaths are accessible for a wide range of users, particularly people with mobility issues and walkers with pushchairs, KCC is replacing all stiles with gates or kissing-gates. The whole network of paths is now shown on the Explore Kent website so that users can see what kind of gradients and other physical features they will find on individual paths and tracks. The well-visited site was shortlisted for a national eGovernment award.

3.3.11 Country parks

KCC manages 19 Country Parks, picnic sites and woodlands across Kent, ranging from major visitor attractions to small-scale sites that conserve special habitats and landscapes. KCC opened its new visitor centre at Shorne Wood Country Park in July 2006, showcasing environmentally-friendly technologies. KCC provides opportunities to more than 500 volunteers to take part in countryside conservation in its country parks and countryside management partnerships.

3.3.12 Green Grid

KCC has led action in Kent's growth areas to lessen their environmental impact and enhance the quality of life for present and future residents. The Greening the Gateway project in north Kent and the Blue and Green Grid project in Ashford are providing more and better green space, particularly in deprived areas, and making parks and other public areas better places to be. Cycling and walking routes link towns with rivers and countryside.

3.3.13 A 21st century library service

Kent has continued to encourage greater use of libraries and has seen a rise in the number of books issued, particularly to children, where the number borrowed rose by

9.63 per cent (in 20XX). New technology is enhancing customer service, with emails alerting users the book they reserved is available or that their books are overdue. The Ask a Kent Librarian remote enquiry service allows the public to ask questions at any time of day or night via the KCC website or by telephone. Library opening hours have been extended across the county, with a total of 106 Kent libraries now open for an additional 310 hours each week.

The county's Summer Reading Challenge encouraged 16,472 children to read books during the holidays (which year?), while a new Books Can Help service in some major libraries allows GPs to advise patients to borrow books or DVDs from the library to help them manage their condition.

It is a KCC priority to create modern, accessible and attractive community libraries such as the new Kkaleidoscope project in Sevenoaks that has incorporated a visual arts gallery and museum within an existing library. Local people helped select more than £50,000 worth of new books. At Coldharbour, the community was similarly involved when KCC responded to a national Love Libraries challenge to redevelop the library in just 12 weeks, creating a 'funky' community facility with its own space for teenagers and a cosy Reading Den.

3.3.14 Promoting Kent as a centre for the arts

In 2006 a Creative Partnerships programme, in conjunction with Arts Council England, worked with schools in seven new cluster areas in Ashford, Swale, Maidstone and Canterbury to help schools deliver creative learning and evaluate its impact on educational attainment.

A media studies training facility has given strategic, audience development and business planning advice to a range of independent arts organisations including the proposed Kent Arena, the Marlowe Theatre and the Margate Theatre Royal. The Turner Contemporary programme has featured nationally and internationally-renowned artists in both gallery and public settings and has attracted participants of all ages.

3.3.15 Schools at the heart of their community

KCC has worked hard to meet and exceed government targets requiring schools to offer pupils and families access to a range of services by 2010. These 'core' services, designed to put schools at the heart of their communities, vary from school to school and depend on what local people say they need. Kent exceeded its target of 165 schools offering access to the full core offer when 180 reached that standard by September 2007.

Other KCC resources focused on achieving 'extended school' goals over the past 12 months include Kent Children's University (KCU), which delivered a wide range of family learning activities alongside its traditional programmes for children. KCC also used central government funding to open Playing for Success centres based at Ebbsfleet United and Margate Football Club. These centres use sports to deliver literacy and numeracy projects outside school hours. The county has also worked closely with Charlton Athletic FC to help the club develop its Kick into Education literacy/numeracy programme. A total of 28 schools took part in Week 53, an opportunity for schools to celebrate their out-of-school hours learning activities.

3.4 Sustainable communities and transport - Transport

3.4.1 Local Transport Plan (LTP)

Following publication of Kent's excellent rated Local Transport Plan, a multi-agency working group has been established to carry out the improvements it identifies – with a focus on improving accessibility.

While the Fastrack service in north Kent has encouraged a 19% shift away from private cars, KCC continues to support Quality Bus Partnerships across the county. It also acts as the district councils' contractor in running free Kent-wide bus travel for the elderly. The Kent Freedom Pass, designed to give 11 to 16 year-olds free bus travel, is already proving popular, with 4,000 passes sold in the first 4 months of a pilot scheme in three areas.

The county supports 200 bus routes in areas that are shown to be dependent on them as well as funding a wheelchair accessible dial-a-ride network for disabled people. A total of 350 schools have travel plans that have promoted social interaction and increased the number of children walking to school. Kent has an expanding network of cycle routes and hosting the Tour de France in July 2007 raise cycling's profile dramatically.

LTP monitoring shows that KCC helped encourage a 56% increase in cycling and a 19% increase in bus usage across Kent between 2000 and 2005. As well as introducing the award-winning Fastrack service, KCC used Government Kickstart funding to set up the Thanet Loop, a popular and accessible service within one of Kent's most deprived areas. Passenger numbers are higher than expected and services now run every seven minutes. The successful introduction of school travel plans has led to a five per cent rise in the number of children walking.

3.4.2 Congestion

Congestion is a significant problem in Kent's principal urban areas. KCC has produced a traffic management plan and established a traffic management centre in Maidstone. This is initially focusing on Maidstone but will cover other town centres as old technology is replaced. Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells are next in line.

KCC is combating congestion by encouraging greater use of buses by improving services in partnership with providers and by working with utility companies to provide better-managed and co-ordinated roadworks. It is providing better information to road users, working with the Highways Agency to ensure co-ordinated route diversions following an incident and providing capital funds to tackle congestion 'hot spots'. KCC highway inspectors are being trained to exercise delegated police powers to deal with highway obstructions.

3.4.3 New developments

KCC supports district council planning teams to ensure that new developments include appropriate public transport through strong Local Development Framework policies. A member of Kent Highways Services has been seconded to Maidstone

Borough Council to support the development of their LDF in what is likely to prove a model for work in other areas.

3.4.4 Targeting areas of high need

KCC targets transport investment resources towards socially-excluded groups and areas with poor accessibility. Kent's Accessibility Strategy identifies ways of improving access. The county has sustained its seven rural Kent Karrier networks despite pressure on supported bus budgets. Kent's LTP investment is assessed against a robust methodology known as PIPKIN (Prioritising Investment Programmes on the Kent Integrated Network) that reflects the need to prioritise measures that have a wider social, economic and environmental impact as well as transport issues such as road safety and accessibility.

Key targets alongside those outlined above include:

- Launching the new Kent Highways Service alliance with three contractors in July 2006
- Trebling the length of road resurfaced in 2006 compared to 2002
- Organising the traffic management for the visit of the Tour De France to Kent in July 2007
- Launching a considerate contractor scheme to encourage contractors working on the highway to do so safely, consistently and considerately
- Acting as one of the pilot Authorities for the implementation of Traffic Management Act permitting schemes in conjunction with DfT.
- Making excellent progress towards the target of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in Kent by 40 per cent through safer roads, education, training and publicity
- Beginning to reduce Kent's carbon footprint by replacing all traffic signal bulbs with new LED lights, producing a 70 per cent saving on energy use

3.4.5 Improving transport infrastructure

Since 2002 a number of major road schemes have supported economic and housing growth and regeneration. These include the first two phases of improvements to the East Kent Access (EKA) road to improve the north/south connection between Dover Harbour and Manston airport, improving access to Ebbsfleet international station and previously land-locked employment sites, the Leybourne bypass and dualling of the A228. Progress has been made on the Sittingbourne northern relief road, Ashford ring road, Rushenden relief road and the final phase of EKA.

3.4.6 Rail in Kent – Integrated Kent Franchise and Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL)

KCC has consistently supported the building of the CTRL, which will result in dramatically reduced domestic journey times to and from London from December 2009. Faster journeys will assist the regeneration of the growth areas of Ashford and the Thames Gateway as well as the coastal towns of Dover, Folkestone and Ramsgate. Other parts of the county, particularly west Kent, will see an increased number of trains to relieve overcrowding, and KCC is supporting the community by working to ensure that services from smaller stations in Kent are maintained and that the number of services switching to other London termini is minimised.

3.5 Safer, stronger communities

3.5.1 Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP)

KCC was leading the way on partnership work to tackle crime and community safety well in advance of the requirement for county-level Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). The KCSP brings together senior officers involved in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and overseeing key outcomes within the Kent Agreement. KCC has for many years supported Kent Police in 'intelligence-led' policing, sponsored key projects such as the highly successful Community Wardens scheme and led the way in sharing data and intelligence between agencies in Kent. This initiative that has now led to the creation of Kent Crime View. The 12 CDRPs now in place, with representation from KCC, have delivered numerous community safety initiatives across Kent.

Information sharing protocols are in place across the county and designated officers can request personal information in appropriate circumstances. A Memorandum of Understanding between Kent Police and the Youth Offending Service allows information sharing in order to analyse the number of young people who re-offend. There also close liaison with Kent Police on specific hate crime initiatives and support services.

KCC has ensured that the Crime and Disorder Act requirement for local authorities to do everything they can to tackle crime and disorder while exercising their other responsibilities is understood by all staff. The Kent Crime and Victimisation Survey (which consults 4,000 local residents every quarter) showed a slight fall in the number of people reporting a fear of crime in 2006/07.

3.5.2 Community safety

Kent has more than 100 community wardens in place across the county. They act as the 'eyes and ears' of their communities and are popular with the people of Kent for strengthening communities, making people feel safer and discouraging antisocial behaviour. As well public acclaim, the scheme received positive feedback from a University of Kent review that revealed the wardens were having a real effect in making Kent a safer county.

Handyvan and HomeSafe

KCC has introduced Community Priorities, a scheme that asks local people about the biggest problems facing their communities so that a multi-agency response can be developed. The answers can be used in conjunction with information from the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) process. This joint initiative, involving the police, local housing staff, antisocial behaviour teams, community wardens and others, invites residents to talk about community concerns either in their own homes or in a community venue. The day-to-day work of wardens and the Handyvan and HomeSafe teams also helps ensure that community safety projects reflect local needs.

Kent Police shares hate crime information with KCC's Community Safety Unit, while the unit and its partners provide training on equality and diversity issues.

3.5.3 Trading Standards

The intelligence-led Trading Standards service has continued to target and significantly disrupt rogue traders who deliberately and persistently operate unfairly. Its work featured in the 2007 BBC3 series (called?) and 400 businesses have been advised about how to prevent the sale of age-restricted goods to young people.

The KCC Act allows KCC to work in partnership with Kent Police to undermine the rewards of crime and increase the recovery of stolen goods. A series of musicals has been used to warn older people about rogue traders and doorstep sellers. The Kent Consumer Support Network sends alert messages to parish councils and organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch about rogue traders operating in their area.

Kent Trading Standards' Rapid Action Team responds as soon as it discovers that rogue traders or doorstep sellers are targeting vulnerable consumers and it focuses under-age sales campaigns and enforcement activity in areas where young people have been identified as attempting to buy age-restricted goods, especially alcohol.

KCC hosts the Consumer Direct service for the whole of the south east after winning the bidding process because of the national reputation of its trading standards service and KCC's successful contact centre.

3.5.4 Emergency Planning

KCC's emergency plans have demonstrated their effectiveness in a number of emergency situations where the council has led a multi-agency response. These included the fuel crisis in 2000 and the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks in 2001 and 2007. The plans have also worked well in emergency situations in which the county has played a strong supporting role, such as the flooding of 2000 and the east Kent earthquake of April 2007.

As well as maintaining its own emergency arrangements, KCC has a service level agreement to provide 11 of Kent's district councils with emergency planning support. This includes meeting the requirements on local authorities to promote business continuity planning to the commercial and voluntary sector, which it does via its website, leaflets, exhibitions and training events.

3.5.5 Drug intervention

The Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team (KDAAT) brings together partners including Police, Probation, Prisons and the Crown Prosecution Service. It is through this partnership that KCC helps deliver the National Drug Strategy at county level. KDAAT commissions prevention services for looked-after children, young offenders, young people excluded or at risk of exclusion and children of substance-misusing parents. Interventions are focused on individuals and delivered in partnership, helping more than 3,500 vulnerable young people in 2006/07.

County-wide intervention and support programmes have been attended by nearly 400 young people at risk of exclusion because of drug possession. Substance misuse education has been delivered in schools, while a parents and carers support service offers advice and information to families affected by drug and alcohol. Local prevention projects around the county have led to fewer first-time entrants to the

youth justice system. A syringe exchange programme that runs across Kent and Medway to tackle the health issues posed to drug users by sharing needles involves 40 pharmacies, 10 fixed service site exchanges and two outreach exchanges. Almost 850,000 syringes were distributed in (what year?).

3.5.6 Road safety

KCC's Road Safety Officers run campaigns across the whole county as well as focusing on local problems. In 2006, they delivered a Ride with Attitude campaign aimed at motorcyclists plus speed awareness courses that offered speeding drivers a chance to attend a training course as an alternative to prosecution. The Help Save 478 Lives initiative is well established and helped the downward trend in casualties continue during 2006.

Partnership working with both Kent Police and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) has provided additional expertise and resources. Examples include:

- National speed awareness and driver improvement schemes
- Campaigns and enforcement designed to raise awareness of key messages such as those related to drink/driving and mobile phone legislation
- Supporting Licensed to Kill, a hard-hitting theatre production for sixth form students to illustrate the consequences of bad driving
- Fit for the Road - a joint stand at the Kent County Show
- A KCC road safety presence at police and fire station open days
- Grow Up Slow Down - a specific anti-speeding campaign aimed at young drivers.

3.5.7 Youth Offending Service (YOS)

Kent YOS has contributed to a year-on-year fall in the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system in the county and a fall in the rates of re-offending for many young people. It also leads the 'prevent and deter' element of the Prolific and Priority Offender (PPO) strategy on behalf of the Kent Criminal Justice Board.

YOS is a member of each of the 12 CDRPs in the county and works with partners on a range of preventative initiatives such as the Power projects in the west and Action 7 in the east of the county. The Service also contracts Crime Concern to deliver three senior (13 to 17 years) Youth Inclusion Programmes, based in Thanet, Ashford and Gravesend and works with the Kent Children's Fund on the delivery of Junior Youth Inclusion Programmes.

Kent YOS works closely with the antisocial behaviour arrangements in each of the districts and the Youth Inclusion Programmes target those either offending or at risk of becoming involved in antisocial behaviour. Front line staff work with young people involved in antisocial behaviour as part of the YOS commitment to preventing youth crime and allow children and young people to be managed safely within the community rather than being held in secure conditions. The Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme has reduced the risk presented by some more prolific offenders while offering them the opportunity to develop socially acceptable lifestyles.

3.5.8 Youth strategies

KCC has been actively supporting district and borough councils in publishing Youth Strategies and has progressed an enhanced framework for commissioning youth

work in the voluntary and community sector. A total of 659 unemployed young people aged 16 and 17 joined a 17-week Entry to Employment training programme which resulted in 65 per cent of them progressing into employment or further training. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme has provided a number of opportunities for young people, including some with challenging behaviour. In 2006 more than 90 participants received a sectional or full award (at bronze level). A partnership group co-ordinated by KCC addresses the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Kent.

3.5.8a Safer Schools

3.5.9 Kent Volunteers

KCC values volunteers and encourages people to take part in voluntary activities through events that focus on volunteer recognition, recruitment and good practice and highlight the ways volunteering benefits individuals, communities and the environment. KCC's annual Awards for Volunteering Excellence receives more than 600 nominations.

3.5.10 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

The voluntary and community sector (VCS) has a vital role to play in delivering excellent public services to the people of Kent by delivering statutory services, recruiting volunteers and supporting individuals at risk. KCC has contracts with more than xxx separate VCS organisations under which those organisations deliver core services on its behalf. These range from being the lead provider for day centre provision for older people to acting as a strategic partner in providing affordable rural housing. VCS procurement in 2007/8 is expected to total £xxm.

The Kent Compact, acknowledged as a leading example of good practice, sets out how the voluntary and community sectors and KCC work together. The Kent Partners' Compact (KPC) is a natural progression from the Kent Compact that will bring together all public sector partners when it is launched in March 2008.

The 10,000-plus VCS organisations in Kent are represented on the Kent Partnership by representatives from Kent CAN - a county-level VCS leadership body. KCC wants to improve and enhance its partnership with the VCS by investing in its leadership capacity, the quality of its support services and its representational role.

The national VCS transformation programme ChangeUp is helping Kent run pilot projects designed to boost volunteer support networks, give more support to VCS organisation in the BME sector and improve efficiencies through shared services and mergers. KCC is helping to oversee this transformation programme.

3.6 Healthier communities

3.6.1 Kent Partnership Health and Well-being sub group

3.6.2 Joint approach to Public Health and Public Health Strategy

Need stuff on both of these – and how they fit together from Mark Lemon and/or Meradin Peachey are these 2 para or just 1?.

3.6.3 School sports

A significant increase in the number of children and young people aged five to 19 taking part in high quality school sport and PE sessions for at least two hours a week has seen the figure climb to 75 per cent (in what year?) from 64 per cent the previous year. Big Lottery Fund projects primarily on school sites are progressing well, with 58 out of 64 completed by March 2007.

3.6.4 Healthy Schools

KCC's Healthy Schools Team achieved a Kent Agreement target at the end of July 2006 when the number of Kent schools signed up as working towards achieving Healthy Schools status reached 50 per cent. A total of 546 Kent schools (90 per cent) are now involved some way in the programme. KDAAT has played its part in this project by educating young people about the health dangers of substance misuse. PCTs have also been key partners.

3.6.5 Healthy Living Centres

KCC's healthy living centres in Gravesend, Ashford and Maidstone offer a wide range of activities, advice and support for local people within some of Kent's more deprived communities. Many have a particular interest in the health and welfare of young children and families, tackling parenting skills, cooking nutritious food on a tight budget and the importance of a healthy life for young children. Other centres focus on young people, sexual health services and access to IT.

3.6.6 Healthy lifestyles

Trading Standards officers run five a day and other food awareness/healthy eating campaigns every year. KCC has also been involved in initiatives designed to promote healthy living and exercise amongst its own staff.

(i) Bien etre

Bien etre, part financed by the European Regional Development Fund, was launched in September 2005 and is a two-year Interreg project set up by partners in Kent and Pas-de-Calais to promote healthy schools and communities. By focusing on healthy eating it aims to stimulate an interest in healthier lifestyles through professional, social and cultural exchanges, increase community involvement in local projects, further community development and improve the lives of children and families.

(ii) Promoting exercise

A number of KCC activities aim to improve the health of individuals by promoting physical exercise. The Countryside Access Improvement Plan promotes walking and cycling for healthy living by providing better infrastructure. The Explore Kent website and the popular magazine of the same name both highlight walking and cycling routes and encourage people to get out into the countryside and coast to take exercise.

KCC helped to fund the east Kent Health Walks initiative and produced promotional material designed to encourage those diagnosed as needing physical activity to enjoy exercising in their local area. To date 176 health walk leaders have been trained and 30 weekly walks start from venues that are easily accessible by foot or public transport. KCC estimates that 550 people participate in these Health Walks on a weekly basis.

3.6.7 Health screening

A partnership between the new Ashford Gateway and a community pharmacy saw a popular free health-screening event make good use of the location and resources of the Ashford Gateway. More partnership approaches to tackling long-term public health targets could follow, and the Gateway team is now working with Lloyds Pharmacy on free health checks for diabetes, blood pressure and (possibly) chlamydia. KCC also offers health checks to all non-schools staff as part of its work & well-being initiative.

3.6.8 Other achievements

- The Select Committee report by KCC's NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee into physical activity and obesity in Kent includes a number of wide-ranging recommendations that will contribute to a Kent-wide strategy on tackling obesity. It will involve KCC, the Kent Department of Public Health, district councils and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) as well as the private leisure industry and the voluntary sector.
- KCC has launched Fit Together, a partnership with the leisure industry in Kent that will promote better joint efforts to encourage more people to take exercise. The idea is to work with the Fitness Industry Association on pilot schemes to improve workplace health and physical activity for young women.
- Joint working arrangements put in place by the new Kent Department of Public Health mean that for the first time in three years, the full amount of government funding for public health (Choosing Health) will be spent on public health interventions by the PCTs.

3.7 Promoting independent lives for older people

KCC is encouraging residents to plan for their health, social and economic well-being in old age and championing the positive contribution older people make to their communities. Most older people, and adults with disabilities or mental health problems, want to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. KCC supports this by providing greater choice by helping people to lead their lives as they want, in their own homes.

During the past five years KCC:

- Increased the number of recuperative care beds available almost four fold
- Increased the number of doctors' practices supported by KCC social services staff more than five fold
- Planned and arranged funding for more than 1,200 units of sheltered housing, above the target of 1,000

- Significantly reduced the number of older people who had to wait before being able to leave hospital
- Increased intensive home care for people needing significant help to live at home by 29%
- Used SIP to help people in long-term unemployment, particularly ill health and incapacity claimants.

3.7.1 Active lives

Active Lives is a ten-year vision statement that sets out how KCC will help people stay safe and healthy while allowing them to remain in their homes as much as possible. It covers areas including transport, housing, leisure and finance and highlights the council's commitment to using new technologies.

KCC's vision is to personalise services so that users have control and choice over their care, wherever possible in their own homes. The council is providing tailor-made services and life-changing technology by investing in the self-assessment website, Telehealth, Telecare active living technology, purchase cards and direct payments.

Telecare uses technology to monitor the surroundings and activity of vulnerable people in their homes, keeping them safer while preserving their independence. Telehealth connects patients by computer to health care professionals so that vital signs can be monitored remotely, reducing both risk and the need for unnecessary appointments when the patient is stable. The initiatives have attracted national attention and been awarded Department of Health funding as a whole systems demonstrator site for partnership working with the NHS.

Other KCC initiatives are helping older people, with the Kent Benefits Partnership encouraging and helping thousands of Kent pensioners to apply for more than £3m in tax benefits since the partnership was launched in 2004. The Brighter Futures project run by KCC and the voluntary sector is helping older people to live independently in their homes for longer by encouraging older people to befriend and support others who need help. The country's first fully-integrated social and health care centre in Tenterden provides halfway-house intermediate and respite care for elderly people leaving hospital as well as being home to permanent residents.

KCC also inspires initiatives to help communities achieve better health - like Activmobs, designed to get people involved in activity by making it part of their everyday life through something like dog walking or gardening.

3.7.2 Promoting independence

Adult Social Services' continuing work to help the council promote independence was recognised in the annual review undertaken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The directorate retained its three star, excellent status, making it one of only four local authorities to have done so for five consecutive years. The directorate continues to develop employment opportunities for people and has used the Supporting People programme as a key element in promoting independence.

3.7.3 Choice and personalisation

More than 1,000 people are now using the Direct Payments system to allow them to take control over their support packages. The Kent Card, the first such initiative to be launched by a local authority, has encouraged more people to take up this option, and further new initiatives such as In Control will continue this shift towards control and personalisation. Developing the Kent Card has also saved £700,000 in back office costs.

Both Active Lives and KCC's Older People's Strategy reflect wide consultation with older people, those with disabilities and carers, and the directorate has been careful to consult widely on all its other initiatives to ensure that services are meeting real needs. The re-fresh of Active Lives engaged the public in a variety of ways, including surveys, consultation events and as part of an editorial board that shaped the final version. The public is now being involved in recruiting staff, including those applying for senior posts.

3.7.4 Internal modernisation

Modernisation and ensuring that resources are used effectively continues to be a major driving force within the directorate. With innovative services demanding a skilled and committed workforce, the directorate has launched Training 4 Care to make sure that its workforce is up to the mark. The new SWIFT information system is designed to ensure KCC has the information it needs for strong performance management and to help meet the challenges of the future.

3.7.5 Joint working with the NHS

KCC has used the Private Finance Initiative in a partnership scheme to modernise supported living services for older people and those with learning disabilities or mental health problems. It has also developed integrated management structures for mental health and learning disability services and KDAAT and integrated community equipment stores for occupational therapy professionals.

3.7.6 Housing PFIs

KCC has led a partnership of 10 district councils to deliver 340 extra-care and supported housing apartments for vulnerable people across Kent. This PFI project is a worldwide first thanks to the number of partners, the value for money achieved and the amount of risk passed to Housing 21, the organisation that will construct and manage the housing services.

3.7.7 Supporting People

The Supporting People programme has demonstrated strong partnership working in delivering housing-related support to more than 20,000 people.

3.7.8 Supporting Carers

The need to develop services for carers, including more flexible respite opportunities that meet individual needs, has inspired a range of initiatives developed in partnership with the voluntary sector. The City and Guilds e-learning programme Learning for Living is one example, along with the Certificate in Personal

Development and Learning for Unpaid Carers piloted in a partnership between Kent Adult Social Services, Kent Adult Education Service, North West Kent Carers' Support and Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley MIND.

3.7.9 Adult Protection

KCC is regarded as a forerunner in developing coordinated services aimed at protecting vulnerable adults. This work is supported through the multi-agency Kent and Medway Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Committee. Kent's commitment to this work has been recognised by CSCI in the Annual Review Meeting over the past few years and has contributed to its retention of three star status.

3.8 Children and Young people

Covered by the JAR and the inspections of YOS and the Youth Service

References

Case Studies