

INTRODUCTION

The people of Kent rightly expect public bodies to deliver the best quality services at the best possible cost. As an ambitious authority, we continually seek to challenge and improve the services we deliver as our contribution to a mixed economy of public, private and voluntary partnerships. We are well aware of the unique challenges Kent faces, and make conscious choices to invest in services that meet the needs of vulnerable individuals and disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The council is involved in delivering more than 80 per cent of all local government services in Kent. Despite our size we ensure close contact with local people through our many neighbourhood outlets and with our development of *Gateways* offering residents seamless access to services provided by more than 30 public agencies, including central government.

Our strategic direction starts with the multi-sector *Vision for Kent* and cascades into our own priorities set out in *Towards 2010*. The strand that runs through all aspects of policy is a drive towards more personalised services and supporting independence, for example working with the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus in our Supporting Independence Programme, and our development of the largest Telehealth scheme in Europe, now adopted by the Department of Health as a *Whole System Demonstrator project*. As well as playing a critical role in the regeneration of the Thames Gateway and Ashford growth areas, we have prioritised regeneration work across Kent's coastal regions. We continue to modernise our road network and reduce congestion through the introduction of *intelligent traffic management systems* and the *Freedom Pass*. All of this is set within a dynamic interchange through multi-agency boards which focus on economic development, skills and regeneration, the needs of children and young people and a range of other quality of life issues, especially for older people. In a further contribution to promoting health and well being we have prepared an integrated *Public Health Strategy* with Kent's two Primary Care Trusts and a wide range of other stakeholders. Together this is helping us to build safer and stronger communities.

As an excellent authority we rely on corporate and personal relationships, and although there is still some way to go we have improved our listening skills in recent years. We are a results-driven authority and we aim to work quickly, often in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors and in consultation with residents. A change in leadership two years ago brought with it the challenging new priorities set out in *Towards 2010*. We are continuing to work towards, and deliver, the aspirations within that document despite the financial constraints of recent years, and our overall performance continues to improve within a strong value for money ethos. Kent proposed the Public Service Agreement (PSA) concept to the Government which developed into the first pilot PSA, the success of which led to the current system of Local Area Agreements being rolled out nationally. Kent's existing Local Area Agreement (LAA) looks set to achieve a combined reward grant of some £30m for delivering on joint community-focused priorities. The LAA is making a positive difference to the lives of people in Kent by inspiring multi-agency solutions that are providing better services, and doing so despite demographics that present serious challenges, both regionally and nationally.

The education economy in Kent is leading nationally in the way it commissions services and is working with the private sector to engage young people and in the innovation embodied by the new 14-24 Unit. This has included introducing pre-vocational education for 4,000 14 to 16 year-olds and setting up vocational centres of excellence across the county for 16 to 19 year-olds. The *Thanet Skills Studio* is a good example of this. Standards continue to rise in secondary education and KCC is making a significant contribution to the links between learning and the economy and is continuously seeking to provide improved services by making decisions as close to the customer as possible. In a constant bid to do better, we rely on research, creative thinking and best practice examples worldwide to help us create new and innovative value for money services, increasingly in partnership with others and always in consultation with customers. We take risks where we need to, we celebrate innovation and success and we learn from failure. This in turn means we need a strong performance and financial management framework. Over the past seven years we have stayed within budget and kept our Band D council tax the twelfth lowest in the country while continuing to transform and modernise the authority and drive further improvements in our performance ratings.

The competence, capacity and motivation of our workforce is a critical factor in our success. Notwithstanding the financial challenges over the last few years, we have continued to develop and strengthen our *Strategy for Staff* and overall staff care framework with substantial and sustained investment in learning and development. The outcome has been lower vacancy rates in high risk services and continuity at the front end of the business which has consolidated competence and been further enhanced by the early implementation of Single Status as part of our overall *reward strategy*. The interchange of skills and support services is part of a multi-agency world. A strong performance management culture is essential to excellent service delivery and continuously improving this is a thread which runs through many of the priorities identified in the Strategy for Staff. Our talent management framework, *strategic workforce plan*, successful graduate programmes and *apprenticeship* scheme all stand us in good stead as we move forward. However we are not complacent and still have much to do in continually redefining our workforce to meet the challenges of how we work laterally and how we connect with our local communities both now and in the future"

Continuity in the council's political and managerial relationships and a tradition of strong leadership across all parties has played an important part in KCC's success. *The Member Development Charter*, developed by the IDeA and signed by all three political parties, demonstrates our commitment to the professional development of councillors and the *Kent Leadership Programme* involves the whole of the public sector, significant private sector companies and senior political leaders with the aim of increasing leadership capacity in Kent. *The Kent Commitment*, signed by Kent's 13 Council Leaders, has significantly improved the ability of the county's political leadership to work together on user-focused improvements as well as providing major opportunities to rationalise, and widen access to, seamless public services. There is a long history of strong joint working between KCC and district councils, but we have much still to do to fulfil these new commitments. The four-year experience of community engagement involving the public and local elected Members and partners in decentralising political structures through *Local Boards* is continuing and we are applying what we have learnt from this experience to develop Joint Localism Structures and Neighbourhood Forums which are both popular and inclusive. Although there has been some good progress, there remains much more to do.

We are applying technology and developing partnerships with ICT experts in a bid to provide the people of Kent with more choice and control and achieve increasing value for money. Innovations have benefited online learning, the democratic process, more personalised services and highway services. Cabinet and County Council meetings are already webcast and most of our formal meetings will be by spring 2008. Key meetings webcast over the past two years have included themed debates on public policy issues and a live debate led by Kent Youth County Council that saw more than 200 schools participating through webcast/internet access and online voting. Using technology in this way encourages community participation, engages schools in real time politics and helps to interest young people in the democratic process. KCC's launch of the online KentTV.com has taken advantage of the broadband world that most of our residents now enjoy, thanks partly to our campaign to see broadband access available across the county. These developments offer increasing opportunities for the whole public sector, including the health service, to interact more closely with the people of Kent and provide interactive creativity and information-sharing opportunities. Kent TV is already popular and has sparked interest throughout this country and beyond and within the government. Controversial when first suggested, Kent TV is a good example of the strategic risk-taking and innovation that has benefited integration and community capacity.

KCC is at the forefront of working with the Government's Cabinet Office and large spending departments on policy issues as well as with national, private and voluntary sector organisations. Our aim is to share best practice and learn from what others are doing both nationally and internationally and to create intelligent thinking about tomorrow's services. We are an outward looking authority with international relationships all over the world. Our European Office plays a critical part in our work and reflects the county's location and close links with mainland Europe. Our strategic approach to international work has just been reviewed and further supported by the authority. Alongside this has been our regional partnership working with SEEDA, SEERA other upper tier authorities and various professional associations. We also lead the *South East Centre of Excellence*, which has delivered efficiencies in high-spend services across councils in the region. Our innovative core policy development group uses secondments to and from government, private and other agencies to inspire future policies across the authority.

As one of the largest local authorities in England we are proud of our reputation for pioneering and innovative work and for the influence we have had on national and international policy. We are determined to build on this record of achievement and to continue to learn, harnessing creative talent both within and outside Kent as well as national and international best practice.

CONTEXT

Kent is widely known for the quality of its countryside and landscape, and has a wealth of historic, cultural, leisure and educational facilities. A vibrant and dynamic county, it contains two of the south-east's four designated growth areas and 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.

Kent has a service-based economy with significant numbers of people employed in health, social care, education, retail and tourism, and a predominantly small and medium-sized business sector which is thriving. It has a growing base in the creative industries and in sectors such as pharmaceuticals and bio-sciences. Kent businesses contribute £19.3bn per annum to the national economy. A quarter of the Kent workforce is qualified to at least NVQ level 4, but this trails both the national average and the average for the south east. The percentage of those with no qualifications, although below the national average, is higher than for the south east as a whole. Kent has no dominant centre of population but a network of 18 towns, the largest of which is Maidstone. Agriculture remains important but is not a significant employer. An above average proportion of the population lives in rural areas. Car ownership in Kent is also higher than the national average.

The population of Kent has grown over the last ten years by more than the average for both the south east and the country as a whole and that growing population and increasing prosperity places demands on the environment, transport, housing and public services. The population is ageing and over the next few years Kent expects to have one of the UK's highest increases in the number of people aged 85, together with a fall in the number of under-18s. The accuracy of all estimates and forecasts of population is currently vulnerable to the rapid changes resulting from migration.

Kent's communities are diverse. We have 19 areas designated within the 10% most deprived in England as well as the most affluent postcode in England. Kent also has one of the largest Sikh communities outside London. The health of people in Kent is generally good; but there is a more than 16 year gap in life expectancy between certain wards. Kent is a relatively safe place to live, but public perception of the level of crime is still an issue – especially in relation to the links between alcohol, anti-social behaviour and crime. The success of the Port of Dover and the Channel Tunnel is reflected in the fact that HGV traffic through Kent is growing at 8% each year, placing a strain on the infrastructure. Finding acceptable sites for the housing growth expected of Kent presents challenges for planners and causes concern for residents.

KCC has 84 councillors. We adopted a Leader and Cabinet structure following the Local Government Act 2000 and are continuing to modernise our democratic services. The Executive is closely engaged in policy development, priority-setting and performance management, with clear political accountability and strong working relationships with officers. We have established Local Boards in each district.. The Leader of the Opposition chairs the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee. We have a Policy Overview Committee for each service directorate and a strong NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The officer structure was completely revised in 2006 and now comprises four service directorates – Adult Social Services (KASS); Children, Families & Education (CFE); Communities (CMY); and Environment & Regeneration (E&R) plus a restructured Chief Executive's Department. The Chief Officer Group includes the Director of Finance in addition to the Managing Directors and the Chief Executive. Excluding school staff, KCC employs 15,000 people, spread across more than 300 premises, giving us a presence in every locality across Kent. Our gross revenue budget is £2.1bn, with over xx% of non-schools spending used to procure services delivered by private and voluntary sector partners. Our capital budget is £1bn over the 3 years of the *Medium Term Plan*.

AMBITION FOR THE COMMUNITY

The sustainable community strategy *Vision for Kent (V4K)*, published in 2004, was agreed by public, private and voluntary partners across Kent and involved 4,000 individual and stakeholder comments. It sets out how we in Kent will work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the county over the next 20 years. KCC's own ambitious *Towards 2010* document defines some of our additional priorities as well as delivering our responsibilities within *V4K*. It sets out priorities that show what we and our partners will do to achieve higher standards of service and greater choice for the people of Kent. Equipping people with the skills and qualifications they need to support a dynamic local economy, supporting young people to give them the best possible start in life, promoting better health and increasing independence for all, increasing prosperity, protecting the environment, ensuring that new housing creates sustainable, safe communities and tackling traffic congestion are priorities that are being addressed by specific, carefully thought-out policies and action.

These priorities are backed up by detailed plans to deliver real action from day one. Over three-quarters of the similarly ambitious targets set out in the previous policy document *Next Four Years* were fully delivered, and we are confident that we can achieve an even greater level of success with our *Towards 2010* commitments. For example, with preparation well underway for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games, KCC has made 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 £4m 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.

The *Kent Partnership*, the county-level Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) chaired by the Leader of KCC, 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 the *Kent Construction Skills Strategy*. The partnership, which lobbies regionally, nationally and internationally on behalf of Kent, is based around five multi-agency working groups - the *Kent Public Service Board (PSB)*, again chaired by the Leader, the Kent Children's Trust, the Safer Stronger Communities group, the Public Health Board and the Kent Economic Board. District-based LSPs are represented at the Kent

Partnership and there is now real alignment between district-level sustainable community strategies and *V4K*.

Kent's PSB addresses strategic issues and tackles agreed priorities across public services in Kent. It also oversees the progress of the ***Kent Agreement*** and looks at new ways to improve service delivery and secure better value for money for the more than £8bn spent annually by public services in Kent. 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 18 outcomes mainly requiring a multi-agency solution. It particularly emphasises improving services and outcomes for children and young people, and independence for all 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. Kent's PSA1 was successful in meeting 83% of the targets set, attracting Performance Reward Grant (PRG) of over £21m. PSA2 is on course to deliver PRG of £23m. In 2008 the ***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 the ***Kent Agreement*** is based.

As well as championing multi-agency partnership work, KCC and the 12 district councils have created the ***Kent Commitment***. This builds on the strong working relationships already in place at both the leadership level and in operational services. It puts residents and service users at its heart by focusing on increased efficiency, for example by sharing back office functions, and on improving public access to services.

In 2006 KCC and its two PCTs jointly appointed a Director of Public Health. The resulting public health strategy, with an underlying theme of reducing health inequalities, has been agreed by our public sector partners and will require joint work with them and with local communities. KCC is working with the public health team and partners to develop local plans in each district. A series of specific initiatives are being implemented both at Kent level and locally to address the priorities in the public health strategy: reducing health inequalities; improving the mental health and well-being of children; improving sexual health and reducing teenage pregnancy; enabling more adults to live healthier lives and preventing more disease; enabling more older people to live at home and in the community with chronic disease; and reducing substance misuse, smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. The ***Choosing Health*** budget allocation to PCTs is a significant resource enabling partners to implement action.

The Kent ***Supporting Independence Programme (SIP)*** continues to underpin our approach to delivering *V4K, Towards 2010* and the ***Kent Agreement*** targets. The programme identifies key dependency groups and areas of high and multiple deprivation in Kent, providing a focus for the County Council and other agencies including Jobcentre Plus and the Department of Work and Pensions to drive forward a wide range of initiatives to improve the lives of people in these areas and secure more flexible work opportunities for individuals currently relying on welfare benefits using a scheme called ***Kent NOW***, working with long-term Incapacity Benefit claimants. SIP priorities are rooted in needs analysis and are reflected in the way we deliver the Supporting People programme across the county.

Public policy is about personalisation and improving access. The underpinning principle for Kent, which we have pursued over the last few years, is about supporting independence and runs across all our services. We have driven transformational change across our statutory services and we are still on that journey. This is just as much about mainstreaming and cultural change as innovation. To meet the needs of individuals in Kent of all ages and backgrounds in this way means giving individuals and communities a stronger voice in designing and transforming services and continuing to improve access through innovative projects such as *Gateways* and *online self-assessment*. It also means continuing to seek new ways of offering choice and individual control and making the most of 21st Century technology to personalise services. Wherever possible people should be given the opportunity to manage their own services. The 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.

Direct payments and individual budgets for Adult Social Services customers are transforming both the service and the relationship between customers and staff. We are using technology to provide more personalised services and greater choice in areas such as ***online self-assessment, Telecare*** and ***Telehealth***, the ***Kent Card***, broadband TV and personalised learning. With RBS we are now planning to take the next major step with the ***Kent Card***, seeking to apply its use to other services and proposing some radical shifts to Government. We believe 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 needs. Together these developments represent powerful progress in bringing public services into a customer-focused, retail style value base, evidenced for example in the transformation of our **Registration Services**.

We have given people more and easier ways to access our services and have used the **SIP** to guide our work with hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups. We developed a countywide duty service for children's and adults' social care services to provide easier access and a more coherent response. Our 24/7 Contact Centre, which now includes all our services, our website and our successful campaign to widen broadband access across Kent (now 99.8%) have made huge improvements in accessibility. Through our contact centre we are developing an independent **Healthwatch** scheme, and we are conducting a review, of call centre activity across the public services in Kent with the aim of providing a single telephone number for all public services.

Gateways draw on retail concepts to deliver better access to public services, connecting with people in the same way as modern retail organisations do. Ashford **Gateway** attracts more than 6,000 visitors per month and houses services that we provide as well as 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 care services help and advice (KCC). A mobile **Gateway** began operating in the autumn of 2007, with one in Margate due to open in January 2008 and Maidstone in June. There is a programme to create a further 12 (including 2 more mobile centres) by 2012, each adapted to meet local needs. We are currently discussing with the Government the possibility of using them to deliver some Post Office services.

CMY add ref to ambitions expressed in the Cultural Strategy and Integrated Youth Support Strategy by Monday 3rd

PRIORITISATION

In deciding our priorities we need to understand and respond to the changing needs of residents and businesses and have a clear picture of what the people of Kent want. People 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 our Contact Centre– a key commitment of our **N4Y** priorities. This includes the vital 'out of hours' service which supports social care and is transforming fault-reporting and complaints handling in relation to Highway Services. It also enables us to respond quickly and efficiently to issues of public concern such as **Healthwatch**. We put customer care at the heart of the organisation through consultation, communication, standards of service delivery and training. We have pledged to understand customers' needs and ambitions by consulting them, encouraging community involvement and developing the services people want. We are committed to re-launching our customer charter, responding positively and promptly to complaints and using feedback to improve and modernise services. All contacts from customers, including complaints provide a vital source of information. We set ourselves ambitious goals for the way we communicate with residents and in how we respond to them if things go wrong. We also rely on their eyes and ears to report faults and draw our attention to problems. It is a critical part of our approach to all complaints, that we examine trends that emerge and take action where service improvements are indicated. We also have effective systems for learning from complaints and consultation and we are piloting further ways of connecting feedback to policy-making, review and evaluation and prioritisation processes

The re-drafting of **V4K** followed a year-long public and stakeholder consultation exercise is now driving the work of the Kent Partnership. Consultation with residents also contributed to the new **Towards 2010** targets. We led local consultation on the amount of housing earmarked for Kent and other proposals within the **South East Plan** and we hold 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 **V4K** to issues like healthy eating and leisure. The **Kent Youth County Council** plays a key role in the way we listen to the views of young people. As a result of the recent survey carried out by The National Foundation for Educational Research, we now have our largest-ever database on the views and lifestyles of young people in Kent (43,000 were surveyed) and will use it to drive corporate and partnership priorities as well as to further develop the Children's Trust and other services such as transport planning.

Every KCC Member sits on their **Local Board** and has a £10,000 budget to spend on projects supporting local needs and priorities. A new **Local Boards** website explains how people can additionally obtain further grant funding Local Boards are designed to allow people to play a bigger role in the County's plans, with evidence of prompt and active service responses to local communities. Some good progress has been made on this, much more remains to be achieved. Our **Going Local** agenda will help achieve even closer engagement with the people of Kent and includes plans for further joint KCC/district council Local Boards or Neighbourhood Forums for a trial period. We are now working with our **PSB** partners and the Kent Messenger Group on a way of pooling and streamlining citizens' panel activity and survey work across all those agencies. We include public perception and service satisfaction indicators as key measures within the

Kent Agreement. Our annual *Tracker Survey* measures public views of the quality of our highways and transport services.. In Adult Social Services we now involve service users and carers directly in staff recruitment and selection.

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 work we have begun to widen the age-range of those we consult with on services for older people demonstrates the way we want to engage future and potential services users as well as those we are currently in contact with. Our business plan monitoring system ensures actions responding to consultation and feedback are reported to POCs and Cabinet.

We use focus groups to work with socially excluded groups and to engage with groups whose views have not been heard in the past. We take an inclusive approach to equality and diversity, going beyond the requirements of legislation. This commitment is based on our aim to deliver high quality, customer-focused services that respond to the needs of the diverse communities of Kent. As an employer, we monitor and address the extent to which our workforce reflects the diversity of Kent's communities. We also chose to move more quickly than other authorities to Single Status for staff. As a community leader, we work with our partners to promote and inspire change. Examples include our active participation in the Kent Equalities Network and the sharing of good equalities practice with the 2 PCTs and Mental Health Trust.

Staff and elected members 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 are prioritised for review. Our commitments and action plans are contained in our published *Equality Strategy* along with our commitment to achieve Equality Standard level 3 by March 2008. Four staff groups support and challenge our diversity ambitions: UNITE (BME staff), Level Playing Field (disabled staff), Rainbow Forum (lesbian gay, bisexual and transgender staff) and Greenhouse (younger staff). As a service provider, we also monitor take up to ensure that our services are inclusive and accessible. We are committed to ensuring that a person's communication method will not be a barrier to them receiving a service. In October 2006 we developed a new Top Temps Linguistic Interpreting Service. This service is also used by other agencies in Kent and beyond. KCC is also exploring ways to enhance the provision of British Sign Language Interpreters. Given the national shortage of sign language interpreters KCC is working in partnership with other statutory agencies in Kent towards providing a Kent based service. We also plan to enhance how we provide communication in alternative formats. We have recently launched a groundbreaking DVD to make life easier for deaf people both as service users and potential employees. It will be sent out in recruitment packs to deaf and deafblind people interested in working for KCC and clips will be available from people's mobile phones soon. Plans are also in place to develop access for Deaf people via SMS text messaging and through innovative technologies such as video interpreting.

Between them, *V4K*, the *Kent Agreement*, *SIP* and *Towards 2010* provide the foundation stones for KCC's priorities and commitments over the next few years. Government housing growth plans for the County, with two of the four national designated growth areas within our boundary, are a significant strategic challenge and our proposed response is detailed in the document "*What Price Growth*", which we are currently updating along with developing a revised strategy for transport and regeneration. Together, these documents provide the core policy framework for financial planning for our revenue and capital budgets. We have had considerable success in ensuring our resources are targeted towards our priorities. However, the increasingly difficult financial climate in which KCC and our partners operate offers new challenges in ensuring funding reaches the priority front-line services demanded by Kent's residents. If an activity is not a local priority or a statutory necessity, its level of priority is and will continue to be reconsidered.

Historic resource allocation sets the base spending position in most councils, even though both national and local policy priorities are constantly changing. This is not good enough in Kent. We have been particularly successful in re-allocating resources and we will continue to ensure budgets are not allocated based on historic spend. In May 2006, Cabinet Members and Managing Directors agreed an incremental improvement to resource allocation, *Delivering Coherence: Policy Led Budgeting*. This outlines how we ensure an even closer match between strategic resource allocation and policy priorities. In parallel, we agreed to review and continuously improve value for money. These approaches make real the underlying drive to ensure that resources are used effectively, economically and efficiently, and this policy will continue to be rolled out over the next 3 years. As we aim for ever improving outcomes for the people of Kent, we must ensure our revenue and capital budget strategies are appropriate for the agenda the Council has set up to 2010, and beyond. We will continue to strive to make the best long-term financial decisions for Kent, and these will continue to be made explicit in our *Medium Term Plan*, which is approved at County Council each February.

Medium Term Plan: Financial planning cannot be successful without looking beyond the annual budget process. Our Medium Term Plan looks ahead three years and places financial plans in the context of our priorities and national

constraints. There are clear and explicit linkages to our strategic objectives and resource allocation is informed by and driven by our policy priorities. We continuously challenge the resource allocation through individual peer reviews of Portfolio Plans. In the longer term we need to ensure that we are equipped to respond to changing demographic patterns, particularly the sharp increase in the number of older people and the expected increase in complexity of needs. Our ambition is to create one of the most sustainable economic hubs in the South East, as the gateway to the wider world, with radical new ways of thinking on social issues and sustainability in Health and Social Care. Given the overall resource constraints within which we work, portfolio holders are required to identify significant savings from efficiencies and income generation in order to ensure resources are available for investment in key initiatives, new government requirements, Council priorities and increased financial pressures from demand led services. This process will continue throughout the life of CSR07

Links to Business Planning: All service units produce a Unit Operating Plan, their annual business plan. These plans are robust and provide a framework for rigorous financial control, tightly linked to activity. Although intended to be at a summary level, together they provide a detailed information trail of what is being delivered at what cost, and how this relates to Council priorities and statutory requirements. All unit plans are required to address the following:

- Value for Money
- Innovation at the front line
- Personalisation and choice for the service user
- Devolution of services to the lowest possible level
- Excellent services and continued improvement
- Joint working
- Management of performance and risk

Business plans are approved and monitored by Cabinet and as well as being key reference documents, they serve two important functions: delegation of authority for budgets linked to activity, and as a control document for in-year monitoring of progress against objectives.

CAPACITY

Despite resource constraints we continue to meet the challenges of rising demand, while at the same time delivering highly rated services consistently within budget. We have achieved this through a combination of working in partnership, increasing efficiency and finding innovative approaches to service delivery. Our size and purchasing power helps us in this, but the scale and complexity of the organisation means that we cannot achieve this without strong organisational frameworks and good communication. Following restructuring in 2006 we set up a series of Corporate Boards and re-energised some established groups. These allow senior officers and leading politicians to focus on cross-cutting issues and sponsor projects and programmes that help us provide the right services for the people of Kent.

Recruiting and developing the right staff: Delivering our priorities depends on the continuing passion, motivation, skills and abilities of our staff. Because we recognise that our staff are our single greatest asset, our *Strategy for Staff* is a key priority. Our aim is to make KCC “a great place to work”; 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.

Through the Workforce Strategy Board, we have introduced modern, responsive reward and recognition packages including *Total Contribution Pay*; leadership, management and support staff development including through our management qualifications centre; talent management and succession planning pilots; improved induction processes; ‘work and well-being’ initiatives; and occupational health and counselling services. We have implemented and monitored up to date equality and diversity practices in employment which together with improved recruitment processes have delivered a diverse and talented workforce. We have also introduced *Ways 2 Success*, the behavioural framework that defines what is expected. While the benefits for staff are clear, the benefits to the people of Kent in being served by a skilled and motivated workforce are even more important.

In 2006 we were successfully re-accredited to the *Investors in People* standard following an externally-led review. We were first awarded IIP in 1999 and have been a *Two Ticks* employer since 2002. The *2007 Stonewall Equality Index* ranked KCC 37 in a list of the top 100 employers. In 2006 the *Kent Leadership Programme* was established. This unique approach to leadership development brings together world class business and educational expertise to develop Kent’s leaders in the public, private and voluntary sectors. It is supported by Imperial College (Tanaka Business School) and the University of Kent and a range of significant local, national and international private sector companies (Edexcel

Ltd, Cap Gemini and Veredus). We also work with our partners across Kent on workforce planning, recruitment, retention and training issues as do workforce development leads in service directorates for example with the private and voluntary sector providers in social care.

We chose to move more quickly than other authorities to **Single Status** for staff as part of our re-structuring of the pay and reward package for all staff and did so without the scale of disruption and loss of motivation facing those authorities who deferred tackling this issue. We avoided the huge financial impact others have experienced.

We know that maintaining good internal communications is a constant challenge and needs to be the focus of continuous improvement. We have recently launched a new programme to build on those elements of our internal communications which have been shown to be valued by staff. There is a strong basis within service directorates on which to build, but this needs to become more cross-cutting to reflect how we are working together to serve residents and improve outcomes. This includes face to face meetings between frontline staff and senior managers, the re-introduction of Team Briefing, the launch of a new approach to the staff newsletter as part of the **Putting Kent First** programme, and reinforcing **KNet's** role as the key source of useful information for staff.

Information & Communication Technology: We are constantly striving to identify and realise the potential of technology to improve the delivery of services to the people of Kent. This is achieved through alignment of ICT with the strategic objectives of the council through the ICT Board. The Board facilitates business ownership and accountability for ICT, with our Information Services Group having responsibility for delivery of agreed solutions. ICT professionals ensure that accurate and appropriate information on technical solutions is available, recognising that while technology is integral to all service and organisation activities, it is only one facet contributing to complex business decisions.

Our strategic partnership with Microsoft has increased 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** programme and its Secondary Strategy. Our **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. Our other nationally-recognised electronic services include **Explore Kent, Cluster Web, online self-assessment** and the **Kent Card**.

Kent Connects is a partnership, inspired by the County Council, which brings us together with the 12 district councils, Medway Council, Kent Police and the Kent Fire & Rescue Service. 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 partners and improved electronic access to resources countywide. Building on the common infrastructure already established the partners are investigating opportunities for joint delivery of direct service as well as further development of shared ICT services, including virtual call centres, shared disaster recovery and more efficient procurement.

We are also using ICT to improve community and democratic engagement. We have successfully implemented regular webcasting of all council meetings, introduced online surveys and commissioned **Kent TV**, a digital broadband channel available through the internet. As part of our partnership with IBM, a community **Webjam** – an on-line system for holding live multi-user conversations - will be held in spring 2008 to encourage and increase public participation.

The **Kent Community Network** provides schools with high speed, high capacity broadband that has placed Kent at the forefront of online educational services. Schools connecting to KCN can use video-conferencing without the need to pay for expensive digital telephone lines and can connect to other schools in Kent, elsewhere in the country and abroad. ICT is a vital part of Kent Adult Social Services' **Whole Systems Demonstrator** project in partnership with the East and West Kent NHS Primary Care Trusts, which is extending **Telecare** and **Telehealth** services, supporting some of the most vulnerable members of society and improving their quality of life. The transformation programme in Kent Highway Services has been planned to derive maximum advantage from extensive use of ICT. Kent's Adult Education service was the first nationally to offer online enrolment and payment.

Significant investment in ICT must always be able to show a contribution to improved service outcomes and value for money. Our technology refresh programme transfers risk to the supplier and is a means of sustaining an up-to-date technology environment while delivering lower costs, avoiding expensive disposal arrangements and ensuring we have the right technology at the right time for service needs. ICT also underpins the modern working practices being implemented to increase efficiency and improve service outcomes, such as secure remote access, mobile working, home working and flexible use of fixed offices

Annual Budget: 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. Each year we balance increased spending pressures against a determination to keep council tax increases at a minimum. This can only be achieved by identifying efficiency savings every year, and taking appropriate management action to deliver these savings. The process is rigorous and carried out within the context of the *Medium Term Plan*. It is this process, as part of the integrated processes of the annual budget, medium term plan and value for money agenda, that provides the financial capacity to deliver our modernisation agenda.

Budget monitoring and budgetary control: We formally monitor and report on budgets and activity levels quarterly to Cabinet with exception reports in interim months. This enables us to ensure Members and senior officers stay focused on the strategic financial issues and are kept informed of changes to the budget position. The quarterly reports focus on the future impact of current year issues and this helps raise early awareness of the ongoing implications and links in to the Medium Term Planning Process. This ensures that potential budgetary risks are identified and reported at the earliest opportunity.

The Budget Informal Member Group is a cross-party group of Members who scrutinise all budget related issues. They are instrumental in deciding which key activity indicators should be included within the quarterly report. These are determined by the risk that any particular service may pose to our financial health within that year, and therefore the key activity indicators may change throughout the year depending on the pressures arising. This helps us ensure that we fully integrate our financial, key activity, risk management and value for money reporting.

As a consequence, with the financial training available to all budget managers, and capable, experienced and suitably qualified finance staff, we have a consistent and proven track record of delivering our spending to within our set budget. We have delivered an under-spend of between 0.26% and 1.57% in each of the last seven years. This is despite projected overspends at the mid-year stage each time, which were corrected by in-year management action. We strengthen the incentive to manage budgets by including budgetary performance in managers' annual performance review. In addition, we have a policy to roll-forward under and over spends into the following year, to be used on projects and priorities approved by Cabinet.

Value for Money: Out of 34 County Councils, we had the 16th lowest Band D Council Tax in 2001/2 improving to the 12th lowest tax in 2007/08. Our 2006 and provisional 2007 results for CPA Use of Resources have given us a top-rating of 4 for Value for Money including level 4 in four out of five of the Key Lines Of Enquiry. This shows that the capacity and capability for us to deliver, despite being a floor-funded Authority, is as high as any council in the country. As a result of the 2006 assessment, we ran a workshop at the request of other local authorities, and were asked to contribute to a CIPFA event sharing best practice nationally on how councils can provide the very best in value for money services.

We have a VfM board which is the focal point for Value for Money within KCC. The Board is attended by the Cabinet Member for Finance, the Director of Finance and Heads of Finance across the authority. It sets both the VfM strategy and objectives and monitors progress against them. We benchmark ourselves against other authorities using, for example, VfM profiles and CIPFA statistical data, whilst recognising their inherent limitations. Our services compare favourably to others on both cost and quality measures. Where they do not appear to compare favourably, we challenge and scrutinise the activity or function in order to improve (either in terms of cost or quality) or understand the rationale for the divergence to assure ourselves that our service mix of quality and cost is reasonable and appropriate, having due regard to local policy priorities. Our Commercial Services operation plays a pivotal role in the council's procurement of value for money services, as detailed in the later section on procurement.

Our **Capital Programme** is one of the largest in the Country. We have made excellent use of our prudential borrowing powers, along with an aggressive review of our existing estate to generate capital receipts, to deliver a whole range of service improvements, innovative projects and our modernisation agenda. This needs medium to long term vision, with bold decision making, particularly when 'supported borrowing' is supported in name only. In addition to *Turner Contemporary* detailed under "economic achievements", other examples of the projects delivered or being built include:

- **Better Homes: Active Lives** - Kent Housing PFI which will provide up to 352 apartments of additional social housing for older people, people with learning disabilities, and mental health problems. This is a partnership between KCC and 10 district councils - contracts have been signed and the project is close to the build stage.
- **Folkestone Arts & Business Centre** - supported by a £3.5m grant from KCC, this will provide a new and important focal point which will attract people and businesses to the area. This scheme is underway and should be completed during the next financial year.

- **East Kent Empty Property Initiative** - KCC is providing the upfront funding for a rolling fund with the aim of bringing empty properties back into use.
- **£5m funding** for the improvement of pavements around the county. A schedule of works has been developed and is planned to be rolled out during 2007-08 and 2008-09.
- The **Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope** project transformed the library into a cultural centre for the arts, complete with computers, a new stock of books and DVDs and an art gallery with open space available for theatre productions and events. The borrowing that KCC was able to put towards this project helped to secure £1m funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. **Kaleidoscope** opened last year.
- Work has also been underway in developing a joint project with Canterbury City Council to revitalise the existing **museum and library services in Canterbury**. Again the promise of KCC funding helped to secure £6.5m funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- KCC has guaranteed inclusion in waves 3-6 of the government's **BSF** programme. Wave 3 alone gives investment of approximately £216m to secondary schools in the county between years 2008-09 and 2010-11. KCC has also successfully delivered 6 schools through PFI with investment in excess of £90m.

All of these projects, and all other projects included in our capital programme, go through a comprehensive two-stage approval process before any financial or contractual commitment is made. This ensures that the objectives and costs of the project are clear and measurable and that funding is in place. This approval process ensures that the capital programme as a whole is delivering projects, which will bring about real improvements to schools, roads and care establishments, as well as making new investment in a wide range of community facilities and technology.

Property: We view our large and complex property portfolio as a strategic resource requiring sound stewardship to support service delivery, as well a catalyst for change and economic development. Our philosophy encompasses a commercial recognition of property assets as resources that consume money, have an opportunity cost and can generate income and economic growth. Overall responsibility for property asset management policy and practice lies with the cross-cutting Property Board chaired by the Chief Executive. A rigorous process challenges underperforming and underused assets. Since 1989/90, over £200m has been raised from the disposal of property assets- the majority ploughed back into modernising and transforming front-line services through new capital projects. These disposal receipts have contributed significantly to the ability to implement the largest new capital build programme in our history. Capital projects are managed by our Property Group through competitive supply chain procurement using a broad base of external consultants and contractors from framework lists which are regularly reviewed and re-tendered, and by tight management from a small in-house specialist team.

The **Property Enterprise Fund** was created in 2006 to review the continuing need for, and to dispose of where appropriate, an historic accumulation of surplus, non-operational property holdings of relatively small value on their own (such as land holdings adjacent to highways and housing stock inherited from earlier local government reorganisations), but which have the cumulative value to be switched into strategic wealth creating projects. The Fund has now banked over £9m from the sale of over 40 sites surplus to the Council's needs. It is also permitted to go into deficit of up to £10m, in order to assist strategic and timely investment spending. From these sales we have been able to acquire the **Manston/Eurokent Business Park** in Thanet, whose growth and employment potential had been held back by its previous owners, as a strategic economic development catalyst for this economically deprived part of the county. This has spawned an innovative regeneration partnership with Thanet District Council, under which both authorities have channelled their strategic land holdings into a joint venture development company to master plan and bring forward early, significant mixed-use private sector led development.

Several other joint initiatives on the sharing and rationalisation of assets between KCC and the other public authorities in Kent (including Police, Fire and the NHS) are in place, focused in particular on aggregation and efficiencies in back office and support functions. Continuing change in service delivery, technology, the need for efficiencies and the joint-working agenda combine to impact substantially on how we are planning and managing our extensive office estate. This has been recognised by the establishment of an Office Transformation team to develop an agreed vision for the future of our office estate, and to bring forward and implement specific proposals. The key ingredients in the vision for office transformation will be to promote a strategy which provides a coherent pattern of accommodation which is 'fit for the future'; drives further forward modern, flexible, technology driven, transformational office working; and allows scarce resources tied up as capital and revenue in buildings to be released for service delivery. It is likely to result in a substantial overall reduction in the office space we occupy as an authority.

Procurement: Including schools, we will spend £860m on goods and services from external suppliers in 2007/8, and therefore see procurement as a major strategic issue. We have analysed expenditure to establish clear responsibility for the seven, service-specific, spend categories that account for nearly 80% of our total spend, the three largest being social

care, highways and buildings. The current MTP 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, with a procurement practitioners' group chaired by the Head of Financial Services. To support devolved procurement, the Board has produced *Spending the Council's Money*, a comprehensive guide to the procurement process. A Strategic Procurement Unit has been set up to advise managers and maintain corporate strategy. The Board takes account of issues such as sustainability, diversity, SMEs, efficiency savings and eProcurement as part of its approach. We have agreed to advertise all contracts valued at more than £50,000 on the south east business portal. The importance of multi-agency procurement issues has been recognised by the creation of a Kent and Medway Procurement Board consisting of KCC, Medway Council, the 12 district councils, Police and Fire authorities and the PCTs. This group works with the *South East Centre of Excellence*, which we have led since 2004 and which is currently chaired by the Chief Executive.

Kent Commercial Services operates as an independent trading operation to supply the council, schools and other public bodies across the south east, London and beyond with goods including office supplies and equipment as well as energy and transport services. With a turnover of £350 million, its scale keeps suppliers' prices low and it also plays a very important role in providing competition in locally developing markets and keeping costs down.

MANAGING PERFORMANCE (this section to be further edited down by Monday 3rd)

Performance management and continuous improvement have been deeply embedded in KCC's culture over the course of the last ten years. It is a key part of the role of Cabinet, Chief Officers and Policy Overview Committees and at all levels of the authority, not just those individuals within the performance management areas of the business. Setting and meeting targets is simply part of the culture. Performance against our strategic statement, *Towards 2010*, as well the *Kent Agreement*, BVPIs and our key directorate and unit priorities are tracked during the year and reported regularly to COG and Cabinet members.

Members have a key role to play in performance improvement. Cabinet has ultimate responsibility for approving and meeting performance targets. *Staying Excellent* is a quarterly report that ensures chief officers and Cabinet members regularly examine and question areas of under-performance and drive forward improvement. Key indicators included in the *Staying Excellent* reports, include CPA indicators and those highlighted by inspectors. Indicators are selected for inclusion where performance is below median or is significantly deteriorating, and are reviewed on a regular basis to take account of changes to performance levels. Each has an accompanying action plan or commentary that targets those areas of concern. There are only 22 indicators in the current report.

Scrutiny, Policy Overview and Select Committees insert to be added on Monday 3rd

Accountabilities and reporting processes are clear with each target assigned to a named officer, chief officer and Cabinet member. Overall performance is also reported to Policy Overview Committees (POCs) and County Council for debate. The amount of performance information reported to POCs in the last 12 to 18 months has greatly increased. Examples include *Towards 2010* monitoring; half-year monitoring of BVPIs, the *KCC Annual Plan* and unit plans; and complaints and consultation feedback. Corporate performance is within the specific portfolio of a Cabinet member (Deputy Leader of the Council). The Leader and Chief Executive take a particular personal interest in performance and, in addition, performance is regularly part of COG and Cabinet 'Awaydays', which allows a more in-depth focus.

KCC has had a proven track record of delivering corporate priorities through its strategic statements. The first, the *Next Five Years* was launched in 1998, and was followed by its successor the *N4Y* in 2002. At the end of its term in 2006, 76% of the 83 targets had been completed and 14% had shown excellent progress. The latest strategic statement, *Towards 2010*, was launched in 2006 and good progress is already being made.

A clear framework of priorities and targets is in place, which cascades throughout the organisation. There are strong links between KCC's ambitions and its key community priorities (*V4K* and the *Kent Agreement*), corporate priorities (*Towards 2010*) and directorate priorities (e.g. *Active Lives* and the *Children and Young People's Plan*), which are embedded in its medium term plan and cascaded down to unit business plans which are then reflected in individual action plans so that staff can see how they contribute to the overall priorities.

Managers and staff focus on performance at all levels in the organisation and use the information to help service planning and target setting for future years. This can be evidenced, for example, through the unit business planning process, which has been reviewed and strengthened in recent years. In addition, data quality processes underpin the key performance

indicators and its profile has been raised across directorates over the last few years. A data quality policy is now being put in place.

KCC's BVPI performance is reported, alongside national comparators, to county council each year and to our budget Informal Member Group during the year. In order to align budget and finance information even more closely and enable a greater focus on priority issues, the authority has introduced policy led budgeting and this is underpinned by the recent introduction of performance management software (*Inphase*). This software will enable performance information to be brought together in one place and shown alongside financial information in order to help the budget decision making processes. It will also allow officers to input data and extract performance reports much more quickly and efficiently.

The processes for selecting robust performance indicators for local priorities has been a focus over the last 12 to 18 months, involving those who are as close as possible to the service. As a result, the number of performance indicators has reduced for monitoring the new strategic statement, *Towards 2010*, compared to its predecessors, becoming far more relevant to the individual target and more outcome focused. In addition, the process of target setting has also been subject to review and performance to target for the BVPIs has now improved from 49% as at mid-year for 2006/07 to 70% at the mid-point this year.

Learning from the performance monitoring data takes place across the authority at all levels, at the half-year point and at outturn, as well as in-year. The well-established internal Performance Management Network meets regularly to discuss relevant issues, ensure useful sharing of experience and to learn from best practice. KCC is a longstanding member of the South East Counties Performance Group and the Kent Performance Improvement Network, which shares good practice and performance information.

As a 'four star' authority KCC is subject to limited inspection. However, it has invited external challenge in the management of its services. Very recent examples include the IDeA peer review of public health, which was extremely positive about the approach being taken and the achievements to date; and an invitation to the Commonwealth of Virginia, as the 'best run' state, to undertake a peer review of our performance management arrangements. Other examples include Charter Marks, *ISO 14001* accreditation, *IP* re-accreditation, *Two Ticks* accreditation, and the planned assessment in March 2008 of KCC's performance against the Equality Standard for Local Government. It also undertakes bench-marking with other authorities, for example we are a member of seven benchmarking clubs for financial services. The Annual Review Meeting process within adult social care provides an external assessment of progress and achievement on goals and targets.

All directorates have strong and developing performance management processes relevant to their own business concerns. Each actively engages their managing directors and Cabinet members and report progress to their management teams. These processes allow services to meet national reporting requirements, and more importantly to provide local direction that enables KCC's priorities to be delivered and not be 'crowded out' by the burden of national requirements. Service level performance management processes also bring in a strong partnership element.

For example, CFE has a highly robust performance management culture, with divisional reporting, some of which is ultimately viewed by members, occurring on a termly, quarterly, or monthly basis depending on the type of information. As an example, children's social service data is reported to the divisional management team on a monthly basis, due to the high importance placed on vulnerable children. Other information, such as that provided to the boards of the 23 clusters of schools within Kent, is updated annually because the majority of the information only changes once a year. Reporting and systems therefore fit the service and audience they serve. Current new developments include provision of performance information for the local arrangements for the Children's Trust. This information and data is accessible online, providing multi-agency access for local areas.

Directorate arrangements include devolved responsibility for operational business planning and performance management at unit level and co-ordination, monitoring and management of key performance indicators, strategic objectives and essential controls, both financial and non-financial. Accountability for the performance of the directorate is led at the highest level, for example lead officers report *Towards 2010* progress to their Cabinet member and Managing Director every 6 months and relevant officers attend POCs where performance is scrutinised.

KCC reviews and reports performance alongside its key partners and supports them in the collective delivery of the targets. Kent is now in its final year for the *Kent Agreement*, having been a pilot authority. A detailed *Kent Agreement* monitoring report is published every six months and contains the latest available data for every indicator together with the comparative position against the previous monitoring point, which are also reflected with a red/amber/green marker. The reports contain detailed commentary on action taken and action planned. They are provided to all partner organisations

within the agreement, together with other interested parties. Each target has a lead officer who heads a steering group to ensure progress is made. In addition, the four working groups of the **Kent Partnership** meet quarterly to drive forward the activity. Robust actions plans are in place to deliver the commitments and these are developed and modified to account for changing circumstances. There is a strong focus on addressing areas where progress has been slower than expected. Performance is reported publicly to Cabinet meetings every six months and to Cabinet Members quarterly.

The frequency of monitoring of performance information varies according to the level of risk. Clarity of reporting is another feature of KCC's performance reports, often adopting the red/amber/green model, or the use of exception reporting to ensure the performance information is clearly communicated and understood in order to make informed decisions about areas for improvement. Exception reporting is used where appropriate, for example **Staying Excellent** reports, finance reports and **KCC Annual Plan** and unit plan monitoring. In order to maintain a focus on its corporate governance arrangements KCC reports annually on a basket of key indicators to its Governance and Audit Committee. This is an excellent example of good practice and KCC believes it is the only county council to adopt such reporting. One of the areas of performance it covers is complaints. Such data is a useful form of customer feedback to help develop a learning and customer responsive culture. A review of KCC complaints in November 2005 highlighted the need for improved monitoring. When benchmarked against other authorities KCC appeared to receive fewer complaints. On investigation it was found that not all complaints were recorded and steps have since been taken to improve this process in all directorates.

We should put something in here on what we are doing to improve our levels of public satisfaction from what should have elsewhere in the self-assessment. Same applies to what we are doing to improve performance in equality and diversity. We can then mention that our equality and diversity BVPIs are monitored through the corporate Equalities Lead Officer Group. ELOG receive quarterly reports and take action to address need.

KCC informs the public about its key priorities for the year as well as reporting performance on key performance indicators in its annual supplement in **Around Kent**, which is distributed to all households. Performance information is also available on KCC's website and is summarised at a very high level within the council tax leaflet. **KCC's Annual Plan** is an example of best practice as it goes much further than the statutory requirement of a Best Value Performance Plan because it sets out the authority's priorities for the year, reports back on the progress against its previous year's priorities and brings together the strategic plans of the authority, including how they are performing, in an easy to understand reference guide.

KCC aims to keep its staff informed about its key priorities and performance for the year via electronic communication such as emails and links to relevant websites and within its **Annual Plan**, which is distributed to all senior managers across the authority. Staff are also engaged via the annual unit business planning process as well as in-year monitoring. The recent re-introduction of Team Briefing will further strengthen the process. Performance related pay is a further feature of KCC's performance management culture underpinned by a robust appraisal and target setting process. Our **Ways to Success** programme enables staff to develop against a framework of behaviours for the workplace e.g. a better focus on meeting the needs of customers.

KCC is not complacent and we will continue to refine our performance management arrangements. For example, work to help improve how we use customer feedback will continue and the introduction of **Inphase** software will further improve the quality and efficiency of our performance management processes.

We have developed, and continue to improve, a range of intelligence and data sharing mechanisms both within the organisation and with partners, who tell us that this support is of enormous value to them. For many years we have supported Kent Police in "intelligence-led" policing and led the way in sharing data and intelligence between agencies in 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 KYOS allows information sharing in order to analyse the number of young people who re-offend. There is also close liaison with Kent Police on specific hate crime initiatives and support services. KCC funded the developmental costs of **Kent Crime View**, now used as the central hub for data sharing between agencies and CDRPs.

Our Analysis and Information Team manages intelligence that includes all major comparative data sources, the **Land Use Information System**, plus innovative Geographical Information Systems tools **Kent Crime View** and the **Kent Landscape Information System**. We are also developing wider application of **MOSAIC** social profiling to improve the quality and efficiency of service planning in a range of public services. Current innovations include **Kent View**, a partnership approach to data sharing and intelligence-led decision making. We are also working with partners to form a **Kent Public Health Observatory** to improve our health intelligence so that we can use our resources better to improve health outcomes.

Risk management: Our success relies firmly on skilful management of risk and the embedding of a strong and effective risk management framework. Over the past year we have revised and improved our approach to the management of risk so that it sits firmly within the business planning process and informs the Annual Audit Programme. Our approach is now more comprehensive. Strategic, directorate and business level risks are identified, regularly monitored and reported to senior managers and Members. Risk assessments are prepared for key risks and the Annual Audit Programme is more focused on the key controls that are in place to ensure we meet our objectives. Risk management is about learning from past experiences to improve the way in which we work in the future. To communicate and embed this new approach, around 200 staff have attended one day risk management workshops during 2007. The risk management process is now an integral part of the way in which we manage our business with staff understanding exactly what risk management means, why it makes good sense and how it should be applied. We are now actively working to improve our management of risk within partnerships to maximise the opportunities for successful collaboration and delivery of objectives. As an entrepreneurial organisation risk management is essential.

Environmental Performance: A cross-party Select Committee on Climate Change has led the development of an action plan which 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 2009. The new revised KCC Environment Policy has now been signed off by the Leader and will be agreed by Cabinet on the 3 December 2007. Actions to date include:

- Creating an Energy and Water Investment Fund of £1m for a range of projects including large and small energy efficiency projects that have already saved 426 tonnes CO₂, and renewable energy projects
- A comprehensive Eco Schools Programme working with over 200 Kent Schools
- Showcasing environmental technologies at Shorne Wood Country Park visitor centre, opened in 2006.
- Setting up a *Low Carbon Communities* initiative with the Kent Energy Centre

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Service Transformation: There has been substantial financial investment into service transformation for a number of years. Both the revenue and capital budgets show where the significant financial investment has been made to enable the modernisation of many of our services in the past 5 years. This has not been at the expense of the people of Kent; we have made huge efficiencies and generated substantial new income streams to pay for much of this investment. Where greater sums are needed and have provided a long-term asset, we have made use of prudential borrowing to provide the asset base from which services can be modernised.

Savings and efficiencies: We are meeting tough government efficiency targets and continue to achieve value for money as well as continuing to find new ways to save. We face 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.

We have consistently exceeded the Government's Gershon efficiency targets. We set out in our *Annual Efficiency Statements (AES)* the actions we have taken, and cumulative efficiencies identified and ultimately achieved. We submitted our first backward looking *AES* in June 2005 which set out achieved efficiencies of £21.8m in 2004/5. The second and third backward looking *AES* set out achieved efficiencies of £21.9m and £17.9m respectively. The forward looking *AES* for 2007/8 sets out planned efficiencies of a further £30.7m. Total efficiency savings of £92m have been or are planned to be achieved by 31 March 2008. Compared to the target saving set for KCC of £54m, our performance represents an over-achievement of some £38m.

The drive for efficiencies and savings in KCC goes back before the Gershon agenda. Savings in our published budgets amount to a cumulative cashable saving of £141.9 million between 2000/1 and 2006/7. The figure for 2007/8 is £41.8m (including income generation of £10.6m). Our current medium term plan sets out further savings and income generation of £44.7m for 2008-10. We have always sought to optimise external funding from all sources, highlighted by the fact that we have attracted more than £100m from the EU since 2000.

We have undertaken a detailed review (during 2006/7) of all of our budgets and challenged and scrutinised our colleagues to identify those services that are mandatory, those that are discretionary, those that provide clear evidence of value for money, those that do not and those where we are not convinced. This informed the Medium Term Plan for 2007-10, and

resulted in commissioning external value for money reviews of School Clusters, Highways, Day Care for Learning Disability, Waste and Libraries. In addition, targeted internal reviews of certain of our subjective codes will provide savings of £3m in the next MTP by better procurement of discretionary items. The improvement in technology has also enabled the finance function to become more efficient. For example, the use of **Transaction Data Matching (TDM)** has reduced the number of invoices that have to be manually processed for home care services from 24,000 to 12.

Recycling into our priorities: As an example of where savings have gone into service priorities - we have provided £7.2m of additional investment in year one (2007/8) into our **Towards 2010** strategy including the piloting of free travel for 11-16 year olds; the launch of the Kent Apprenticeship scheme and the extension of vocational and skills training; and investment of over £1m into promoting economic development and employment opportunities. In total £15.7m has been provided for over the first three years of the Medium Term Plan. Having identified explicit policy priorities we have made sure they have been transparently and separately funded in our Medium Term Plan. We are explicitly monitoring and reporting on this ring-fenced budget allocation to ensure we are on target for delivery of the outcomes.

In general, our alignment of funding to policy has resulted in significant shifts of resources to match priorities, or to anticipate demands and pressures. This means that we have not faced the crisis measures in demand-led services such as adult care that other authorities have. Examples of what we have done include:

- significant additional investment in education and into the school estate, plus new vocational centres
- maintaining funding to front-line services, particularly child protection and Adult Social Care
- additional investment in Adult Social Care anticipating demographic changes
- increased funding into Highways against asset management information
- new capital investment in libraries and community services to rationalise and transform them
- the first phases of modernising our 19 adult social care homes and day care centres
- creating the Property Enterprise Fund
- back-office staff reductions of 25%
- moving to single status faster than most other authorities,
- investment in preventative measures in child protection,
- co-location plans for Highways Services, alongside ICT investment and structural reorganisation.

A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Creating new jobs by attracting more businesses to Kent and encouraging existing enterprises to expand is essential. In Kent we have a unique opportunity to take full advantage of the busiest “gateway” between London and the rest of Europe to bring more employment to the county. However, while Kent has proven strengths in construction, land-based industries, pharmaceuticals, technology, tourism, health & care services, the Kent economy overall underperforms compared to other parts of the south east. This is changing fast. Our innovations in vocational education, skills development and employment for young people are transforming the Kent workforce. We are also working with the private sector to exploit business opportunities as a result of the new high-speed rail services and the London Olympics. Strategic investment in the creative industries and cultural-led regeneration are attracting private investors and town centre regeneration schemes are underway right across north, east and mid Kent. We are a key player in regeneration partnerships for Margate, Dover and Folkestone that focus on redevelopment, inward investment, transport links, sport and culture as key elements of building strong local economies.

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 KCC-sponsored organisations are delivering specific aspects of improving Kent’s economic performance.

- **Locate in Kent** is the inward investment agency that has attracted or secured an average of 2,749 jobs per year since its inception in 1997 and is key to maximising Kent’s growth
- **Kent Tourism Alliance (KTA)** co-ordinates Kent’s tourism industry and ensures that national and international visitors are offered a high quality product. Our goal is to make Kent a world class destination
- **Produced in Kent** supports local producers and encourages public sector bodies in Kent to buy local food and drink. A 2005 study estimated that 64% of KCC’s spend was focused locally
- **Kent Sustainable Business Partnership**, helping local businesses improve competitiveness through better environmental performance

- **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 has inhibited development.

Kings Hill, KCC's joint development with the Liberty Property Group of Philadelphia, demonstrates the long history of our economic development work. It is one of the most successful live/work communities in the south east with 800,000 sq ft of office and business space developed, consent for a further 1.2 million sq ft gross, , over 100 companies in occupation, a workplace for 5,000 people, growing retail and leisure facilities, a post-graduate centre and homes for 3,500 people. Work to mirror this success at Manston/Eurokent in Thanet is detailed earlier in this document.

The London 2012 Olympics represent a major opportunity for Kent businesses. Work has been ongoing with partners including Business Link Kent to develop an action plan as part of the Kent 2012 Strategy to raise the profile of the opportunity and to support Kent business. Over 600 Kent businesses have registered an interest on the London 2012 website but it is important to ensure that they have the capacity and preparedness to tender for contracts. KCC has funded research to identify how SMEs (small to medium sized enterprises) can position themselves to win contracts.

Achievements to support growth and regeneration:

- **Turner Contemporary** is a flagship cultural project which is aiming to regenerate Margate through the development of an innovative new gallery. The building will open in 2010, but the programme of activities to engage with, inform and inspire as wide an audience as possible is already well established with special programmes to engage with young people. KCC secured £10m of European Commission Objective Two funding to improve access to the eastern sea front, linking **Turner Contemporary** to other leisure, culture and retail facilities in Margate Old Town.
- New academies will include **business incubators** linked to the school sites, starting in 2007 at the Marlowe Academy, Thanet. Units already exist at Astor College, Dover and Abbey School, Faversham
- KCC and partners support 3 **Enterprise and Innovation Hubs** across north and east Kent.
- KCC-managed workspace at the **Old Rectory** in Dartford is designed to allow small firms to grow
- Phase 1 of the new **Fastrack** public transport system in Dartford and Gravesham is a critical part of the infrastructure unlocking future growth. It already has passenger numbers 50% above forecast. In its first year of operation, 19% of passengers are choosing to use the bus instead of the car. In 2007 it won the bus category in the National Transport Award and two categories in the UK Bus Awards.
- The 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.
- KCC has agreed a £109m development contribution for community infrastructure at **Eastern Quarry** in Dartford and is achieving significant contributions from other major schemes , such as Templar Barracks in Ashford
- Ashford's redesigned 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.
- 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.
- Major development schemes are underway in Folkestone and Dover. In Folkestone, private sector investment in the harbour area of £300m over the next 20 years has begun, including **Folkestone Creative Arts and Business Centre** (with a £3.5m contribution from KCC). In Dover, £40m is to be spent on regenerating the town centre and the development of **Dover Sea Sports Centre** began in 2007.
- The **LEADER+** and **Rural Revival Programme** partnerships have led to £5m being invested in rural priorities
- The **Kent Rural Delivery Framework** represented the first multi-agency action plan for Kent's rural areas. The framework outlined how Kent partners will manage key issues affecting Kent's rural economy, communities and environment. It is recognised regionally as an example of best practice.
- Market Town 'health checks' have inspired communities to identify future regeneration priorities under the **Kent Rural Towns Programme** in a process that has seen £1.2m committed to community-led projects.

Tourism is a significant component of the Kent economy. In 2007 **KTA** developed a new 24/7 on-line booking and marketing system, while KCC has already used funding allocated as part of the **Towards 2010** process to lever in more than £2.5m over the next five years to promote Kent as a premier tourist destination. With the 2007 London Campaign and a continuous refresh of the tourism product, we are changing the profile of the tourist stay and the tourist spend in Kent. In July 2007 Kent took part in celebrations to mark the 400-year anniversary of the founding of 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. Hosting the 2007 Tour de France boosted the Kent economy by an estimated £120m.

Kent Film Office (KFO) is raising the profile of Kent as a place in which to film or make TV programmes. Significant tangible financial investment has already come to Kent as a result of this initiative, for example a single TV series filmed in Kent following work by the **KFO** contributed £2.5m to the local economy. **KFO** helps the industry find locations in which to film, boosting the Kent economy by providing job opportunities and increasing demand for local services.. We have recognised that the creative industries form one of the biggest growth areas in the economy and we want to make sure that companies base themselves here. We recently gave direct financial support, by becoming an executive producer, to a locally based film company to enable them to film a major new production in Kent. As well as making sure that they would be spending money in the Kent economy, the company will provide work experience for young people to develop the skills needed locally to expand this sector. We also expect a return on our investment.

Skills and Employability: Too many young people leave school with insufficient careers advice to fulfil their potential or make the right choices for entry into employment, post-16 education or university. Too many students drop out because they make ill-informed choices and too many businesses say there is a significant skills deficit in the young people they employ. We are striving to 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. Vocational courses that are tailor made to the needs of industry, matching skills to market requirements, and the provision of first-class careers guidance for young people are central to how we are changing this. To ensure that all young people thrive and receive a relevant education we are continually looking at alternative approaches to learning and teaching, such as vocational education, and **Skill Force** style programmes, which show a 95% success rate..

The 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 an 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. **KEY Training Services** continues to make a major contribution to reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) and to creating work pathways for young people. 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 Kent Community Programme (KCP)** aims to ensure that young people who are not in employment, education or training 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.

Kent Success (KCC's apprenticeship programme) was launched in the autumn of 2006. The council and its partners 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 also gives young people an extensive range of skills and an apprenticeship contract of employment with KCC. **Kent Works** delivers a high-quality education-business service for students, teachers and employers, working with more than 110 schools and colleges. This service has not yet reached as many schools as planned.

Kent NOW (New Opportunities for Work) 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.

The **EVOLVE** development partnership (KCC, the Prince's Trust, the health service and the MCCH Society) 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 project helps 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 BME communities.

Kent Adult Education are focusing on individuals with poor literacy and numeracy skills (below entry level 3) through initiatives such as **Skills Plus** – bespoke services to meet individual needs, located in town centres where people can drop in and to improve literacy and numeracy skills. **Young Enterprise in Schools** raising awareness of the opportunities of self-employment to young people, and providing support where they seek to establish a business, is important in increasing the number and quality of new businesses created in the county. The 'Bee Positive' programme delivered via

KCC/LSC funding provided coaching to some 150 teachers and heads together with a classroom toolkit to enable delivery of tangible motivational life skills to school pupils with the aim of creating positive 'can-do' attitudes that are critical to developing enterprise skills. We are now working with the Kent Foundation, a charitable trust established by KCC, to deliver a programme of enterprise skills development and support for young people who are thinking about or who have established a business. We are also working with Kent universities on issues around graduate retention including enterprise skills development.

TRANSPORT

Improving the quality of our day to day highway maintenance services and the management of roadworks are hugely important to us, to Kent residents and the Kent economy, so we are delighted to have been recognised as the UK Transport Authority of the year. However we recognise that levels of public satisfaction with highways and transport services are not as high as they should be. We do not underestimate the challenges we face in improving this, but have already moved resources to support the changes needed. Having taken the difficult but necessary decision to end the Kent Highways partnership agreement with District Councils in 2005, the ***Kent Highway Services Alliance*** was created in 2006 as an innovative 'virtual company' to provide Kent's highways service. The alliance brings together KCC, Ringway, Jacobs and Traffic Signals UK and breaks down the old-fashioned client/contractor tensions to focus on efficiency and improving services.

Congestion is a significant problem in Kent's principal urban areas, which we are tackling in a variety of ways. We have established a traffic management centre in Maidstone and produced a traffic management plan. This is initially focusing on Maidstone with Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells to follow as old technology is replaced. 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. We are 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.

We have sold 4,700 passes in the first 5 months of the ***Kent Freedom Pass***, which gives 11 to 16 year-olds in two pilot areas free bus travel all year round. Early indications are that school-run journeys by car have reduced by 25%. We continue to support ***Quality Bus Partnerships*** across the county and act as the district councils' contractor in running free Kent-wide bus travel for older people. We 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 by 5% the number of children walking to school. Kent has an expanding network of cycle routes and hosting the 2007 Tour de France raised cycling's profile dramatically. ***Local Transport Plan (LTP)*** monitoring shows that we helped encourage a 56% increase in cycling and a 19% increase in bus use across Kent between 2000 and 2005. As well as introducing the award-winning ***Fastrack*** service, we used Government ***Kickstart*** funding to set up the ***Thanet Loop***, a popular and accessible service in one of Kent's most deprived areas. Passenger numbers are higher than expected and services now run every seven minutes.

Following publication of Kent's excellent rated LTP, a multi-agency working group has been established to carry out the improvements it identifies, with a focus on improving accessibility. We target transport investment resources towards socially-excluded groups and areas with poor accessibility. Our 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. We supports district council planning teams to ensure that new developments include appropriate public transport through strong Local Development Framework policies. A Kent Highways Services officer 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.

Other key achievements include:

- Trebling the length of road resurfaced in 2006 compared to 2002
- Organising the traffic management for the Tour De France 2007
- Launching a considerate contractor scheme for contractors working on the highway
- Sustaining seven rural Kent Karrier networks despite pressure on supported bus budgets.
- Acting as one of the DfT pilot authorities for the Traffic Management Act permitting scheme
- 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

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. We have consistently supported the building of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, 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 we are 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.

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*. The Government's housing growth agenda presents enormous challenges for Kent to manage this growth sensitively so that it results in the construction of quality housing with the minimum environmental impact. Our particular role is 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

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. We set out the scale of the investment needed to achieve this goal in *Kent – What Price Growth?* Kent 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. We are asking developers to play their part where we can make a clear and justified case for investment in infrastructure and are urging central Government to contribute more to major transport schemes. A new Kent Regeneration Strategy is being developed to take this forward.

Affordability: With housing affordability a significant issue, we are 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 to enable young people, in particular, to find a home. We are also working with District Councils on housing solutions and choices that anticipate demographic changes and the housing needs of people with disabilities. We actively pursue opportunities to release any surplus land or buildings for housing development, particularly on brownfield sites.

Housing PFI: 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 national 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 the homes and manage the housing services.

Housing partnerships 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, develop housing protocols (for example in relation to young people leaving care) and county wide strategies covering issues such as a 'move-on strategy' from supported housing for vulnerable adults. There is also close working on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues.

The *East Kent Empty Property Initiative (EKEPI)* with Thanet, Dover, Shepway and Swale district councils is on course to exceed its 2008 *Kent Agreement* target. 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.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

How Kent rises to the challenges of managing housing growth, improving the local environment, dealing with waste, and promoting cultural and leisure activities is the real test of its commitment to creating sustainable communities. The ***Kent Environment Strategy***, launched in 2003 by the Kent Partnership as a 'daughter document' to *V4K* sets out how Kent partners will take action on a wide range of local and global environmental issues. KCC has already had considerable success in meeting some of these challenges. Between 2002 and 2006/07 we have increased the percentage of household waste recycled to 32.4% and reduced waste growth to zero. Since 2002 we have 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, and seen public satisfaction with libraries and recycling sites increase significantly

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.

Our ***Development Investment Team*** achieves significant developer contributions but also plays a wider role in shaping new developments in terms of design, infrastructure and public services. The ***Kent Developers Guide*** is the first in the country to have a robust basis for securing finance for social care and youth & community services. Working with partners, the team's influence begins at the planning stage and continues through to site-specific negotiations in partnership with district councils, and results in successes such as Eastern Quarry. Our 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 Stirling Prize winner 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.

Waste, litter and the local environment: 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. The Kent Waste Partnership between KCC and the district councils in Kent is the mechanism through which the partners achieve the priorities set out in the ***Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy***. Partnership working sponsored the highly successful ***Operation Cubit***, dramatically reducing the numbers of abandoned cars in Kent. The ***Clean Kent*** campaign (led by KCC) focuses action across all agencies on issues such as fly-tipping, roadside litter and environmental crime. This includes Rapid Response Teams, environmental action with schools, additional resources for enforcement and prosecution as well as multi-media campaigns. A series of European and other partnerships have brought significant additional resources into local environmental action. We have led action in Kent's growth areas to 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.

Schools at the heart of their community: KCC is ahead of the 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. We 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. We have 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.

A 21st century library service: Kent has continued to encourage greater use of libraries with some rationalisation of services and has seen a significant rise in the number of books issued, particularly to children, where the number borrowed rose by 9.63 per cent in 2006/7 compared to the previous year. New technology is enhancing customer service, with emails alerting users that their books are available (or 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 104 Kent libraries now open an additional 332 hours each week. The county's **Summer Reading Challenge** encouraged 16,472 children to read books over the summer holidays in 2006 while a new **Books Can Help** service 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 **Kaleidoscope** project in Sevenoaks that has incorporated a visual arts gallery and museum within an existing library and 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*.

Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS): The voluntary and community sector (VCS) plays a vital role in delivering excellent public services to the people of Kent by delivering services, recruiting volunteers and supporting individuals at risk. We have contracts with more than xxx separate VCS organisations to deliver core services. These range from being the lead provider for day centre provision for older people to acting as a strategic partner in enabling affordable rural housing. VCS procurement in 2007/8 is expected to total £xxxxm. The **Kent Compact**, acknowledged by NACVA as a leading example of good practice, sets out how the voluntary and community sectors and KCC work together. The *Kent Partners' Compact* is a natural progression from the *Kent Compact* that will bring together all public sector partners when it is launched in March 2008.

We continue to improve and enhance our strategic 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 funding pilot projects designed to boost volunteer support networks, give more support to organisations in the BME sector and improve efficiencies through shared services and mergers. Adult Education through **Action for Communities** is developing a whole new infrastructure linking the VCS to formal learning institutions

KCC encourages people to take part in voluntary activities through events under the banner of the **Kent Volunteers** programme that focuses on volunteer recognition, recruitment and good practice and highlights the ways volunteering benefits individuals, communities and the environment. Our annual **Awards for Volunteering Excellence** receives more than 600 nominations. We also promote employee volunteering as part of staff development.

Youth strategies: KCC has been working closely with District Councils to create local Youth Strategies and has a clear framework for commissioning youth work in the voluntary and community sector. 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 supports the development of services and activities to meet the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Kent. KCC has introduced additional, dedicated youth facilities in east Kent and continues to review provision across the county.

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

This is a key theme in the *Vision for Kent*. To achieve its aims we work through existing partnerships, making sure activity is both focused and effective. Although there is much less crime in Kent than in most parts of the country, current challenges for community safety include the implications of the "24/7" society and building confidence in the criminal justice system. Changing demographics and growth pressures will bring new challenges, including ensuring further reductions in crime, increasing public reassurance and protecting the built and natural environment from anti-social behaviour and disorder.

Crime and anti-social behaviour is often worse in areas that are economically deprived, isolated or in need of regeneration. Vandalism, graffiti, litter, abandoned cars and fly-tipping all degrade communities. Crime and anti-social behaviour related to substance abuse, particularly alcohol, is also of concern. It is therefore important to promote a strong sense of pride in local communities by working with the Police and a wide range of public, private and voluntary organisations, to focus on tackling crime issues in the round, in order to establish confidence and reassure local people. 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.

KCC leads the Safer & Stronger Communities Group, which brings together all the agencies with a duty to cooperate (as set out in the Crime & Disorder Act 1998). The role of this group is to aggregate all 11 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) assessments into a countywide strategic plan, ensure it is cohesive with the LAA, and be responsible

for allocation of the Safer & Stronger Communities funding element of the LAA, including monitoring overall performance. Since the mid 1990s we have been a committed partner in working with others to tackle crime and community safety well in advance of the requirement for CDRPs. Our services are represented as standard on all CDRPs in Kent. We spend over £8 million a year on crime prevention and reduction through core services.

All KCC staff have been issued with an information leaflet informing them of their responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, and an awareness programme and community safety DVD is now part of the induction process for all new staff. Community safety is an integral part of the annual planning process and features in all appropriate KCC business and operational plans.

KCC community safety unit: KCC funds and deploys over 100 community wardens to targeted locations across the county. As a vital element in the Neighbourhood Policing programme, they act as the 'eyes and ears' of their communities and are extremely popular with the people of Kent for strengthening communities, making people feel safer and discouraging antisocial behaviour. It is a nationally acclaimed service and recent feedback from an independent evaluation by the University of Kent showed that the wardens are having a marked effect in making Kent a safer county, largely through a "pro-social modelling" rather than enforcement approach. This year KCC won the DCLG's National Warden Manager award. The *Handyvan* and *HomeSafe* schemes provide rapid support to victims of domestic violence, burglary and doorstep crime in making their homes more secure. Following the outstanding early success of the schemes, their remit has expanded to cover basic home safety improvements (for example to help reduce falls in the home). Our Community Safety Training centre offers training products both internally and to other partners involved in community safety, including training on equality and diversity issues.

The Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team (KDAAT) brings together partners including Police, Probation, NHS, 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 for Kent and Medway tackles the health issues caused by drug users sharing needles. It involves 40 pharmacies, 10 fixed service site exchanges and two outreach exchanges and almost 850,000 syringes were distributed in (what year?).

Kent Youth Offending Service (KYOS) 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 young people, although this fall is not as sharp as in other areas. It also leads the 'prevent and deter' element of the Prolific and Priority Offender (PPO) strategy on behalf of the Kent Criminal Justice Board. KYOS is a member of each of the 11 CDRPs in the county and works with partners on a range of preventative initiatives such as the *Power* project and *Action 7*. 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. Front line staff work with young people as part of the KYOS commitment to preventing youth crime and allowing 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.

Kent Safe Schools (KSS) seeks to listen, consult, engage and support children and young people to encourage and empower them to actively participate and positively contribute to their schools and communities. Currently KSS works with over 7000 children and young people each year across Kent delivering preventative services such as peer mentoring, work based learning, anti bullying accreditation and alternative curriculum provision, reducing anti social behaviour and bullying while increasing achievement and attainment. KSS was nationally recognised in 2000 by winning the prestigious British National Crime and Community Safety Awards and this was followed in 2001 by being cited by the Social Services Inspectorate and National Audit Commission report on KSS as an example of good project practice.

Young people involved in KSS projects have won over 20 *Try Angle Awards* for their contribution to the local community. The Swale Group won the Mid Kent and then the countywide Respect Award for the formulation of the Swale Youth Strategy supported by KSS. The young people are part of the Swale Youth Forum, co-facilitated by KSS. Two peer mentors (trained by KSS) at Swanley Technology College received the Diana Princess of Wales Award. This

award recognises outstanding contributions by young people in tackling bullying, and supporting young people in the community. The recent LERN evaluation carried out by the University of Greenwich described KSS as "an important and valuable initiative" and identified improvements in "self esteem, confidence and emotional well being" and in "preparing young people to be positive citizens".

KCC's Road Safety action has delivered significant reductions in the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on Kent's roads (compared to the national targets). Kent has already reached the national target for 2010 for the reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured. The team runs 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 a well-established multi-media campaign. Partnership working with both Kent Police and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) has provided additional expertise and resources. Examples include:

- Campaigns and enforcement to raise awareness related to drink/driving and mobile phone legislation
- *Licensed to Kill*, a hard-hitting theatre production for teenagers illustrating the consequences of bad driving has just won a gold medal in the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Pride Awards.
- *Grow Up Slow Down* - a specific anti-speeding campaign aimed at young drivers.

Trading Standards: Kent pioneered the intelligence-led approach which focuses activity on traders and trading practices where there are concerns. Priorities are determined by a strategic assessment and include: preventing people becoming victims of doorstep crime by alerting neighbourhoods to the presence of fraudulent traders; using the Kent Consumer Support Network to send alert messages to parish councils and organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch about rogue traders operating in their area; the Rapid Action Team responding to live incidents and supporting victims; targeting persistent rogue traders; preventing anti-social behaviour and harm to children by focusing on under-age sales, especially of alcohol; providing advice to businesses and carrying out targeted enforcement campaigns; preventing the spread of animal disease and taking action on unnecessary suffering in livestock. Primary legislation, pioneered by KCC, (The Kent Act) allows us to work in partnership with Kent Police to undermine the rewards of crime and increase the recovery of stolen goods. KCC also 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 successful contact centre.

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 requirement to promote business continuity planning to the commercial and voluntary sector, which we do via websites, leaflets, exhibitions and training events.

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Following an initial pilot, KCC has reached agreement 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 to improve the implementation of "improved health and quality of life" in the Vision for Kent. 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. A health and well-being partnership is one of the 5 sub groups of the Kent Partnership. This group drives forward multi agency delivery of the health targets in the *Kent Agreement*. A Public Health Board has also been set up to oversee and manage the public health function on behalf of the 2 Kent PCTs and Kent County Council. It includes senior representatives from all our directorates as well as district councils, the voluntary and private sectors and the PCTs. The Board is developing an innovative Kent Public Health Observatory to improve health information; and a multi-agency public health workforce strategy as well as developing a public health strategy agreed by public sector partners. In October 2007 the KCC approach to Public Health was the subject of an IDEa Peer Review, whose initial feedback was very positive and included helpful suggestions for future areas of work to focus on.

Promoting sport and exercise:

There has been a significant increase in the levels of activity in young people as a result of Big Lottery Fund projects to provide supervised activities on school sites outside core school hours. The increase in the number of children and young people aged 5 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. **Kent School Games input from CMY due on Monday 3rd, plus further sports participation statistics**

KCC's Healthy Schools Team achieved a *Kent Agreement* target at the end of July 2006 when the number of schools working towards *Healthy Schools* status reached 50 per cent. A total of 546 schools (90 per cent) are now involved 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. The programme gave an early focus on the schools in the most deprived areas. Thanet is the first district to achieve 100% of schools reaching the healthy school status.

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.

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. External projects and programmes that KCC has promoted include our partnership with *Charlton Athletic FC* which delivers youth crime reduction, better school attendance and health improvement through sport. Other examples are:

Bien etre: this is about widening the experiences of primary school children in Dover to stimulate an interest in healthy lifestyles through activities with French children in Dover and in France, part financed by the European Regional Development Fund and launched in September 2005 as a two-year project. 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. The **let's talk project** gives young people in North France and Kent a chance to express their views on relationships and sex in this European funded project. Several new initiatives were piloted to help improve sexual health of young people through learning about cultural differences and experiences.

Kent's Public Rights of Way network is the largest free gym in the county. The **Explore Kent** website and the 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. We estimate that 550 people participate in these **Health Walks** on a weekly basis. We also launched **Fit Together**, a partnership with the leisure industry in Kent that will promote better joint efforts to encourage more people to take exercise. We are working with the Fitness Industry Association on pilot schemes to improve workplace health and physical activity for young women.

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 *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 and blood pressure and we hope to include chlamydia. We also offer health checks to all non-schools staff as part of our work & well-being initiative.

Obesity: A 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.

OLDER PEOPLE

Although many services which support older people are covered by earlier sections on transport, sustainable communities and community safety, we take pride in our focus on social care services for older people and for vulnerable adults. This section describes the achievements of those services.

The **Vision for Kent** sets out the challenges resulting from the significant increase expected in the numbers of older people. KCC's **Active Lives** is a 10-year vision for the future of services for older people and adults with a disability. It provides a focus on independence, choice and personalised services for older people which links together **Our health, Our Care, Our say, Vision for Kent** and **Towards 2010** and reflects the overriding desire of individuals to be supported to remain independent as they grow older. This has the support and endorsement of all the major public agencies in Kent.

Building on the successful approach to producing Active Lives, we are developing a comprehensive Older People's Strategy, based on wide engagement with the public and partners. We have shown our commitment to prevention and promoting independence by maintaining the moderate band in our eligibility criteria. CSCI have recently commented that few councils in the country have been able to maintain this, but we believe that keeping eligibility as low as possible supports our focus on prevention.

Putting People First – Choice and Control

Direct Payments and personalised budgets are a key mechanism in promoting independence and we have worked hard to ensure that they are an attractive option for older people. Key innovations such as individualised budgets, the *Kent Card*, and our *Client Money Service* are helping in this. A key driver for the development of personalised services will be the internal change project Active Lives for Adults (ALfA). This project is addressing the key issues arising from personalisation including:

- Straightforward and simple access to services and information
- Re-shaping operational and back-office workforce structures in conjunction with our partners;
- Finding new ways of planning, commissioning and contracting, particularly of more traditional large-scale services, to meet the requirements of self-directed support.
- Joint initiatives with our partners, to involve the public and service users. For example, in forming a 'reference' group to support the development of the ALfA programme.

Kent has been one of the first authorities to recognise the need for good quality training across the social care sector, delivered through the '*Training 4 Care*' programme.

Ensuring the availability of high quality services

Active Lives outlines clear commitments to support older people in their own homes and to enable them to manage their long term conditions. Essential to these commitments has been the development with our partners of a range of high quality services to make a reality of these choices. These include:

- **Recuperative and Intermediate Services.** to enable people to return to their homes. Examples of this include the Shepway Intermediate Project; an integrated service with the PCT, Rapid Response Teams; and units developed to focus on Intermediate Care.
- Local preventative services, often managed by the voluntary sector, such as local 'falls' projects
- Implementing the Supporting People *Older Peoples Strategy*
- The **Whole Systems Demonstrator:** Kent is one of only three areas in the country to pilot a multi-million pound scheme to support older people. The DH has awarded Kent £5.1m to enable health and social services to make new technologies available to many more people. Telehealth and Telecare will be a major part of the project and a key element will be the integrated working arrangements between Social Services and Health. The pilot will be based in Ashford, Shepway, Gravesend, Dartford and Swanley.
- The Government funded '**Brighter Futures for Older People**' currently supports older people living in their own homes in the districts of Ashford, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells. It is delivered via a range of volunteer services designed to reduce avoidable admissions into hospital or long-term care. It also keeps older people healthy, promotes social inclusion and independence and produces other benefits to the volunteers and their communities. Over 150 volunteers are working within seven projects and well over 500 older people have been supported to date.
- Kent has been successful in bidding for the £1.5 million Government funded **Partnerships for Older People Project**, a two-year joint project with the Eastern and Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust and the voluntary sector with three strands: employing 18 Community Matron Support workers to support people with Long Term Conditions to remain in their own homes; using **Telehealth** and **Telecare** technology; helping people access care where they need it; and providing accessible information.
- We are in partnership to deliver projects which are giving people more control over their conditions through such programmes as the **Expert Patient Programme** and the **Looking after Me** programme for carers.
- A key focus has been reducing the number of older people who are admitted to hospital in an emergency. KASS and PCTs were leading members of the **national innovation forum**, which led on this issue. Actions arising from this included the shared care desk run in conjunction with the Ambulance Service.

Making the best use of our resources

Innovation is a part of the Directorate's culture and we have a major programme of modernisation overseen by the Modernisation Board to ensure that we mainstream current innovations and identify the next generation of innovation. Many areas of innovation and modernisation have already been mentioned. Others include:

- Developed with the Royal bank of Scotland (RBS), the **Kent Card** was launched in March 2007. It offers major opportunities to enable people taking up Direct Payments to use the card flexibly to pay for services. Central

Government and other Local Authorities have shown an interest in the **Kent Card**. Use of the card is being developed in partnership with older and disabled people.

- Modernisation of Older People Services. The ‘traditional models’ for these services no longer fit the aspirations and expectations of people as expressed in **Active Lives**. A strategic review is underway to review the contribution of all in-house residential units ensuring they are working towards the objectives of **Active Lives**. It is expected that all units will have one or more of the following specialist services: recovery & recuperation services; intermediate care services, and services specialising in dementia. Depending on need in a particular District, the outcome of this review may be to continue unchanged. However, in many cases we have already been instigating changes either to the nature of the service provided (moving to a more specialist provision such as recuperative care); or to the use of the building (sites converted to extra care housing).
- A capital **Dignity in Care** grant of £1.895m has been given to improve the quality of the home environment for residential care homes for older people during 2007/8.

Creating the conditions, with others, for equality of opportunity

The drive to ensure there is equal opportunity for older and disabled people is an integral part of the directorate’s core business. For example:

- KCC’s “**Culturally Competent Care**” has been recognised by the Dept of Health as national good practice for all health and social care professionals. These principles of person-centred care planning underpin our practice in working with older people from BME backgrounds but are also applicable in work with people of other cultures from whatever client group.
- Government guidelines encouraged the active involvement of disabled people in the design of Disability Equality Schemes rather than simple consultation. KCC took this seriously by initially surveying 1,000 disabled people, 99 of whom participated in 3 “Active Lives” events where people with physical impairments, mental health, sensory impairments and learning disabilities were supported to contribute their views. A further feedback event was held before the DES was published.
- Through Multi–Agency Public Protection Arrangements and the Multi-Agency Adult Safeguards Board we have put in place robust adult protection processes, which have given Kent a reputation for excellence in this area.
- Through the **Kent Benefits Partnership** thousands of Kent pensioners have been encouraged and helped to apply for more than £3m in benefits since it was launched in 2004. Our newly formed specialist finance teams are leading the way on this and are beginning to make significant links into District Councils and the Benefits Agency to support the aims of this target.