

By: Keith Ferrin Cabinet Member Environment, Highways and Waste/Amanda Honey – Managing Director Communities

To: Cabinet 3 December 2007 - Item 9

Subject: KCC Environment Policy

Classification: Unrestricted

---

### **Summary:**

KCC's existing Environment Policy is overdue for review. Both the Chief Officers Group and the Climate Change Cabinet Working Group agreed in August that this review is needed urgently. The purpose of this report is to get feedback and approval from Cabinet for the new KCC Environmental Policy.

## **For Information**

---

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 KCC's Environment Policy is the statement of our commitment to improving our own corporate environmental performance. The scope of the Policy covers our own estate, operations, activities and decision-making. It is therefore related to but separate from our wider policy commitments to protect and enhance Kent's environment as a whole (as set out in the Vision for Kent, the Kent Environment Strategy, Kent Prospects and the Kent and Medway Structure Plan); it is the way in which we demonstrate that we lead by example within our own organisation.

### **2. Revising KCC Environment Policy**

2.1 It is essential that the updated policy:

- Provide a clear and renewed public commitment to improving our corporate environmental performance
- Reflect key strategic policy drivers such as Towards 2010, Putting Kent First, the KCC Climate Change Action Plan as well as the emerging Kent Agreement 2 and the high level aims of the Joint Environmental Prospectus produced by the LGA and Defra.
- Be underpinned by strong practical guidance and solutions, measurable targets and standards (Towards 2010), with clear resourced action plans, which identify potential for cost savings and efficiencies wherever possible.

### **3. The vision for the revised KCC Environmental Policy**

The proposed KCC Environment Policy statement is attached in **Annex 1**. This is a high-level statement and will be underpinned by detailed action plans and guidance. The vision comprises three complementary pillars:

- To stabilise and progressively reduce KCC's environmental footprint
- To progressively reduce our carbon dioxide emissions and make sure our estate and services are adapted to the future impacts and opportunities of climate change
- To contribute positively to Kent's character, local environmental quality and natural environment

In addition to publishing the high-level statement in stand-alone format on our external webpages and in our buildings, we propose the main reference point for KCC colleagues is publication of the Policy on KNet.

#### **4. Process**

The process for the revision of the KCC Environment Policy to date has included:

- discussion and agreement by all KCC's Directorate Senior Management Teams, and key KCC Officers
- discussion and agreement by the KCC Environment Board on the 26 September 2007
- discussion and agreement by COG 7<sup>th</sup> November
- an assessment of implications which has been consulted on with the Environment Board, as well as Directorate Senior Management Teams and key officers
- starting the development of a detailed set of action plans and guidance to ensure effective and well planned implementation

#### **5. Changes to the policy**

There has been a challenge regarding the lack of aspiration with regards to the waste target. Baseline data for waste will not be available until late November. When this is available, this target will be reviewed and a revised target put forward for approval. Details of the target once approved will be widely circulated.

#### **6. Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) NOTE and SUPPORT the contents of the report
- (ii) Agree the KCC Environment Policy
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Managing Director for Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste to approve the revised waste target.

**Background Documents:** None

**Contact:** Carolyn McKenzie – Environment and Regeneration 1916

## **Annex 1: Draft revised KCC Environment Policy**

### **KCC Environment Policy**

At Kent County Council, elected members and staff alike recognise that protection and enhancement of the environment is the key to sustaining a high quality of life in Kent. We recognise that our own activities have an impact on the environment, that we have a responsibility to ensure that these impacts are positive, and that our use of natural resources is minimised.

#### **Our vision**

**To stabilise and progressively reduce our environmental footprint; to progressively reduce our carbon dioxide emissions and make sure our estate and services are adapted to the future impacts and opportunities of climate change; and to contribute positively to Kent's character, local environmental quality and natural environment**

We will do this by applying an evidence led approach to sustainability, identifying the potential for cost savings wherever possible and committing to environmental policies and standards in the following areas:

#### **Our decisions**

We will:

- Expect every manager and decision-maker in KCC to demonstrate how they comply with this Policy
- Integrate environmental considerations into our strategic and day-to-day decision-making processes, and give significant weight to them where they conflict with other objectives
- Assess key decisions for their environmental impact, taking a pragmatic whole-life-cost view, and use such assessments to fully inform decision-making
- 'Climate proof' decisions to ensure they reduce our contribution to climate change and help us prepare for the impacts and opportunities of unavoidable climate change, including where appropriate enabling biodiversity and coastal areas to adapt to climate change in line with the KCC Climate Change Action Plan
- Continue to comply with all relevant environmental legislation and statutory duties
- Seek to embrace new environmental technology and methodologies to ensure we are at the leading edge of developments and solutions, within a well-managed risk-analysis and cost-benefit framework

#### **Our estate**

We will:

- Reduce energy use within our estate to meet carbon reduction targets of 10% by 2010 and 20% by 2015
- Increase the proportion of the energy needs of our existing estate met from renewable sources
- Reduce water use by 7.5% by 2010 across our estate
- Reduce waste generation across our estate by 10% by 2010, and increase the proportion of our corporate waste which is reused or recycled to 50% by 2010
- Maximise the efficient use of land in our Estate by reusing previously developed land and buildings wherever practical, before using greenfield land.
- Protect, enhance and restore biodiversity, the natural and historic environment within both our buildings and open space, including measures that support climate change adaptation
- Minimise light, noise, air and other forms of pollution arising from our estate
- Ensure KCC-owned highways comply with the relevant parts of this Policy

#### **Our travel and transport**

We will:

- Reduce our members and employees' need to travel, including through our estate strategy, locations selected for council events, use of public transport, teleconferencing and other sustainable solutions
- Achieve reductions in total business mileage travelled by employees, encourage greater car sharing and other sustainable solutions, without adversely affecting end-user service delivery
- Promote the use of fuel efficient vehicles and technologies through our vehicle fleet and lease car scheme

#### **Our procurement**

We will:

- Increase the proportion of goods and services sourced locally where there are environmental or employment benefits and in compliance with broader UK and EU purchasing legislation
- Work with our suppliers to ensure that they are taking action to reduce the environmental impacts of their businesses
- Identify those goods, including timber and paper, which can be obtained from certified sustainable sources and ensure that these supplies are used
- Work with suppliers to develop markets for environmental technologies, goods and services

### **Our construction**

We will:

- Meet high standards of sustainable construction in all new KCC buildings and refurbishments, and in all developments on KCC-owned land. The BREEAM 'very good'/Code for Sustainable Buildings level 3 or equivalent standard is required as a minimum
- Require all new KCC buildings and refurbishments to assess the feasibility of developing on-site renewable energy to help meet energy needs
- Ensure that our estate and roads are planned and managed in ways which minimise the risk of flooding and do not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere
- Seek to avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and comply with policy and legislative requirements

### **Our workforce**

We will:

- Ensure that our members and employees understand the implications of environmental legislation and regulation, and exceed minimum environmental standards where possible
- Ensure that environmental awareness is raised and good environmental behaviour encouraged through our corporate training, performance appraisal and reward strategies
- Raise awareness of how to comply with all relevant environmental legislation and statutory duties

### **Our leadership role in the community**

We will:

- Lead Kent's communities to a better understanding of the importance of our environment and help them value and enhance the environment locally and globally
- Set out and deliver a vision of environmental excellence with our partners in the Kent Partnership through regular review and implementation of the Kent Environment Strategy

We will set out detailed action plans and guidance for delivery of these commitments, so that colleagues across KCC have a clear basis for decision-making.

This Policy is owned by the KCC Environment Board who may choose to call decision-makers to account for compliance with these commitments and escalate as necessary to the Leader and Chief Executive. Any proposed exceptions to this Policy will need to provide a sound business case based on whole-life economic, social and environmental costs and benefits.

Kent County Council's Corporate Environmental Performance Group will oversee provision of advice and support, monitoring and reporting. In particular, the Group will lead embedding of these commitments in ISO14001 accreditation for the County Council as a whole by 2010. The Group will report via the KCC Environment Board to the Leader and Chief Executive.

[signed]

Paul Carter  
Leader

[signed]

Peter Gilroy  
Chief Executive

Published [November] 2007. This Policy and its successful implementation will be reviewed annually by the KCC Environment Board, escalating any changes as necessary to the Leader and Chief Executive.