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To: Communities Cabinet Committee

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Subject: **Business Planning 2013/14 – Substantive Draft Plans**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary : Following the development of business plan headline priorities in November 2012, Directors and Heads of Service have built on feedback from the Communities Cabinet Committee to develop substantive draft business plans for 2013/14.

This year the emphasis has been on reducing the burden of business planning by using a lighter touch process. It is important to increase the consistency and synergy between business planning, the performance management dashboards and directorate and divisional risk registers which underpin the business plan actions reported to the Committee on a regular basis.

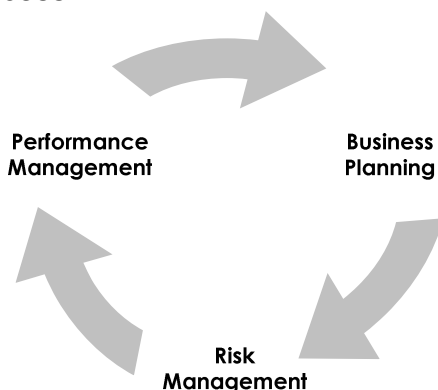
Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and comment on the draft plans, ahead of the Key Decision by Cabinet to approve business plans in March 2013.

1. Background

- 1.1 A pre-requisite to delivering key organisational priorities, both in the medium and long-term, is an effective business plan offering a clear focus on the delivery of agreed strategic outcomes through day-to-day activity.
- 1.2 During the November each Cabinet Committee was given the opportunity to discuss and comment on high-level 'headline priorities' for each division. This feedback was considered as early substantive draft plans were developed to ensure the headlines evolved into more detailed actions taking known legislative, policy and financial constraints into account.
- 1.3 The emphasis for the 2013/14 draft business plans is to identify clear, tangible actions, ensuring that all activity is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound (SMART). Actions are underpinned by milestones to check progress and are complemented by meaningful Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Activity Indicators that enable the organisation to monitor and manage performance, demonstrating progress against the delivery of Bold Steps for Kent. High level risks relating to the delivery of the actions are set out in the business plan, supported by detailed division and directorate risk registers.
- 1.4 The draft plans are still at an early stage of development and will be refined further over the coming months before approval in March 2013. The Policy and Strategic Relationships team has been supporting directors to develop their draft plans as part of an ongoing, informal quality assurance process to help embed the revised business planning process.

2. Business Planning, Performance and Risk Management

- 2.1 It is important the business planning process closely complements and supports the work already underway to improve the quality and consistency of performance and risk management across the organisation. As such, to help reduce the burden of business plan development, the draft business plans draw on the existing work to prepare the directorate performance dashboard and directorate & division risk registers. This has helped reduce duplication and enhance the synergies between business planning, risk and performance. Cabinet Committees play an important role in providing oversight and assurance through the bi-annual business plan outturn monitoring process.



2.2 Risk Management

Key risks and mitigating actions faced by divisions in delivering their 2013/14 business plans are outlined in Section E of each plan. In addition, several more strategic or cross cutting risks that potentially affect several functions across Customer & Communities and/or the Authority are listed in the directorate risk register. This register provides further context to the business planning process and will evolve during the coming months alongside the finalising of business plans.

- 2.2 The directorate hosts a range of 'corporate' support functions and some Customer & Communities directors lead or coordinate mitigating actions in conjunction with other directors across the organisation to manage risks featuring on the Corporate Risk Register. These include Civil Contingencies & Resilience and Localism.

- 2.3 A link to the Corporate Risk Register can be found at:
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s36860/Corporate%20Risk%20Register%20-%20App%201.pdf>

2.4 Performance Management

All business plan actions are measured against focused key performance and activity indicators. Keeping all actions SMART will ensure meaningful management information is developed to support the Performance Dashboards reported to Cabinet Committees on a quarterly basis. This year, divisions have taken feedback from the Communities Cabinet Committee on the Performance Management Dashboard into account when developing their 2013/14 performance measures and have focused on selecting KPIs which are the most meaningful and accurate reflection of progress against key priorities.

- 2.5 KPIs in the 2012/13 performance dashboard which are non-essential, difficult to measure effectively or are not felt to be a priority by the Committee will not be rolled

forward. If possible, more meaningful measures will be established but it is intended to reduce the overall number of KPIs to allow more focused and concise performance reporting to the Cabinet Committee in 2013/14.

3. Business Planning Timetable 2013/14

- 3.1 Historically, business plans were approved by Cabinet and then potentially called into scrutiny. From 2013/14 business plans will be approved as an annual Key Decision with Cabinet Committees playing a key role in considering and shaping the draft plans prior to approval in their pre-scrutiny role.
- 3.2 As a result the timetable for developing business plans has been brought forward so Committees have an earlier opportunity to comment on draft plans. This will be the last opportunity for Cabinet Committees to formally consider draft plans before approval by Cabinet in March 2013.
- 3.3 It is important to note at this early stage the draft plans are not intended to capture all the planned activity for the forthcoming year and it has not been possible to include detailed financial information as the 2013/14 budget has not yet been approved by County Council. The plans, therefore, have some incomplete sections which require further development and refinement but following feedback from the Cabinet Committee, the responsible Corporate Directors, Directors and Cabinet Members will address this during January.
- 3.4 In February, the plans will be submitted to the Policy and Strategic Relationships team for formal quality assurance which will focus on ensuring consistency between plans and in particular cross-cutting links to support transformation programmes and organisational priorities. A letter outlining the quality assurance feedback will be sent to directors to allow them a further opportunity to reflect before the submission of the final business plans to Cabinet for approval by Key Decision in March 2013.
- 3.5 The approved plans will go live and be published online in April 2013.

4. An Iterative Process

- 4.1 The 2013/14 business plans are the starting point for future development and will be refined and improved each year as part of an iterative annual process. As the plans progress through 2013/14 the synergy between business planning and the performance and risk management cycles will improve. In turn this will make the 2014/15 business planning easier as processes and reporting are embedded and become more consistent and complementary.
- 4.2 The new Section G in the plan will help to establish a clear recognition of how different service divisions link with corporate support services to achieve shared objectives across the business. The aim of this is to enable services to plan ahead and manage capacity effectively with limited resources. This will also be important to identify cross-cutting links across the business plans, particularly identifying complementary and conflicting activity, to reduce the limitations of working in silos.
- 4.3 The findings from the quality assurance and auditing of the business planning process for 2013/14 will be taken into account to update the process for 2014/15. This will include updating any documentation and refreshing the supporting management guide to further aid the effective development of business plans in the future.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the Directorate Risk Register set out in Appendix A.
- b) Comment on the draft performance indicators in Section F of the draft business plans in Appendices B, C & D and discuss which areas of performance the Committee would most like to focus on in 2013/14.
- c) Consider and comment on the substantive draft business plans set out in Appendices B, C & D.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Customer & Communities Directorate Risk Register

Appendix B: Communications & Engagement Draft Business Plan 2013/14

Appendix C: Customer Services Draft Business Plan 2013/14

Appendix D: Service Improvement Draft Business Plan 2013/14

Background Documents

N/A.

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