

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

## ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

### Medium Term Plan 2009-10 to 2011-12

**NOTES** of a meeting held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 24 November 2008.

**PRESENT:** Mr R Truelove (Chairman), Mr C Hibberd, Mr R F Manning and Mr R J Parry.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr R Hallett, Directorate Finance Manager and Mrs C A Singh Democratic Services Officer.

**Apologies:** Mr D S Daley.

#### **1. Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2009-10 to 2011- 2012**

(1) Mr Truelove agreed with the Members how they would proceed in discussing the MTP report which Members highlighted had already been discussed at the last meeting of the Environment and Regeneration POC on 6 November 2008 (Item B3). The Chairman asked Mr Hallett to introduce the report.

(2) Mr Hallett gave Members a brief update highlighting the pressures and priorities for the Directorate. He also spoke of the implications of the national economic challenges with inflation and deflation.

(3) The Members then asked questions on specific areas of the budget which included the following comments and suggestions:

- Members felt that it was important that the Kent Regeneration Strategy was transparent in what was required in line with 2010.
- There is no reference to the Climate Change Strategy and the contribution that Environment and Regeneration is making to this. There needs to be cross directorate commitment to tackle Climate Change.
- Priority should be given to improving and maintenance of the fabric of what we already have. The core services of Highways should be given priority.
- There will need to be flexibility by KCC in managing the budget which may need to change mid year with the possibility of opportunities which may arise through; falling inflation, extra capital funding and lobbying the Government. It would be necessary to have a contingency plan.
- There may be one off opportunities to help small businesses
- Members asked Mr Hallett to report back on whether we are getting Value for Money with Ringway and Jabobs.
- Members asked for comparable measures when referring to roads and footways
- Members felt that there was an issue with the ongoing cost and availability with the Freedom Pass and buses for uneconomic routes. Members requested a demographic breakdown of those using the Freedom Pass.
- There needed to be a transparent direct link with the Economic Development Strategy to the services of; Locate in Kent, Produced in Kent and Visit Kent. Are

we getting Value for money? Are they delivering our objectives? Who was monitoring this?

- Members felt that it was appropriate to have a County wide; Kent Regeneration Strategy as well as a County wide Strategy for Environment and for Regeneration.
- Members suggested that there needed to be a skills education and training to regeneration which needed to be embedded into all directorates and proposed that the Children, Families and Education and Environment and Regeneration Directorates work closer together to move this forward.

### **Conclusions**

(1) Members felt that the MTP service Priorities and objectives were right for Environment, Highways and Waste, although Climate Change had been included.

(2) Members unanimously endorsed the proposals to deal with the priorities and pressures for Kent Highway Services and noted the intention to invest in footways.

Members were not supportive of making any savings through turning off street lights.

(3) Members suggested that there were savings to be found on the current Waste contracts though adjustments and renegotiation and on those contracts due to be renewed.

(4) Members were generally supportive of the Freedom Pass rolling out.

(5) Members specifically said that they did not want to propose Bus capitalisation.

(6) Members suggested that the electricity contract with EDF needed to be renegotiated.

(7) Members felt the £400k allocated to road improvements and traffic management for the Open Golf championship in Sandwich was a non essential and needed to be rescinded.

(8) Members suggested deferring the £500k for Congestion Management.

(9) Members gave support to deferring the 10 year update of the Land Use and Development Survey to 12 years.

(10) Members gave their support to the reduction in the Resources staffing budget of £250k. This will be achieved by approximately 8 posts which are vacant at present remaining so unless they are deemed as essential.

(11) Members requested a review/challenge on the funding allocated to; Locate in Kent, Produced in Kent and Visit Kent with a view to reducing their funding.

(12) Members requested that any funding saved from Locate in Kent etc should be allocated to training and Kent Apprenticeship.

(13) There was general support for the rural regeneration agenda especially in the current economic climate