

By: Paul Carter, Leader of the County Council
Peter Gilroy, Chief Executive

To: Corporate Policy Overview Committee – 28 May 2008

Subject: Consideration of the draft KCC Annual Plan 2008/09 and
process for publishing the final approved version

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report sets out the background and process for publishing the KCC Annual Plan 2008/09. A copy of the latest draft is attached to enable Members to make any comments they think are appropriate prior to its approval at County Council on 19 June.

FOR INFORMATION

1. Introduction

The Local Government Act 1999 introduced the statutory requirement for authorities to produce a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). The contents are strictly prescribed. The statutory deadline for publication is 30 June. This will be the last year that authorities will be required to prepare a BVPP.

Kent's BVPP is known as the KCC Annual Plan. The principal audiences are KCC's staff and Members as well as groups and organisations with an interest in our activities. It is nevertheless a public document and potentially an important means of communicating with local people directly.

2. Purpose of the KCC Annual Plan

The KCC Annual Plan goes further than the statutory minimum BVPP content requirements. It brings existing KCC planning processes together in one document and is an important mechanism for incorporating elements of Towards 2010, Kent Agreement, Supporting Independence Programme, Vision for Kent and other Directorate priorities, for example.

It acts as a bridge between KCC's strategic objectives and corporate priorities and its service and financial plans, and avoids duplicating large amounts of detailed information contained elsewhere. It reports upon progress made against many priorities for the previous financial year as well as setting new targets for the current year and beyond. Much of the information included is therefore taken from existing Member approved information sources.

The KCC Annual Plan is also a central part of the Authority's performance management processes bringing together performance information and comparing KCC with other authorities.

The Annual Plan follows the Towards 2010 format with Directorate and Portfolio information being allocated under Towards 2010 headings.

3. Role of Members of Policy Overview Committee

For the last four years the draft Annual Plan has been presented to Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee (POCC) to enable Members to make any comments they think are appropriate prior to its approval at County Council.

This year the process has been amended and instead the draft Annual Plan is being submitted to each Policy Overview Committee (POC). This will enable each committee to focus specifically on areas which are the responsibility of their committee in relation to the policy objectives and performance targets set.

It is recommended that Members send their comments in advance of the meeting.

This will allow responses to be provided to Members on the day, wherever possible, rather than after the meeting, as has happened in a number of instances in previous years.

These comments should be sent to Janice Hill, preferably by email -

janice.hill@kent.gov.uk - by 26 May. There will still, however, be an opportunity for Members to make additional comments on the day.

4. Completion of the Plan

The KCC Annual Plan 2008/09 is fairly close to completion. There are some small gaps within the performance indicator (PI) tables but these will be completed shortly.

The document will be proof read and a 'plain English' check undertaken prior to publication.

This year the Annual Plan will again be published on CD. The CD will also include the Vision for Kent, Towards 2010, The Kent Agreement, Supporting Independence documents, Medium Term Plan, Children, Families, Health & Education Directorate Annual Review, Kent Adult Social Services Active Lives and the People of Kent.

A published (hard copy) version of the Annual Plan will also be available.

5. Approval process and Member involvement

The Constitution states that the Leader shall submit a draft Annual Plan to County Council. The date of this meeting is 19 June. This date is fixed to allow Members to see as full a draft as possible prior to its publication at the end of June.

The terms of reference of Governance and Audit Committee require it to check compliance of the KCC Annual Plan with statutory requirements prior to its publication. Authority to do this has been delegated to a small, cross-party group of Governance & Audit Committee members on 4 June, as there is no suitable date for this to be undertaken by the full committee prior to the publication date. County Council will be orally informed of their view on 19 June.

6. Publication

Copies of the KCC Annual Plan are sent to all Members of the County Council, the Authority's principal partners and relevant voluntary organisations, senior KCC managers and our external auditors, amongst others. Copies will also be sent to all libraries and KCC offices open to the public as in previous years.

A copy will be available on KCC's web-site by the end of June. This will be a web-based version to enable better access to the public and other interested parties. A copy is also available on KNET to allow access to all our staff.

7. External Audit

The requirement for such Plans to be externally audited currently remains. KCC's previous external auditor's reports on the last eight years Plans have been unqualified with no statutory recommendations in the last seven years.

An early draft of the Plan will be made available to our new appointed external auditors, the Audit Commission, in order to ensure KCC meets the statutory requirements prior to publication.

8. Recommendation

Members are asked to NOTE the arrangements for publishing the KCC Annual Plan 2008/09.

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