

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

To: Environment & Regeneration Policy Overview Committee – 29 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 has been made available to Members to enable them 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 by the legislation. The statutory deadline for publication in 2008 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 a number of elements including Towards 2010, the Kent Agreement, the Supporting Independence Programme, Vision for Kent and specific Directorate priorities.

The KCC Annual Plan acts as a bridge between KCC's strategic objectives, its corporate priorities and its service and financial plans, and avoids duplicating large amounts of detailed information that is available elsewhere. It reports progress made against many of the priorities for the previous financial year as well as setting new targets for the current year and beyond. Much of the information included is taken from existing Member information sources. It 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 its responsibility and make observations in relation to the policy objectives and performance targets set.

It is recommended that Members send their comments to the directorate contact in advance of the meeting. This will allow responses to be provided to Members on the day wherever this is possible rather than after the meeting as has happened in a number of instances in previous years. **These comments should be sent to Kelli Davis, preferably by email (kelli.davis@kent.gov.uk) by 26 May 2008.** 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, the Medium Term Plan, the 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 in early June, as there is no suitable date for this to be undertaken by the full committee prior to the end of June. County Council will be orally informed of their view.

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. 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 before 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 all our staff to access the plan.

7. External Audit

The requirement for such Plans to be externally audited currently remains. KCC's previous external audit reports on the last eight year's 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 newly appointed external auditors, The Audit Commission, in order to ensure that KCC meets all statutory requirements prior to publication.

8. Recommendation

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

Contact details:

Kelli Davis kelli.davis@kent.gov.uk tel 01622 696836