

## **MANAGING DIRECTORS / DIRECTORS STATEMENTS**

### **KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

#### **MANAGING DIRECTOR'S/ DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROLS, GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESSES FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008**

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The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this accountability, members and senior officers are responsible for putting in place proper risk management processes, governance arrangements and internal controls to ensure the proper stewardship of the resources at its disposal.

As a Managing Director / Director I have responsibility for maintaining a system of risk management; suitable governance arrangements; and of sound internal controls; within my Directorate to support the achievement of Corporate and Directorate objectives.

The governance arrangements in place ensure that services are measured in terms of the quality of services for users, are delivered in accordance with the authority's objectives and for ensuring that they represent the best use of resources. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated with clear delegation arrangements.

The risk management system identifies principal risks and the existing internal controls in place to manage the risks. It puts action in place to test key controls and if appropriate new controls are introduced in order to manage them more efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal controls is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

I am also responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal controls in place during 2007/08. My review has taken into account the following

- (i) Outcomes from risk assessment and evaluation
- (ii) Self-assessments of key service areas within the department
- (iii) Internal audit reports and results of follow ups regarding implementation of recommendations
- (iv) Outcomes from reviews of services by other bodies including, Inspectorates, external auditors etc
- (v) Linkage between business planning and the management of risk

Improvements have already been made to controls in certain areas during the year as follows: -

#### **Children's Trust Arrangements:**

The further development of children's trust arrangements at a county and local Level have included the development and implementation of the Kent Children's Trust Governance Framework and related Partnership Agreement. Agreed in November 2007, the Framework sets out arrangements to ensure the KCT is effective and accountable in improving outcomes.

We continue to develop systems to ensure we have captured information and data to inform planning needs including MOSAIC, the Kent Children and Young Peoples' Survey (currently being undertaken for a second year), and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which has been undertaken with multi-agency partners. A revised version of the CYPP is currently being developed as an overarching strategic framework describing the priorities and activities for the Kent Children's Trust Board.

### **SEN Transport:**

- AEN and Resources and Transport Integration Unit make every effort to ensure that the service provided is a quality one that guarantees the safety, health and well being of the child or young person. Additionally, Transport Integration's procurement procedures are designed to secure value for money through economies of scale arrangements and the tendering process.
- A survey of all parents and carers was undertaken in spring 2007, in order to inform a review of its policy with a view to developing one policy that covers all groups of children and young people. From this survey, two main areas were identified for further investigation. This has enabled the AEN and Resources and Transport Integration Unit to create a new single Kent Policy on Transport for Children, Families and Education.
- In recognition of the needs and vulnerability of young people with learning difficulties, the Local Authority has decided to extend access to transport to escorts where they are needed to enable young people to travel safely as part of the Kent freedom Pass Pilot Scheme. The new policy takes into account the New Transport Provisions which were inserted in the Education Act 1997, and which came into effect in September 2007.
- The new Kent Policy on Transport for Children, Families and Education will provide clarity around the need for standards for providers in order to ensure that the arrangements in place take account of the specific needs of the children and young people who are being taken to and from school. This policy will mitigate the likelihood of any harm befalling the vulnerable groups outlined previously within the SEN Transport Policy.

### **School Attendance and Achievement of Looked after Children:**

CFE continues to pursue a multi-agency action plan to promote the educational achievement and attendance of Looked After Children. Key actions include:

- The Kent Pledge setting out our commitments to LAC, including support for education.
- A number of services in place to ensure quick access to education and regular attendance at school
- Local action plans to promote the educational achievement of LAC in each cluster.
- Training for Governing Bodies, Designated Teachers, social workers and health staff.
- Increasing take up of LAC lead Governor role and model school policy.
- Foster carer training and support for carers to promote children's achievement.
- Multi-agency 'team around the child' model of support within our specialist fostering schemes, promoting health, education and stability for children with complex needs.
- Mentoring service for LAC, promoting children's motivation and achievement. The scheme, delivered by Rainer on behalf of KCC, is also supported by

DCSF as part of a national pilot mentoring programme for LAC. External evaluation in progress.

- Easter / summer holiday study support and sport taster sessions for LAC, provided in partnership with Kent Cricket Club and Margate, Ebbsfleet and Buckmore Park FC.
- 220 personal computers purchased this year for LAC.
- Targets for continuing improvement of educational outcomes for LAC being negotiated within Kent Agreement 2.

### **Business Continuity Planning:**

CFE has established a Resilience Group, which is representative of all levels of staff across all CFE divisions. The Resilience Group has made significant progress, undertaking a Business Impact Assessment process, which will lead to the development of Business Continuity Plans for each division in the next year.

I have also identified certain areas where key internal controls still need to be enhanced. These are as follows: -

### **Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs)**

To strengthen children's trust arrangements at the local level Kent is introducing 23 LCSPs from September 2008. These local partnerships will focus on improving outcomes for local children and young people within the framework of the Kent CYPP. The local partnerships will promote integrated working and processes and bring together professionals from across children's services. They will also have a key role to ensure active participation of children, young people and families in identifying needs, developing and evaluating services.

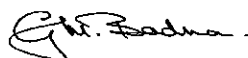
We will need to ensure that the introduction of the LCSPs results in a structure that is fit for purpose, ensuring that there is no disruption to front line services and that a high standard of service is maintained.

### **Integrated Commissioning Framework**

An overarching commissioning framework has been developed to enable integrated planning, delivery and evaluation of services for children's young people and families. The framework sets out principles, definitions and values to underpin all integrated commissioning activity. Arrangements that are in place to develop commissioning models and guidance will need to be carefully managed to ensure that we continue to deliver effective and efficient services, and improve outcomes for Children and young people and their families.

Action plans to introduce these improvements have been developed and I am satisfied that these steps will enhance the system of internal controls and will be monitoring to ensure their implementation and operation. I am also satisfied that except for these matters a sound system of internal control has been in place throughout the financial year and is ongoing.

**Signed**



**Managing Director / Director**

**Date 24 April 2008**

