

**KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S GROUP**

**Overview & Scrutiny Management Board
10th October 2006**

**Report Number C/22/06
Use of Resources Scrutiny**

**Report by Councillors Caldwell & Winchcombe – Members of the
scrutiny task group**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To report back to Members the findings of the Use of Resources Task Group.

2.0 Financial, Staffing, Legal & Risk Implications

- 2.1 There are no staffing, financial, risk or legal implications arising out of this report.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The April meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board identified that there were some additional tasks for the group to undertake. These were to develop the role of scrutiny in respect of article 8.5 of the constitution regarding involvement in the development of the council's strategies and in particular to act as consultee for the review of the corporate strategy. The task group was additionally given the task of reviewing BV12 which is the number of employee days sickness taken.
- 3.2 The original group consisted of Cllrs Combe, Carter & Winchcombe. This was expanded to include Cllrs Parsons & Caldwell.
- 3.3 The group met in July to discuss the workload. In particular how Overview and Scrutiny could be more involved in the development of council strategy. It was agreed that the municipal work plan needed to be adopted earlier in the year. This would then give Overview and Scrutiny the option of reviewing the workplan and deciding if there were any items they would like to call in.
- 3.4 The group then met in September to discuss the consultation draft of the revised Corporate Strategy. The response is contained in section four of this report. As a result of reviewing the strategy the group also identified two pieces of work that they would like to see included in the Overview and Scrutiny work plan in 2007/08. These are included in the recommendations of this report.

3.5 The group has arranged to have a further meeting in October with the Human Resources Manager. The findings on this in respect of BV12 will be reported to the December 2006 Overview & Scrutiny meeting.

4.0 Consultation response

Having considered the draft Corporate Strategy in some detail the Overview and Scrutiny task group would like to offer the following comments.

- 4.1 Overall the board agrees that the four priorities are still appropriate and the actions proposed are still important, however there are some key areas that Kennet should be addressing.
- 4.2 The Kennet and Avon canal is a significant feature of the Kennet landscape and the council does acknowledge the impact it has on tourism in the district. However it is felt that there is an even more important aspect of the canal which is the impact on residents lives. The strategy needs to recognise that factors such as dog fouling, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping affect many of our residents as a direct result of some canal users. Whilst recognising that Kennet cannot necessarily act directly, the strategy should recognise the community leadership role we have in influencing others.
- 4.3 The board would like to emphasise the importance of providing plastic and cardboard recycling. However we would also like the strategy to stress the importance of education to encourage people not to purchase excess packaging in the first place and lobbying national government to deal with this.
- 4.4 The board are concerned about the proposal to adopt a taxation strategy that follows government guidance and feel this should be deleted from the draft strategy. The strategy should also give more emphasis to local decisions based on local need rather than the adoption of national policy.
- 4.5 Overall the strategy should put more emphasis on communications in service delivery throughout the strategy and in particular this should be emphasised in the risk management section.

Recommendations

IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED THAT; the Board

- i) Recommends that the council adopts the municipal work plan in February 2007, to enable Overview and Scrutiny to plan their work programme earlier and in particular to enable them to identify items to call in during the municipal year.

- ii) Notes and approves the response to the council on the corporate strategy in section 4.
- iii) Approves two pieces of work for the 2007/08 Overview & Scrutiny work programme to investigate a) the council's investment policy and b) to examine the impact of the Kennet canal across the district.

September 2006