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Michael Laing Chief Executive

25th September 2007

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **WEDNESDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2007** at **6.00 P.M.**

AGENDA

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| 1. Apologies for absence | |
| 2. To consider the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 st August 2007 as a true record. | Copies previously circulated |
| 3. To consider a draft Climate Change Strategy. | 1 - 38 |
| 4. To consider the Corporate Plan 2007 – 10. | 39 - 60 |
| 5. To consider a Community Engagement Strategy. | 61 - 79 |
| 6. To consider the Third Sector Strategy for Communities and Local Government – Briefing Note. | 80 - 88 |
| 7. To consider a health profile comparison. | 89 - 92 |
| 8. To consider the triennial survey results for planning, tenants and benefits. | 93 - 97 |
| 9. To consider the Rural Communities report. | 98 - 102 |
| 10. To consider a Corporate Customer Care Strategy. | 103-139 |
| 11. To receive a report on the status of the low performing Best Value Performance Indicators. | 140-154 |
| 12. To consider a Sustainable Communities Plan. | 155-192 |
| 13. To consider the Council's draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). | 193-203 |

14. To consider the 2007/08 Revenue Budget Additions. 204-208
15. *To consider changes in the Council's health and safety arrangements. 209-222
16. To consider such other items of business which, by reason of special circumstances so specified, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

*It is likely that item 15 will be taken in the closed part of the meeting in accordance with paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006 .

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Mrs Burn, Ferguson, Gale, Grogan, Hayton, Henry, Kay, Kingston, Mews, Mowbray, Murphy*, Miss Ord, Perkins, Mrs Pinkney, Mrs Seabury*, Stonehouse and Zair.

*ex-officio, non-voting capacity.

Chair: Councillor Stonehouse

Deputy Chair: Councillor Kay

TO: All other Members of the Council for information
Management Team

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3rd OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration
DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from Members to consult on the draft Climate Change Strategy.

introduction

2. The Council recognises the implications that climate change has for the economic prosperity and the environmental and social well being of the district and in order to minimise the impacts of climate change a draft Climate Change Strategy has been produced for the District.
3. Action by local authorities are likely to be critical to the achievement of Governments climate change objectives and Councils are uniquely placed to provide vision and leadership to local communities, raise awareness and help change behaviours.
4. Wear Valley District Council has already established itself as a leading authority in its domestic energy efficiency activities, having achieved the Governments Home Energy Conservation targets ahead of the expected date (30% reduction in domestic household carbon dioxide emissions by 2010).
5. Some local authorities are already taking exemplary action on climate change and, through various innovative initiatives, have been showcased in the Sustainable Energy Beacon Councils Theme. (Woking Borough Council being one of the selected authorities).
6. An earlier report to Management Team informed of the methods and best practice adopted by Woking Borough Council.
7. Where practicable we have adopted those methods of best practice from the learning experience of Beacon authority Woking Borough Council.

committing to climate change

8. The Nottingham Declaration is a voluntary pledge to address the issues of climate change, signed by the Leader and Chief Executive. In signing it, councils are committing to ensure that tackling climate change is a cornerstone of the overall council's plan.

9. Wear Valley District Council signed up to the Nottingham Declaration in December 2005.

climate change strategy

10. The draft Climate Change Strategy attached provides a framework for actions.
11. The actions embodied within the strategy demonstrate how the council, communities, businesses and individuals can implement measures to tackle the climate change issue, to provide a cleaner environment and improved quality of life throughout the district.
12. All responsible Lead Officers within the Action Plan are expected to embrace the climate change issue and apply its principles to all decision making and business planning of the council, including joint working with other agencies.

wear valley carbon emissions baseline target

13. In order to achieve the national target of a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 from a 2004 baseline it is necessary to work from standardised emissions data produced by a reputable organisation.
14. Estimates predict an annual reduction of 7493 tonnes or 2% per annum of CO₂ is required in the Wear Valley District.
15. A project commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has published a nationally consistent set of carbon dioxide emission estimates right down to local authority level. (Source: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globalatmos/index.htm>)
16. These estimates of carbon dioxide emissions have been produced from the following broad source categories: domestic, industrial & commercial and transport, and will be the baseline figures upon which we will monitor our progress.

conclusions

17. The established targets are challenging, and significant changes need to be made if we are to achieve them. We will therefore form a cross-departmental Climate Change Working Party made up of officers and members to monitor the implementation of the activities outlined in the Action Plan.
18. In order to effectively respond to the increasing demands brought on by climate change, the Action Plan should be a 'living' document that is reviewed quarterly so that actions are kept relevant and are adaptable to the changes that will occur.
19. The Strategy supports innovative initiatives and aims to encourage others to incorporate the deployment of new technologies and products and the reduction of their carbon footprint.

20. Consultation is recognised as a vital part of managing Climate Change. The Council will develop a 'best practise' consultation programme and methodology that is both relevant, responsive to changing issues and flexible.

RECOMMENDED

1 That Members agree to approve for consultation the draft Climate Change Strategy and the policies implicated in the Action Plan.

Officer responsible for the report
Robert Hope
Strategic Director for
Environment and Regeneration
Ext 264

Author of the report
Ian Bloomfield
Environment/LA21 Officer
Ext 423

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

**Report of the Chief Executive
CORPORATE PLAN 2007-10**

purpose of the report

1. To submit for approval the outcome focussed action plan within the Corporate Plan 2007-2010.

background

2. The Corporate Plan serves three purposes:
 - a. It lists the Council's objectives for Wear Valley and the actions it will take to improve the quality of life for people in Wear Valley;
 - b. It details the Council's contribution to the work of the Local Strategic Partnership to deliver improvements on the issues that most affect local people and communities, and;
 - c. It is the Council's own Improvement Plan, which details the actions that we will take to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council to help it achieve its ambition to become the best district council in England.
3. The plan clarifies the Council's aims, objectives and actions and develops robust targets and actions by which progress can be measured against objectives.
4. The objectives and priorities are user and outcome focused so that people and communities can see the benefits of the Council's activities.
5. The plan continues the Council's work to improve its effectiveness and efficiency by, for example, improving how it consults and engages with groups like young people, continues to develop its partnership working procedures and develop a strategic approach to procurement.
6. The draft priority actions are listed in Annex B to this report. There are 26 Key Outcomes in the draft plan and it is designed to ensure that this and future Corporate Plans are shorter and more focused on the issues that the Council considers to be most important for Wear Valley and its communities. At the same time, the Corporate plan sets the strategic objectives for all the Council's activities as well as providing the strategic direction for the development of Service and Operational Plans.

financial implications

7. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is linked to the Corporate Plan to ensure that the Council is aware of the financial cost of the activities that it plans to undertake.

legal implications

8. The Council is required to produce an action plan which addresses issues raised in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment and other inspections. The Corporate Plan fulfils this requirement.

human resource implications

9. The Corporate Plan has been developed to be achievable using existing resources within the Council and draft service plans that detail the Human Resource requirements for delivery will be submitted to the appropriate Policy Committees.

information technology

10. There are no information technology implications to this report

crime and disorder implications

11. Crime is one of the Council's objectives and there are a number of proposed priority actions to reduce crime and disorder. Other proposed actions will also impact on the quality of life in Wear Valley and, indirectly, on crime and disorder in the district.

conclusion

12. This is the Council's fourth Corporate Plan and the changes proposed shows that the Council is committed to building on its previous improvements and continuing to improve the well being of the residents of Wear Valley.

recommendation

- i. It is recommended that Committee approves the draft outcome focussed Action Plan attached as Annex B of this report.

Officer responsible for the report

Michael Laing
Chief Executive
Ext 368

Author of the report

Dr. Lawrence Serewicz
Policy and Partnership Manager
Ext 311



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Director of Central Resources
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

purpose of the report

1. To consider the adoption of a Community Engagement Strategy for the Council. If community engagement is to be integrated into the way the Council operates to form part of its overall culture then a strategic approach needs to be taken to ensure community engagement activities are co-ordinated across the Council.

background

2. The Government sees community engagement as central to the delivery of its modernisation and improvement programme and at the heart of the work of local authorities.
3. The 1999 and 2000 Local Government Acts, in particular set out the statutory requirements that underpin community engagement as a key tool for improving public services and tackling the 'democratic deficit'. More recently, giving local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives was reiterated in the DCLG White Paper (2006) "Strong and prosperous communities".
4. By reviewing community engagement arrangements the Council is progressing its ongoing initiative to implement its modernising agenda.

community engagement

5. Community engagement is about facilitating engagement with people and giving them a voice to influence the development of policies and strategies that affects their lives and to inform the way in which services are planned and delivered.

strategy

6. The proposed Community Engagement Strategy is attached at Annex C.
7. Although there are pockets of good practice within Departments, for example, the Local Development Framework Statement of Community Involvement has received formal endorsement, these are not shared throughout the Authority.

financial implications

8. Community engagement requires the Council to allocate resources, time, expertise and funding to the process. The financial implications will need to be evaluated when considering any community engagement activity.

human resource implications

9. If community engagement is to form part of the Council's overall culture then there will be implications for staff in that they will need to acquire the necessary skills so as to ensure community engagement is effective.

conclusion

10. To take advantage of best practise in community engagement and to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken in this respect it is proposed that the Community Engagement Strategy, attached to this report is adopted.

RECOMMENDED

1. That the Community Engagement Strategy attached at Annex C to this report be adopted.

Officer responsible for the report

Gary Ridley, Strategic Director

Author of the report

Sharon Spence, Head of Committee and Democratic Services on behalf of the Community Engagement Working Group

AUTHORISATION FORM (AF1)

Item :
Committee :
Date :

Every section of this report must be completed. Indicate whether the following has been taken into account when producing the report. The officer consulted must initial the 'yes' column, for example an officer from the Legal Section will initial the yes column to indicate he/she is satisfied that the legal implications are covered within the report.

| | Yes | no |
|--|-----|----|
| Financial implications | | |
| Legal implications | | |
| Human Resource implications | | |
| Health and Safety implications | | |
| IT implications | | |
| Value for Money | | |
| Crime and disorder implications | | |
| Human Rights, equality and diversity implications, access to services | | |
| Risk assessment/option appraisal | | |
| Policy context | | |
| Background papers | | |
| The report contains exempt information – if yes give reasons (public interest test) The appropriate exempt category must be stated. | | |
| | | |
| The Monitoring Officer has been consulted on the report | | |
| A legal officer has been consulted on the report | | |
| The report has been considered by the Corporate Management Team where appropriate | | |
| Other officers consulted on the report – list below | | |
| | | |
| List dates when the Council or its committees previously considered this issue. | | |
| | | |

Please note that the Head of Committee and Democratic Services/ Deputy Monitoring Officer or her appointed staff will send reports that do not present all the relevant information clearly, back to the author which may delay the consideration of the issue by committee.

POLICY & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

Third Sector Strategy for Communities and Local Government- Briefing note.

purpose

1. To summarise the information detailed in the Third Sector Strategy discussion paper, and provide a response to the discussion paper.

background

2. The Department of Communities and Local Government and large parts of the third sector share the same broad vision and aim of prosperous and cohesive communities. In response to the Capability Review, the government committed to publishing a third sector strategy to set a framework for effective, on-going engagement with the sector at all levels.
3. This discussion paper sets out the proposals for improving their engagement with the third sector.
4. The discussion paper states how the government is considering how to support and develop community anchors. How community anchors can help build greater enterprise and sustainability across the sector. In particular they are examining the feasibility of supporting “community anchors” to simulate and develop enterprise and self-sufficiency through transfer of assets to community ownership and management, and through expansion of earned revenue.
5. For the purpose of this report Community Anchors are:

“Independent, community led, multi purpose organisations which provide a focal point for local communities, community organisations and community services.”
6. The discussion paper has six questions in which it would like a response to, these can be found below.

governments relationship with the third sector

7. The government state that their responsibilities require a strong relationship with the third sector, which contributes to the department's objectives through:
 - *Bridging* divides between different communities and bringing people together, reducing tensions and helping to create tolerant and cohesive communities;
 - *Delivering* community-based solutions and action, empowering communities to make a difference;
 - *Playing* a leading role in the delivery of the Supporting People programme, tackling and preventing homelessness, social housing, tenant engagement, and transforming neighbourhoods;
 - *Bringing* a user perspective and involvement of local people in the services they receive, including those who may be 'hard to reach disadvantaged or excluded;
 - *Helping* citizens to represent their views to the state and helping to build accountable local government; and
 - *Supporting* community enterprises to realise economic opportunities, address under representation of particular groups especially the most marginalized in society, regenerate places, and help communities to thrive.
8. The third sector's relationships mainly occur at the local level. The relationship reflects the structure of the sector – nearly 90% of which are small neighbourhood based community organisations. These are often mutual aid or interest groups with no staff or physical assets, often with low levels of income and dependent on voluntary support. The best of such organisations have a strong connection to and understanding of local community interests.
9. The majority of financial relationships with the third sector are now indirect – mediated through others such as national intermediary bodies. For example, partnership arrangements such as Local Area Agreements, where the role of the Government Offices is increasingly important. The government expects the trend toward indirect funding for the sector will continue.

10. The Government's wants to work with the third sector in the following areas:

- recognise the role of the third sector in their work;
- reduce inconsistency in how the government work with the third sector;
- listen and learn from the voice of the third sector;
- create a framework for strong local partnerships; and
- ensure fairness in service delivery.

11. The government proposes to improve their relationship with the third sector by:

- improving how they work with the sector;
- enabling the sector to be an effective local partner in place shaping;
- moving to a more strategic partnership and funding relationship with the sector; and
- supporting sustainable investment in community anchors.

12. To improve the way the government works with the third sector they propose to:

- build the capacity of their staff to work with the third sector; promote greater awareness of the importance of the third sector in realising their aims; and share good practice experience of working with the sector. During June they will hold a third sector month as part of their departmental transformation programme. This will encourage staff to consider how the sector contributes to their work and how the relationship could be improved.
- take into account both the impact of their policies on the third sector and the potential role of the sector to support better outcomes from those policies. They are discussing with the Commissioner for the Compact how to 'proof' their policies and programmes.
- consider how their NDPBs can take up the application of Compact principles and ways of working, in partnership with the Commissioner for the Compact. (Wear Valley has signed the Compact but it is still not embedded within the Authority.)
- monitor and respond to alleged breaches of the Compact, with the aim of eliminating all breaches.
- establish a Third Sector Partnership Board of between 15-20 members to provide oversight and facilitate critical challenge between the sector, local government and the department. This Board will also provide challenge on the effective implementation of the Local Government White Paper proposals (as set out in section 4.2).

- create an internal Programme Board which will bring together those with responsibility for key areas of our engagement with the third sector from across the Department.

next steps

13. The Government would like a response to the following six questions which are contained in the discussion paper. The government is seeking the view of their partners and stakeholders etc and would like the questions answered from Wear Valley's perspective. A proposed response from Wear Valley is in Annex D and a response from 2D is attached in Annex E.

the questions are:

- Q1. How effectively do we implement Compact principles? (The Compact is the agreement between government and the voluntary and community sector to improve their relationship for mutual advantage and community gain).
- Q2. In what other ways could we help to improve the effectiveness of engagement with the third sector at the:
 - regional and sub-regional levels; and
 - local level?
- Q3. Would your organisation wish to be considered to become a strategic partner?
- Q4. Do you agree with our focus on community anchors?
- Q5. Are there good models of regional and sub-regional bodies, local authorities, or LSPs working strategically to support community anchor organisations in conjunction with the local third sector?
- Q6. Are there major gaps in our proposals for improving our strategic engagement with the third sector?

human resource implications

25. There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

financial implications

26. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

legal implications

27. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

recommendations

- i) That Members note and discuss the information within the briefing note.
- ii) That Members approve the response in Annex D.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Chief Executive
Ext 368

Author of the report
Emily Butler
Policy & Research Officer
Ext. 448

Wear Valley's response to Government Third Sector Strategy discussion paper:

Work in rural communities of Wear Valley (and Teesdale) are prime examples of good practice. Focusing on Wear Valley, there is a stable infrastructure, bodies in 2D and the Community Network, which are members of/in contact with local, sub-regional, regional and national third sector agencies and partnerships.

Q1 – How effectively do we implement Compact principles?

Wear Valley thinks the government should not re-invent the wheel, but build on good practice. It should start by enforcing Compact compliance. Monitoring central governments preliminary and then build outwards. The Compact should be used by all partners, contractors, sectors and departments and enforced by an independent body.

Q2 – In what other ways could we help to improve the effectiveness of engagement with the third sector at the:

- I. Regional and sub-regional levels; and
- II. Local level?

A corporate understanding of the community and the voluntary sector is needed at regional, County and District levels. An improvement strategy for the Third sector (based on the compact) would be welcomed.

It is crucial that Government Departments promote sub-contracting with VCS organisations with local contact and expertise, if large contracts are awarded to large out-of-area organisations, subcontracting would be better going to organisations with strong local links to ensure local delivery and networking is preserved and developed.

At regional level, 2D is a member of Voluntary Organisation Network North East (VONNE) and at County level of the One Voice Network, which gives us a network of networks in the Region.

Wear Valley LSP has assured funding of the Community Network for 07-08 with direct NRF monies.

Q3 – Would your organisation wish to be considered to become a strategic partner?

This focuses on Government relations with or through large national voluntary organisations and partnerships. Nationally, 2D and the Network are members of relevant voluntary sector bodies, National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), Urban Forum and Volunteering England, mentioned repeatedly in the proposed strategy, and so they are informed of/in touch with national developments.

Q4- Do you agree with our focus on community anchors?

Wear Valley has a strong connection with the Third Sector and works closely with 2D and the Community Network, why ruin or break down the firm structure in place already?

Q5- Are there good models of regional and sub-regional bodies, local authorities , or LSPs working strategically to support community anchor organisations in conjunction with the local third sector?

Yes. Regionally, we have Voluntary Organisation Network North East (VONNE) and sub regionally the One Voice Network which is chaired by Michele Armstrong.

In Wear Valley as previously stated we have a very good relationship with the LSP, but have a severe lack of resources. Our capacity to help and provide resources to the LSP is very limited, which is not good especially when our LSP has such a strong working relationship with the Community.

Q6 Are there major gaps in our proposals for improving our strategic engagement with the third sector?

The strategy does not make clear where sustainability and resources will come from. It recognises that three year funding is crucial to the third sector, but it is essential that there are mechanisms to ensure this, at all levels.

Response to Government Third Sector Strategy discussion paper:

It is striking that all the case studies used in the Government's Third sector strategy paper are from urban areas, not rural. It raises the concern that the government does not fully appreciate the difficult situation of isolated rural communities in remote areas, e.g. the upper Dales.

Third sector work in rural communities of Wear Valley (and Teesdale) are prime examples of good practice. Focusing on Wear Valley, we have fantastic infrastructure bodies in 2D and the Community Network, which are members of/in contact with local, sub-regional, regional and national third sector agencies and partnerships, aka strategic partners and community anchors mentioned in the Third Sector Strategy paper.

Q1 – How effectively do we implement Compact principles?

2D and the Network feel that the government should not re-invent the wheel, but build on good practice. It should start by toughening up Compact compliance, and monitoring, in some of their departments. This should extend to commissioning and contracting: are they demanding Compact compliance and monitoring it?

The strategy should state how it will assist the voluntary & community sector to monitor and address breaches of the Compact and contracts by other sectors and departments. This could possibly be included in the compact.

Q2 – In what other ways could we help to improve the effectiveness of engagement with the third sector at the:

- I. Regional and sub-regional levels; and
- II. Local level?

A corporate understanding of the community and the voluntary sector is needed at regional, County and District levels. An improvement strategy for the Third sector (based on the compact) would be welcomed. It would be beneficial for expertise from local government to cross over to the voluntary sector, and vice versa – we need to agree practical ways of doing this.

It is crucial that Government Departments promote sub-contracting with VCS organisations with local contact and expertise, if large contracts are awarded of large out-of-area organisations (viz. proposed contract for LINKs early adopter scheme in Co Durham). Subcontracting to organisations with strong local links ensures local delivery and networking is preserved and developed.

At regional level, 2D is a member of VONNE and at County level of the One Voice Network, which gives us a network of networks in the Region. Locally, we are fortunate to have a very good working relationship with Wear Valley LSP, which has assured funding of the Community Network for 07-08 with direct NRF monies.

Q3 – Would your organisation wish to be considered to become a strategic partner?

This focuses on Government relations with or through large national voluntary organisations and partnerships. Nationally, 2D and the Network are members of relevant voluntary sector bodies, NCVO, NAVCA, Urban Forum and Volunteering England, mentioned repeatedly in the proposed strategy, and so they are informed of/in touch with national developments.

Q4- Do you agree with our focus on community anchors?

2D and the Community Network believe that wheels should not be re-invented, but good practice and strong community links and partnerships built upon. Government should set mechanisms in place to strengthen good structures already in place such as 2D, the Community Network & One Voice.

The community sector in particular will lose if “community anchors” are different from the existing bodies, but links with local government also may be weakened or lost. Some changes may be needed to address new needs and priorities; 2D and Network are proactively engaged in doing so (viz. current 2D restructure and Network future strategy discussions).

Q5- Are there good models of regional and sub-regional bodies, local authorities , or LSPs working strategically to support community anchor organisations in conjunction with the local third sector?

Yes. Regionally, we have Voluntary Organisation Network North East (VONNE) and sub regionally the One Voice Network which is chaired by Michele Armstrong.

In Wear Valley we have as previously stated a very good relationship with the LSP, but have a severe lack of resources for joint working. Once NRF ends the Network's funding is in jeopardy, and will an under funded LSP have even less? Direction from Government or GO-NE to the LAA on 3 year funding of infrastructure organisations and LSPs will be very important to the District.

Q6 Are there major gaps in our proposals for improving our strategic engagement with the third sector?

The strategy does not make clear where sustainability and resources will come from. It recognises that three year funding is crucial to the third sector, but it is essential that there are mechanisms to ensure this, at all levels.

Grants are essential for local or smaller community groups in particular. The need for grants must not be lost in the current emphasis on social enterprise, charging for services, commissioning and the apparent Government preference for large contracts/partners.

POLICY & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Chief Executive
HEALTH PROFILE COMPARISON

purpose of the report

1. To submit for information a comparison report regarding health statistics published in the yearly health profiles 2006 to 2007.

background

2. The North East Public Health Observatory (NEPHO) publishes a report every year to inform local authorities and other agencies about the area's health profile.
3. The profile gives a snapshot of health in our area. With other local information the health profile has been designed to support action by local government and primary care trusts to tackle health inequalities and improve people's health in Wear Valley.
4. A comparison table is attached as Annex F.

findings

5. A summary of the findings where the data has not changed or there is no data are detailed below:

| No change | No data | New Indicator |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Adults who smoke | Ecological footprint | Income deprivation |
| Binge drinking adults | Children in poverty | Homelessness |
| Healthy eating adults | Smoking in pregnancy | Older people-hip fracture |
| Physically active adults | Breast feeding | |
| Obese adults | Obese children | |
| Feeling in poor health | Physically active children | |

6. The comparisons show:
 - The life expectancy of males has risen by 2.2 years and the life expectancy on females has risen by 2.6 years;

- Deaths from smoking have decreased by 216 people in the last year;
- Early deaths from heart disease and stroke have reduced by 171 people in the last year;
- Early deaths by cancer have reduced by 175 in the last year;
- Infant deaths have gone down by 9 this year;
- Road injuries and deaths have decreased by 6 in the last year and,
- Children with tooth decay have fallen by 0.53%.

Some statistics have increased, these are:

- The rate of teenage pregnancy has risen by 2%;
- The amount of people suffering from mental illness has risen by 40.90%;
- The amount of people staying in hospital due to alcohol has risen by a further 165 people this year;
- 53 more people have been diagnosed as having drug misuse problems and;
- The amount of people with diabetes has risen by 139 in the last year.

conclusions

7. The main problems identified with the comparison are; people diagnosed with mental health problems has risen dramatically and the reasons for this must be identified. One possible explanation could be that more people are getting help with their mental health, therefore more cases being registered.
8. The amount of people being diagnosed with diabetes has risen.
9. The amount of drink and drug related problems are rising and therefore we must look into how and why this is happening.

human resource implications

10. Staff time is the only human resource implications regarding this report.

financial implications

11. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

legal implications

12. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. That Members not the information within the report.

- II. That the group leaders meet with representatives of the PCT to discuss the health profile report and what future action can be taken.

Officer responsible for the report

Michael Laing
Chief Executive
Ext 368

Author of the report

Emily Butler
Policy & Research Officer
Ext. 448

POLICY & STRATEGIC development COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

TRIENNIAL SURVEY RESULTS FOR PLANNING, TENANTS AND BENEFITS.

purpose of the report

1. To report the planning, tenants and benefit triennial survey results for Wear Valley and compare them with other district scores.

background

2. Every three years all English local authorities are statutorily required to undertake Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) surveys. The surveys collect data on satisfaction performance indicators. The first round of surveys were carried out in 2000-01, the second in 2003-04 and this report complies the set of results from the third round in 2006-07.
3. The information is part of the wider suite of BVPIs, which councils are statutorily required to report by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Audit Commission. Local authorities collect this survey data following a prescribed methodology and timetable. After collating the data, authorities submit it to the Audit Commission to collate and analyse at national and regional aggregate levels.
4. There are five BVPI surveys which are:
 - a general survey (this was reported to COMT previously on 12th June 2007)
 - a survey of local authority benefit claimants (undertaken twice in different sample windows),
 - a survey of local authority tenants,
 - a survey of planning applicants.

5. This report focuses on the planning, tenants and benefit surveys.

Planning Survey

6. The planning survey focuses on BVPI 111. The indicator shows the percentage of applicants and those commenting on applications who are satisfied with the service received.
7. The score for BVPI 111 in comparison to the last round of satisfaction surveys in 2003/04 are as follows:

BVPI 111

| National score 2006/07 | National % change since 2003/04 | Wear Valley score 2006/07 | Wear Valley % change since 2003/04 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 72.4% | -2% | 81% | -8% |

8. Wear Valley's satisfaction score has decreased by 8% but is still in the top quartile for performance nationally and at district level. The change is likely to be result from considerable staff turnover since 2003/04 and an increase in individual staff caseloads. This has lead to some delays in the initial processing of applications and some delays in officers getting back to applicants and agents. In addition some procedural changes meant applicants and agents had to respond, submit amended plans or withdraw applications within tight deadlines (or run the risk of a refusal) so that the BVPI 109 targets for processing planning applications could be met. These have been met consistently for the last two tears.

Benefits Survey

9. This survey focused on seven BVPI's which are as follows:
- 80a – Percentage satisfaction with the benefit service, contact with office;
 - 80b – Percentage satisfaction with service from benefits office;
 - 80c – Percentage satisfaction with the telephone service given;
 - 80d – Percentage satisfaction with staff in the benefits office;
 - 80e – Percentage satisfaction with the clarity of forms;
 - 80f – Percentage satisfaction with the time taken to make a decision and,
 - 80g – Overall satisfaction with benefits service.
10. Wear Valley is the 21st highest performing authority in England. All the scores are above national and district averages.

11. The score for these in comparison to the last round of satisfaction surveys in 2003/04 are as follows:

| BVPI | National score 2006/07 | National % change since 2003/04 | Wear Valley score 2006/07 | Wear Valley % change since 2003/04 |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|
| 80a | 77.5% | 0 | 83% | +5% |
| 80b | 79.2% | +0.6% | 86% | +9% |
| 80c | 69.6% | +1.8% | 79% | +9% |
| 80d | 80.2% | +0.2% | 86% | +7% |
| 80e | 62% | +1.1% | 70% | +9% |
| 80f | 69.9% | -0.5% | 84% | +18% |
| 80g | 77.4% | +0.3% | 86% | +11% |

Tenants Survey

12. This survey focused on six BVPI's, these are as follows:
- 74a – Satisfaction with the overall service provided by landlord;
 - 74b – Satisfaction with the overall service provided by landlord for BME groups;
 - 74c – Satisfaction with overall service provided by landlord for non-BME groups;
 - 75a – Satisfaction with opportunities for participation for BME groups and;
 - 75b – Satisfaction with opportunities for participation for non-BME groups.

13. The score for these in comparison to the last round of satisfaction surveys in 2003/04 are as follows:

| BVPI | National score 2006/07 | National % change since 2003/04 | Wear Valley score 2006/07 | Wear Valley % change since 2003/04 |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|
| 74a | 77% | -2% | 76% | +4% |
| 74b | 72% | +1% | 0 | No longer landlord |
| 74c | 77% | 0% | 76% | +4% |
| 75a | 64% | -1.01% | 65% | +10% |
| 75b | 62% | +0.15% | 0 | No longer landlord |
| 75c | 64% | -0.43% | 65% | 10% |

quartile position

14. The table below compares Wear Valley's BVPI results to all other district councils. (Our performance, top quartile is coded as dark green, median light green, and bottom quartile performance is coded red).

| Table 1:WVDC Quartile Performance in comparison to other Districts | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---|-----------|--------|--------|--------------|
| Survey | BVPI Number | Description | WV Result | Bottom | Median | Top Quartile |
| Planning | 111 | % of applicants and those commenting on planning applications satisfied with the service received | 81% | 67% | 74% | 80% |
| Benefits | 80a | % satisfaction with the benefit service – contact with the office | 83% | 76% | 80% | 83% |
| | 80b | % satisfaction with service from benefits office | 86% | 77% | 81% | 85% |
| | 80c | % satisfaction with the telephone service given | 79% | 68% | 74% | 81% |
| | 80d | % satisfaction with staff in the benefits office | 86% | 78% | 82% | 85% |
| | 80e | % satisfaction with clarity of forms | 70% | 59% | 62% | 65% |
| | 80f | % satisfaction with the time taken to make a decision | 84% | 67% | 72% | 76% |
| | 80g | Overall satisfaction with benefits service | 86% | 75% | 79% | 83% |
| Tenants | 74a | Satisfaction with the overall service provided by landlord | 76% | 77% | 81% | 84% |
| | 74b | N/A | 0 | | | |
| | 74c | Satisfaction with overall service provided by landlord for non BME groups | 76% | 78% | 81% | 84% |
| | 75a | Satisfaction with opportunities for participation for BME groups | 65% | 62% | 66% | 70% |
| | 75b | N/A | 0 | | | |
| | 75c | % satisfaction with opportunities for participation for non BME groups | 65% | 62% | 66% | 71% |

human resource implications

15. There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

financial implications

16. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

legal implications

17. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

conclusions

18. Although the planning performance indicator has decreased by 8% Wear Valley is still in the top quartile for performance.

16. The benefit section has done extremely well with only one PI failing to reach the top quartile by 2%.

19. Performance within the tenants section has improved but they are in the bottom quartile. Processes are in place for improving customer involvement and satisfaction scores are improving year on year.

RECOMMENDED

- i) Members are asked to consider the performance information presented in this report.
- ii) Dale & Valley Homes continue to review their objectives within the Business Plan yearly.

Officer responsible for the report

Michael Laing
Chief Executive
Ext 368

Author of the report

Emily Butler
Policy & Research Officer
Ext. 448

POLICY & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

STRONG COUNTIES AND VIBRANT RURAL COMMUNITIES REPORT OF THE RURAL ISSUES TASK GROUP– BRIEFING NOTE

purpose

1. To inform Members of the Rural Communities Report.

background

2. The County Councils Network, which represents England's 37 Shire Counties, launched a detailed report on the future of services in rural England. The covers issues including:
 - affordable homes,
 - post offices,
 - crime,
 - healthcare,
 - deprivation and schools.
3. The report challenges the stereotype that rural England is universally prosperous. The report identifies key challenges for the public sector around unrecognised deprivation, demographic change, and lack of access to services.
4. Drawing on case studies and evidence from member Councils, as well as research by the Government's Commission for Rural Communities, *Strong Counties and Vibrant Rural Communities* sets out how County Councils are meeting those challenges, and looks at what measures will enable them to continue improving those services in the future.
5. As well as calling for specific policy changes – the right for local authorities to build housing where there is demonstrable unmet need; great respect for the 'rural-proofing' process across Whitehall, and a more robust legal framework to underpin partnership working - the paper draws on a wealth of experience to show how local government can, and does, work to deliver high quality services in rural areas.

crime, the fear of crime and community safety

6. While crime is, on average, lower in rural than in urban areas, it is still a significant factor affecting the lives of rural residents. Less local support for those suffering due to rural crime, as a result of the absence of

'critical mass' of victims, and a less local police presence, as the force focus their efforts on areas of higher crime.

7. Becoming a victim of crime in a rural area can have a very different impact from becoming a victim in an urban area. In particular, in an area which is normally low in crime, the victim of a serious and personal crime is likely to face a much greater level of shock and more abrupt change in fear levels - rural victimisation can have a higher community impact through greater local media coverage.
8. It is also possible that there will be less local support for those suffering due to rural crime, as a result of the absence of a 'critical mass' of victims, and a less local police presence, as the force focus their efforts on areas of higher crime.
9. Victims may need to travel great distances to access support. For example, the lack of rural Domestic Violence refuges and support may mean relocating to an urban area away from existing family and community networks. The Domestic Violence Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 225), while predominantly aimed at district and borough level, impacts on County Councils and other agencies in requiring education and support programme's for victims and offenders. This is particularly challenging where a Countywide approach would be more beneficial than a district one – very much the case in rural areas.

housing

10. The most crucial current issue affecting the long term visibility of rural communities is that of access to affordable housing. As the rural population increases, potentially by as much as 20% over the next two decades, (the State of the Countryside 2006, Commission for Rural Communities), this situation is likely to become more acute. The publications of new draft PPS3 provides a welcome recognition the need for rural housing and introduces the possibility of allocating land for affordable housing, in addition to the rural exception site policy that has been in place for some time.
11. County Councils are particularly well placed to improve delivery by co-ordinating the use of model planning agreements and protocols, playing a co-ordinating role and research and intelligence role. The sub regional Housing Market Assessment approach to planning for housing, is to ensure rural housing issues are not overlooked and that Local Development Frameworks include appropriate thresholds and targets. This means that ensuring maximum take up of benefit entitlements should be a priority for rural service deliverers.

rural deprivation, exclusion and regeneration

12. Levels of income poverty are rising in the countryside. 35,000 more households were income poor in 2006 than in 2004- reaching 30% of

households in the most sparsely populated areas, where average full-time weekly earnings are £130 lower than in the most urban areas.

13. The report stated that there was an interesting point to note relative to levels of income poverty and take up of state benefits (particularly when pensions are excluded). Take up is lower in more sparse and rural areas. This may indicate take-up problems, and in the context of lower internet use and mobility, present an argument in favour of retaining service outlets which can be used for benefit collection and banking facilities – in particular it raises a concern about whether changes to the network and services of post offices are being fully rural proofed.
14. There are two main strands to rural poverty and deprivation. Area based deprivation and deprivation amongst individuals and families. As well as areas of great affluence, the countryside contains areas of significant deprivation, and a great deal of hidden poverty and isolation in areas that, overall, appear affluent. In particular the dispersed nature of this need can exacerbate the deprivation itself, since it will be more expensive to provide services to a small number of geographically isolated service users, yet the apparent overall affluence of the area when using average local statistics will lead to lower central government funding for those public services. This means that ensuring maximum take-up of benefit entitlements should be a priority for rural service deliverers.
15. While neighbourhood poverty in Britain is often perceived as an urban problem, 18 of the most deprived 100 districts in England are rural, as are 99% of wards suffering from service deprivation. A situation, which could be significantly worse if increasing competition and deregulation, makes Universal Service Obligations unsustainable. Deprivation across a wide range of areas masks hidden poverty, which is a risk. When the poor live alongside the wealthy, even at Super Output Area the statistics make it look like a prosperous village.

education and childcare in rural areas

16. Overall educational performance is higher in rural schools, though the gap is narrower when looking at 'value added'. This should not disguise the fact that many rural areas have struggling schools, and particular challenges transporting children to and from school, with a knock on effect in particular on staying on rates at 16, (the delivery of Education in Rural Areas, 2003, House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee).
17. The good news is that only 0.7% of rural primary schools closed between 2000 and 2006, compared with 2.2% of urban primary schools (The State of the Countryside 2006, Commission for Rural Communities).

18. Particular problems for rural schools include fewer specialist resources, less diversity, a smaller range of subjects, more difficulty reaching critical mass for extended services, and 'stranger danger'. Young people at risk of exclusion can find it especially hard to access the support they need in rural areas. In many areas Connexions does not provide rural service, but relies on young people coming to the towns for their advice and support.

health and social care in rural areas

19. Overall, the countryside is perceived as a healthy place to live, with higher life expectancy, lower rates of infant mortality, and lower levels of airborne pollution. Indeed the tradition of restorative breaks in the countryside has continued to develop, with organisations such as the CaRE network promoting rural destinations which can cater for those with particular needs.
20. Despite this, the countryside has a growing elderly population, and a significant number of residents with a limiting long-term illness – 1.6 million rural residents, and 20% of residents in sparsely populated areas.
21. There are other particular needs – for instance the suicide rate amongst young men is 50% higher in rural than urban areas.

conclusions

22. The trend towards increased neighbourhood and community governance is one which the Rural Issues Task Group supports. Moreover it may be seen as an exclusively urban, rather than rural issue.
23. Partnership working in rural areas will require County Councils to work more closely with town and parish councils, to participate in the development of the Government's neighbourhood agenda.
24. The Task Group also support further contribution to the future role envisaged for Local Strategic Partnership and to expand their contribution to a range of other locally based initiatives via partnership arrangements (including the Rural Pathfinders, the Market Towns Initiative, Rural Sure Starts, etc).

human resource implications

25. There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

financial implications

26. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

legal implications

27. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION

- i. That Members note the contents of the note.
- ii. That Members support officers in making sure rural and community governance issues are kept at the forefront of policy agendas within County Durham.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Chief Executive
Ext 368

Author of the report
Emily Butler
Policy & Research Officer
Ext. 448

POLICY & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Chief Officer, Corporate Development Unit
CORPORATE CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY

purpose of the report

1. To submit for approval the Corporate Customer Care Strategy and seek agreement for the strategy going forward for Equality and Diversity impact assessment by groups such as the Local Strategic Partnership.

introduction

2. The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for the development of Customer Care for residents, visitors, businesses and partners in Wear Valley.

The strategy is in 9 distinct parts focusing upon aspects of Customer Care:

- Current Position
- Customer Care Vision
- Customer Care Objectives
- Customer Care Aims
- Customer Care Principles and Values
- Customer Care Awareness and Training
- Customer Relationship Management
- Customer Care Structures
- Customer Care Action Plan

background

3. Wear Valley District Council aims, through the introduction of our Corporate Customer Care Strategy, to ensure that our provision of customer care to residents, businesses, visitors and anyone who contacts the Council by any means, is of the highest standard possible.

4. The strategy has been developed with the support of Aberdeen City Council, Waltham Forest and the Northern Ireland Court Service.

summary of the customer care strategy

5. The strategy will help us to implement our vision “to become the best district council in England”. The strategy will help us to deliver the following priorities:-

- citizen focused government
- accessible services
- social inclusion
- using information better

6. The development of the Customer Relations Management (CRM) software in conjunction with Durham County Council and the other eight Districts will:-

- further improve services to the customer
- eventually enable multiple transactions through one call or contact
- have up to date records of the services provided to the customers
- provide information relating to the quality of the service and performance against corporate targets.

7. The development of a Customer Care Handbook will set out Customer Care guidelines focusing upon corporate standards for interactions with both external and internal customers.

8. An introduction to customer care has been included in the Induction Programme and customer care training is being organised for Planning. Once trialed and evaluated it will become an established method of customer care training.

embedding the recommendations of Sir David Varney’s report to the Chancellor, “Service Transformation: A better Service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer”

9. The Citizen and Business Contact Council, established following Sir David Varney’s Report, has the remit of overseeing public sector contact centres and is the custodian of the performance management framework. Sir David has recommended the establishment of best practice performance indicators and benchmarks to assist centres to perform to the level of best peer performance in the public sector. This strategy takes into consideration the need to measure performance in terms of Customer Care.

10. The mechanisms for collecting information relating to some of these indicators recommended by Varney will be developed within the County Durham e-government partnership, of which Wear Valley is a partner. This partnership is committed to the development of a Customer Services Relationship Management system tailored to the needs of each District.
11. Within the Varney report is the recommendation that all contact centres undergo accreditation by December 2008 i.e. Charter Mark

access to services

12. The strategy is designed to improve access to services. One key recommendation is the proposal that there be at least one evening extended hours to accommodate the proposed on-line Planning application booking system and provide face to face contact for our customers who find it difficult to come to the Civic Centre during our normal working hours.

financial implications

13. The migration of services may have financial implications as front line contact with the public is migrated to the back office. There may also be financial implications arising from revised opening hours. Additionally, there may be further IT costs associated with the full implementation of CRM.
14. The implementation of this strategy in full will be the subject of bids in the forthcoming budget cycle. The strategy will draw together the Council's current spend on Customer care.

legal implications

15. There are no legal implications in the adoption of the strategy. However, it should be recognised that implementation of certain parts of the strategy may have legal implications (for example, an extended use of CRM will engage the Data Protection Act 1998).

human resource implications

16. It will be necessary to conduct an in-depth assessment of front/back office activities service by service in terms of time taken and level of responsibility in order to manage the transfer of resources to First Stop Shop. Some

services such as Leisure will use the CRM as a virtual system, linked to Glenholme and Woodhouse Close.

17. There are training implications as service managers and supervisors use information generated for service provision and the back office staff utilise the reporting systems for management and performance information

health and safety implications

18. There are no Health and safety implications.

it implications

19. The development of the CRM is undertaken in partnership with the Durham E- government partnership and assists in delivering e-government objectives. It is anticipated that a “light” version of the CRM will be used by Back Office staff (Multi Agency services (MAS)) It has the capability of using the Universal Work Queue, re-routing work into other queues and recording Service requests.

value for money

20. At present an Ombudsman complaint investigation carried out by the Ombudsman's office is costed in the range £700 and the Council's own costs will reflect this. Savings being identified through the Business Improvement Team focusing on Customer Services illustrate that improved customer care will reduce the need for management involvement caused by in some cases the unnecessary escalation of complaints. Tracking systems and customer history will also reduce time wasted by specialist staff such as planners and environmental health officers searching for information and will speed up response and investigation time. Not all contact with the Council is either valuable or necessary and reducing these contacts will save money and eliminate waste.

equality and diversity

21. The strategy has inbuilt provision for equality and diversity, however an impact assessment will be carried out and it should be noted that following consultation with various groups the strategy may be amended to ensure compliance.

conclusion

22. Delivery of the Customer Care Strategy will create a fundamental building block in improving the customer experience, measuring customer experience and provide a vehicle for service change.

recommendations

- i) That Members agree to the implementation of this strategy as outlined in this report
- ii) The Members give their approval to the Strategy going forward to discussion with interested parties including the LSP who will contribute comments as part of the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment.

background papers

- i) Sir David Varney's report – Service Transformation: a better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer
- ii) Triennial Survey

Officer responsible for the report
John Docherty
Chief Officer Corporate Development

Author of the report
Dorothy Emerson
Customer Care Officer

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

**Report of the Chief Officer of Corporate Development
LOW PERFORMING BVPI UPDATE**

purpose of the report

1. To report on the status of the low performing Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's).

background

2. At the end of the 2005/06 year Chief Officer Management Team identified a list of best value performance indicators that were performing poorly. These indicators are to be monitored on a quarterly basis. This report presents BVPI data for the 1st Quarter (April-June).
3. An analysis of each indicator is presented in Annex H.
4. Annex I tabulates the 1st Quarter BVPI data in relation to our targets and previous performance. Quartile figures are from 2005/06 as top quartile figures from 2006/07 have not yet been released.
5. Graphs mapping actual performance over time compared against their individual targets are presented in Annex J which also details the current 1st quartile results.

High level findings

6. Overall when compared to the previous year end results or where applicable to the results from the previous years first quarter results 50% of the indicators scores have improved and 50% have not.
7. If the predictions for the indicators are correct 28% (5) of the indicators will have improved a quartile. 11% (2) would have decreased a quartile, and the remaining 61% (11) would have stayed the same, this is presented in Annex K.
8. Using the performance trend over quarter one to forecast estimated out turns at the end of 2007/08, only 44% of indicators would reach or exceed their target set out in the Best Value Performance Plan.

9. Using the predicted results a total number of 2 indicators would be in the top quartile, 6 will be in the above median quartile, 6 will be in the below median quartile and the remaining 4 indicators will be in the bottom quartile, this is presented in Annex L.

performance by department

10. Resources department have a total number of 9 indicators which are selected to be in the low PI basket. 5 of these indicators have improved with the remaining 4 either staying the same or decreasing. From the predicted results 2 of the indicators will be in the top quartile, 3 indicators will be in the above median quartile, 3 will be in the below median quartile and 1 indicator will be in the bottom quartile.
11. Community department have 6 indicators which are selected to be monitored. 3 of these indicators have improved however 3 have also either stayed the same or declined. From the predicted results 2 indicators will be in the above median quartile, 2 will be in the below median quartile and 2 will be in the bottom quartile.
12. Environment and Regeneration department had 3 indicators selected to be monitored. Only 1 indicator has improved with remaining 2 indicators either staying the same or declining. From the results it is able to predict the department will have 1 indicator in the above median quartile, 1 indicator in the below median quartile and the remaining 1 indicator in the bottom quartile.

conclusion

13. During quarter one there has been some improvement on the performance of our low scoring BVPI's. However, in some cases the performance trend is not sufficient to ensure we meet our targets or increase our quartile performance by the end of 2007/08.

RECOMMENDED

- i. That committee approves the content of this report.
- ii. That the Corporate Development Unit continues to monitor these indicators on a quarterly basis and reports finding to the Chief Officers Management Team and Policy and Strategic Development Committee.

Officer responsible for the report

John Docherty
Chief Officer, Corporate Development
Ext 306

Author of the report

Michael Cooper
Best Value Programme Co-ordinator
Ext 878



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

**Report of the LSP Manager
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PLAN**

purpose of the report

1. To formally invite the District Council as Accountable Body for the Local Strategic Partnership to agree the Sustainable Communities Plan for Wear Valley

background

- 3 Wear Valley District Council has a duty to produce a Sustainable Communities plan that links together the Community Plan, Local Development Plan and reflects Climate Change issues.
- 4 The plan has to comprise of 4 key components:
 - Long-term Vision
 - Action planning for short-term priorities
 - Shared commitment for implementation
 - Monitoring and review arrangements
- 5 There are also 4 underpinning principles to be followed:
 - It should involve local communities in the process
 - Involve members within and outside the executive
 - Be prepared and implemented by a broad local strategic partnership
 - Be based on a proper assessment of needs and resources.
- 6 The original Community Strategy for Wear Valley was widely consulted on and received widespread support from LSP partners. The Local Development Framework consultations have again confirmed that the issues are still the priorities for the LSP. However we need to have SMART targets that relate to the issues and be clear about resources and links to other plans including the Local Area Agreement.

Sustainable Communities Plan

- 5 Attached at Annex M are the Sustainable Communities Plan and key priorities. Consultation has now taken place with a range of partners including the general public and the first draft has been amended to take into account these responses. Over 500 copies of the draft document and response questionnaire were distributed and the following issues have been incorporated into the plan:
- Increased profile for climate changes issues
 - Clarification concerning crime and domestic abuse targets
 - Clarity regarding affordable housing and the need for improved accessibility
- 6 Some issues raised during the consultation will need to be included in the action plans for delivery of the plan. These include:-
- Improvements to cleanliness of the streets
 - Improvements to Bishop Auckland Town Centre
 - Fuel Poverty linked to energy efficiency
 - Issues facing older people and those with health problems
- 7 The aim is to launch the Strategy at the Community Conference in November when the Local Development Framework is also being consulted upon.

Conclusion

- 8 Whilst further work will need to be carried out to obtain ownership by other authorities the priorities are linked to the Local Area Agreement, Council Plan and the key delivery plans of partner organisations.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 That Committee agrees the Sustainable Communities Plan and agrees that there is strategic fit between the draft Sustainable Communities Plan and Local Development Framework, Council Plan and the Local Area Agreement.
- 2 That Members agree to engage in the process of further developing the delivery plans for the priorities contained within the Plan.
- 3 That Wear Valley use the Sustainable Communities Plan to influence the Local Area Agreement to enable local needs to be met.

Officer responsible for the report

Author of the report

Mary Hall Ext 414

AUTHORISATION FORM (AF1)

Item :
Committee :
Date :

Every section of this report must be completed. Indicate whether the following has been taken into account when producing the report. The officer consulted must initial the 'yes' column, for example an officer from the Legal Section will initial the yes column to indicate he/she is satisfied that the legal implications are covered within the report.

| | Yes | no |
|--|-----|----|
| Financial implications | | |
| Legal implications | | |
| Human Resource implications | | |
| Health and Safety implications | | |
| IT implications | | |
| Value for Money | | |
| Crime and disorder implications | | |
| Human Rights, equality and diversity implications, access to services | | |
| Risk assessment/option appraisal | | |
| Policy context | | |
| Background papers | | |
| The report contains exempt information – if yes give reasons (public interest test) The appropriate exempt category must be stated. | | |
| | | |
| The Monitoring Officer has been consulted on the report | | |
| A legal officer has been consulted on the report | | |
| The report has been considered by the Corporate Management Team where appropriate | | |
| Other officers consulted on the report – list below | | |
| | | |
| List dates when the Council or its committees previously considered this issue. | | |
| | | |

Please note that the Head of Committee and Democratic Services/ Deputy Monitoring Officer or her appointed staff will send reports that do not present all the relevant information clearly, back to the author which may delay the consideration of the issue by committee.

POLICY & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Strategic Director of Resource Management
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2007/08 -2009/10

purpose of the report

1. To consider the Council's draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

background

2. The Audit Commission's Use of Resources assessment places significant emphasis upon an authority possessing an updated Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and it being linked to its Council Plan. In layman's language this is about the Council ensuring it has and will continue to have the necessary resources to carry out the required action to meet its priorities and objectives set out in the Council Plan.
3. The Audit Commission (AC) judged that the Council satisfied the relevant criteria on level 2 "adequate" in its Use of Resources assessment. However, to improve to a level 3 "performing well", it is critical that the MTFS is embedded and there are firm linkages with the Council Plan.

linkages to council plan

4. An executive summary of the revised MTFS is shown in Annex N. A full copy is available upon request. It sets out linkages between the MTFS and the updated Council Plan. These include:
 - identifying the financial resources available to deliver the actions laid down in the Council Plan
 - modelling the impact of delivering the Council Plan to ensure it is affordable
 - setting down the framework through which resources are re-directed towards delivering the Council Plan and strategic objectives
5. As the strategy is linked with the Council Plan, it also demonstrates that account has been taken of the following:
 - External drivers e.g. future grant settlements
 - Investment plans e.g. capital programme
 - Risk assessments e.g. risk to achieving the outcomes in the Council Plan
 - Sensitivity analysis e.g. impact of changes to major funding streams
 - Expected developments in services e.g. the future cost of extending the concessionary travel scheme included within financial forecasts
6. The strategy also demonstrates that the financial consequences of local improvement priorities have been taken into account e.g. capital funding for

the introduction of the twin bin scheme to enhance recycling and liveability as well as funding for major economic developments such as Eastgate. It also emphasises the link between our priorities and national priorities such as creating safer and stronger communities.

7. The MTFS is linked to a variety of other corporate plans such as the Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy. In order to strengthen corporate ownership of the document, it is signed by the leader, Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Resource Management.

equality and diversity implications

8. An impact assessment has been undertaken on the Strategy to determine whether its implications are discriminatory against any section or group within the community. The main issue arising from the review is the need to ensure availability of the Strategy in alternative languages and formats.

conclusion

9. The MTFS is a key document demonstrating how the inputs necessary to meet the aims and objectives of the Council Plan can be funded. It will be reviewed following future changes to the Council Plan.
10. A full copy of the Strategy will be placed on the Council's website and the attached summary distributed to stakeholders such as members of the Local Strategic Partnership.

RECOMMENDED that members approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy attached as Annex N.

Officer responsible for the report

Gary Ridley
Director of Central Resources
Ext 227

Author of the report

Stuart Reid
AD – Finance and I.T.
Ext 258

Medium Term Financial Strategy

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) supports the corporate plan that sets out our key objectives and priorities for the period over the next three years to improve services to residents. It provides a framework through which we ensure that our resources are deployed to meet strategic objectives laid down in the Council Plan.

2. Context Statement

2.1 The Council Plan sets out the Council's six strategic objectives:

- Population
- Economy
- Crime
- Environment
- Health & Well being
- Lifelong Learning

2.2 The financial planning required to deliver these objectives will take account of the following:

- Future Local Government Funding
- Efficiency agenda
- External inspection
- Wider economy
- Local Area Agreements
- National priorities e.g. safer and stronger communities
- Electronic Government
- Demographics / service development
- Current financial position

2.3 The MTFS is linked to a variety of other corporate documents as below:

| Policy/Document | MTFS Link |
|--|--|
| Community Plan | Council's financial contribution towards LSP objectives |
| Council Plan | Council's financial contribution towards achievement of its corporate objectives |
| Value for Money Strategy | To identify efficiencies so that resources are re-allocated to front line services |
| IT Strategy/Implementing Electronic Government | Use of external funding to promote e-government and cognisance of ongoing revenue implications |
| Human Resources Strategy | Financing of training programme |
| Capital Strategy | Recognition of the capital resources |

| Policy/Document | MTFS Link |
|---------------------------|---|
| | required to deliver the Council's medium term capital programme |
| Asset Management Plan | Identifying the capital resource to improve the Council's property portfolio and ensure its buildings are fit for purpose |
| Waste Management Strategy | To provide the necessary revenue and capital resource to enhance liveability |
| Procurement Strategy | To promote value for money and efficiency in how the Council spends its resources |

3. Our Priorities

- 3.1 The Council Plan ensures that everything we do is focused on our six strategic objectives. The allocation of revenue and capital funding is driven by the Council Plan so that resources are targeted towards priorities.
- 3.2 The cost of carrying out the work to deliver our priorities and objectives set out in the Council Plan are contained within three year revenue and capital forecasts. Some of the main resource requirements for delivering the Council Plan are shown in the table below:

Table 1 - Linkages to Council Plan

| Ref. | Corporate Objective | Commentary |
|------|---------------------|---|
| 1 | Population | £27m available till 2012 to bring all properties up to meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS). |
| 2 | Economic | Part share of £10.2m available over the medium term as part of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI). |
| 3 | Health & Well Being | Capital resources available to fund new joint leisure facilities within three year capital programme. |
| 4 | Crime | £300,000 available in revenue budgets to fund street wardens scheme |
| 5 | Environment | £500,000 available in capital programme to fund improvements to Dene Valley over the next three years. |
| 6 | Lifelong Learning | Revenue budgets available to recruit apprentices within the Council. |

consultation

- 3.3 We have consulted with the following stakeholders in formulating our priorities set out in the Council Plan:
- Members
 - Local Strategic Partnership
 - Business community
 - Customer panel

- 3.4 Resource allocation is also driven by public consultation using the bi-ennial SIMALTO exercise.

service planning

- 3.5 Each department's service plan contains its contribution to achieving the Council Plan. Each element of that plan is costed ensuring that planning and resource allocation is integrated.

partnerships & external funding

- 3.6 We adopt partnership working where there are clear financial benefits. Key partnerships include the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which is responsible for significant funding streams such as Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and Dale and Valley Homes (D&VH) who manage the housing service on our behalf.
- 3.7 We face a financial risk with the potential loss of external funding in future years which needs careful management. The three-year forecasts assume that service delivery ends upon cessation of these external funds.

equality & diversity

- 3.8 An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken on this strategy to ensure that it is not discriminatory against any section of the community. The annual budget process takes into account the effect of budget decisions on diverse groups amongst residents of the area.

4. Revenue Plans / Forecasts 2007/08 – 2009/10

- 4.1 The MTFs is a financial forecast that ensures that our spending plans are aligned with the priorities set out in the Council Plan and corporate objectives. It also demonstrates that budgeting is policy not finance led. Summary three year forecasts for the General Fund and HRA are shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The annual budgets are drawn up with reference to the MTFs and service plans. They are revised upon a change in Council policy or service development commitment which is likely to result in a significant financial commitment to ensure they are up to date.

resources

- 4.3 As from 2008/09, the grant settlement will be on a three-year basis in line with the timing of the Comprehensive Spending Review. It is assumed that Government grant support will increase by 2% per annum over this period.

reserves and balances

- 4.4 The MTFs takes account of the need to provide contingencies against unforeseen costs. Consequently, the Authority has agreed a protocol on the Authority's use of reserves and balances. This has taken account of the

CIPFA policy on local authority reserves and balances in determining their appropriate level. Desired levels of reserves and balances will be reviewed in the light of any substantive changes to the risks that we face. This is carried out as part of the annual budget setting process.

- 4.5 As at the end of March 2008, we will have at least £850,000 in unallocated general fund reserves which is judged to be the minimum figure necessary to cushion the Authority against unforeseen events. Due to the ongoing decline in the housing stock and reappraisal of the necessary level of reserves, a managed decline in the HRA working balance is planned to £1m excluding likely back dated windfalls in subsidy which remain to be confirmed.
- 4.6 These levels of balances are considered adequate given the net levels of expenditure within the General Fund and HRA and their historic spending patterns. The minimum level of balances deemed essential is reviewed each year as part of the budget setting process.
- 4.7 Our reserves and balances are monitored during the year as part of the budget monitoring process. Reports to Committee include a consideration of the extent to which spending impacts upon reserves and balances in terms of affordability.

risks

- 4.8 We acknowledge that account must be taken of risk in planning services. Many of these risks are covered by insurance. However, there are many risks that are not insurable. Our policy on reserves takes account of the sensitivity in assessing the financial impact of the potential risks. We have ensured that there are sufficient reserves to maintain financial stability in the medium term.
- 4.9 The anticipated cost of these financial risks where quantifiable has been built into the three year revenue estimates. Costs arising from the other risks listed would in the first instance be funded by un-earmarked reserves. Some of the major financial risks are:
- Job Evaluation
 - Changes to Concessionary Travel Scheme
 - Reduced fees and charges income
- 4.10 The risks associated of not achieving the key outcomes in the Council Plan has also been assessed.

revenue sensitivity analysis

- 4.11 We have taken into account the potential volatility of major budgets in compiling the forecasts. This includes conducting a sensitivity analysis on the following factors:
- Government funding
 - Council Tax levels

- Pay inflation

4.12 The impact of a 1% change to these factors has been modelled. The worst case scenario for the General Fund is a deficit of £560,000 by the end of 2009/10. We will manage that deficit through efficiencies, use of earmarked reserves or changes to local taxation levels to ensure our commitments remain affordable. The HRA will retain sufficient reserves over the term of the plan even under a worst case scenario.

5. Capital Plans/Forecasts 2007/08 – 2009/10

5.1 We have approved an indicative three-year capital plan as part of our annual budget setting process. This is updated on an annual basis. The three-year forecast is consistent with our approved Capital Strategy. The summary three year capital forecast is shown in Appendix 2.

capital resources

5.2 We borrow to fund capital expenditure in line with Government funding received to meet the associated financing costs. Due to D&VH attaining a two star rating in managing the housing stock, an additional £15.5m will be available in supported borrowing over the next three years.

5.3 Spending plans and forecasts are based around realistic assumptions regarding the timing and level of capital receipts to ensure affordability. The capital programme assumes right to buy receipts will continue at a similar rate to previous years and that no significant windfall receipts arise.

5.4 As at 31st March 2007, we retained £13m in usable capital receipts. In accordance with our Capital Strategy, a portion of that funding has been provisionally earmarked for the renovation or replacement of leisure facilities. This is included within the three-year forecasts.

setting the capital programme

5.5 Capital proposals are evaluated against a variety of criteria before they are approved. Schemes are placed in priority order with those receiving the highest scores included within the programme.

5.6 All capital schemes are subject to an option appraisal through the budget process before inclusion within our capital programme. The option appraisal includes consideration of the following issues:

- Outsourcing
- Joint working
- Lease/buy
- Do nothing
- Exit strategies
- Risk.

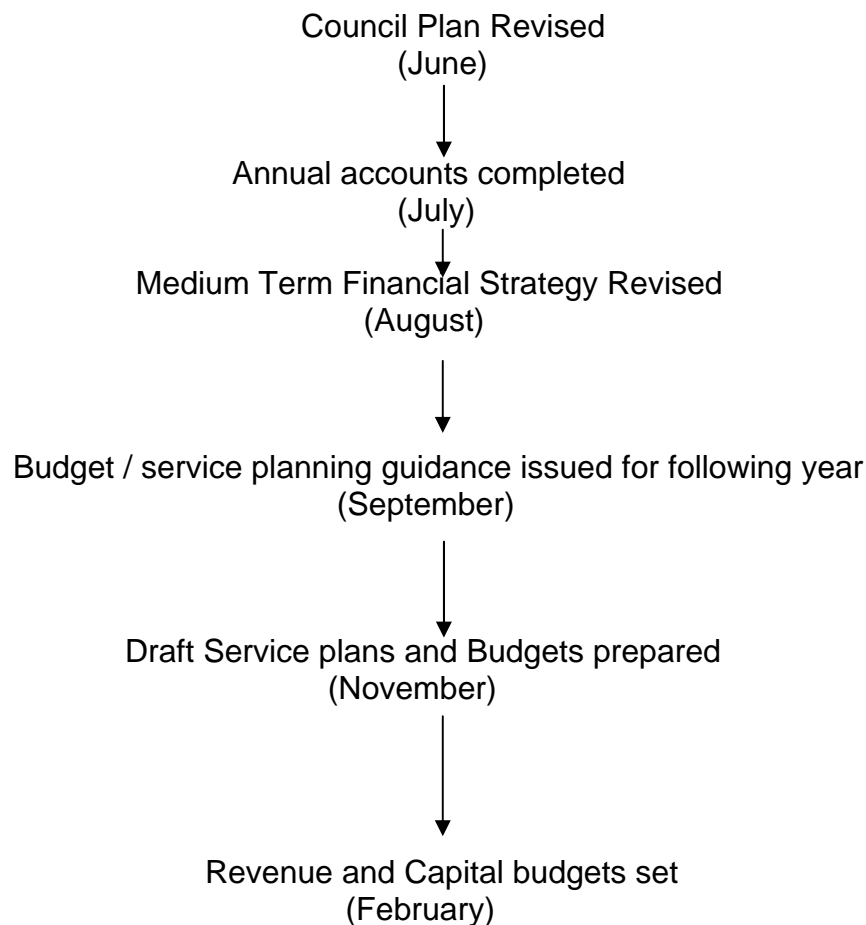
capital sensitivity analysis

- 5.7 The forecasts are modelled around potential capital receipts. It is estimated that un-applied capital receipts of £13.1m at the end of 2007/08 will fall to £1.8m by the end of 2009/10. There are sufficient capital resources available to fund existing capital commitments over the life of this plan.

6. Monitoring and Review Mechanisms

- 6.1 The monitoring of the MTFs forms part of our corporate reporting and review processes. This is shown below:

Annual Planning Cycle



- 6.2 The Performance Management Framework allows us to systematically allocate resources to our priorities. The production of service plans on an annual basis form part of that framework. These are produced departmentally and link aims, objectives and actions with the resources necessary to achieve them. The service plans provide a three-year focus and are therefore in line with the timeframe adopted for budget planning.
- 6.3 The annual service plans link into annual budgets. Service plans include the impact of any growth and savings approved through the budget process and thus resources are aligned towards our corporate objectives. However, the emphasis is upon policy determining budgets and not vice versa.

alignment with corporate objectives

- 6.4 To ensure that resources are suitably aligned to corporate priorities, an annual exercise is undertaken to determine the proportion of our resources that are being allocated to each objective. This exercise allows us to monitor the process of aligning resource to objectives.

budget monitoring

- 6.5 Budget holders monitor those budgets for which they are responsible. This ensures that resources are used in an efficient and effective manner. In order to keep members involved and accountable for financial management, they receive reports on a quarterly basis.

budget deficits

- 6.6 It is important that we have a process to manage any budget deficits that may arise over the lifetime of this strategy. This is to avoid sudden and significant reductions in service delivery or high increases in council tax / rents. The management of any deficit will include the following:
- i) Three year expenditure forecasts
 - ii) Budget Monitoring
 - iii) Action plans from budget holders

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This document sets out the key financial issues facing us and how our resources support our goal to become the “best District Council in England”. It demonstrates clear linkages with the Council Plan and how resources are allocated to meet corporate objectives.



WEAR
VALLEY
DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Corporate Management Team
2007/08 REVENUE BUDGET ADDITIONS

purpose of the report

1. To seek member agreement to:
 - Add certain revenue expenditure to the 2007/08 General Fund revenue budget
 - Add certain revenue expenditure to the 2007/08 Housing Revenue Account
 - Approve the necessary virement to enable the proposals to be introduced.

context

2. Members will be aware that as part of the budget setting process it is necessary to go through the identification of revenue growth bids and cost improvements. In relation to revenue growth bids, it is important that the Council direct its resources to those areas which yield greatest utility as it strives to meet corporate objectives, and at the same time agree a programme of cost improvements to generate the necessary room for manoeuvre.
3. In recent years the level of proposed revenue growth bids has exceeded the available cost improvements needed to fund them. Whilst this level of growth bids is right and proper in that it reflects member and officer aspirations it still leaves an unfulfilled need.
4. During the current financial year, continuous monitoring of both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has identified a series of cost improvements/underspends. In the normal course of events such resources would be carried forward to the 2008/09 budget. However, given the current external landscape (CPA/Local Government Review/external inspections to name but three), Corporate Management Team are of the common view that new expenditure introduced at the present point in time would yield positive benefits whilst also being affordable.
5. In light of the above, Corporate Management Team (CMT) has set out a detailed set of proposals for new expenditure to support the attainment of corporate objectives. CMT considers that a prudent quantum of resource available to fund the proposals is £0.387m in the General Fund and £0.25m in the HRA.
6. Whilst there has not been specific public consultation in relation to these proposals, it is important to remember that the Council's chosen method of

consultation (SIMALTO) has yielded consistent results. In other words, public preferences are consistent in the desire for:

- Environmental improvements
- Crime/disorder
- Youth activities

7. The recommended list of growth items shown in Annex O has taken account of these public preferences and also strengthens internal capacity.
8. Finally, it is important to remember that the 2008/09 budget will include the normal growth and savings elements and that the proposals set out below are not intended to usurp established processes and procedures.

proposals

9. The spending options shown in Annex O have been subject to review by a cross-departmental group of senior officers. This review considered the validity of each proposal against a pre-defined set of criteria (e.g. legal need/degree of support for corporate objectives/generation of external funding/public demand). They have also been considered in detail by Corporate Management Team to compile a final list.
10. The total of proposed General Fund growth bids is £386,961. The total of Housing Revenue Account bids is £99,000. All these bids are affordable.
11. It is of prime importance that new expenditure streams clearly support national objectives, corporate objectives and the Council Plan. The link to the Council's corporate objectives is shown in Annex O.

key risks

12. An assessment of key risks has been carried out and is shown below:

| Risk | Prob | Impact | P x I | Mitigation | Officer responsible |
|---|------|--------|-------|--|----------------------------------|
| i) Internal capacity to deliver | 2 | 2 | 4 | Regular monitoring of implementation of new spending proposals | CMT |
| ii) Lack of member support | 1 | 3 | 3 | All proposals agreed by members | CMT |
| iii) Affordability | 1 | 3 | 3 | Covered within report | Director for Resource Management |
| iv) Lack of links to corporate objectives | 1 | 3 | 3 | Covered within report | CMT |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|-----|
| v) Value for money | 1 | 2 | 2 | Normal scoring process used to rank bids and subject to member and officer scrutiny | CMT |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|-----|

financial implications

13. The delivery of the above proposals is predicated on the availability of sufficient resources. As mentioned above, budget monitoring has identified the necessary flexibility to give practical effect to the proposals in Annex O. The Council's constitution requires Committee approval for virement above £10,000 between cost centres. The following virement is necessary in light of the proposals:

| Cost centre | £000 | Reason for budget underspend |
|---------------------------------------|------|--|
| i) Interest received on investments | 112 | Increased long term investment rates secured |
| ii) Concessionary travel | 50 | Lower demand than expected |
| iii) Additional benefit subsidy grant | 75 | Income from previous years claims |
| iv) Minor capital receipts | 50 | Arising from minor asset sales |
| v) Salary budgets | 100 | Covers all departments |
| vi) HRA | 250 | Additional rental income |

14. It is important to remember that the total proposed expenditure in the General Fund of £0.387m represents only 3% of the net general fund budget, and that £0.099m in proposed HRA expenditure represents only 1% of the net HRA budget.

legal implications

15. The Council has the legal powers to spend resources in the areas set out in the Annex.

hr implications

16. The main implication relates to internal capacity to deliver. Recruitment of new posts may be difficult and will be subject to a job evaluation process. This will be closely monitored by departments. Mainstreaming of posts will minimise redundancy costs in 2008/09.

equality/diversity implications

17. There are no significant implications arising from this report.

conclusion

18. This report represents an opportunity to improve services to citizens/customers in advance of the 2008/09 budget and is viewed as being complimentary to existing processes and procedures. The proposals have been evaluated in large part

against their contribution to achieving corporate objectives, and have also been informed by an overall risk assessment. .

- RECOMMENDED** that members
- i) Agree the spending proposals shown in Annex O for inclusion within the 2007/08 budget
 - ii) Agree to the necessary budget transfers as outlined in paragraph 12

Officer responsible for the report

Gary Ridley
Director of Resource Management
Ext 227

Author of the report

Gary Ridley
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CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2007-10



Climate Change - global problem, local solution

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FOREWORD



Climate change is affecting every one of us already. Scientific evidence is now overwhelming that global warming is happening and this serious global threat demands an urgent local response.

To sustain our communities into the future we need to act to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions. As signatories to the Nottingham Declaration we are committed to considering the impact of our actions on the climate and actively seeking to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council and the District.

This climate change strategy demonstrates how we will tackle this situation with an action plan that coordinates District wide activities to reduce carbon dioxide emissions for the benefit of all our residents and businesses.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Councillor Neil Stonehouse
Leader of the Council

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is a global issue and it is already affecting life in the Wear Valley District. The weather is getting milder and we already have seen incidents of serious flooding in the Bishop Auckland area. We hear and read about the impacts of climate change every day and the situation will become more and more apparent over the coming decades.

In the Wear Valley District, the impacts of climate change are only just beginning to be felt, and it would be easy for us to choose to ignore the situation and continue with business as usual. However, the consequence of this would limit our ability to moderate the severity of climate change and lessen our ability to manage its impacts. Alternatively, we can choose to tackle this issue and take steps that will reduce the scale of climate change in the future and enable us to adapt better to its effects.

This strategy looks at the whole issue of climate change, how it will impact upon the Wear Valley District and what we are able to do about it. In particular, the strategy:-

- * *examines the evidence* for climate change and the projections for how it could affect life in Wear Valley and the delivery of Council services;
- * *formulates policies* to define the Council's position and role in terms of addressing the causes of climate change and managing the impacts
- * *considers what action* the Council could take to address the causes of climate change and manage the impacts, and
- * *sets out what the Council will do* with its partners to adapt to and manage climate change.

Wear Valley District Council, have made a commitment towards climate change by signing the Nottingham Declaration and, like other authorities across the UK, are at the early stages of dealing with climate change issues.

This document is the first time that the Authority has considered climate change issues and the first time that policies to guide the Council's response to climate change have been formulated.

The policies and information contained in this strategy are based on the best data and predictions currently available. In time, as more data is collected and modelling techniques improve, the forecasts for climate change will become more accurate and reliable. The Council's approach to climate change will, therefore, remain flexible enough and this strategy must develop as better information becomes available.



BACKGROUND

1. The Science of Climate Change

The Greenhouse Effect

One third of the sunlight that falls on the earth is reflected back into space. The other two-thirds reaches the ground, which re-radiates it as infrared radiation. Some of this energy is blocked by greenhouse gases, the effect of this is to warm the atmosphere and the earth. Naturally occurring greenhouse gases include water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

Any factor that alters the amount of radiation received from the sun or lost to space, may influence the climate. Human activities, such as burning fossil fuels, that emit extra amounts of greenhouse gases, alter the amount of energy trapped in the atmosphere and the temperature of the earth.

Evidence Of Change

Is the evidence for climate change convincing? And how do we know that it is caused by our activities? Most climate scientists agree that the world is going to get warmer. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was set up by the World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Environment Programme in 1988 to assess scientific and socio-economic information on climate change and its impacts.

Variations in climate and weather are entirely natural. The causes of natural variations include, for example, volcanic eruptions and changes in the sun's output. Natural causes could possibly account for the increase in global temperatures. Current evidence suggests that recorded changes are exceeding natural variation. Central England has one of the longest temperature records dating back to 1659. This record shows that temperatures have increased by 0.7 °C in the UK since 1659. Of that, a rise of 0.5°C occurred in the 20th Century. Globally, average temperatures have increased by 0.6°C since 1860. Over recent years the changes have been felt ever more intensely. 1999 was the joint warmest year ever recorded in the UK and the top ten warmest years globally have all occurred since 1980.

Although the majority of climate experts believe that human-induced climate change is a reality, a sizeable group of experts disagree. They question much of the science that underpins the global warming hypothesis in the following ways:-

- * It is data from weather stations that has been used to monitor the earth's annual mean surface temperature. These records indicate a warming in the range of 0.3 – 0.6 °C over the period. Sceptics consider that as so many weather stations are close to towns and cities the warming may simply reflect the heat associated with the growth of these settlements.
- * There are inconsistencies between the surface temperature records and the data produced by satellite and balloon studies
- * Scientists who are sceptical believe that computers used to model climate change are not capable of simulating the complexities of the earth's climatic systems

However, in 1995 the IPCC concluded that the balance of evidence suggests that the recent warming is due to human influences, in particular the increased emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane following industrialisation of the world. Atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases have risen by some fifty per cent in less than two hundred years.

See Appendix 1 for reference to Kyoto Protocol.

2. Forecasting the future

Global

There is a good deal of uncertainty in forecasting how the climate will change, since it is a complex system and modelling itself is not a perfect science. Climate change will not materialise in the same way everywhere due to geographical differences. For example, an overall average temperature rise, increase or decrease in rainfall or changes in the frequency and intensity of extreme events will become apparent.

Whether climate change is being fuelled by human activity, or is a natural phenomena, it is inevitable. The level of change will none the less be influenced by our future emissions of greenhouse gases. The more greenhouse gases we release, the greater the change will be.

National

The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP - See Appendix 4.) aims to co-ordinate an assessment of the impacts of climate change. Because of uncertainties, no single climate change scenario can adequately describe the range of possible impacts. Therefore to build a picture of how climate may change over the next 100 years, a series of four scenarios, called the UKCIP02 scenarios have been prepared for the UKCIP. The scenarios are labelled low emissions, medium-low emissions, medium-high emissions and high emissions and relate to future global emissions of greenhouse gas emissions.

The four climate change scenarios span a range of future global warming rates. Key points from these scenarios are summarised below:-

- * By the 2080s average annual temperature may rise by between 2°C for the low emissions scenario and by 3.5°C for the high emissions scenario.
- * High summer temperatures will become more frequent and very cold winters will become increasingly rare. We have had a very hot summer in 2006, and the likelihood is that this type of weather may occur as often as one year in five in the medium-high emissions scenario by the 2050's.
- * Winters will become wetter and summers may become drier everywhere. Summer soil moisture by the 2080s may be reduced by 40% or more over large parts of England for the high emissions scenario.
- * Snowfall amounts will decrease throughout the UK.
- * Heavy winter rain will become more frequent and more emergency situations, like the flooding of the River Gaunless, will occur.

- * Relative sea level will continue to rise around most of the UK's shoreline and extreme sea levels will be experienced more frequently.

These forecasts also come with a warning that there are major uncertainties about future climate change, including the rate of greenhouse gas emissions growth; management of climate change therefore, becomes an important consideration in an effective and sustainable strategy.

See Appendix 2 for wider national context.

Regional Projections

From a regional aspect, there are climate change predictions for the North East and Durham County area. These indicate that climate will change significantly by 2050 and dramatically by 2080.

- * Mean annual temperature is expected to rise by between 1.5°C and 2.5°C by the 2050s and 1.5°C and 4°C by the 2080s. Warming will take place throughout the year with the greatest rises in the summer months
- * The warming will be accompanied by wetter winters, but drier summers, autumns and springs, leading to a reduction in rainfall of up to 10%. Heavy rainfall events in winter will increase in frequency and intensity
- * There will be a fourfold decrease in frost nights, a five-fold increase in warm summer nights and a two-three fold increase in warm summer days
- * Soil moisture will be reduced during the summer months

Changes in extreme climate conditions, rather than average conditions are likely to have the greatest impact on the region. The most notable changes for the 2080's under the medium high scenario include:-

- * A fourfold increase in the frequency of wet winters with 60% more rainfall than average
- * A fourfold increase in the frequency of a dry summer with 50% less rainfall than average
- * A hot "1995" type summer nearly every year rather than once in a hundred years.

Local Projections for Wear Valley District

Current models on climate change are not yet able to develop scenarios specific to local areas, however, a recent climate change project commissioned by The Environment Agency in October 2006 produced a report entitled, *Climate Change Adaptation on the Wear* (Appendix 4) which aimed to forecast the climate changes across the Wear catchment by the 2050's.

The most significant projections are forecast to be:-

- * Increases in average and extreme temperatures, with extreme hot summer temperatures being around 3°C greater than the present day;
- * Increases in the number of heatwaves;

- * Increases energy costs to keep cool;
- * Decrease in average rainfall over the course of a typical year, but with a significant increase (of up to 20%) in winter rainfall and reductions in spring and autumn rainfall;
- * A notable reduction in winter snowfall (of up to 50%); and

These forecast climate changes, the report claims, will have impacts on the buildings, infrastructure and people within the Wear catchment, however, the impacts will not be of a devastating sudden nature but will occur progressively between now and the 2050's.

Biodiversity Impacts

Climate change will affect different habitats in different ways. The overall impacts on wildlife are still very uncertain, but at this stage it is considered that there may be benefits to wildlife.

- * Warming and drying will impact differently on individual plant and animal species. Some species, like badgers, are expected to do well under climate change.
- * Changing water temperatures will affect the type and quantity of fish in the River Wear.



Biodiversity is a complex issue that is affected by global changes in unidentifiable and subtle ways. Change is inevitable however, forecasting the changes is extremely difficult and has become an increasingly specialist field.

3. Wear Valley District Council implications

(a) What we are doing now

Domestic Energy Efficiency

Wear Valley District Council has already achieved the Governments target of a 30% reduction in domestic carbon emissions ahead of the 2010 deadline and were recently commended by DEFRA on the progress of its Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) strategy and its achievements so far.

The Council provides proactive information on domestic energy efficiency. Its Energy Officer arranges workshops with community groups, schools and residents. The aim is to increase their awareness of efficient energy and reducing emissions and to provide them with improved access to funding sources from external approved sources and alternative energy providers.

Public Partnership Initiatives

Many partnerships have evolved around the delivery of earlier strategies and Wear Valley District Council, have made best use of this in meeting Government targets. A product of which has resulted in two highly successful projects 'championed' by the authority:

- The Council was recently commended by Government Office North East for achieving the national target of a 30% reduction in domestic Co2 emissions ahead of the 2010 target deadline.
- The Councils waste recycling collection targets were exceeded in 2006-7 (no targets exist for the present year 2007-8). In the last six years, within the Wear Valley District, the total tonnage of recycled household waste has gone up from 3% to 15.77%.

Local Strategic Partnership

A successful partnership between Wear Valley and Teesdale communities, which is focussed on climate change and the delivery of, "*a significant improvement in the environment*", is the LSP Environment theme group. Sustainability is at the heart of its approach and its main desire is to increase bio-diversity through the management of our natural environment and to ensure rural communities are sustainable in both employment and residential aspects. The group works in partnership with local communities in both districts and engages a range of agencies in both public and private sectors.

Domestic Renewables

- In order to encourage the uptake of renewable energy devices the Council have allocated grant funding of £30,000 to bolster the existing government grant distributed via the Low Carbon Buildings Programme for domestic households. This fund has stimulated particular interest in those rural areas off the gas network and leads the way towards tackling climate change.

Public Buildings

- The Council is already taking a range of actions that will help to either reduce greenhouse emissions or manage the effects of climate change in its own buildings. By encouraging simple behaviour, such as, switching off lights when you leave a room, or putting waste in the recycling bin, it will soon start to make a huge difference. Substantial funding has also been allocated for the implementation of renewable devices to the Civic Centre and the 'flagship' business centre at South Church, Bishop Auckland.

Lead partner in Energy (Eco) village proposal (EREV)

- The Council, as part of the Wear Valley Task Force, is actively promoting the implementation of the Eastgate Renewable Energy Village (EREV), on the site of the former Lafarge Blue Circle Cement Works at Eastgate. It will provide a unique opportunity to demonstrate all forms of renewable energy and act as a major catalyst for change. It will attract inward investment from businesses in the new energy sector, encourage supply chain activity with value added manufacturing and encourage knowledge intensive businesses start-ups. The aim is that the EREV will become a centre of excellence in renewable energy and related sectors. EREV is a major regeneration project. It will provide an eco-friendly living, working and learning environment and visitor attraction for the benefit of people of Weardale. It will demonstrate best practice in sustainability by utilising all five forms of land-based renewable energy available in the UK, which are wind, solar, hydro, biomass and geothermal – a unique concept in this country.

The development will create sustainable jobs, homes and recreational facilities for local people and also provide opportunities for links with existing businesses in the Dale.



The development has the potential to achieve between 40-60% of Weardale's emissions reduction target for 2020,

(b) What more can we do?

In order to improve our progress we have a far reaching role in taking significant steps towards mitigating climate change (reducing future emissions) and by ensuring that policies and enforcement action support the climate change agenda we can also achieve benefits for ourselves and our communities. Good communication and creative thinking will be used to maximise opportunities to deliver best solutions for climate change through good design while also retaining local distinctiveness in environmentally sensitive locations.

Advice and Support

There are various sources of advice and support that can be accessed when thinking about how to make a further contribution to tackling climate change. The major sources of this advice include the Energy Savings Trust, the Carbon Trust, The Nottingham Declaration Pack, the Local Government Climate Change Commission, the Improvement and Development agency and Warm Front.

Strategic Approach

Taking a strategic approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation can help to ensure that all appropriate actions are considered, that progress can be reported and that potential partners can see the value of proposed actions. Effective action will include the development of appropriate partnerships and offer routes to reach and persuade the right people to take action.

Community Leadership

Strong local leadership is going to be vital towards efforts to tackle climate change. All sections of the community are going to have to contribute, through increased energy efficiency and increasing the use of renewable and low carbon technologies. Leading a local area to reduce carbon emissions can deliver many local benefits and developing a market for low carbon goods and services can offer wider opportunities for local businesses to develop in areas that will have national and international markets.

Public Buildings

In our public buildings there are some common areas of excessive energy consumption where savings can be made, such as lighting, heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and office equipment. Energy management within these buildings will contribute directly to climate change mitigation, lead to cost savings and form a key part of our community leadership role in this area.

Planning

The planning system helps define a local authorities' "place shaping" role and is centred on sustainable development. As such, it offers one of the largest opportunities to influence energy use and hence carbon dioxide emissions arising from new developments. The new Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on climate change sets out how planning, in providing for the new homes, jobs and infrastructure needed by communities, should help shape places with lower carbon

emissions. In addition to implementing planning policies, council officers can encourage and educate developers to progress beyond minimum standards and move towards a zero carbon standard, which will shortly be required for homes in England. By following these examples, the Council will aim to be an exemplar authority in the way it balances the challenging objectives of "whole place" management and climate change.

Housing

As social landlords we also have a duty to ensure that any housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard, however, tackling climate change requires more than just meeting these basic standards. We need to work together closely to change behaviour and offer assistance in both the social and private housing sectors through energy efficiency and renewable and low carbon measures.

Transport

Tackling climate change is a priority for transport policy. Local and Regional Transport Plans are a key element of the response to climate change and important areas of influence we need to focus on are; encouraging sustainable travel, improving the infrastructure for all travel modes and working with partners to explain the benefits of low carbon travel in order to allow the public to make informed travel choices.

Economic Development and Regeneration

As a local authority we have a key role to play in how climate change can affect economic growth. Through the creation of employment and positive planning we can facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by contributing to sustainable economic development.

4. Climate Change Strategy Methodology

Step 1 - Establish Baseline data for Carbon Dioxide emissions

The establishment of baseline data for those chosen sectors of action needs to be forecast as accurately as possible from a consistent, reliable source. This carbon emissions analysis will allow us to see where we are going and what we need to achieve.

Step 2 - Set Targets

The Government has set a national target of 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 and annual targets will be established to achieve this goal. The targeted areas will be in the Domestic, Business and Transport sectors.

Step 3 - Develop an Action Plan

The Action Plan will be describe policies, programmes and actions to be taken to achieve the carbon reduction targets.

Step 4 - Implementation of Action Plan

Implementing the Actions will be an on-going process until the target goal has been reached.

Step 5 - Monitor and Review Actions

Progress will be monitored and reviewed against the Joint Environmental Prospectus and adjusted annually.

Joint Environmental Prospectus

The Joint Environmental Prospectus constitutes a shared commitment between DEFRA and the Local Government Association to work together to instil a strategic approach to the environment, sharing three key environmental aims, to:

- tackle climate change and adapt to the unavoidable impacts;
- maintain a healthy natural environment;
- make the local environment cleaner, safer and greener

These key aims will be reflected in the new performance frameworks for both local and national government and the joint prospectus poses ten questions to the Council and its partners regarding their ability to shape and maintain sustainable communities. (See Annex 5).

The Authority has already begun to address a number of the early stated questions within its climate change strategy and its long term economic strategy. The more challenging targets offer the Council an opportunity to assess its approach to sustainable communities that integrate environmental needs and opportunities that create places where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

The measures outlined in the Action Plan will serve to re-inforce and build upon the good practices that Wear Valley District Council have already been recognised for and its performance will be demonstrated against the LGA-DEFRA Joint Environmental Prospectus.

Baselines and Targets

Carbon Dioxide is the main greenhouse gas accounting for about 85% of the total gases emitted. The vast majority of carbon emissions come from the burning of fossil fuels and in recent years increasing emphasis has been placed on the role of the regional and local government in contributing to energy efficiency improvements and reductions in carbon dioxide emissions.

A project commissioned by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), published in October 2005 and later reviewed in November 2006, combined data from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory with newly available local gas, electricity and road transport fuel consumption data from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to develop a nationally consistent set of carbon dioxide emission estimates right down to local authority level.

Estimates have been produced of carbon emissions from the following broad source categories:-industrial & commercial, domestic, road transport for local authorities. These statistics are a new development and as such are defined as 'experimental statistics' under the terms of the National Statistics Code of Practice. The figures produced will be used as our baseline data.

Carbon Dioxide emission baseline

Estimates Of Carbon Dioxide Emissions in Wear Valley District (tonnes kt co²) 2004

| Fuel Type | Domestic | Industry & Commercial | Road Transport | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------|
| Electricity | 58 | 72 | | 130 |
| Gas | 53 | 37 | | 90 |
| Oil | 6 | 20 | | 26 |
| Solid Fuel | 11 | 11 | | 22 |
| Other (Non-fuels & Process gases) | 1 | 171 | | 172 |
| Road Transport: Petrol | | | 56 | 56 |
| Road Transport: Diesel | | | 41 | 41 |
| TOTAL | 129 | 311 | 97 | 537 |

Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globalmos/index.htm>

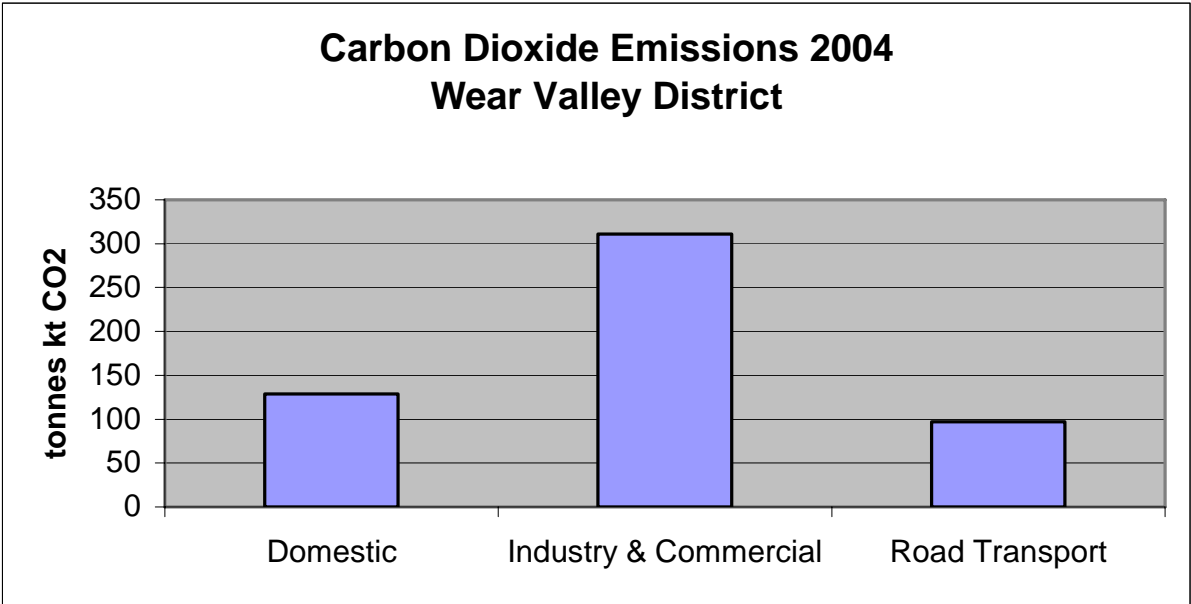
In total the combined fuel figures for 2004 indicate that Wear Valley produced 537 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide, (which will be used as our baseline figure), by far the greatest contributor being Industry & Commerce with 58%, Domestic users at 24% and Road Transport at 18%.

In order to achieve the national target of a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 from a 2004 baseline, Wear Valley will need to reduce emissions by an extra 7493 tonnes (2%) each and every year. The DTI's commitment to make energy data available at a local level will enable local and regional bodies to target activity more effectively and be a useful tool in monitoring progress.

Measuring Progress

In order to know how effective the actions are against tackling climate change it is imperative to monitor and review as part of the project management process.

Progress towards achieving our targets will be measured via the outcomes of the Action Plan and the monitoring of sustainability generally will be reviewed and demonstrated against the Joint Environmental Prospectus. Baselines, made up from measurable current or recorded conditions, will be used to test real progress and change monitored against the three sectors of concern; domestic, business and transport.



Effective actions will be monitored to consider the impacts in carbon emissions by the following processes:-

1. **DOMESTIC** - Reduce emissions and raise awareness and understanding of energy efficiency alternatives across the domestic household sector.
2. **BUSINESS** - Encourage businesses and other organisations to take action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.
3. **TRANSPORT** - Address traffic congestion and pollution, make public transport more accessible and increase use of renewably produced fuels such as bio-diesel, where appropriate.

5 ACTION PLAN

KYOTO PROTOCOL

The first review of the developed countries' commitments to tackle climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was conducted in Berlin in 1995. It concluded that the current commitment made by countries to reduce their emissions to 1990 levels by 2000 was inadequate.

In 1997, the parties under the UNFCCC met in Kyoto in Japan where a decision was negotiated to adopt a protocol under which emissions would be reduced. This legally binding commitment meant that industrialised countries would reduce their combined greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 5.2% compared to 1990 levels by the period 2008-2012. Different countries had varied targets to reflect national circumstances and the EU agreed to reduce emissions by 8% to be shared out between member states.

Measures were also agreed about the mechanisms which could be used to reduce emissions. These fall into three areas. Firstly, a country can develop projects which build up credits or emission reduction units which counteract the greenhouse gas emissions should the project not have gone ahead. This could include forestry projects or replacing a coal power station for a more efficient gas version, as long as the benefits outweigh the previous 'business as usual' outcome. The second mechanism is similar but the projects must be based in a developing country which also enables that country to achieve sustainable development. This could include the installation of solar panels to replace a domestic diesel generator. Finally, countries which have achieved emission reduction over and above their Kyoto targets, will be allowed to sell their excess to UNFCCC parties who are finding it more difficult to meet their targets.

The UK agreed to cut emissions by 12.5% on 1990 levels. A report to be published shortly will confirm that the UK has met and exceeded this target. As of July 2001 84 countries have signed the Kyoto Protocol and 37 countries have ratified or acceded to it. The Protocol will enter into force on the 90th day after it has been ratified by at least 55 parties. In March 2002, it was announced that the UK was ratifying the Protocol with the added challenge, which goes beyond the Kyoto target, to cut emissions by 20% by 2010. If this target is reached, the UK will then be in a position to trade the excess to other countries who fail to meet their Kyoto targets.

UK CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/ukccp/pdf/ukccp06-all.pdf>

The Climate Change Programme, published in 2006, sets out our policies and priorities for action in the UK and internationally. The Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006 placed an obligation upon DEFRA to report to Parliament on greenhouse gas emissions in the UK and action taken by Government to reduce these emissions.

The programme explains:-

- Why the climate is changing and what its effects might be
- How the international community is working to co-ordinate a global response, with agreement to the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol
- The leading role the UK plays internationally and in Europe
- The UK's legally binding target under the Kyoto protocol to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions
- The progress the UK has already made in cutting its greenhouse gas emissions
- New measures the Government and the devolved administrations are introducing to reduce emissions further and achieve the UK's Climate Change targets
- The important role of key stakeholders such as businesses, local authorities, representative groups, trade unions and each of us as individuals
- The more significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that will be needed beyond 2010, and how the government is preparing the EU to make major transformation towards a low carbon economy and
- How climate change is expected to affect the UK, how we might need to adapt and the action the Government and the devolved administrations have started to take to prepare for this.

Key principles of the programme:-

- Reflect the importance of tackling climate change by a positive response to the UK's domestic goal.
- Take a balanced approach, with all sectors and all parts of the UK playing their part
- Safeguard, and where possible enhance, the UK's competitiveness, promote social inclusions and reduce harm to health
- Focus on flexible and cost effective policy options which will work together to form an integrated package
- Take a long term view, looking to targets beyond the Kyoto commitment period and considering the need for the UK to adapt to the impacts of climate change and
- Be kept under review.

The following details outline some of the projects and policies, which are being implemented in light of the UK Climate Change programme

Renewable Energy

The Government's energy policy objective is to ensure secure, diverse and sustainable supplies of energy at competitive prices. It originally set a target to ensure that 5% of UK energy should be met from renewables by the end of 2003, stretching to 10% by 2010. This currently includes energy from wind, wave, waste, crops or bio-energy and landfill gas.

The Renewables Obligation Scheme came into effect from the 1st April 2002 to help the Government to meet renewable energy use targets and replaces the previous Fossil Fuel Obligation scheme. This new scheme is aimed at encouraging businesses to switch their energy use to one from renewable resources. It also places an obligation on electricity suppliers to ensure that a certain percentage of what they supply is generated by renewables at source.

The Government is also supporting the research of new technologies to enable the development of renewable energy supply. This includes funds for offshore wind projects and energy crops and research. Please see below for more details. The Government is also ensuring the maximum value of funding by ensuring links between the different programmes such as the Climate Change Levy and the Emissions Trading Scheme. This includes, for example, making electricity generated from renewable energy exempt from the Climate Change levy that also provides an additional incentive for businesses to switch to renewable sources.

It is hoped that renewables will not only be used to generate power but also heat and transport for public and business use.

The Carbon Trust

The Government has established this not-for profit organisation to help facilitate the movement towards a sustainable, low-carbon economy by bringing forward innovative technologies.

It is funded by the government and in part from Climate Change levy receipts.

The Trust was launched in April 2001 and its objectives are:-

- To ensure that UK business and the public sector meet ongoing targets for carbon dioxide emissions.
- To improve the competitiveness of UK business through better management of resources, and
- To support the development of a UK industry sector that encourages the use of innovative and cost effective low carbon technology.

The trust is therefore developing and implementing programmes for research and development into new technologies and opportunities.

This includes:-

- Developing and delivering the energy efficiency best practice programme to provide independent information and impartial advice for business energy users.
- Develop and promote the Enhanced Capital Allowances Scheme to encourage investment by business to take up energy efficiency measures.
- Investing in the development of low carbon technologies in the UK
- Co-ordinating the relationship between technologies and funding partners.

Additional information can be found at www.thecarbontrust.co.uk

Carbon Trading Scheme

In order to meet targets agreed at Kyoto and to enable greenhouse gas emission reductions to be made in the most economically efficient way, a world-wide Emissions Trading Scheme is being developed. The government in the UK has already set up an emissions trading scheme to allow UK business and other organisations to gain early experience of emissions trading. 34 organisations have already voluntarily taken on a legally binding obligation to reduce their emissions against 1998-2000 levels. The scheme is available for all companies who are responsible for greenhouse gas emissions.

The trading scheme sets an overall target for organisations who can decide on a flexible way to achieve their own target. Therefore, it doesn't matter how much individual organisations emit, as long as the overall target is met.

Participants can either:-

- Meet their target by reducing their own emissions;
- Reduce their emissions below their targets and sell or bank the excess emissions allowances; or
- Let their emissions remain above their target and buy emissions allowances from other participants.

The Government is introducing a number of ways to encourage organisations to be involved. This includes providing financial incentives and making links with Climate Change Agreements and other existing energy targets. Some organisations might develop emission reduction projects to build up credits to trade, though project criteria have yet to be developed. This might include though schemes such as tree planting and Combined Heat and Power. Any organisation that doesn't want to be part of the scheme can also set up an account to buy or sell allowances.

Further information is available from DEFRA 'A summary Guide to the UK Emissions Trading Scheme' and on

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/07.htm

Climate Change Levy

The government has introduced a Climate Change levy on all non-domestic energy use from April 2001. This therefore increases energy bills by approximately 15% and encourages organisations to be more energy efficient. The carbon savings from the levy are expected to save 5 million tonnes of carbon (MtC) per year by 2010.

The levy is applied at different rates depending on the type of energy and will be charged on energy supplied. Electricity therefore has the highest levy rate as it requires more energy in the way of fossil fuels for production, followed by gas and coal and liquid petroleum gas. Renewable energy and good quality Combined Heat and Power will be exempt from the levy. This provides an additional incentive for businesses to switch to electricity from a renewable or more efficient source.

Revenue from the levy will be recycled to business via a 0.3 percentage point cut in employers' National Insurance contributions. An additional fund of £150 million for energy saving measures and initiatives will also be available.

Where companies and industries are intensive energy users, the Government has proposed an 80% reduction in levy rates as long as the organisations sign up to Climate Change Agreements to meet energy efficient targets. So far, around 40 businesses have signed up which includes The National Farmers Union and UK Steel.

LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

Home Energy Conservation Act

The UK spends around £60 billion a year on energy and it is estimated that around 20% of this is wasted.

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) requires every UK local Authority, with housing responsibilities, to prepare, publish and submit to the Secretary of State an energy conservation report stating how it could achieve a 30% rise in home energy efficiency by 2010. This identifies practicable and cost-effective measures to significantly improve the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in their area; and to report on progress made in implementing the measures.

An integrated approach involving the different departments in the local authority, advisory services and the local community will contribute to meeting the UK's Climate Change commitments.

Wear Valley District Council energy officers work closely with strategic partners such as, NEA and EAGA Partnerships, PCT's and the HIA's to meet home energy conservation targets. The Council was recently commended by GONE for achieving the national target of a 30% reduction in domestic Co2 emissions ahead of the 2010 deadline.

Additional info – www.defra.gov.uk/environment/energy/heca95

Proposed EC directive on the energy performance of buildings.

New requirements were expected to come into force at the start of 2002 to govern the energy efficiency in the construction of new buildings. These include:-

- Significant improvements of the thermal insulation standard of the building fabric
- More onerous standards for the energy efficiency of domestic heating
- New standards for the commissioning and control of space heating and hot water system.

PLANNING AND REGULATION

National

The Planning White Paper “Planning for a Sustainable Future”- 21 May 2007 proposes to “make planning more responsive to climate change” and sets out proposals for how local planning decisions should contribute to meeting Government targets for the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, help speed up the shift to renewable and low carbon forms of energy and ensure that new developments through their location and design are resilient to the consequences of climate change. This has been reflected in the RSS through the addition of Policy 2A which seeks to ensure that ALL plans, programmes and strategies seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): "Delivering Sustainable Development" sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. The draft **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) "Planning and Climate Change"**, when finalised, will supplement PPS1 setting out how planning, in providing for new homes, jobs and infrastructure needed by communities, should help shape places with lower carbon emissions and which are resilient to climate change. The draft PPS on climate change outlines the Government's target of *moving to zero carbon housing within 10 years* and suggests achieving this in three steps:-

1. Moving first in 2010 to a 25% improvement in the energy/carbon performance set in building regulations
2. in 2013 moving to a 44% improvement
3. in 2016 moving to zero carbon.

Government expect local planning authorities to develop **Merton** style policies that require a percentage of the energy in new development to come from on-site renewables. The 'Merton rule' is the planning policy, pioneered by the London Borough of Merton, which requires the use of renewable energy onsite to reduce annual CO2 emissions for all new major developments by 10%.

See Appendix 3, for National Energy and Building Regulations and Transport Plans.

Regional

The North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out the long term strategy for the spatial development of the North East Region. The RSS contains a range of policies intended to guide and be delivered through the preparation of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and Local Transport Plans (LTPs) by Local Planning Authorities. The RSS also provides the spatial context for the delivery of other regional strategies including the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Housing Strategy and Regional Transport Strategy.

The RSS Consultation Document –May 2007 recognises that climate change is the single most significant issue that affects global society in the 21st Century. The RSS outlines the Government's targets in the draft Climate Change Bill – March 2007, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5% below 1990 levels over the period 2008-2012 and to move towards the domestic goal of a 20% cut in carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels by 2010, and the goal of a 60% cut by 2050. The RSS introduces a range of policies to help address the issues of climate change, including policies on the location of development, encouraging sustainable forms of transport, encouraging and supporting the use of renewable energy sources, and waste management.

The RSS introduces Policy 40 to help achieve commitments set in the Government's Energy White Paper - 23 May 2007 that at least 40% of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2060 and 10% of renewable electricity by 2010 and 20% by 2020. Policy 39- Sustainable Construction seeks plans, strategies, programmes and planning proposals to ensure new developments are energy efficient and

incorporate mechanisms to reduce energy consumption. This will assist in ensuring new development contributes towards delivering the targets in P40.

Local

Given the growing significance of climate change the emerging **Wear Valley District Local Development Framework** should be committed to addressing the issues and impacts arising from climate change. The forthcoming Core Strategy will therefore set out how the Council intends to work with other organisations and also deliver climate change related strategies influencing the district, in a manner which ensures development in Wear Valley successfully contributes towards adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

To ensure delivery of this commitment the proposed Core Strategy contains both a locational and Strategic Policies on climate change. In the future the adopted Core Strategy will ensure all other policy documents within the Wear Valley LDF and all planning proposals approved by the Council will have to actively contribute towards addressing climate change.

Amended Building Regulations

Amended Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power) came into force 1 April 2002 and below is an outline of how they have been amended to take climate change into account.

The energy used for heating, hot water, mechanical ventilation, cooling and lighting for example, of the UK's building stock results in approximately half the nation's carbon dioxide emissions (46%: 27% from housing, 19% from non-domestic buildings). This equates to approximately 235 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, or 63.5 million tonnes of carbon per year (MtC/year). [1]

The amended regulations state that whilst new buildings should have a minimal impact on CO₂ emissions, alterations on existing buildings should also be subject to CO₂ minimising regulations and increased energy efficiency. The regulations include taking energy performance into account, for example seasonal impacts and the availability of solar power. The maintenance, operation and monitoring of systems supplying heat, hot water, conditioned air, ventilation and the energy impact of light fittings are also covered. There is also emphasis on the role of skilled personnel to ensure regulations are met and information disseminated to other people using the building.

The role of insulation of the building material is being carefully examined and the replacement of windows or glazing, and boilers in existing buildings (including dwellings) must now comply with the regulations.

Tighter methods for the calculation of energy ratings are being developed, with the Carbon Index Method being one suggested option. Further 'carbon-based' thinking is used to consider the carbon content and therefore energy efficiency of the fuel used and of the building's emissions and material.

Ten Year Transport Plan

In July 2000, the Government published a ten year plan for transport, which examines how a more sustainable and integrated transport system can be developed. The plan includes tackling congestion, pollution, increasing choice, raising standards and making travel safer, more attractive and accessible to all.

All modes of transport will benefit from greatly increased public and private funding totalling £180 billion, with increased priority for cycling, walking, public transport, environmental and safety measures.

It includes working with the freight and distribution sector. Improvements to the rail system will hopefully encourage an 80% increase in rail freight volumes.

The Plan will deliver or contribute to the achievement of a number of targets, including:-

- Improve air quality by meeting National Air Quality Strategy targets for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles, sulphur dioxide, benzene and 1-3 butadiene
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5% from 1990 levels, and move towards a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010

In essence, the Ten Year Plan aims to provide:-

- A change in investment through new public and private partnerships
- The resources to implement the vision of an integrated transport system that was set out in the Transport White Paper, 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone'
- An integrated approach to the problems of congestion and pollution that threaten our quality of life and our future economic well-being.

Powering Future Vehicles: Draft Government Strategy

Road transport has doubled in the last 30 years and is responsible for 22% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. It has to be tackled therefore to enable the UK to meet its commitment of reducing emissions by 20% by 2010. The Government is therefore examining how future vehicles can use alternative energy and has developed a draft strategy for supporting the move to low carbon technology which includes working with partners within the Government and industry, encouraging research and development, setting technical and economic standards and encouraging markets. This will also work towards meeting the target of 10% of electricity to come from renewable resources by 2010.

UK Fuel Poverty Strategy

The Department of Trade and Industry published its first Fuel Poverty Strategy in November 2001. Fuel poverty within a household can be defined as one that has to spend more than 10% of their income in order to produce satisfactory heating. This can affect all people but the old, children and long-term disabled people are particularly at risk.

Fuel poverty occurs mainly due to a combination of low income and poor energy efficiency – factors, which can often go hand in hand. This puts additional costs on the Government and wider community and adds to the unsustainability issue of energy waste.

An integrated approach is to be taken by the Government to put a number of actions in place. These includes working with the local authorities on schemes, continuing pressure and support of energy industry initiatives to reduce fuel bills for the less well off and continuing action to tackle fuel poverty and social inclusion.

OTHER CONTACTS, RESOURCES AND INITIATIVES

Climate Change Adaptation on the Wear, June 2006 (Royal Haskoning Report)(Commissioned by Environment Agency) Ref: **9R8792/R001/EMG/Newc**

Community energy programme

Limited funding available to develop and implement community-heating schemes to tackle fuel poverty and reduce energy costs for public buildings

www.est.org.uk/communityenergy

Energy Saving Trust – Advice Centres

Support for energy efficiency improvements and advice to needy households.

TADEA (Tees and Durham Energy Advice Centre)

6 Belasis Court, Belasis Hall Technology Park, Billingham TS23 4AZ

Tel:01642 373 021

Freephone: (0800) 512 012

Energy Saving Trust – Lightswitch programme

Advice and funding to promote the benefits of energy efficient lighting in the non-domestic sector. This includes the supply and installation of time or sensor controls.

www.lightswitch.co.uk

National Wind Power – Windworks

Assistance for farmers and landowners with suitable land to develop small wind energy projects, without the capital expenditure.

www.windworks.ltd.uk

DEFRA – UK Climate Change Programme grants

Support for policies and measures that will contribute to the UK's domestic target of cutting green house gas emissions.

www.energy-efficiency.gov.uk

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/index.htm

Low Carbon Technologies

Support for feasibility studies to investigate and develop the potential for long-term, innovative, energy efficient, low carbon technologies for industry and buildings. To involve private sector companies, research organisations and partnerships involving a variety of organisations, including those on the supply chain.

www.environment.dtlr.gov.uk

DEFRA energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme

Programme covering advice, research and development costs designed to stimulate energy efficiency improvements for businesses, transport, the public sector, housing and buildings and to disseminate best practice.

www.energy-efficiency.gov.uk

UK Climate Impacts Programme

The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) provides scenarios that show how our climate might change and co-ordinates research on dealing with our future climate.

www.ukcip.org.uk

LGA-DEFRA Joint Environmental Prospectus

This prospectus constitutes a shared commitment between DEFRA and the Local Government Association to work together to instil a strategic approach to the environment.

10 key questions to ask the Council and partners to help and understand how to shape and maintain sustainable communities.

1. What key activities within the organisation, and within the community have the greatest environmental impact?
2. What steps are you taking to reduce this environmental impact?
3. What are your local strategic partners, and local environment groups doing on the environment and how could your ambitions fit together?
4. Do your procurement policies include environmental aims and objectives, and have you identified priorities?
5. What mechanisms do you have in place for communicating environmental messages throughout your organisation and changing behaviour?
6. Has the Local Strategic Partnership agreed a key set of environmental challenges and opportunities, and do these include climate change?
7. Do the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Local Development Framework adequately address the 3 overarching environmental aims, your key challenges, and opportunities?
8. What incentives (financial and others) do you have in place to support behaviour change and reductions in environmental impact?
9. How will the changing climate and other large environmental changes impact on the local economy and community? What are the costs of these impacts? Is it clear what action needs taking?
10. How confident are you that your actions on the key environmental challenges (identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Development Framework and Local Area Agreement) will result in a significant improvement in the LSP's environmental performance?

5. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

1. Domestic

Domestic housing accounts for over a quarter of UK carbon dioxide emissions and there are many ways in which we can cut down on the energy consumed in our homes and the amount of carbon dioxide emitted. Any steps we take to reduce energy consumption will have a direct, positive impact upon climate change and with energy prices expected to increase, savings can also be expected on energy bills.

M = Mitigation measures of the causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions

A = Adaptation measures adapting to the unavoidable climate change resulting from the increased concentrations of those gases from human activities over the last century

| MEASURE | ACTION | OUTCOME | LEAD |
|--|--|---|---|
| Energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] Planning & Regulation | As part of the Local Development Framework process, incorporate planning policies to ensure that new development in the District contributes to a reduction in CO2 equivalent emissions, including a percentage of renewable energy measures, and consideration given to reduce water consumption, rainwater harvesting and recycling of grey water, where appropriate. Work towards implementing 'C-Plan', (Carbon Impact Assessment Tool) to achieve a 40% reduction of CO2 emissions with new developments. | Through LDF, ensure that new development results in a 40% reduction in CO2 emissions. | WVDC Forward Planning |
| Energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] Planning & Regulation | Ensure that new build developments are in compliance with Part L of Building Regulations. | New housing built to energy efficient standards | WVDC Building Control |
| Energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] Planning & Regulation | As part of the Local Development Framework process support appropriate re-use of existing buildings to save energy, reduce building waste and retain local identity. Consider implementing 'C-Plan' equivalent for existing buildings. | Existing buildings re-use built to energy efficient standards | WVDC Forward Planning/Building Control |
| Energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] Planning & Regulation | Support an informed and balanced approach to energy conservation within the historic environment and reflect through planning process. | Historic building re-use built to energy reduction/efficient standards | WVDC Conservation Manager |
| Adaptation to climate change – Flood risk [A] Planning & Regulation | As part of the Local Development Framework process and development control influence the location of new development to restrict or prevent development on flood plains. | Minimise the impact of climate change | WVDC Forward Planning/Development Control |

| MEASURE | ACTION | OUTCOME | LEAD |
|--|---|--|---|
| Adaptation to climate change – Changes in weather [A] Planning & Regulation | Ensure that all development, new and existing, can cope with the expected increase in temperature and possibly drier weather. To include frequent monitoring and repair of buildings of historic and local significance. | Minimise the impact of climate change | WVDC Development Control/Conservation Manager |
| Adaptation to climate change – Flood risk [A] Planning & Regulation | Ensure that new developments incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). | Minimise the impact of climate change | WVDC Forward Planning/Development Control |
| Mitigation & adaptation to climate change [M & A] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all Council plans, programmes and strategies seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that energy efficiency & energy reduction measures have been incorporated into projects receiving Council contribution. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a cross departmental climate change working party to monitor action plan performance on a quarterly basis | CCWP to monitor delivery of CCS Action Plan ¼ ly | WVDC (all departments) |
| Home energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete benchmarking of energy consumption across Dale & Valley properties <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate and audit energy consumption to identify potential overuse, waste and level of carbon emissions <input type="checkbox"/> Address identified inefficiencies and instigate efficiency measures to reduce emissions through the creation of a rolling programme of replacement/ refurbishment. | Contribute to achieving a reduction of CO2 emissions of greenhouse gases by 2% per annum | Dale and Valley Homes |
| Recycle [M] CO2 reduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Green Box recycling scheme introduced district wide <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing promotion campaign to encourage better take-up of recycling facilities provided by the local authority. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage composting of garden and kitchen waste. Operating garden waste collection scheme. <input type="checkbox"/> Operate a School Paper recycling scheme. <input type="checkbox"/> Promote the prevention of waste, purchasing of loose fresh food and buying local produce to reduce food miles. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage the development of integrated waste management strategies allowing for reduction of emissions through efficient management and improved control of waste | New local recycling targets being determined by Gov. | WVDC Peter O'Neil |

| MEASURE | ACTION | OUTCOME | LEAD |
|--|---|--|---------------------|
| Education & awareness programme - Home energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] | Carry out awareness raising and training events within the community to implement measures towards reducing climate change. | Improve SAP ratings within households | Sue Carr WVDC |
| Energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] | Warm Homes Campaign to include information on the availability of low carbon electricity tariffs | Improve SAP ratings within households | Sue Carr WVDC |
| Energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] | Ongoing investigation of examples of low carbon initiatives and renewable energy options/best practise and encourage take-up throughout the District. | Contribute to achieving a reduction of CO2 emissions of greenhouse gases by 2% per annum | Ian Bloomfield WVDC |
| Energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] | Encourage the take-up of energy efficiency and energy reduction measures of community buildings. Utilising WVDC Alternative Energy Grant where applicable. | Develop a pilot project with Eastgate Village Hall Committee. | Ian Bloomfield WVDC |
| Home energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] | Promote energy efficiency, energy reduction measures and renewable energy solutions to householders in off gas settlements. Utilising WVDC Alternative Energy Grant where applicable. | Develop a pilot project with Eastgate residents. | Ian Bloomfield WVDC |

2. Business

A large proportion of carbon dioxide emissions are produced by businesses through manufacturing processes, energy use and transport. Many see this as inevitable in a competitive market, but taking action on carbon reduction does not mean that business competitiveness will be compromised. In fact, the opposite is true. A business that uses energy more efficiently and plans its logistics thoughtfully can save both money and resources and increase its market effectiveness accordingly.

M = Mitigation measures of the causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions

A = Adaptation measures adapting to the unavoidable climate change resulting from the increased concentrations of those gases from human activities over the last century

| MEASURE | ACTION | OUTCOME | LEAD |
|--|--|---|---|
| Energy reduction & energy efficiency [M] Planning & Regulation | As part of the Local Development Framework process, incorporate planning policies to ensure that new development in the District contributes to a reduction in CO2 equivalent emissions, including a percentage of renewable energy measures, and consideration given to reduce water consumption, rainwater harvesting and recycling of grey water, where appropriate. Work towards implementing 'C-Plan', (Carbon Impact Assessment Tool) to achieve a 40% reduction of CO2 emissions with new developments. | Through LDF, ensure that new development results in a 40% reduction in CO2 emissions. | WVDC Forward Planning |
| Energy reduction & energy efficiency [M] Planning & Regulation | Ensure that new build developments are in compliance with Part L of Building Regulations. | New housing built to energy efficient standards | WVDC Building Control |
| Energy reduction & energy efficiency [M] Planning & Regulation | Support appropriate re-use of existing buildings to save energy, reduce building waste and retain local identity. Consider implementing 'C-Plan' equivalent for existing buildings. | Existing buildings re-use built to energy efficient standards | WVDC Development Control/Building Control |
| Energy reduction & energy efficiency [M] Planning & Regulation | Support an informed and balanced approach to energy conservation, reduce building waste and retain local identity. within the historic environment and reflect through the planning process. | Historic building re-use built to energy reduction/efficient standards | WVDC Conservation Manager |
| Adaptation to climate change – Flood risk [A] Planning & Regulation | As part of the Local Development Framework process and development control influence the location of new development to restrict or prevent development on flood plains. | Through LDF, ensure that new development results in a 40% reduction in CO2 emissions. | WVDC Forward Planning/Development Control |

| MEASURE | ACTION | OUTCOME | LEAD |
|--|---|---|---|
| Adaptation to climate change – Changes in weather[A] Planning & Regulation | Ensure that all development, new and existing, can cope with the expected increase in temperature and possibly drier weather. To include frequent monitoring and repair of buildings of historic and local significance. | Minimise the impact of climate change | WVDC Forward Planning |
| Adaptation to climate change – Flood risk [A] Planning & Regulation | Ensure that new developments incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). | Minimise the impact of climate change | WVDC Forward Planning |
| Mitigation & adaptation to climate change [M & A] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all Council plans, programmes and strategies seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that energy efficiency & energy reduction measures have been incorporated into projects receiving Council contribution. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a cross departmental climate change working party to monitor action plan performance on a quarterly basis | CCWP to monitor delivery of CCS Action Plan quarterly | WVDC (all departments) |
| Energy reduction & energy efficiency. Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions [M] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage local businesses to improve their competitiveness through energy efficiency measures and carbon emissions reductions. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage the use of renewable energy technologies <input type="checkbox"/> Raise awareness of schemes that can assist with the purchase cost of energy efficient equipment and the enhanced capital allowance scheme. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop promotional campaign to highlight the availability of government grants for renewable energy measures. | Engagement with 20 businesses per annum | The Enterprise Agency for Wear Valley and Teesdale/WVDC Natural England MAS MIDAS / BREW |
| Energy reduction & energy efficiency. Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions [M] | Develop a promotional strategy to inform local business sector of available support to implement energy efficiency measures, carbon emissions, waste reductions and the potential cost savings and improved competitiveness. | Engagement with 20 businesses per annum | The Enterprise Agency for Wear Valley and Teesdale/WVDC Natural England MAS MIDAS / BREW |
| Energy reduction & energy efficiency [M] | As part of the Council's procurement strategy consider climate change impacts and encourage local supply chain development to reduce waste at source through reduced packaging, reduce road miles and increase purchase of recycled products | Hold 4 events per annum | WVDC Corporate Development Unit /The Enterprise Agency for Wear Valley and Teesdale |

| MEASURE | ACTION | OUTCOME | LEAD |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Energy reduction & energy efficiency [M] Public Buildings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Adoption of an Energy Management Policy by WVDC ❑ Complete benchmarking of energy consumption across authority properties ❑ Evaluate and audit energy consumption to identify potential overuse, waste and level of carbon emissions ❑ Address identified inefficiencies and instigate efficiency measures to reduce emissions through the creation of a rolling programme of replacement/ refurbishment incl use of renewable energy technologies. ❑ Purchase energy at the lowest economic and environmentally friendly rate using effective contract procurement. ❑ Establish members of the AMG as climate change champions. ❑ Develop a programme to raise awareness of climate change & energy efficiency amongst all employees. | 15% reduction of energy consumption across all major buildings and facilities by 2010 | WVDC Asset Management Group |
| Energy efficiency & energy reduction [M] | Support programmes for alternative energy production across the district and promote inward investment and business opportunities. | Capitalise on AE investment opportunities | WV Forum for Business |

3. Transport

Transport is the fastest growing source of carbon dioxide emissions in the UK. More journeys are being made over shorter distances, (journeys of less than 5 miles are responsible for the majority of these) and while car engines are becoming more efficient, the increasing use of heavy fuel-guzzling vehicles such as 4x 4's is offsetting these improvements.

There are many forms of action that we can take to counter the negative effects of transport on climate change, the obvious being to leave the car at home on shorter journeys or car share, cycle, walk or take public transport.

M = Mitigation measures of the causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions

A = Adaptation measures adapting to the unavoidable climate change resulting from the increased concentrations of those gases from human activities over the last century

| MEASURE | ACTION | OUTCOME | LEAD |
|--|---|---|------------------------|
| Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions[M] | As part of the Local Development Framework process influence the location of development, to direct the majority of new homes to settlements which provide a high mix of community services, shops and jobs, and are serviced by frequent & reliable public transport, to reduce the need to travel by private car. | Through LDF, ensure that new development results in a 40% reduction in CO2 emissions. | WVDC Forward Planning |
| Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions[M] | As part of the Local Development Framework process incorporate cycling and walking connections into new major developments (ensuring footpaths and access routes are open, well lit, direct and are not liable to flooding). | Reduce use of fossil fuels/ greenhouse gas emissions. | WVDC Forward Planning |
| Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions[M] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Programme in place for 100% of WVDC fleet to use 'green' biodiesel. <input type="checkbox"/> As fleet vehicles are replaced actively utilise new greener technologies. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage staff home working, car share schemes and develop a 'green' staff travel plan. | Reduce use of fossil fuels/ greenhouse gas emissions and operational costs | WVDC (all departments) |

| MEASURE | ACTION | OUTCOME | LEAD |
|--|---|--|---|
| Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions[M] | Develop a promotional campaign to raise awareness of alternatives to car travel for residents and businesses. | Reduce use of fossil fuels/ greenhouse gas emissions | Ian Bloomfield WVDC |
| Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions[M] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Promote and facilitate innovative public/community/visitor transport schemes eg demand responsive public transport & community vehicles. ❑ Encourage visitors to use public transport, Weardale Railway and cycle. | Reduce use of fossil fuels/ greenhouse gas emissions | WVLSP Environment Theme Group |
| Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions[M] | Encourage the use of 'green' biodiesel with taxi and private hire companies and consider the introduction of a discount scheme to provide an incentive. | Reduce use of fossil fuels/ greenhouse gas emissions | WVDC Tom Carver |
| Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions[M] | Promote the use of 'green' biodiesel through Wear Valley Matters | Reduce use of fossil fuels/ greenhouse gas emissions | WVDC Ian Bloomfield |
| Reduce use of fossil fuels & greenhouse gas emissions[M] | Develop an Integrated Transport Plan for Wear Valley | Reduce use of fossil fuels/ greenhouse gas emissions | WV Local Strategic Partnership – Transport Theme Group/DCC |

Review and Monitoring

As stated in the introduction, the policies and information within this strategy are based on the best data and predictions currently available. It should be borne in mind that it is not possible to be completely confident in the data and predictions for a number of reasons.

There is uncertainty about future emissions of greenhouse gases since it is not possible to be sure about how population, economies, energy technologies and other social factors will influence emissions. Given this and the widespread implications for the area of climate change, this action plan will be reviewed and updated annually. The effectiveness of this action plan will be monitored, in terms of how it is affecting reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and improving our ability to manage the impacts of climate change.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council is committed to improving the quality of life of all its residents by working with people and partners and empowering individuals and communities to contribute and influence services. We believe that citizens should be at the heart of its decision-making processes and will strive to ensure that all sections of the community have an opportunity to get involved at a level and in a way that suits them.

The Council is committed to:

- ensuring that community needs and priorities are driving programmes to make neighbourhoods better
- ensuring that residents of neighbourhoods are empowered through community engagement
- encouraging more voluntary and community groups to become involved in planning and delivering local services
- ensuring that feedback is given to participants about the outcomes of community engagement

- learning from the Council's own and others' experience and share community engagement skills and knowledge of putting the citizens are the heart of decision making
- involve hard to reach communities such as young people and disabled people, but also including the gypsy and traveller communities, rural communities and the Polish community.

The Council has produced a Local Development Framework Statement of Community Involvement which has already received formal endorsement. By adopting and implementing this strategy the Council demonstrates its continuing commitment to making community engagement part of its overall culture.

Having made these strong commitments it is essential that engagement works and is sustained. Sustaining participation and developing engagement district wide brings the benefits of:

- clarify in understanding community issues
- value for money
- effective service development and delivery
- improved quality of life and
- a stronger community sector.

Policy context

The Government sees community engagement as central to the delivery of its modernisation and improvement programme and at the heart of the work of local authorities. It has become central to public policy.

Integrating the work of different organisations and services (who all contribute to the overall quality of community life) is essential to build effective relationships with communities and other bodies.

The Government's White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' (2006) emphasises the need for greater public engagement to facilitate community involvement and empowerment.

Community engagement provides the following benefits:

- enables service improvement to be driven by an understanding of public needs;
- enables any gaps in service provision to be identified;
- uses information to benchmark and monitor delivery helping to identify problems and drive improvement; and
- strengthens decision making and local democracy.

Wear Valley District Council's Vision

The Council's Vision is "To become the best District Council in England".

To achieve this we have identified four values, which we consider essential in delivering improvements. These are:

- **Customer centred** – The Council will consult customers about the design and delivery of services, and ask them for their views on the quality of its services and the success of its initiatives.
- **Citizen focused** – The Council will understand and respond to the individual rights, needs and responsibilities of the local population.
- **Community led** – The Council will recognise the right of the local community, in all its different forms and interests, to come together to manage its own affairs. The Council also recognise that it must work with other public and private sector organisations within Wear Valley.
- **Excellence in Management and Organisation** – The Council will be innovative and a centre of management excellence.

Council objectives and priorities

In line with the Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership the Council has adopted six key objectives to improve the quality of life in Wear Valley.

These are:

- **Population** – To work for a slowly growing and demographically balanced population.
- **Economy** – To work for a significant increase in employment and business activity.
- **Crime** – To work for a significant reduction in crime and the fear of crime.
- **Lifelong Learning** – To work for improvements in lifelong learning that exceed the national average.
- **Environment** – To work for significant improvements in the environment.
- **Health** – To reduce health inequalities and to improve the quality of life for the residents of Wear Valley.

What is a community?

We recognise that community can be defined in different ways, for example:

- Community of place – defined by an area with physical boundaries, e.g. a housing estate or neighbourhood.

- Community of interest (also referred to as an interest group) – defined by a shared interest, experience or demographic characteristic – e.g. young people, people with disabilities, working population, ethnic minorities.

Levels of community engagement?

This strategy will help ensure that we can provide the most appropriate ways for communities and customers to be involved and give feedback.

The various levels of community engagement are:

Informing – making the community aware of local issues and initiatives. Information supports all types of community engagement and keeps people informed about decisions, services and local events.

Consulting – seeking the views of the community. Consultation can be used when there is a decision to make about something or when there are a number of choices about the details. The Council seeks to obtain public feedback to inform decision making.

Involving – actively involving the community in processes of decision-making. Deciding together. This is when local people are involved in deciding which option to choose. The Council work directly with the local community to ensure issues and concerns are addressed. The Council will ensure that these concerns are directly reflected in options

and provide feedback on how input from customers has influenced decision-making.

Acting together. This is when decisions are made by partnerships between local people or agencies and the Council. The people involved in making the decisions also take part in carrying them out. The Council will look to citizens for advice and innovation in finding solutions and incorporate that advice to the maximum extent.

Empowering - Supporting independent community initiatives This is when independent groups get help to develop and carry out their own plans or projects. It involves devolving budgets and decision-making to the local area. It places final decision-making in the hands of the local community

It is important that all levels of community engagement are carried out in the most appropriate way. Different methods of engagement will be used relevant to the activity and circumstances. A selection of methods is set out in more detail in the Community Engagement Toolkit, which will be used to support anyone involved in community engagement activities.

Scope of the strategy

This is the overarching strategy for all the Council's community engagement activities and is designed to ensure better co-ordinate

engagement with customers, citizens and communities. It is based on the beliefs that: -

- all communities should be involved in decisions that affect them
- all communities deserve high quality public services, shaped around their needs; and
- policies and strategies should reflect local priorities, requirements and aspirations.

We recognise and embrace the diverse nature of our communities and the importance of community capacity building. We will develop capacity within our communities to enable greater understanding and ability to influence service delivery, decision making and policy development.

Community engagement and partnership working will take time and commitment to achieve but is seen as an essential requirement and integral to the way the Council works.

Who will use this strategy?

Everyone engaged in community engagement can use this strategy, including:

- all Wear Valley citizens
- elected members

- Council staff
- community and voluntary sector organisations
- partners, e.g. Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership, the police, health service, colleges, private sector
- Local Area Agreement

We will work with existing community engagement systems when these are 'fit for purpose' and will support organisations to ensure they become 'fit for purpose'.

The Council understands that sometimes people choose not to get involved but for those who do, it will work with other partners to ensure that any barriers to community engagement are removed and that feedback is given.

Aim of the strategy

The aim of the strategy is to facilitate engagement with the people within Wear Valley. It will give them a voice to inform the way in which services are planned and delivered.

What are the Council's community engagement principles?

The Council's community engagement principles direct the way the Council carries out its community engagement activities. The Council's engagement toolkit will support everyone involved in community engagement activities.

| | |
|---|--|
| In all our community engagement activities the Council will: | |
| COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate community engagement activities to avoid duplication, and ‘consultation fatigue’, caused by too much consultation and too little action and feedback, and • provide leadership from the top, to ensure that community engagement influences services and plans |
| ACCESS AND INCLUSION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the Council takes into account particular needs and overcomes any difficulties participants may have to enable them to participate • involve hard to reach communities • ensure that there is equal access to core services • ensure services meet the needs of all communities; and • ensure adherence to health and safety regulations. |
| CLARITY OF PURPOSE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be open and honest about the aims of community engagement activity • ensure that community engagement activities are realistic but that expectations are not raised that cannot be met. • have clear processes to provide feedback on community engagement activity and outcomes and give reasons if the Council is unable to meet expectations; and • ensure participants know what they are |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| | agreeing to take part in and how the information will be used |
| CONFIDENTIALITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure awareness of confidentiality issues in community engagement activities, particularly the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998. |
| INTEGRITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that community engagement activities are voluntary and that participants can withdraw at any time • ensure that the rights and dignity of all participants are respected at all times • respect the rights of participants to decide how much to reveal about themselves; and • give careful consideration to activities, information and questions to ensure that they do not offend, cause distress or embarrassment. |
| VISIBILITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that those most directly affected by plans and decisions are aware of opportunities for community engagement and consultation; and • engage with key stakeholders and/or representative groups in advance of specific community engagement activities using the most effective means of publicity. |

Who is responsible for delivering the strategy?

The governance framework for this strategy is outlined below.

- The cross-departmental Community Engagement Group with an appointed Lead Officer will be required to:
 - produce an Action Plan to ensure effective implementation of the strategy and to oversee that implementation.
 - develop a Community Engagement Toolkit to help staff plan and carry out community engagement activities effectively and consistently and to improve co-ordination and governance of engagement activities.
 - will work with community organisations to oversee the implementation of the strategy, action plan and use of the Toolkit.
 - with the intention of providing a co-ordinated and consistent approach to community engagement the strategy and toolkit will be made available to Partner Organisations for their use.
- The Lead Officer will report on a quarterly basis to the Policy and Strategic Development Committee and Chief Officer Management Team on the work identified above and on work to enhance

engagement activity in Council decision-making, performance management and risk management.

Diversity and equality

Wear Valley District Council is committed to providing and promoting equality for all its employees and the local community it serves and is committed to preventing all forms of discrimination. We oppose all forms of discrimination which may cause a person to be treated unjustly on the grounds of race, ethnic origin or nationality, disability, gender, sexuality, age, income, appearance, faith or religious or non-religious beliefs and responsibility for dependents.

In planning community engagement activities, we will integrate the objectives of equality, service accessibility (including hard-to-reach groups) and diversity to deliver truly representative and inclusive consultation processes, outputs and outcomes.

The Council will ensure community engagement exercises are inclusive by:

- making large print, Braille or recorded versions of materials available to survey the visually impaired
- making sure that public meetings and forums are held in accessible buildings
- making sure that public meetings are held at appropriate times of the day

- avoiding clashes with religious festivals/activities and other major events
- giving consideration to the need for signers, interpreters and translators
- making sure face to face interviews are carried out in ways that enable people with hearing difficulties to take part
- using an interviewer for people who might have difficulty reading or writing
- ensuring questionnaires can be administered in the appropriate language or provide translations; and
- including a reply pre-paid envelope for postal surveys

Data protection

Wear Valley District Council is required by law to collect and use personal information about people with whom it deals in order to perform its statutory functions. Personal information obtained by Council, as part of its community consultation responsibilities, will be dealt with properly in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Data quality statement

Our vision is “to be the best District Council in England”. Data quality is crucial to this. The availability of complete, accurate and timely data is important in supporting not only excellence in customer service but also corporate governance, service planning, accountability and achieving value for money.

The Council is therefore committed to ensuring it maintains the highest standards of data equality and, as a result, gets its information right first time.

ANNEX F

Green indicates
GOOD
increase/decrease -
Red indicates BAD
increase/decrease

| Domaine | Indicator | Wear Valley Value 2006 | England Average 2006 | Difference | Wear Valley Value 2007 | England Average 2007 | Difference |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Our communities | | | | | | | |
| | Income deprivation | 37% | | | No comparison data indicator changed | | |
| | Ecological foot print | No data | | | 5.009 | 5.47 | 0.461 |
| | Homelessness | New indicator | | | 124.6 | 7.8 | 3.2 |
| | Children in poverty | 3,391 (28.1%) | 21.3 | 6.8 | No change | | |
| | GCSE achievement | 384 (47.5%) | | | 489 (60%) | 57.50% | 2.5 |
| | Voilet crime | 914 (14.8%) | | | 1329 (21.6) | 19.8 | 1.8 |
| Giving children & young people a healthy start | | | | | | | |
| | Smoking in pregnancy | No data | | | | | |
| | Breast feeding | No data | | | | | |
| | Obese children | No data | | | | | |
| | physically active child | No data | | | | | |
| | Teenage pregnancy (under 18) | 52.30% | | | 54.3 | 42.1 | 2% |
| The way we live | | | | | | | |
| | Adults who smoke | 31.90% | | | 31.90% | 26.00% | Data not changed |
| | Binge drinking adults | 24.20% | | | 24.20% | 18.20% | Data not changed |
| | Healthy eating adults | 19.60% | | | 19.60% | 23.80% | Data not changed |
| | Physically active adult | No data | | | 9.80% | 11.60% | Data not changed |
| | Obese adults | 25.80% | | | 25.80% | 21.80% | Data not changed |
| How long we live and what we die of | | | | | | | |
| | Life expectancy - male | 74.7 years | | | 75.20% | 76.9 | 2.2 |
| | Life expectancy - female | 78.5 years | | | 79.00% | 81.1 | 2.6 |
| | Deaths from smoking | 450 | | | 293.40% | 234.4 | 215.6 |
| | Early deaths: heart disease & stroke | 262 | | | 113.00% | 90.5 | 171.5 |
| | Early deaths:cancer | 294 | | | 132.60% | 119 | 175 |
| | Infant deaths | 14 | | | 5.30% | 5.3 | 8.7 |
| | Road injuries and deaths | 66 | | | 57.90% | 59.9 | 6.1 |
| Health and Ill health in our community | | | | | | | |
| | Feeling in poor health | 10.7 | | | 10.7 | 7.8 | |
| | Mental health | 0.5 | | | 41.4 | 27.4 | 40.90% |
| | Hospital stays due to alcohol | 216.1 | | | 381.6 | 247.7 | 165.50% |
| | Drug misuse | 240 people | | | 293 people | 9.9 | 53 people |
| | People with diabetes | 2334 people | | | 2473 | 139 | 139 people |
| | Childrens tooth decay | 2.03 | | | no data | 1.5 | 0.53% |
| | Sexually transmitted infections | No data | | | | | |
| | Older people: hip fracture | No data | | | 786.9 | 565.3 | |



CORPORATE CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY

Our aim is “to become the best district council in England”.

Customer Care - Listening - Responding – Changing!

Lead Officer
Approval Date
Version
Review Date

Corporate Customer Care Officer

Contents

Introduction
Current Position
Council's Vision and Priorities
Corporate Values
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Customer Care Principles and Values
Customer Care Awareness and Training
Customer Relationship Management
Customer Care Structures
Customer Care Action Plan
Conclusion

Lead Officer
Approval Date
Version
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Corporate Customer Care Officer

Appendices

- A. Triennial Survey results
- B. Council Values, Objectives and Aims
- C. Framework for Provision of Services through Different Channels and Points of Contact
- D. Framework for Customer Care Standards
- E. Corporate Customer Care Performance Standards
- F. Customer Services Structure
- G. Customer Services Action Plan
- H. Perceptions of Local Government

Introduction

1. Now is the appropriate time to develop and implement the Council's Customer Care Strategy. The strategy outlines the shape of customer service and how it applies to customer care and our overall aim to meet and exceed customer expectations and needs.
2. The Customer Care Strategy is closely linked with the Council's Communication Strategy, and Consultation Strategy and it is in line with other strategies and policies operating within the Council.
3. The Council has already shown a commitment to customer care by investing in the development of the First Stop Shop introducing a Customer Relations Management system (Oracle) and appointing a Corporate Customer Care Officer.

Background

4. Central government is taking a strong lead in ensuring the customer is at the centre of public services. E-government policy is not just about the transition of traditional communication channels to more electronic service delivery, but also about improving services to our customers. using these 4 key principles –
 - citizen focused government
 - accessible services
 - social inclusion
 - using information better
5. Services should be accessible via a number of methods such as the telephone, internet, e-mail and face to face interaction. Services need to be available when the customer wants them and located at easily found and convenient sites. When new services are developed consideration needs to

be given to ways of incorporating and promoting an inclusive society. Information received from customers should be used effectively to enable better policy-making, service delivery and more efficient working.

6. The government's Strong and Prosperous Communities White paper focuses on the Customer's role in driving service development and improvement.
7. The Council is continually transforming to meet the needs and aspirations of both citizens and Central Government while continuously developing our reputation as an excellent service provider within the community.
8. Quality customer care is at the heart of this continuous change process. It plays a key role in improving service quality and organisational awareness through the provision of information on customer views and concerns and the operation of a robust customer interface through Customer Services.

Why do we need Customer Care?

9. How customers perceive our services impacts on the levels of overall satisfaction with the Council. Recently published findings of research commissioned by the Department for Communities into perceptions of Local Government has emphasised the importance of quality customer care in an increasingly customer orientated environment.
10. The research was based on Workshops and Focus Groups which were organized in 13 Local Authorities in England (See **Appendix H**) the key findings illustrate customer concerns and impressions and how these in turn impact upon perception and ultimately on satisfaction levels. The research reinforces the importance of customer care when customers are interacting with the Council. Simple actions such as returning calls in a timely manner reassure the customer that they are dealing with a professional and customer orientated organization.
11. The Council recognizes the need to achieve a consistent customer service led culture throughout the organisation through introducing corporate standards and targets for service delivery and taking a corporate approach to customer care.
12. The key lines of enquiry (KLOE) process carried out during Corporate Assessment, looks for evidence of a well publicized, user friendly and supportive service for customers and staff to submit complaints or grievances or representations about service performance and that these are used in service development. Customer care is included in the CPA – District Council Framework from 2006.

Current Position

13. Nationally overall satisfaction with Local Authorities is 55% and Wear Valley's score is also 55%. This is an improving picture rising from 47% in 2003/4. The satisfaction with complaint handling has risen from 32% to 35% figures are rising as we are improving. The Council has an excellent opportunity to improve customer perceptions of how the Council provides information and resulting impact on overall satisfaction (**see Appendix A**). The latest triennial survey included research into Information Provision satisfaction levels and the results can be used for measuring improvement in customer care.
14. Customer confidence in the Council is based upon perception of our customer service, when our customer service fails we begin a vicious circle of apathy where customers no longer feel it is worth the effort to point out problems and the only visual method of expression is dissatisfaction. By re-instating trust in our listening abilities and having the will to improve the perception of our performance we will improve satisfaction
15. A corporate approach is needed to customer care. While there are areas of best practice throughout the Council there is no corporate baseline for Customer Care. We do not measure our performance based on set achievable service delivery targets
16. Analyzing Customer behaviour will give a valuable insight into how we can improve access to services. We need a greater understanding of who our customers are and how we can serve their needs, grouping services together using their priorities for service provision rather than the departmental structures traditionally used for service delivery. We know that one priority is litter, by grouping Housing, Housing Benefit and litter we can help customers and gather neighbourhood information at the same time, simply by prompting the customer by asking the right questions.
17. We do not have a statement of intent, a vision for customer care or standards for various types of communication. There are areas where standards have been introduced but these are not universal or formatted for easy data and performance management.
18. The Council has already invested in improving customer services by setting up the call centre (First Stop Shop) to provide customer front line services and it uses Customer Relationship Management software, (Oracle system). The system is shared by the eight districts and Durham County Council and is aimed at:-
 - further improving services to the customer
 - eventually enabling multiple transactions through one call or contact,

- having up to date records of the services provided to the customers,
 - providing information relating to the quality of the service and performance against corporate targets.
19. We need to review the image and profile of the First Stop Shop to delineate between Customer Services and Reception. The area needs clear signposts so customers find information quickly and efficiently, by making these efforts we show the customer how we value their time and effort contacting the Council
 20. Leaflets about our services should be easy to understand and developed in various formats/languages to ensure equality of access to services
 21. We can create a good positive experience for the customer through letters and e-mails that are customer friendly, and written in plain English. Correspondence should be written to universal standards throughout the authority i.e. a corporate letter style complying with RNIB guidance.
 22. Complaints are valuable as they identify where performance has dipped. Customer feedback tells us about how the customer perceives the quality of our services. Handling complaints positively and resolving them quickly and correctly will reduce the number escalated. At present the authority does not capture many of the comments and reports relating to services and these are not providing management information on service provision and customer concerns. These must be integrated together with the formal complaints system into one system allowing managers to set in place mechanisms for the swift resolution of customer complaints and comments within agreed timescales. A proactive approach will considerably improve the handling of complaints

OUR VISION AND PRIORITIES

23. Our vision is... ***“To become the best district council in England”***. To support this goal, the Council targeted a range of priorities, approved by the Council in late 2001
24. The vision is supported by strategies and service plans outlining improvements in the District aimed at improving the quality of life for all its residents.

Council Values, Objectives and Baselines

The Council’s values, objectives and Baselines are outlined in **Appendix B**.

25. The Council’s Vision and supporting objectives are at the core of the Customer Care Strategy.

Customer Care Aims Vision and Priorities

26. Our vision, aims and priorities create a springboard that provides best practice customer care and opportunities to improve performance.

Who are our Customers?

27. The Council's 'customers' are the community it serves, which includes residents, anyone who receives our services and anyone we interact with, partners and relatives.
28. Good customer service has to take place inside the organization just as it occurs outside. We are all each other's customers and our internal relationships must reflect this.
29. We need to engage with customers who do not use our services so that we can understand why they have not chosen our service. In areas such as recycling and leisure where the customer has choice, this is crucial to improve service.

Customer Care Vision and Commitment

30. All involved in customer service provision need to be committed to customer care.

We will give user friendly, quality customer care – listening, responding, changing!

31. Our Customer Care Vision Statement is:-

Customer Care – listening - responding - changing!

32. The Council needs to be passionate about customer care and want to improve performance.
33. Our approach to customer care is to provide top quality services at all points of contact including Leisure Centres, Council Offices Receptions, and where staff interact with customers in areas such as refuse collection. How a single service is handled will affect the reputation of the whole Council.

CUSTOMER CARE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

34. Principles and Values at the core of the strategy, these are outlined and summarized as:-

Values

- Being honest and open with internal and external customers
- Working with Service Users to shape and monitor the strategy
- Ensuring equal access to all customers
- Developing services to meet evolving customer need

Principles

- All those employed and those serving as elected members have a part to play in providing customer care.
- Customer care will maintain a high profile through features in Team Talk, Wear Valley Matters and staff induction courses.
- Customers can carry out multiple transactions through one single point
- First Stop Shop will operate as the contact centre for everyone wishing to contact the Council by telephone or e-mail.
- Customer interactions will be transparent and progress easily tracked

CUSTOMER CARE AIMS

Our aim is to meet inherent Customer needs.

- **Easy access to Council Services through a variety of channels.**
- **Information about services is easily available**
- **Minimising time spent and the cost of contacting us**
- **Customers need to feel appreciated and be confident that opinions are incorporated in service development**
- **To say it only once**
- **My time is valued**
- **I am fully informed**
- **Interface and signpost external services**

CUSTOMER CARE OBJECTIVES

35. The objectives focus upon providing an environment where excellent customer care and service is embedded in our culture.
- Service providers are responsive to customers, taking on the customer perspective.
 - Customer feedback – surveys, complaints, suggestions –guide service development.
 - Demonstrate standard behaviour
 - Embed customer care into all service provision

- Improve the image staff project when dealing with customers
- Improve the perception of the Council
- Treat our customers with respect, courtesy and friendliness
- Establishing customer champions, drawn from both elected members and officers. Ensure the “Customer Care” message is cascaded through to all levels of staff with Directors and all Managers and promoting it as a key priority for the Council.
- Defining corporate customer care standards and apply these universally to all services.
- Annual review of standards and update based on customer feedback and performance monitoring
- Provide equal and easy access to our services at a time, place and channel that suit the customer. **(See Appendix C)**
- Clear definitions of communication categories are required for example, what is a Complaint – **“An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council’s action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council**
- Training will be provided to staff to:-
 - understand customer care
 - manage customer information
 - monitor and improve Customer Services performance
- 80% of enquiries should be dealt with at the first point of contact by empowering staff as much as is sensible in decision making processes.
- Roll out and development of the CRM
- Provision of coherent records of transactions in the event of escalation to senior management,
- Improve our speed of response to enquiries from customers by having our information in a format that can be easily exchanged with partner organizations.
- Seamless and personalised service founded upon life episodes and/or Service Packages

- Providing value for money avoiding duplication and maximising efficiency.
- Achieving economies of scale as services migrate and customers use channels other than face to face or telephone.
- Pursuing quality accreditation schemes, e.g. Charter Mark.

CUSTOMER CARE AWARENESS AND TRAINING

36. The Council will increase awareness and understanding of the Council's customer services strategy and the customer care standards both externally and internally. The Council will achieve the work by:-
- A revised Formal Complaints Procedure leaflet
 - Customer Care will feature regularly in Management Team Meetings
 - Posters setting out the corporate customer standards will be displayed on Council notice boards, published on the intranet, be included in team briefings, and included in the staff magazine,
 - The Customer Care Handbook Customer Care- listening responding changing will be produced. Human Resources need to ensure that this is included in induction packs provided to new entrants and a copy circulated to all staff.
37. Customer care training will be compulsory for all staff commencing with all new staff through the induction scheme.
38. The framework for Customer Care standards is set out in **Appendix D**

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

39. Customer Care will be implemented through the various aspects of Customer Services
- The Council will use Oracle to log service and information requests and ensure the required outcomes are consistently delivered within an agreed time and quality framework.
 - Regular reports will be generated through the CRM system and provided to senior management by the Corporate Customer Care Officer analysing the nature of complaints, comments, reports and praise and the lessons learnt.
 - The Council will re-launch the suggestion scheme, both through the website and by customers completing suggestion slips at Council offices.
 - Regular monitoring reports will be generated through the CRM system and provided to senior management by the Corporate Customer Care Officer on a monthly basis to senior management regarding telephone answering, response to correspondence (including E-mails) E- requests and visitor waiting times.
 - Regular surveys, including those to staff, will be used to gain feedback about customer care and identify trends.

- We will communicate our improvements (You said, We did) feedback should be based on current performance and less on old perceptions.
 - The Council will undertake mystery shopping gaining feedback on the way in which customers are handled when they contact or visit the Council.
40. To improve services to customers, the performance targets have been identified (see **Appendix E**). The standards are in draft as it is not possible to set them as many are not measurable until systems are put in place.
41. These will provide the basis for debate and ratification between service users, service providers and the Corporate Customer Care Panel, to ensure they are (SMART) Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Time related).

CUSTOMER SERVICES STRUCTURE

42. Customer Services and Customer Care structure and relationships are outlined in **Appendix F**
43. Regular liaison between the two departments supplying the service will ensure the effective implementation and adherence to the Customer Care Strategy.

CUSTOMER CARE ACTION PLAN

44. The Service Action Plan to progress the strategy is attached as **Appendix G**

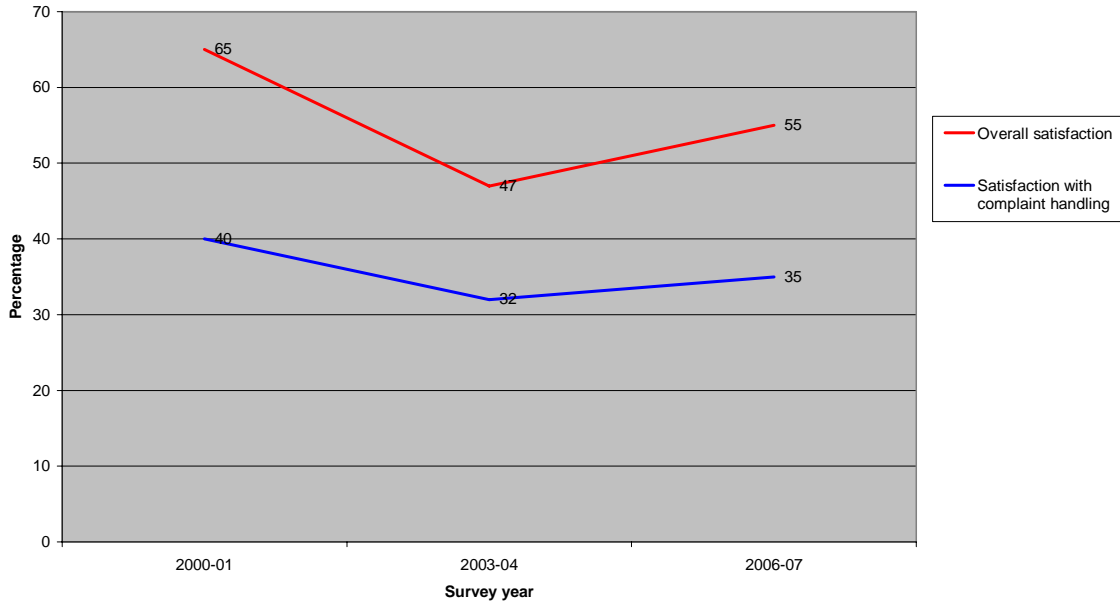
CONCLUSION

45. The Council's Customer Services Strategy is ambitious and has the support of Councillors and senior management.

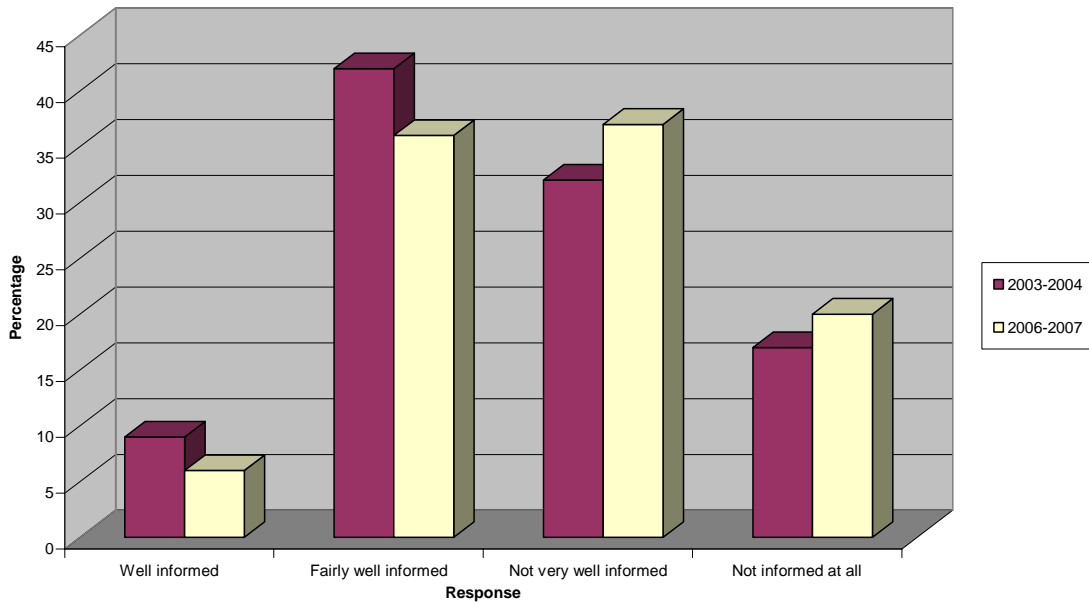
Appendices

Appendix A

Wear Valley DC - Triennial Survey Results Trends

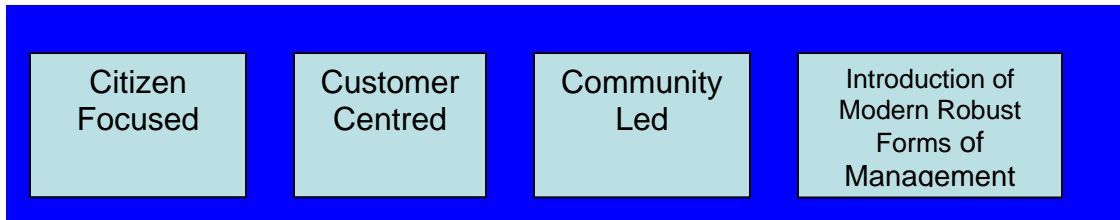


Wear Valley DC - Information Provision & Overall Satisfaction



Appendix B

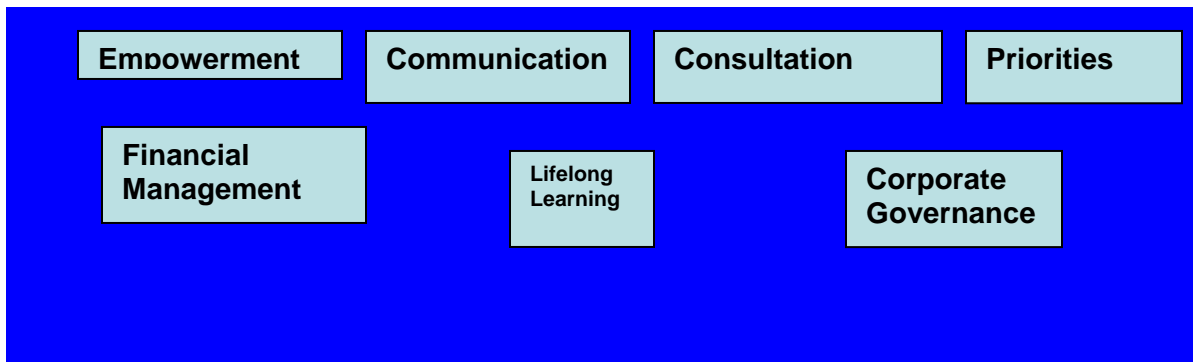
Council Values



Corporate Objectives.



Corporate baselines



Appendix C

Framework for Provision of Services through Different Channels and Points of Contact

The Council wishes to maximize the use of the various channels and points of contact available to provide services including supplying information and undertaking transactions.

The Council will adopt a multi-channel and multi-access point approach to customer contact and care.

The main delivery channels needing to be considered are:-

- Face to face (the customer coming to a council location to access services)
- Remote Customer Service points (Durham County included)
- Freephone
- Video conferencing
- Self Service (the customer accessing services by themselves)
- Internet / Kiosks
- Mobile Services (face to face but with the service taken to the customer)
- Free post

The channel mix will change over time with increased acceptance and availability of electronic channels.

The widest range of services will be available at the First Stop Shop/Mall. This will enable them to function as a local community resource, e.g. specialist 'clinics' by the Police, access to in-depth advice from service specialists.

Appendix D

Framework for the development of Corporate Customer Care Standards

On Contact

We are polite and courteous

We guarantee confidentiality and equality

We will provide an interpreter and assist those with literacy problems, where appropriate

We will supply information/advice about other services, not provided by Wear Valley District Council where we can

Telephone Contact

We will answer your calls within 10 seconds (three rings)

We will greet giving our name and service area

When we pass your enquiry we will pass on your personal details and the nature of your query so that you do not have to repeat it to another person

Written Contact

We will respond to all correspondence, (Formal Complaints excluded) including Councillors' enquiries, within 10 working days if this is not possible we will acknowledge within 1 working day.

We will provide a contact name, e-mail address and direct dial number in the letter

We will process written formal complaints through the complaints procedure including giving a full response to Stage 3 complaint within 25 working days.

We will write in plain language providing translations where appropriate.

We will provide information in other languages, on tape or in Braille at the customer's request.

We will acknowledge and resolve where we can, using the most appropriate form of communication – telephone and e-mail to bring about swift resolution.

E-Mail/ Internet /Fax

We will acknowledge within 1 working day and give a full response/update within 10 working days

We will acknowledge informal complaints (concerns) within 1 day and give full response/update within 10 working days.

We will use plain language

Face to Face Contact

At the First Stop Shop

Front line staff will wear uniform

Wear name badges

Signage and facilities will meet the needs of Customers who are:-

- Disabled
- Mothers with babies
- Children
- The elderly

Callers will be attended to within 5 minutes and provided with the required information or we will transfer/ make an appointment with a specialist service provider within 10 minutes.

We will keep the appointment that you have made and will inform you in advance if we have to cancel it

In your Home

We will:-

- Make an appointment to meet you in your home and will inform you in advance if we have to cancel it
- Wear and show Council identification when we meet you, and if necessary you can confirm our identity through the Council.

Appendix E

| Standard | Target Current | Target April 2008 |
|--|---|--|
| % of enquiries dealt with at first point of contact (from the Customer's view point) Customer advised of next steps and timeframe if not practical | | 80% |
| Abandoned Calls – Calls held in queue < ?minutes | Council wide figure not available (Research to be undertaken) – Require call logger facilities – Telephone line contract renewal Nov 2007 | Number of abandoned calls/ enquiries should be no more than 20% (?) Calls to be released from queue within 60 seconds |
| Outbound Calls Standard Greeting – Standards to be included in Handbook | | |
| Inbound Calls Standards to be included in Handbook Answer telephone within 10 seconds (approx. 3 rings) | | 90% |
| Voice mail Checked a minimum of daily Standards to be included in Handbook | | 90% |
| Answering Machines Standards to be included in Handbook Messages to be acknowledged within 1 day | | |
| Message Taking Standard to be included in Handbook | | |

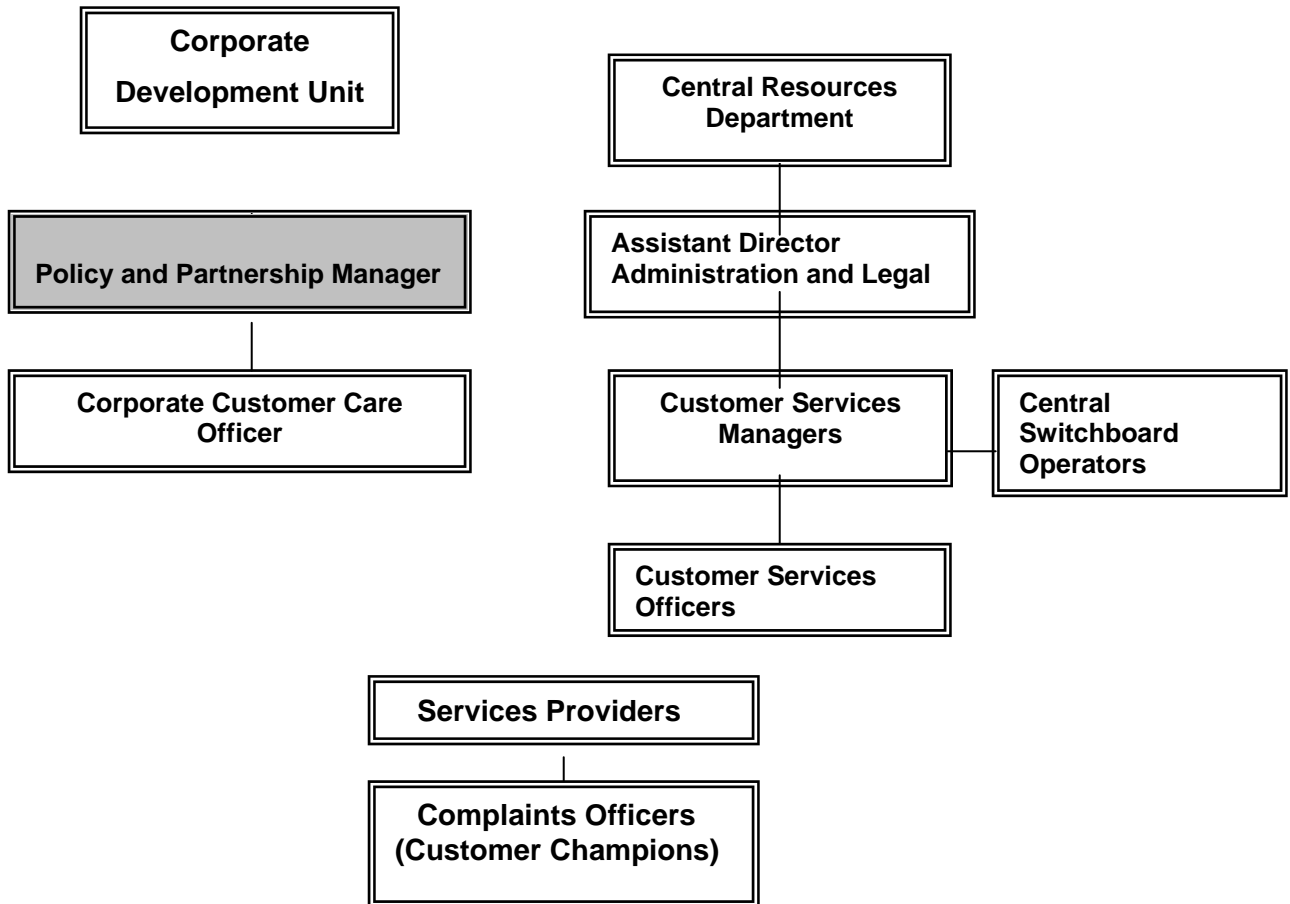
| | | |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| | | |
| <p>Attend to visitors in Council premises enquiries/transactions at Council premises:</p> <p>% of enquiries dealt with Reception < 5min</p> <p>Service Providers <10min</p> <p>Customers provided with appointments (Service Providers)</p> <p>Standard to be included in Handbook</p> <p>Extend range of leaflets to facilitate self service to customers</p> | <p>Council wide figure not available (Research to undertaken)</p> | <p>90%</p> <p>80%</p> |
| <p>Visiting Customers in their homes –</p> <p>Standards to be included in Handbook</p> | | |
| <p>Response to correspondence, including councillor</p> <p>10 working days, then in multiples of 10 updating customer at these points (respond by telephone/e-mail if appropriate)</p> <p>Acknowledgement within 1 working day if resolution is not possible</p> <p>Standards to be included in Handbook</p> <p>Use Plain English standard</p> | <p>Council wide figure not available (Research to undertaken)</p> | <p>90%</p> <p>90%</p> |
| <p>E-mails -</p> <p>Acknowledgement within 1 working day if resolution not possible</p> <p>Respond/ update within 10 working days.</p> <p>Standards to be included in handbook</p> <p>Use Plain English Standards</p> | | <p>90%</p> <p>80%</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|-------------------|
| Fax Response/update within 10 working days Acknowledgement within 1 working day if resolution is not possible Standards to be included in handbook | | 90% |
| Response to Comments/ Reports/ Enquiries/ Suggestions/ Praise Recorded –1 working day Acknowledged – (if not resolved) - 1 working day Final Response/ update – 10 working days then in multiples of 10 updating customer at these points | | 90% 90% 80% |
| Resolution of Complaints* (other than in the Formal system) (*concerns) Within 10 working days Acknowledgement (written/e-mail /fax within 1 working day | | 80% |
| Acknowledgement of Stage 1 complaints Within 3* working days (respond by telephone/e-mail if appropriate) (*reduce to 1) | | 100% |
| | | |
| Full response/update to Stage 1 complaints Within 10 working days | | 90% |
| | | |
| Acknowledgement of Stage 2 complaints Within 3* working days (respond by telephone/e-mail if appropriate) (*reduce to 1) | | 100% |
| Full response/update to Stage 2 complaints Within 10 working days Currently 15 days | | 80% |

| | | |
|--|--|------|
| | | |
| Acknowledgement of Stage 3 complaints Within 3* working days (respond by telephone/e-mail if appropriate) (*reduce to 1) | | 100% |
| Full response to Stage 3 complaint Within 25 working days | | 90% |
| Internet – E Service requests | Automated Response – Staff Response in line with e-mails | |
| BV157 – E-enabled priority services | 100% | 100% |
| Satisfaction feedback through resident and staff surveys, panels, mystery shoppers and other means | Targets to be set | |

Appendix F

Customer Services Structures:



Appendix G

Service Action Plan

| Target | Action | Why are we doing it | When will we do it | Comments |
|---|--|---|---|----------|
| Raise profile of Customer Services throughout the Council and the District. | <p>Include in Induction presentations</p> <p>Provide Customer Care Information in easy format – Telephone answering techniques</p> <p>Poster Campaign</p> <p>Presentation of Oracle and where we are at Extended Management Team</p> | <p>To ensure Customer Care is at the heart of the organisation</p> <p>To have Customer care standards and helpful hints are easily available</p> <p>Bring CRM system to the forefront as an information management tool for service development</p> | <p>May 2007</p> <p>Nov 2007</p> <p>May 2007 (completed)</p> | |
| Defined Targets and desired achievement levels for Customer Services and Service Providers own Service targets. | <p>Introduce Standards for E-mail Letters</p> <p>Telephone Answering Visitors</p> <p>Set out Service Targets for inclusion in Customer Care Handbook</p> <p>Set Percentages of Achievement and set as Local Targets</p> | To ensure a consistent and quality service allowing dips in performance to be managed leading to service improvement | Jan 2008 | |
| Update of Formal Complaints Procedure | <p>New Communication form to include comments/ reports /Praise</p> <p>Include Young People and Children</p> <p>Replace negativity with a more proactive approach</p> <p>Look at role of Complaints Officers</p> | <p>To gather information relating to service provision to develop service improvement</p> <p>To ensure Young People and Children are aware of Council Services</p> | Sept 2007 | |

Lead Officer
Approval Date
Version
Review Date

Corporate Customer Care Officer

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|--|
| | Recording of all complaints, compliments, comments and transfer to Oracle from Lotus notes | Ensure all complaints are tracked | | |
| Introduce Customer Advocates | Customer Services to take on role of Customer advocates | Ensure independent person is working on behalf of the customer Build up relationship between Council and customer | Dec 2007 | |
| Implementation Customer Care Charter | Public Statement of our Standards | A first step towards Charter Mark | Jan 2008 | |
| Customer Feedback Systems | Introduce Listening Boards Pilot scheme at Glenholme Introduce Customer Confirmation slips | A first step to making sure our customer realise we are listening to them Give confidence in the system | Dec 2007 March 2008 | |
| Design and Re-launch of Customer Services Internet Pages | Make this more user friendly, more communication less complaints Pages needed for Customer Services (Including First Stop Shop). To include Charter, Children's pages. Competitions Suggestions RNIB Customer standard | | Feb 2008 | |
| Involvement and empowerment of staff to satisfy resolution of Customer needs at first | Arrange workshops for the Empowerment and levels of decision making of frontline staff. | | March 2008 | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------|--|
| contact, (target to be set) | | | | |
| Formulate Management Information for Service Providers including Contact Council's Contact Centre Pls | Utilise Oracle for reports Devise other reporting mechanisms Set up Customer Care meetings with Service providers to exchange information Reports – Invite Neil to give a presentation on Reporting from the CRM to give managers a flavour of what information can be gathered and the benefits. Report development and then design data collection forms | | Dec 2007 | |
| Introduce mechanisms for Customer input/feedback and Surveys for Customer Satisfaction | Set up Focus Groups and Random sampling for Customer Satisfaction Standpoint Design Surveys-Paper form, Telephone Internet feedback | | Nov 2007 | |
| Bench Mark against Benchmarking Club and market leaders in Customer Care | Aim to be the Best District Council in the Country | | Jan 2008 | |
| Work with Partners and Stakeholders to develop Joint Working especially in areas such as Residents meetings/ Road Show activities Mobile services | Customer Services goes out and about! Link with events- Shows Christmas Fairs Work with the Fire Brigade and other stakeholders | | Nov 2007 | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|-------------------|--|
| <p>Identify opportunities for partnership working in relation to mobile and outreach services.</p> | <p>Set up teams to ensure outreach is consistent and meets customer's needs in terms of access and inclusion Look at Talking Newspaper, Braille, languages and hard to reach groups</p> | | | |
| <p>Rights of Staff to be treated with courtesy and respect.</p> | <p>Design a Poster explaining the rights of staff not to be abused.</p> | <p>To protect staff from verbal and physical abuse</p> | <p>Sept 2007</p> | |
| <p>Extend the use of CRM to manage Customer Enquiries and Interactions</p> | <p>Work with the other Districts to role out Oracle and work with First Stop Shop to extend the system</p> <p>Examine present position and policies as to development of CRM. Research previous workshop information gathered on attributes re-align with what is happening now and any major policy/ structural changes. Use of the CRM systems - where they are at present and where Oracle can be updated to give improved performance Generic verses Service Specific Look at Back Office supporting</p> | | <p>April 2008</p> | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | <p>information and how the relationships would work. Look at present information. Is it in data bases can this be accessed and fed into the system. Look at staffing capability and transfer of customer interface to front office. Update Workshop information, create work flows and re-engineer processes - Letter Monitoring – linking with NECE Project Transfer of formal Complaints from lotus notes to Oracle Use of oracle to track and monitor letters – acknowledgement and service requests to solve the Immediate problem Set up programme for Roll out priorities Data input at Reception and First Stop Shop of all complaints, comments suggestions and praise. (Not as yet Requests for Service) Extend the system to provide a virtual Call Centre to include Complaint Officers (Customer</p> | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------|--|
| | Champions) and relevant Managers/ Supervisors. | | | |
| Further develop internal and external Customer Care within the Council | Look at Training and development of staff in areas of Customer Care. Ensure that Staff understand we are all customers of each other Look at team meetings and staff suggestions feedback. | Team meetings will allow staff to learn from each other and share experiences in order to develop best practice and innovation | Sept 2007 | |
| Provide a Customer Care Handbook | Publish a handbook on Customer Care, including Standards Policies and Expectations | To improve Service delivery and consistency | Dec 2007 | |
| Ensure Equality and Accessibility of Service | Carry out impact assessments on all aspects of Customer Care | Ensure our services are accessible to all and are socially inclusive | Oct 2007 | |
| Write and implement Customer Care Policies | E-mail Protocol Letters Face to Face Telephone | To ensure high standards of Customer care are delivered throughout the organisation | Feb 2008 | |
| Write and implement Customer Care Procedures | Work with First Stop Shop to build up procedures and Work flow | Provide a framework for Customer Care delivery and assist in training | Nov 2007 | |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|------------|--|
| Write and Implement Monitoring and evaluation Procedures | Set up monitoring systems for Calls, Letters E-mail Face to face Complaint resolution Comments Suggestions Reports Set up Evaluation and feedback mechanisms Including Efficiencies, Capacity Re-orientation of Resources | To supply information regarding performance | April 2008 | |
| Key Line of enquiry | Ensure these are taken into account when developing customer care systems | | July 2007 | |
| Develop key Customer Group definitions | Understand needs and behaviours | Tailor communications and services rather than provide a one size fits all | March 2008 | |
| Introduce Customer Champions | Replace Complaints Officers with Customer Champions centralise the recording of complaints comments etc. | Act as a focal point for customer care in their service | Nov 2007 | |

Appendix H

Extracts from Perceptions of Local Government in England relating to Customer Care

Sally Taylor and Bridget Williams
BMG Research Ltd
October 2006
Department for Communities and Local
Government: London

Key Findings

SATISFACTION WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

In all three elements of the research, as in various other studies that have analysed residents' satisfaction with their local authority, it appears that service provision is The key driver of residents' satisfaction. For most people, "local authority service provision" means, above all, refuse collection and recycling, followed by leisure, sporting and recreational facilities, parks and keeping the streets clean.

Assessing satisfaction with service provision is complicated by the fact that there is considerable confusion and misunderstanding about the demarcation of local authority responsibility and those of other providers, in terms of service provision (high level authorities, Police, the lack of NHS Dentists in the area, etc.). Awareness of the range of services provided by councils tended to be low across all three

strands of the work, and when shown a list of the council's services, most respondents expressed surprise at the range of services provided. In all strands of the research, residents' first reactions when asked to discuss their local authority are largely negative and critical. It is rare for respondents to state that they are very satisfied with their local authority. In general, those aspects of service provision that are working well appear to receive far less attention to those than are perceived to be sub-standard. Some respondents noted that a service which is working well tends to fall into the background, with respondents expecting that this is a "normal" standard of service.

Respondents in their 30s to 50s appear to be the most negative, with younger and older respondents most positive about council provision.

When assessing their level of satisfaction, it appears that first of all, most respondents focus in on quite passive experiences of services – what they see and pass by in their day-to-day life: issues like litter, graffiti, crime, parks, traffic and so on.

Lead Officer
Approval Date
Version
Review Date

Corporate Customer Care Officer

When it comes to more “active”, actual physical contact and involvement with council services, most respondents think first about refuse collection and to a lesser extent, doorstep recycling facilities – even though this is usually still quite a passive level of “involvement”.

In almost every group, respondents noted that their council tax is high, and many felt that it is too high. A key theme throughout the discussions is respondents’ desire to know that their money is being spent wisely on what they see as core services. In order for their satisfaction with the local authority to increase, most respondents want to see improvements to a fairly consistent range of services (particularly antisocial behaviour, activities for young people and traffic).

CONTACT WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

For a minority of respondents, direct contact with local authority staff can have a significant impact on residents’ overall views of their council – serving usually to reinforce, but occasionally to question their pre-existing views about the council as a whole.

Negative encounters with staff are clearly likely to have a correspondingly negative effect on resident’s views of the council. In some cases, it seems that these negative encounters are more likely to affect respondents’ overall satisfaction, where they live in a pleasant environment and are accustomed to receiving good service from their local authority.

Respondents seem to have far more examples of occasions on which they have had an unsatisfactory (rather than positive) experience with local authority staff. Reports centre on the failure of staff to ring back and answer queries and the length of time it takes for the council to rectify what respondents view as apparently simple problems (such as faulty fencing or street lighting)

There were fewer reports of instances where residents have experienced excellent service from council staff. The groups in which residents had the most positive things to say about staff tended to be more likely to be satisfied with the council. In areas where residents were overall dissatisfied with their council, a positive assessment of these staff does not appear to impact greatly on overall satisfaction.

In the third strand of research, we explored whether respondents had previously attempted to tackle local issues in their area by taking some action. In most cases, respondents found that their action had not translated into any real change, and they had been left disillusioned and more negative about the council in general. In the main, respondents do not know the identity of their local

councillor. Most take very little interest in local politics and are highly cynical about what would motivate a person to stand for election to the council.

CUSTOMER CARE

In one strand of the work, respondents were asked to think about “customer service” or “customer care” in public sector bodies. Most respondents’ first reaction was that their council fails to offer good customer care. Many respondents are particularly critical of slow or poor switchboard service and the fact that staff rarely return calls promptly or efficiently.

However, when they think more carefully about it, many agreed that there were several areas in which customer care has been excellent. Most acknowledged that in their council, as with all large organisations, there are departments and staff that offer good customer care, and departments and individuals that do not. However, until they are asked to think about them, many examples are either taken for granted and expected, or otherwise not at the forefront of most residents’ minds.

In order for councils to improve their customer care, respondents felt that councils need improve the service that residents receive on the telephone or in response to written communications. This focus may have been a result of the fact that few people had had much experience of face-to-face contact with council staff.

Key calls for improvement were as follows:

- the switchboard operators need to be fast in picking up the phones, polite,
- efficient and capable of directing callers to the correct extension;
- staff within departments should be equipped with the knowledge to provide
- answers;
- calls should be returned within agreed time frames; and
- staff should accept greater responsibility for residents’ problems and queries,
- and be seen to be more proactive.

However, some residents felt that councils will never offer better customer service because unlike private sector companies and even the ex-public utilities, there is no competition to force them into action.

There is clear confusion amongst residents over who the local council is and what they do. Perceptions of the council are often based not only on the council,

but also on the performance of other organisations and other factors outside of the council's control. In addition, because residents are generally unaware of the range of services provided by the council, opinions are often based on a very narrow range of experiences, primarily issues surrounding liveability and "street scene". Linked to this, many feel that they are not receiving value for money for their council tax.

Given that only a small proportion of those interviewed had had much contact with the council, for many, perceptions appear to be mainly based on hearsay and media reports. With this in mind, it is not surprising that respondents are more positive about the council in areas which actively manage their relationship with the local press. In general, there were calls for councils to provide clear, honest and transparent information on a range of issues, why particular policies have been adopted, how much they cost, etc. It was felt that such transparency would engender more trust amongst residents.

It is vital that, where residents are included in consultation exercises, that they are given adequate feedback and, where views cannot be taken on board, to be told why. Those who have expressed their views but feel that they have not been taken into account were amongst the most negative respondents participating in the research.

Almost all felt that councillors need to be more visible and seen to be connecting more with the communities they serve in order that they can provide real community leadership.

Respondents called for those working in the council to take responsibility for residents' problems and queries, and to be more proactive in responding to them.

Analysis of Indicator Performance

BV2b – The duty to promote race equality checks

The performance for this indicator has remained constant during the first quarter. The current performance is above median – the first quarter result has not changed since the previous 06/07 year end result ceasing the year on year improvement of the indicator – The indicator is currently performing above median when compared to national statistics, if subsequent performance does not improve it is likely the indicator could deteriorate into below median or bottom quartiles.

BV11a – The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women

The performance of this indicator has improved in the first quarter, however, the quartile performance of this indicator remains static in the below median quartile.

BV11b – The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities

The performance of this indicator has remained constant despite the various initiatives and recruitment techniques undertaken by the Council. If current performance continues we will fail to meet our target and will remain in the bottom quartile.

BV15 – The percentage of the workforce retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce

During the first quarter the performance of this indicator has improved from 0.36 to 0 – taking the indicator into the top quartile.

BV17a – The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities

The first quarter performance for this indicator has remained static – the indicator currently resides in the bottom quartile and without a massive influx of minority ethnic employees the indicator is likely to be difficult to influence.

BV63 – Energy Efficiency: the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings

During quarter one, the performance of this indicator remained static at 64.6 – if this trend continues the target of 65.5 will not be achieved. If the scoring for the quartile performance increases it is likely the indicator will decrease from below median quartile to bottom quartile.

BV76b – Number of fraud investigators employed, per 1000 caseload

During quarter one, the performance of this indicator increased from 0.37 to 0.39, with a recent partnership with Teesdale capacity is available to employ more fraud investigators, however, with recent LGR action the likelihood of notable increase is limited. The indicator is currently in the above median quartile.

BV76c – Number of fraud investigation per 1,000 caseload

The performance for this indicator has increased from the previous year's first quarter results from 10.76 to 21.48 – if this trend continues our target of 57 will be achieved and the performance will be in the top quartile.

BV76d – Number of prosecutions and sanctions, per 1,000 caseload

The performance of this indicator has increased (1.61) when compared to previous years first quarter results (0.46). It is predicted that the year end result will achieve the target of 6.4 which would take the indicator into the above median quartile.

BV84a – KG of Household waste collected per head

The performance of this indicator has decreased during the first quarter with total waste collected currently at 107.01KG per head of population for the year. If this continues we will not reach our target and will subsequently be in the bottom quartile. It is important to note that this indicator is subject to seasonal variation, e.g. more waste at Christmas and could increase.

BV86 – Cost of waste collection per household

The performance for this indicator has increased (13.66) when compared to the previous years first quarter results (13). If this trend continues the councils target of 50 will not be achieved.

BV106 – Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land

The performance of this indicator during quarter one has increased from 61.9 to 80.34 – this significant increase puts the performance into the above median quartile.

BV126 – Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households

The performance of this indicator has currently been predicted to achieve a score of 6.68, which will enable the council to achieve its target of 7 meaning the council would finish in the above median quartile.

BV128 – Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population

The performance of this indicator is predicted to be 9.39 falling short of the councils target of 9.

BV156 – Percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people

The performance of this indicator has remained constant during the first quarter. With no budget planned for this area it is unlikely this score will improve.

BV174 – The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population

The performance of this indicator has decreased from 0 to 1.6 in the first quarter.

BV184a & BV184b – Percentage of non decent homes

Despite numerous attempts to obtain this information the department concerned failed to supply the desired information within the timeframe given.

BV204 – Percentage of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning permission

The performance of this indicator has again decreased. The score has fallen from 50 – 60, if this trend continues the indicator will remain in the bottom quartile.

| PI No. | Department | Corporate Priority | Description | 06/07 results | | 1st Quarter | Target | On Target? | Top Quartile | Median | Bottom | Predicted quartile | Improvement | Improved a quartile? |
|--------|------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|---------|-------------|--------|------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| | | | | 2005/06 | 2005/06 | | | | 2005/06 | | | | | |

Crime

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|-------|---|------------------|-------|----------|------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|------|
| BV076b | Resources | Crime | Housing Benefit Security: No. of fraud investigators employed, per 1,000 caseload | 0.37 | 0.37 | 0.39 | 0.35 | | 0.45 | 0.35 | 0.28 | Above | Y | Same |
| BV076c | Resources | Crime | Housing Benefit Security: No. of fraud investigations, per 1,000 caseload | 10.76 (43.04) | 54.7 | 21.48 | 57 | | 60.27 | 45.32 | 31.21 | Top | Y | Up |
| BV076d | Resources | Crime | Housing Benefit Security: No. of prosecutions and sanctions, per 1,000 caseload | 0.46 (1.84) | 4.87 | 1.61 | 6.4 | | 8.14 | 5.47 | 3.62 | Above | Y | Up |
| BV126 | Community | Crime | Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households (No.) | 11.09 | 9.89 | 6.68(P) | 7 | | 5.70 | 7.40 | 9.60 | Above | Y | Up |
| BV127a | Community | Crime | Violent crime per year, 1,000 population in the LA area | 19.69 | 16.74 | 18(P) | 16.5 | | 11.10 | 14.50 | 18.60 | Below | N | Same |
| BV128 | Community | Crime | Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population (No.) | 7.62 | 9.67 | 9.39 (P) | 9 | | 6.40 | 8.30 | 10.50 | Below | Y | Same |
| BV174 | Community | Crime | **The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population** Council target is different to quartile weighting | 0 | 3.22 | 1.6 | 0 | | 3.60 | 0.80 | 0.00 | Above | Y | Same |

Environment

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-------------|-------------|---|-----------------|--------|--------|------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|------|
| BV84a | Community | Environment | Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head | 97 (388) | 422.26 | 107.01 | 400 | | 381.00 | 409.60 | 442.70 | Bottom | N | Same |
| BV86 | Community | Environment | Cost of waste collection per household | 13 (52) | 51.34 | 13.66 | 50 | | 40.28 | 46.25 | 52.61 | Bottom | N | Down |
| BV184a | D & V Homes | Environment | The proportion of LA homes which were non-decent at the beginning of the year | 35.6 | 38.6 | | 52 | | 12 | 24 | 39 | | | |
| BV184b | D & V Homes | Environment | The percentage change in proportion of non-decent LA homes in the year | 3.26 (13.04) | 21.4 | | 21 | | 29.20 | 14.20 | 0.70 | | | |
| BV063 | Env & Regen | Environment | Energy Efficiency - the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings | 64.1 | 64.6 | 64.6 | 65.5 | | 69 | 67 | 64 | Below | N | Same |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------------|-------------|---|----|------|-------|----|--|-------|-------|-------|--------|---|------|
| BV106 | Env & Regen | Environment | Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land. | 50 | 61.9 | 80.34 | 65 | | 89.36 | 75.00 | 57.36 | Above | Y | Up |
| BV204 | Env & Regen | Environment | % of appeals allowed against the authorities decision to refuse planning applications | 0 | 50 | 60 | 25 | | 25.00 | 30.00 | 36.10 | Bottom | N | Same |

Health

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------|--------|--|------|------|---|------|--|------|------|------|-----|---|----|
| BV015 | Resources | Health | Percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce | 0.18 | 0.36 | 0 | 0.35 | | 0.00 | 0.25 | 0.42 | Top | Y | Up |
|-------|-----------|--------|--|------|------|---|------|--|------|------|------|-----|---|----|

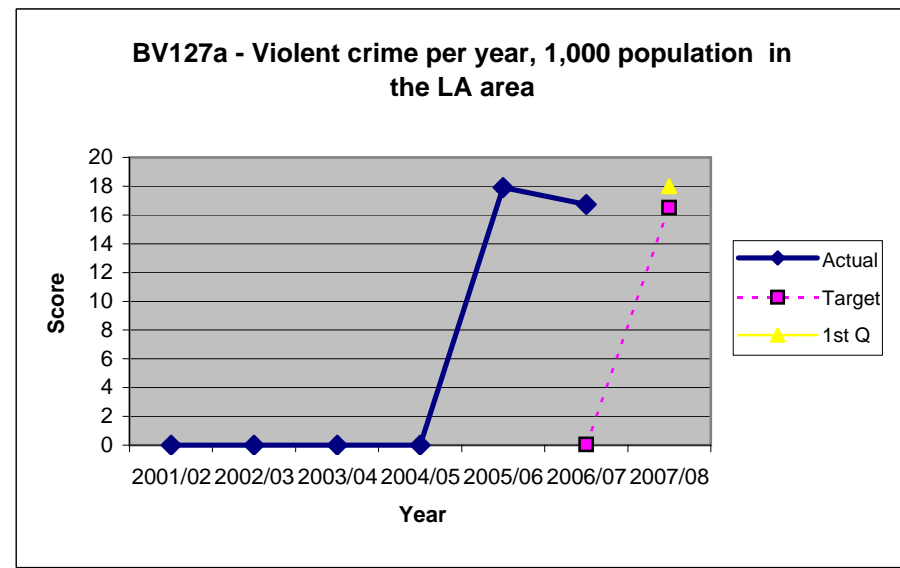
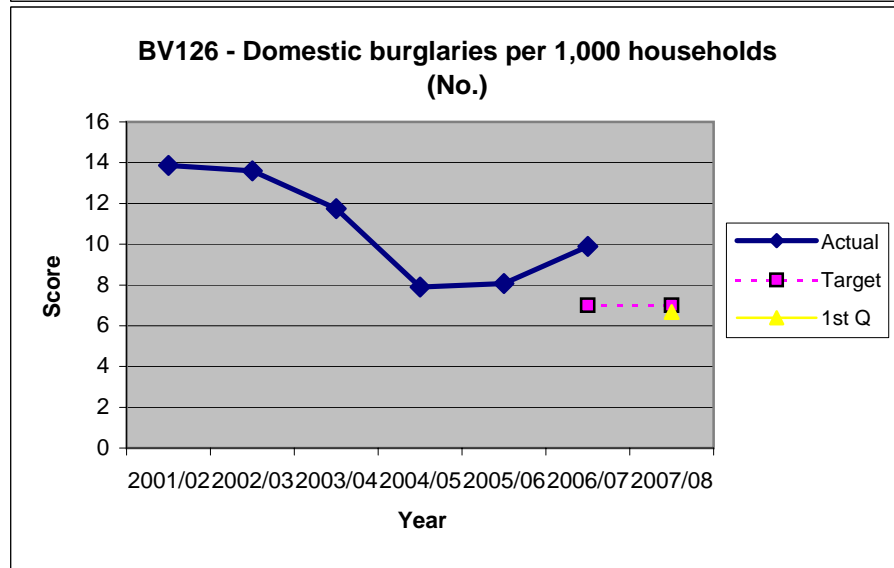
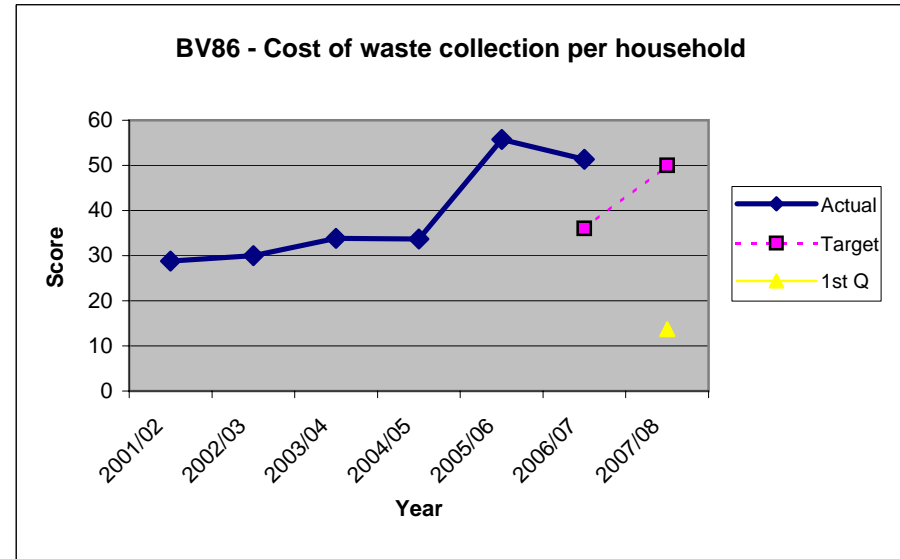
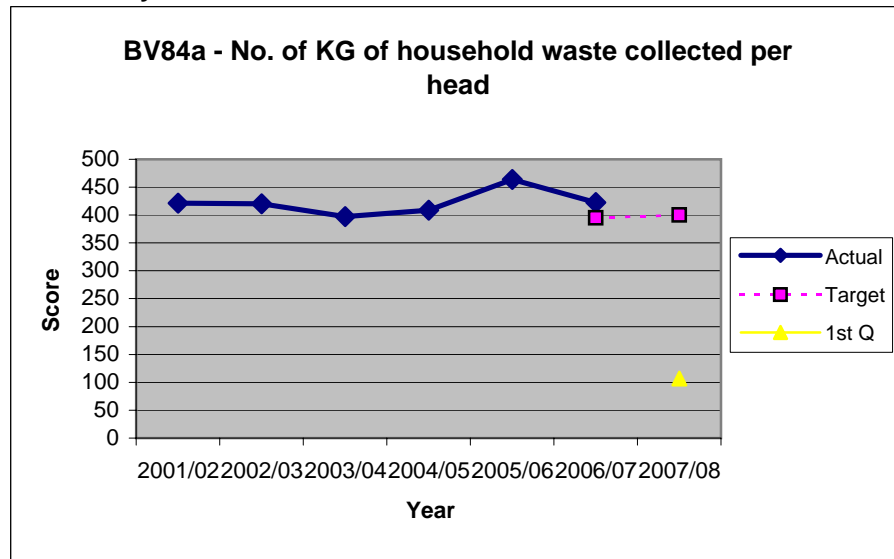
Organisational Development

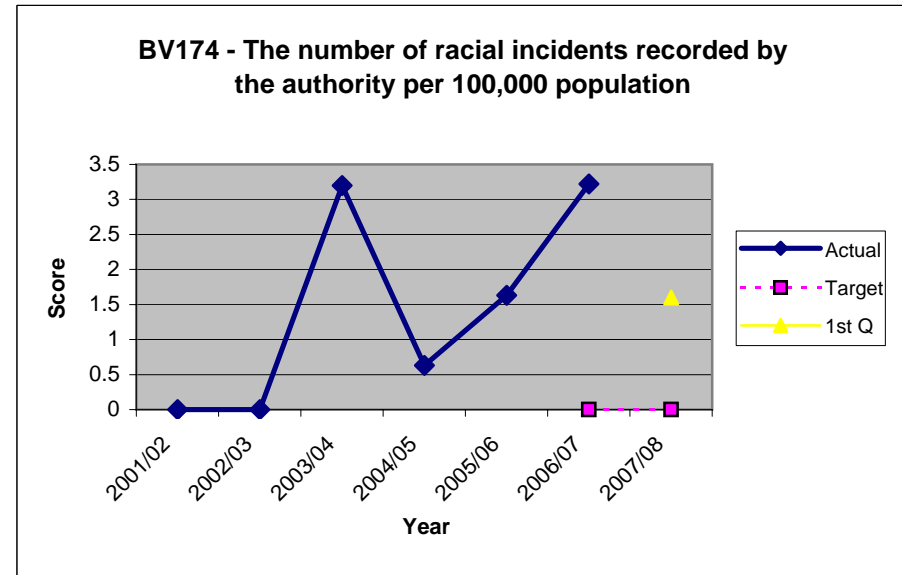
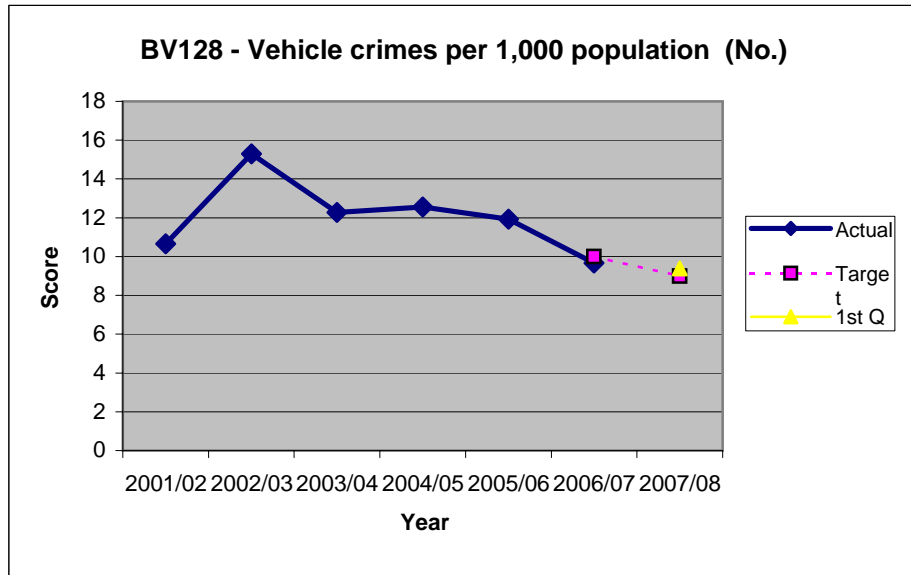
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|----------------------------|---|-------|------|------|-----|--|-------|-------|-------|--------|---|------|
| BV002 b | Resources | Organisational Development | The duty to promote race equality checklist score | 42 | 58 | 58 | 55 | | 73.00 | 58.00 | 42.00 | Above | N | Same |
| BV011 a | Resources | Organisational Development | The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women | 20.88 | 22 | 24 | 25 | | 31.25 | 25.00 | 18.79 | Below | Y | Same |
| BV011 b | Resources | Organisational Development | The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4.5 | | 3.37 | 0.00 | 0.00 | Below | N | Same |
| BV017 a | Resources | Organisational Development | Percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities | 0.53 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 1 | | 2.70 | 1.40 | 0.80 | Bottom | N | Down |
| BV156 | Resources | Organisational Development | Percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people | 45 | 65 | 65 | 60 | | 87.5 | 72.87 | 53.81 | Below | N | Same |

P - predicted year end results from DCC

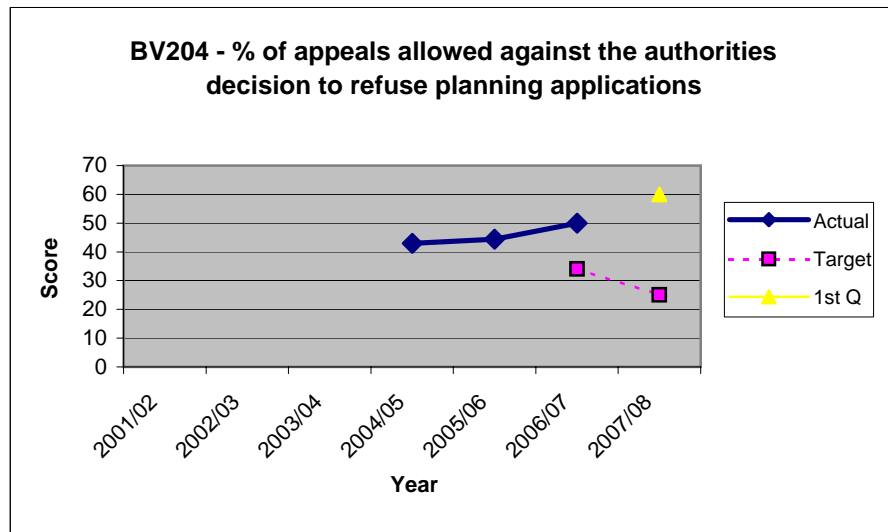
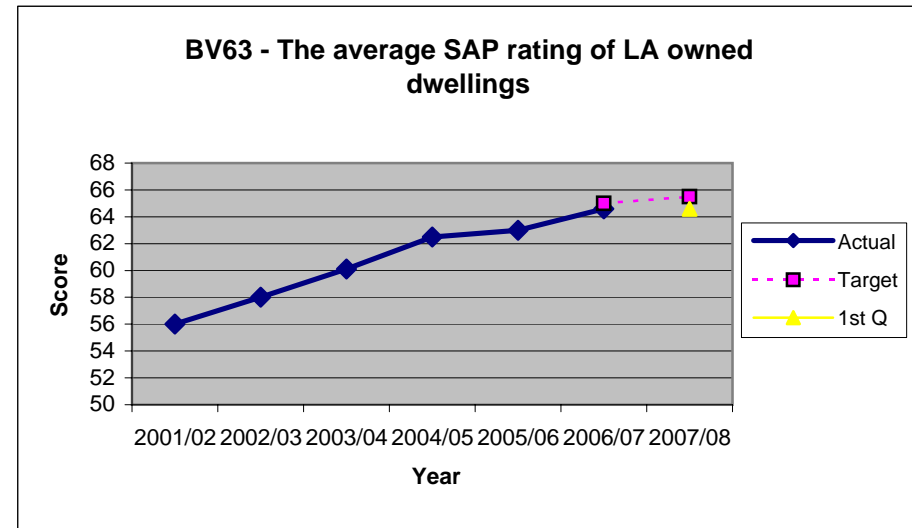
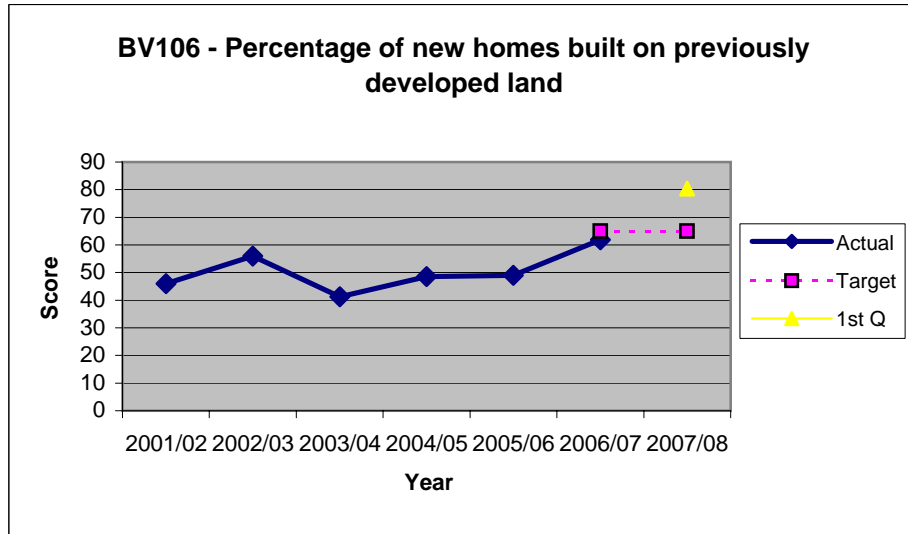
It would appear that the greatest improvements have been made within the crime priority. Out of a total of 6 indicators 2 are predicted to be in the below median quartile 4 indicators are predicted to be in the above median quartile with the final 1 indicator predicted to be in the top performing quartile. Many of the other indicators have not made the significant and continuous performance improvement that these indicators have.

Community

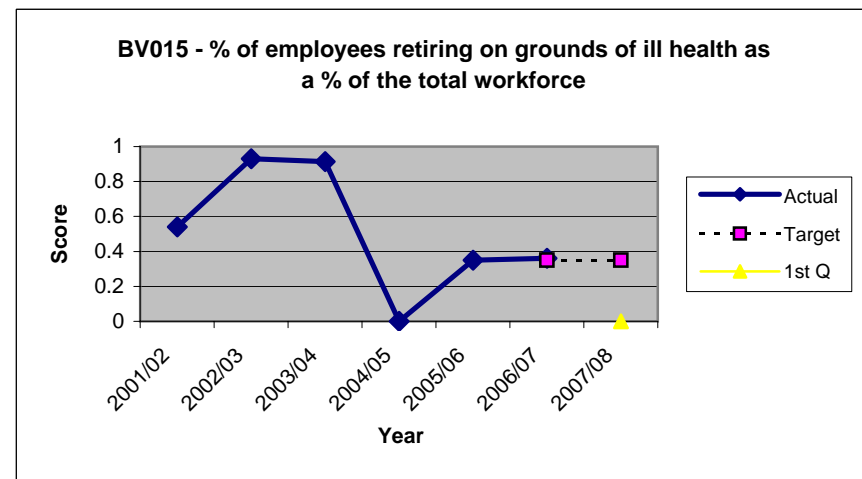
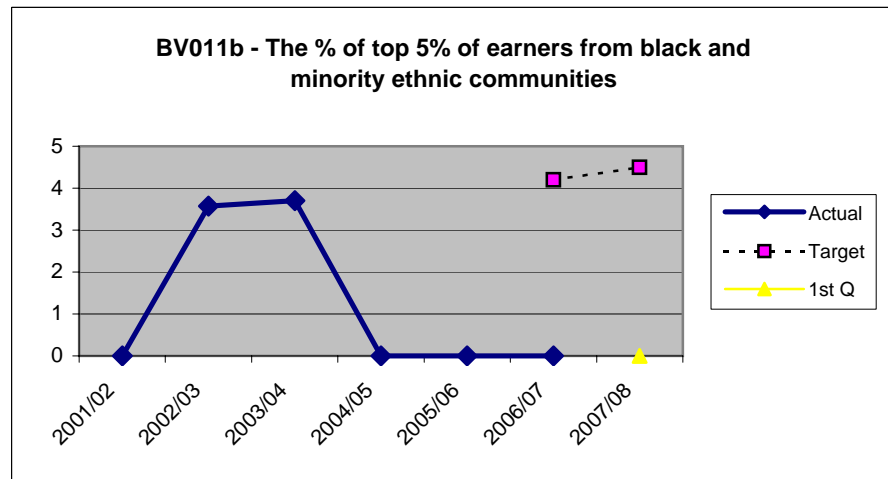
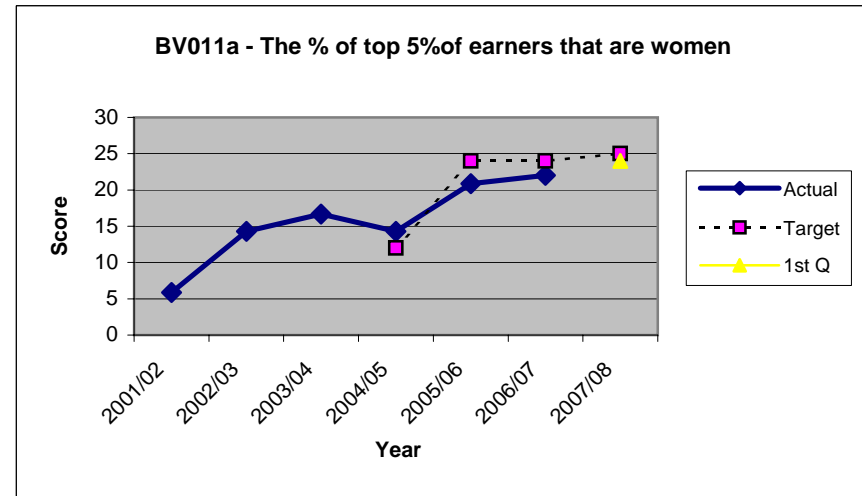
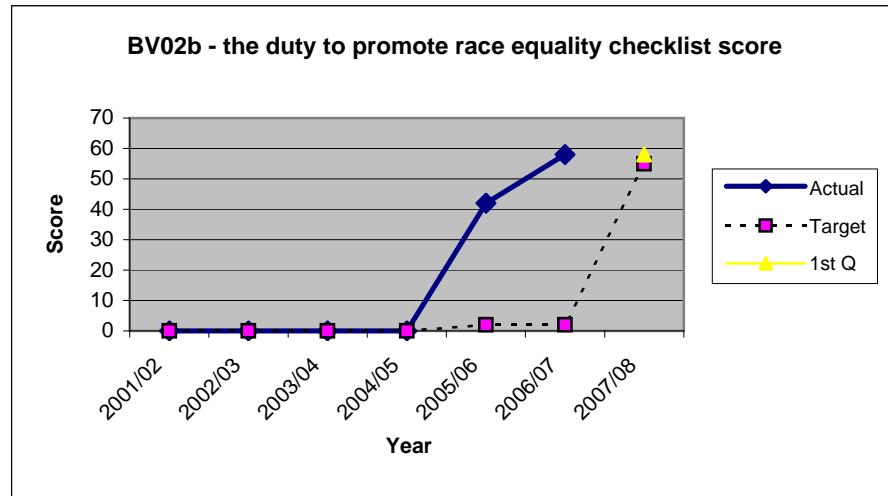


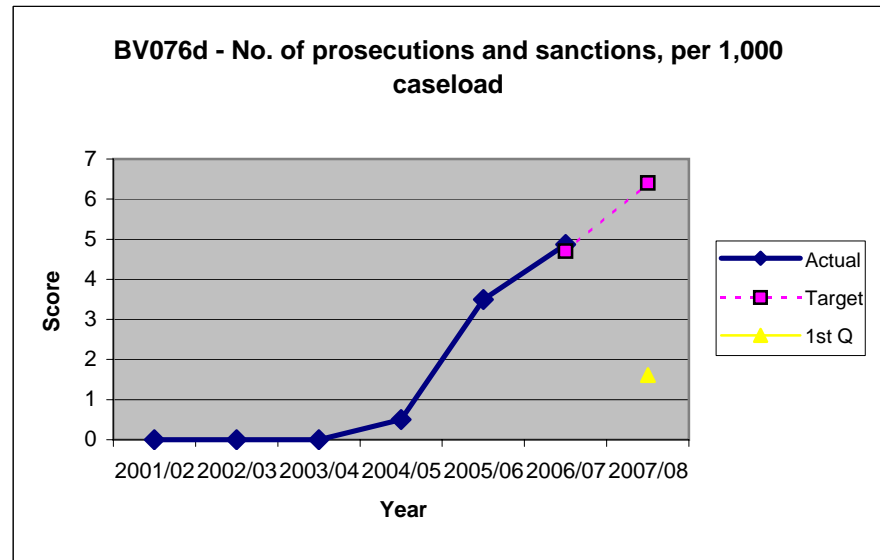
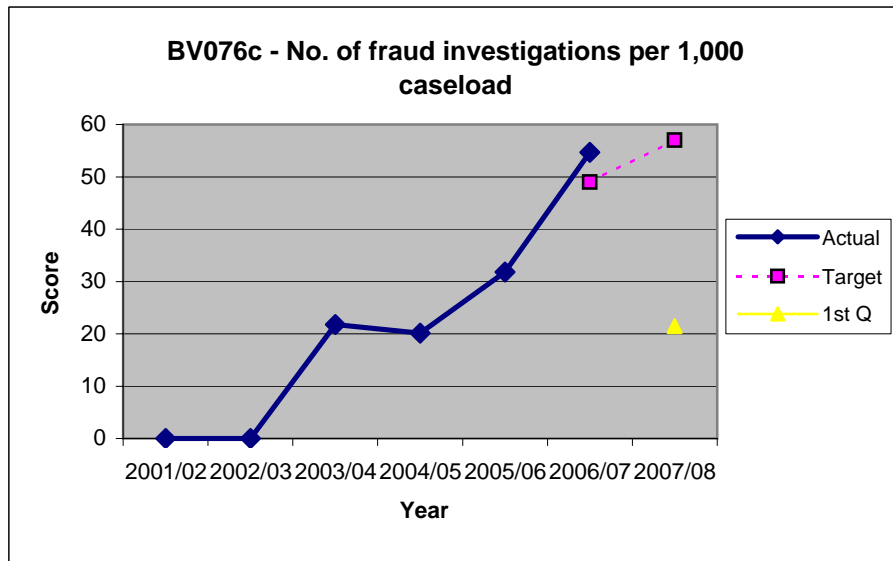
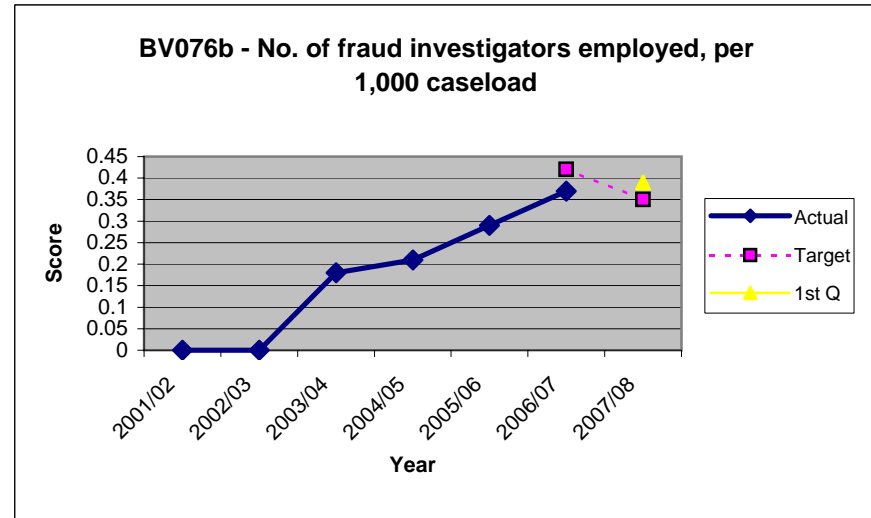
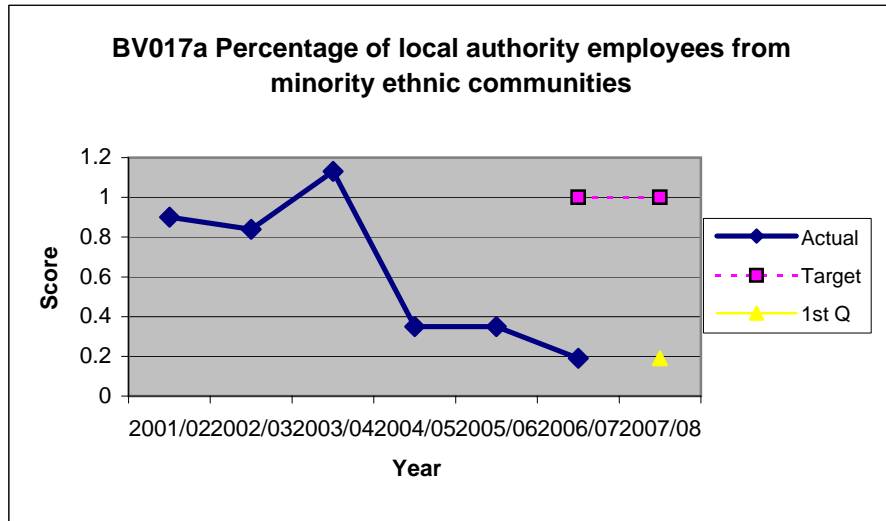


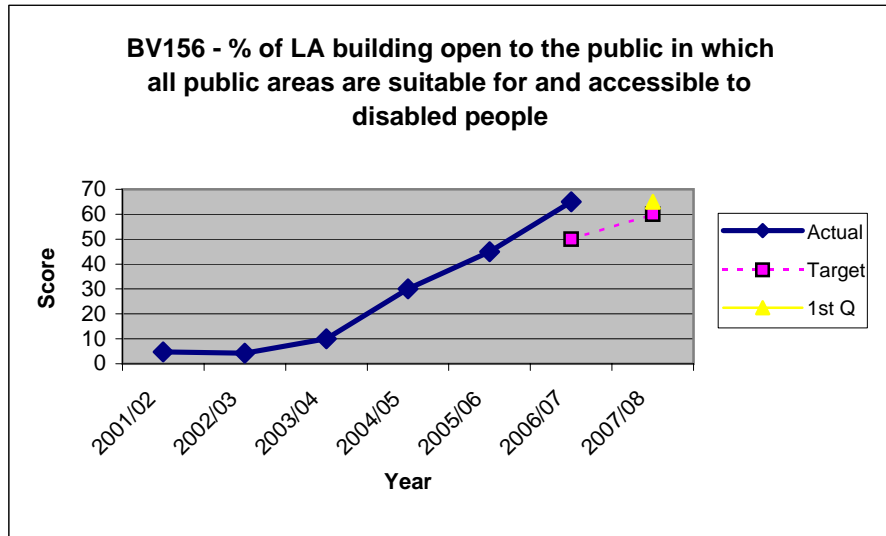
Environment & Regeneration



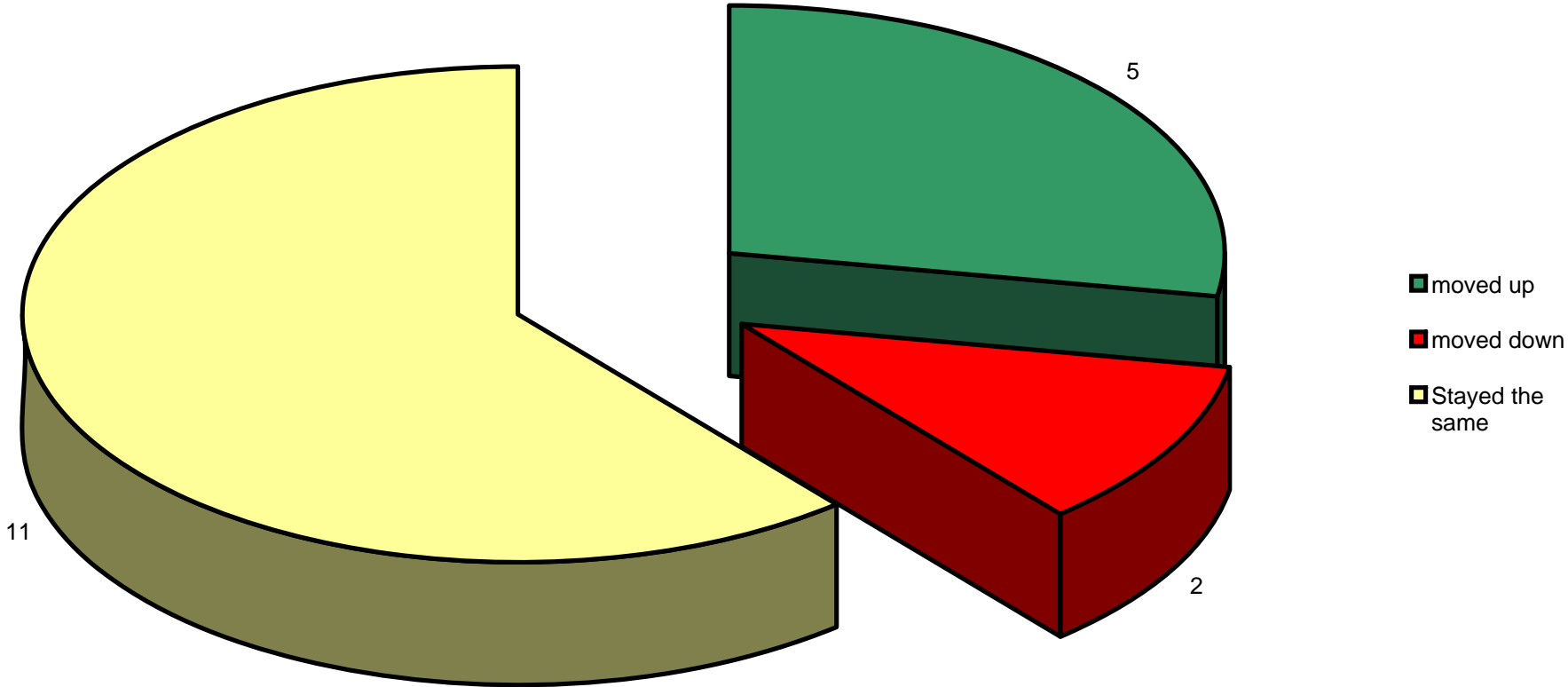
Resources



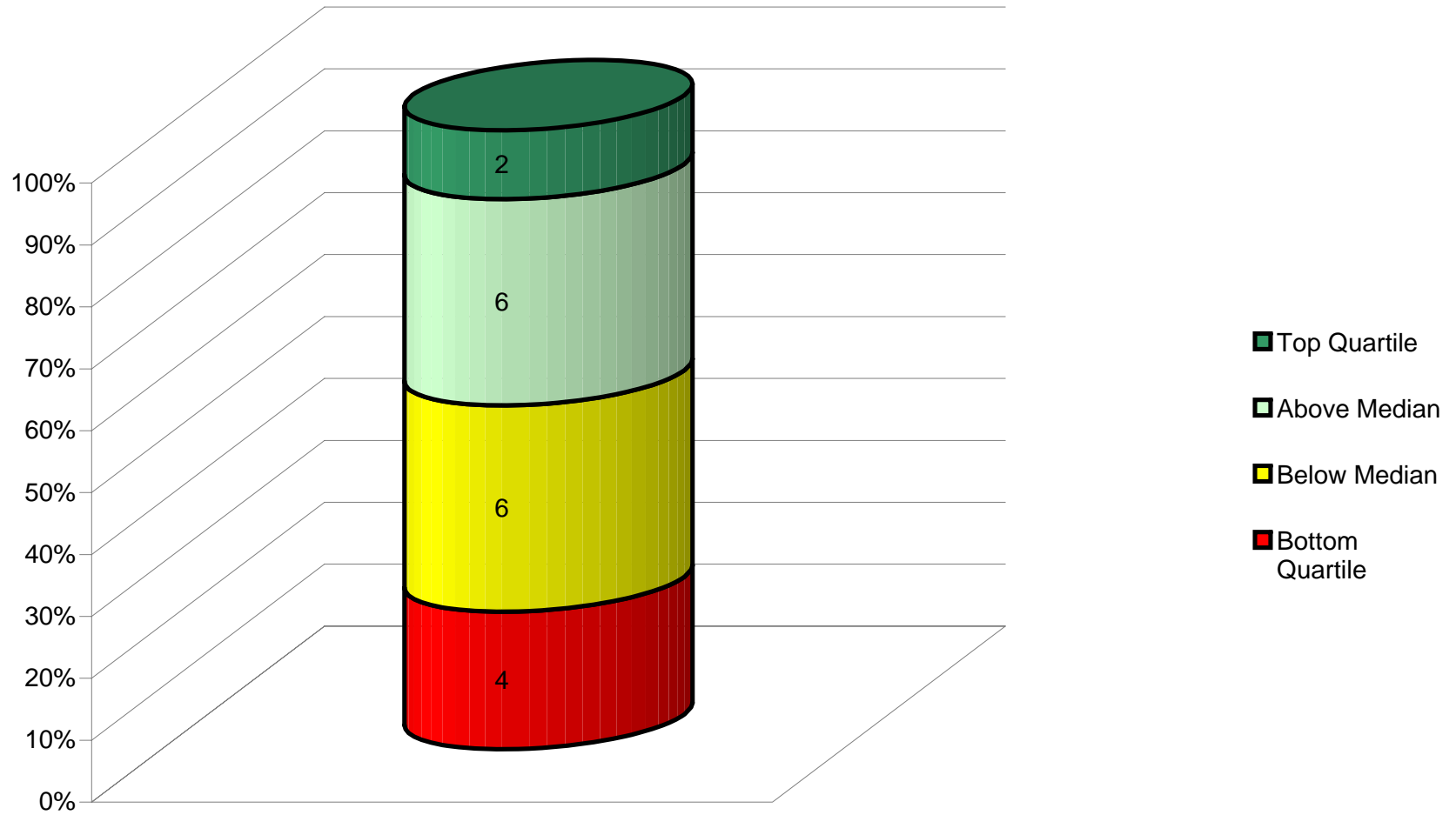




Wear Valley Quartile movement



Wear Valley predicted Quartile info





Succeeding Together

A Sustainable Community Plan for
Wear Valley 2030



July 2007
(Draft1)

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A Message from the Chair,
Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership,
Councillor Neil Stonehouse
(Leader of Wear Valley District Council)

Photo

Succeeding Together is Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) Sustainable Community Strategy. It sets out the direction and focus for our work with the Local Area Agreement for County Durham. It is built upon the earlier Community strategy and builds upon the achievements we have already made in the six years of the LSP's existence.

It is called Succeeding Together for a very good reason, we are succeeding in our vision to improve Wear Valley and we are continually working together and achieving greater improvement as a result. Our work over the last two years has been supported by a wide range of partners from all backgrounds, geographical areas and interests. Wear Valley LSP has representation from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors.

We don't want this to be a document that sits on a shelf collecting dust, if we are to improve Wear Valley we need to action the priority actions set out in this plan. It is important that the detailed action plans are developed with yourselves in the community to make sure that we deliver the services you need to improve your quality of life. To ensure this happens we will review the plan annually and we will set up a performance management framework that involves the community in monitoring our success and helping us solve the difficulties we face in an efficient but effective way.

What is a Sustainable Community Strategy?

It is simply a plan that will focus our actions to deliver a better quality of life for everyone in Wear Valley whatever their age, gender, status, ethnicity or religion. It is a long-term vision and will take a strategic view and join up service delivery to make it more effective and efficient. However it will contain short-term actions as a step on the journey to success.

It is a plan that will ensure we improve the quality of life for everyone without damaging and destroying the very things on which we depend for work, enjoyment and a fulfilling life. It involves:

- Using evidence of need through Neighbourhood Profiles to give a detailed picture of local issues both through examining data but also asking communities what impact issues have on their quality of life.
- Develop solutions together to problems at a local level, county level and ensure that regional services also meet the needs of our localities.

How did we agree our priorities?

We consulted widely to develop our first community plan and this included a wide range of consultation events out in the community, stakeholders and partners and diverse groups. In Wear Valley we believe that involving our communities in an ongoing and meaningful way is crucial to ensuring we deliver what people need. The LSP and thematic groups involve local communities in this ongoing process. In Wear Valley this is supported by the Community Network and 2D supporting our voluntary and community sector. Thematic groups have regularly discussed priorities and progress towards reaching these priorities asking whether our priorities have changed.

The Community Network has brought together community groups to special themed events to talk about priorities that they want action on. They also organise on behalf of the LSP an annual conference attended by over 200 people including young people. Our Children and Young Peoples Participation worker also ensures that young people have the opportunity to comment on services that affect them and that we action what they raise.

The priorities have also been confirmed through the Local Development Framework consultation and the work to develop the Sustainability Assessment. The priorities are clear from the neighbourhood profile work we have undertake with a range of partners which looks at data and research on thematic and crosscutting topics.

What are the key issues we face?

There is a range of issues that we have to address if we are to achieve the LSP Vision of:

“A confident community motivated by self worth, in which each individual is able to achieve a collective improvement in Wear Valley”.

- We have a large geographical area with diverse communities with different needs covering urban and rural areas.
- The population is ageing and many 20 – 30 year olds leave to find work elsewhere.
- Wear Valley is the most deprived rural area in the country
- Large numbers of people on benefit either Job Seekers Allowance or Incapacity.
- Educational attainment is lower than the national average
- Residents are likely to die sooner in Wear Valley than in many parts of England
- Crime is low compared to national figures but fear of crime is comparatively high
- Young people have low aspirations and often feel isolated
- Over 40% of housing fails to meet decent homes standards and there are issues of affordability
- Teenage pregnancy is amongst the highest in the country
- Transport particularly in rural areas inhibits access to services

Are things improving?

We are improving these things in Wear Valley and have improved according to the National targets that we have to address. Quality of services has also improved and service providers are continuing to strive for improvements in all of the areas set out above.

- The population is no longer declining and is increasing slightly year on year
- We are still the most deprived rural area in the country but we are closing the gap
- Fewer people are on benefit now than were two years ago
- There are now more opportunities for improving skills and increasing learning opportunities for all age groups
- We are narrowing the gap and people are living longer now than they were
- A number of crimes are reducing particularly burglary
- Many young People are beginning to move to an ‘I can’ culture
- Housing is improving and we have funding to support work to accelerate this
- Teenage pregnancy is still an issue but some areas that were hotspots no longer are

- Transport is still an issue but we are addressing transport issues together with everyone sharing one aim of improved access to services

What is our Vision for the Future?

Wear Valley LSP and its partners want to see a locality where individuals are involved in their community, want to continually improve their neighbourhoods and are proud of the area in which they live. We want Wear Valley to be a thriving economic area with a growing and demographically balanced population. We want Wear Valley to have good standards of services that enable people to live a long life of good quality not limited by ill health, poor housing or unemployment. We want a place where people can afford to stay, bring up their families knowing it will enable their children to get the most out of life in terms of education and social skills to be safe and free from risk of crime.

Wear Valley will become an area where people will start their own business, take a pride in their locality, protect the environment and work together to make their neighbourhood a great place to live, work and have fun.

How will we achieve the Vision?

We will achieve this vision over time by working together to solve problems and develop solutions that meet our local need. Set out in this plan are the key outcomes that will make sure that Wear Valley is improving as a district, a collection of neighbourhoods and that we as individuals are all part of that improvement.

More detailed delivery plans will be developed to make sure that each neighbourhood in Wear Valley has services that meet the needs of the people who live and work in it. These delivery plans will set out key actions and the resources required to put them into action. We will take a phased approach and tackle areas of highest need first but making sure that other areas are not adversely affected by these actions. We will also ensure that rural areas are not adversely affected by the actions in this plan and are currently rural proofing the proposals and will also rural proof the action plans.

To deliver this plan we will need to make sure that our local priorities are fed into the plans of partner organisations and in particular to the Local Area Agreement which covers County Durham as a whole.

How will we measure our success and address any risks?

The Plan will form part of the performance management framework of the LSP and its partners. All delivery organisations for the priority outcomes will be required to give a six monthly report on progress and to examine risks affecting delivery as part of this programme. A review report will be presented annually to the LSP and the broader community and a review of targets and priorities will be part of this process.

We will as part of this assessment need to think about the long term sustainability of the work that we are doing. Not only will this include looking at local issues but we also must ensure that Wear Valley does not impact adversely on the broader environment. Climate change for example will need to be addressed and in Wear Valley we are developing a Climate Change Strategy that highlights the benefits of reducing energy consumption to local business and private sectors. It will also look at ways that we can reduce greenhouse gases and emissions within Wear Valley and improve the overall quality of life elsewhere. We need to work together if we are to achieve our goals but we can succeed in meeting our vision.

For more information and to discuss this plan in more detail please contact:

Local Strategic Partnership
Civic Centre
Crook
County Durham
DL15 9ES
Tel 01388 761977

POPULATION

LSP Objective:

To work for a slowly growing and demographically balanced population

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|-----------|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| SSC P2 | Residents of all ages actively influence policy and service development and implementation | Number of community groups engaged in development and delivery | <p>Every adult has the opportunity to influence development and delivery of this plan in the future</p> <p>Every young person aged 5-19 in Wear Valley has the opportunity to influence service development</p> | <p>Communications with community improved</p> <p>Neighbourhood arrangements are implemented and every resident is aware of how to get involved</p> <p>Increased participation through a range of mechanisms networks</p> | <p>LSP Website set up and implemented</p> <p>Quarterly LSP Newsletter put in place</p> <p>Neighbourhood arrangements in place throughout Wear Valley by January 2008</p> <p>Participation Strategy agreed and implemented by LSP Partners</p> | <p>January 2008</p> <p>1st edition January 2008</p> <p>Protocol for community engagement at neighbourhood level agreed by LSP November 2007</p> <p>Participation strategy agreed and implementation plan by December 2007</p> | <p>Community engagement mechanisms, Council Plan, Compact, Local Area Agreement, Children and Young Peoples Participation Strategy</p> <p>Lead : LSP Board</p> |

POPULATION

LSP Objective:

To work for a slowly growing and demographically balanced population

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|-----------|---|---|--------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| SSC P3 | Meeting the needs of a society that is changing in terms of age and aspirations | Increased % of people satisfied with Wear Valley as a place to live | Year on year improvement | Neighbourhood arrangements implemented and local performance targets agreed | Implementation of the Liveability Action Plan agreed by the LSP 2007 | To meet or exceed PSA 8 including to Reduce the % of unacceptable litter and detritus by 16% 2007/8 Increase satisfaction with local parks and open spaces by 6% Increase the % of households satisfied with the quality of places in which they live by 5% | Local Development Framework, Council Plan, Local Government Act, Open Space Strategy, Community Safety Strategy, Local Area Agreement SSCF Block Lead: Wear Valley District Council & Environment Theme Group |

LIFELONG LEARNING

LSP Objective:

To work for improvements in lifelong learning to exceed the national average

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|--------|---|---|--------|--|--|---|---|
| SSC L1 | Increase the number of people in Wear Valley with basic skills qualifications | Number of people in Wear Valley obtaining NVQ1 or above | | <p>Implement NEET strategy</p> <p>Increase community learning programmes</p> <p>Increase skills improvement opportunities with employers</p> | <p>Number of students achieving NVQ1 or above</p> <p>Number of training programmes in communities</p> <p>Number of interventions through Forum for Business and Lifelong Learning Partnerships</p> | <p>By April 2008 increase students at basic skill level by 800</p> <p>By April 2011 increase basic skills attainment by 1500</p> <p>Target of 10 interventions per year</p> | <p>Children's Plan, Local Area Agreement, Local Growth Improvement Initiative (LEGI), RES, Skills Strategy, LSC, Connexions, Schools, Further education</p> <p>Lead: LSC & Local Children's Board Lifelong Learning Theme</p> |

LIFELONG LEARNING

LSP Objective:

To work for improvements in lifelong learning to exceed the national average

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|--------|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| SSC L2 | Increased number of people of working age with qualifications | Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey | Less than 25% of working age population have no qualifications by 2011 | Community and family learning action plan developed and implemented | Number of participants training in an increased number of community venues (including employment venues) and achieving NVQ1 or above | Baseline identified in 2007 and targets set to ensure at least one community venue in each neighbourhood arrangement area offering training | LSC Skills strategy, LEGI, Local Children's Board, Lifelong Learning Thematic group, Forum for Business, Local Area Agreement Council Plan Lead: LSC |

LIFELONG LEARNING

LSP Objective:

To work for improvements in lifelong learning to exceed the national average

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|---------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| SCS L2 | Improve educational attainment in Wear Valley | Attainment data as compared to national figures | Reduce gap between Wear Valley and national average year on year in Maths and English | Improve educational standards so that schools maximise achievement and potential | Key Stage 2 rates increase Key Stage 3 rates increase Key Stage 4 rates improve | 70% of schools in Wear Valley attain level 4 in English and Maths by 2008 55% of schools in Wear Valley attain level 3 in English and Maths by 2008 Percentage of pupils achieving GCSE rates A-C is 62% by 2008 | Links to Children's Plan, Local Area Agreement, Lead: Children's Services Authority & Children's Trust |

LIFELONG LEARNING

Priority Actions to deliver continued

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|------------|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| SCS L3 | Increased number of Modern Apprentices | Number of Modern Apprentices in Wear Valley | Baseline identified and then year on year increase | Baseline to be established Action plan to deliver agreed and implemented | Baseline in place by Dec 2007 Targets set for next three years | In place Dec 2007 Minimum of year on year improvement in number of apprentices | NEET's strategy, Children's Plan, Skills Strategy 14-19 strategy, Council Plan Lead: Children's Services Authority & Children's Trust |

ECONOMY

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant increase in employment and business activity

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| SCS E 1 | Reduce the number of Wear Valley Residents receiving benefit for incapacity or unemployment | Increase in employment rate and reduction in Job Seekers allowance and Incapacity benefit | Reduce the number of Wear Valley residents on Job Seekers allowance by at least 1% per year Reduce those on incapacity benefit by at least 2% per year | Continue to target most deprived areas for interventions to improve skills and access to employment Implement LEGI initiatives to continue work started with NRF | Year on year decrease in adults of working age with no qualifications Number of Wear Valley residents from target groups accessing LEGI initiatives and finding employment | Less than 25% of population of working age have no qualifications by 2011 Number of residents finding employment/self employment through LEGI increases year on year from 2007/8 baseline | LEGI, Skills Strategy, Wear Valley Economic Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy, Local Area Agreement, Council Plan Lead: Wear Valley District Council & Forum for Business |

ECONOMY

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant increase in employment and business activity

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|-----------|--|--|--------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| SCS E2 | Increase in business birth rate and reduction in the number failing within the first three years | Number of new businesses Reduced failure rate of businesses receiving support | Increase business year on year | Develop local business coach programmes, formal and informal networks | Number of businesses accessing support through the Enterprise Agency and other initiatives | 48 new businesses by 2008 Reduced failure rate by 15% based on 2007 baseline | LEGI, Skills Strategy, Wear Valley Economic Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy, Local Area Agreement, Council Plan Lead: Wear Valley District Council & Forum for Business |

Priority Actions to deliver continued

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|------------|---------------------|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| SCS E3 | | New business infrastructure put in place | Sq feet of business space developed | Implement Eastgate proposals, South Crook and West Auckland proposals | Number of new businesses in development by 2011 | 20 New businesses in the target areas. | Wear Valley Economic Strategy,, RES, Local Area agreement LEGI, Council Plan |
| | | Businesses supported to take on employees | Increase of 50 businesses contacted about employing at least one individual from business stock in 2007 | LEGI and Enterprise Agency business coaches support business development | Number of new employees in businesses requesting support | 15 new employers of at least one person | Lead: Wear Valley District Council |

ENVIRONMENT

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant improvement in the environment

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|--------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| SCS Env 1 | Residents have improved satisfaction with where they live | Customer satisfaction Improved level of cleanliness | Satisfaction Survey results improve based on LA 2007 Triennial survey | Implement Liveability strategy | Neighbourhoods Improved , less litter, detritus and higher satisfaction as shown in triennial survey | Proportion of land with combined deposits of litter and detritus is less than 10% Proportion of land from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible is less than 2% | Council Plan, Liveability Action Plan, Local Area Agreement, Lead: Wear Valley District Council and Environment Theme Group |

ENVIRONMENT

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant improvement in the environment

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|-------------|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| SCS Env2 | Transport provision meets the needs of residents to access services reducing damage to environment | Reduction in number of residents reporting that transport is a barrier to accessing services | Baseline information developed in 2008 and reduction of 5% by 2011 | Survey of customers of a range of services is undertaken Service providers and transport providers brought together with community to design and implement solutions | Number of residents reporting transport is a barrier to accessing services Increase in shared use of transport mechanisms | Reduction in number of residents reporting transport is a barrier to service access Transport Action plans developed for all neighbourhood arrangement areas by 2010 | Local Transport Plan, Community Transport, Integrated Transport Unit Lead: Transport Sub Group of LSP, Durham County Council |

ENVIRONMENT

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant improvement in the environment

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|--------|--|--|---------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| SCS E2 | To reduce the negative impact of climate change in Wear Valley | Climate Change Strategy agreed and implemented | Strategy in place by March 2008 | <p>Key issues consulted on at LSP and Community Network</p> <p>Action plan for implementation agreed by partners</p> <p>Review of activity undertaken at District level</p> | <p>Climate Change Strategy launched in November 2007</p> <p>Outputs within Climate Change Strategy adopted by the LSP by March 2008</p> | <p>Launch November 2007</p> <p>Performance monitored and key actions incorporated into environment work plan</p> | <p>Local Development Plan, Sustainable Communities Plan, Council Plan, Local Area Agreement</p> <p>Lead: Wear Valley District Council and LSP Board</p> |

ENVIRONMENT

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant improvement in the environment

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|--------|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| SCS E3 | Local Development Framework that meets local need and supports the spatial delivery of the Sustainable Communities Plan | Synergy between outcomes in the two plans | 75% of issues addressed are the same, use the same evidence base and sustainability assessment | <p>Key issues consulted on at LSP and Community Network</p> <p>Joint performance mechanism agreed including community engagement</p> <p>Review of both plans undertaken at least annually at both District and neighbourhood level</p> | <p>Launch of both plans in November 2007</p> <p>Community Conference Performance Management arrangements in place by November 2007</p> | <p>Launch November 2007</p> <p>Performance reports produced quarterly and risk assessment incorporated</p> | <p>Local Development Plan, Sustainable Communities Plan, Council Plan, Local Area Agreement</p> <p>Lead: Wear Valley District Council and LSP Board</p> |

COMMUNITY SAFETY

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant reduction in crime and the fear of crime

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|-----------|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| SCS C1 | Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour | Overall crime rate from National Crime Reporting data Residents reporting anti-social behaviour affecting their quality of life Secondary/deliberate fires | Reduction of 15% by 2008 based upon 2003 baselines Quality of Life survey shows improvement every three years Reduction of secondary and deliberate fires to meet LAA target | Reduce crime in all areas and narrow the gap between the worst and best areas Implementation of action plans linked to neighbourhood arrangements | Indicators for crime in each Super output area show a reduction year on year Reduction in secondary and deliberate fires in Wear Valley | Reduction of overall crime in all areas. Hotspots areas to be targeted annually and stretched targets implemented and achieved for worst 10% SOA Meet Local Area Agreement stretched target in Wear Valley | Community Safety Strategy, Local Area Agreement, Neighbourhood Policing, Council Plan Lead: Community Safety theme (CDRP) |

COMMUNITY SAFETY

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant reduction in crime and the fear of crime

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|-----------|---|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| SCS C2 | Reduction long-term in domestic abuse incidents | Reduction in incidence and impact of repeat occurrences of domestic abuse | Reduction of repeat victims by 10% in 2008 | <p>To investigate and make every effort to get cases brought to justice</p> <p>To manage the risk and offer support to reduce further impact</p> <p>To provide emergency accommodation</p> <p>To offer a 24 hour crisis intervention service</p> | <p>No. of repeat victims</p> <p>% of cases going to court</p> | <p>Number of repeat occurrences reduced by 10% by 2008 based on 2003 baselines.</p> <p>Increase cases brought to court by 10% by Mar 2009 based on 2007/8 baseline</p> <p>Programme in place by April 2008</p> | <p>Domestic Violence Forum, Woman's Refuge CDRP, Local Area Agreement</p> <p>Lead: Wear Valley District Council & CDRP</p> |

COMMUNITY SAFETY

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant reduction in crime and the fear of crime

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|-----------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| SCS C3 | Reduction in fear of crime | Reduced fear of crime LAA survey | 10% reduction in fear of crime by 2012 | Development of a crime reassurance strategy Implementation of Neighbourhood Arrangements linked to Neighbourhood Policing | Reassurance strategy agreed by LSP partners Arrangements in place and mechanisms for dealing with locality issues | Agreed by January 2008 Arrangements in place by March 2008 | CDRP, Neighbourhood Policing Strategy, Communication Leads, Media Lead: Community Safety Theme and LSP Board |

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

LSP Objective:

To reduce health inequalities and to improve quality of life for the residents of Wear Valley

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|--------|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|
| SCS H1 | Improved life expectancy and reducing premature mortality rates | Reduced incidents of chronic disease | Reduction in coronary heart disease and stroke by 1% per year | <p>Reduce smoking</p> <p>Increased participation in exercise</p> <p>Develop baseline of provision for exercise and update annually</p> | <p>Reduction of smoking in manual groups</p> <p>Numbers of sessions held</p> <p>Number of individuals accessing centres</p> <p>Number of new members at leisure centres based on 2007 baselines</p> | <p>26% drop in smoking rates in manual workers by 2010 based upon 2003 baseline</p> <p>2% year on year increase in participation at leisure centres and community gyms based on 2007 baseline</p> | <p>Primary Care Trust, Surestart, Council Plan, Regional Tobacco Control Group</p> <p>Lead: PCT & Wear Valley District Council</p> |

Priority Actions to deliver continued

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|--------|--------------|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| SCS H! | | Increased numbers accessing healthy eating programmes including eating healthily on a budget | All schools meeting Healthy School Standards Number of healthy eating courses in communities increasing from 2007 baseline | Plan for development of a healthy eating programme developed and delivered in communities Community representatives trained to deliver courses | Plan in place and agreed Number of courses delivered Number of community representatives trained | Plan in place January 2008 implementation agreed and commissioned March 2008 6 courses delivered 10 representatives trained by 2010 | Obesity strategy, Health Delivery Plan, Children and Young Peoples Plan Lead: PCT & Wear Valley District Council, Local Children's Board |

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

LSP Objective:

To reduce health inequalities and to improve quality of life for the residents of Wear Valley

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|--------|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| SCS H2 | Increase access to prevention services and provision of early support to reduce need for complex physical and emotional well-being services | Reduction in referral to complex mental health services for all ages Reduction in mortality rates | Reduction in tier 3 Child and Adolescent Mental Health referrals Reduction in referrals to inpatient facilities for mental health preventable conditions Reduction of mortality rates for coronary heart disease and stroke year on year | Implementation of Family Support Strategy Gap analysis of opportunities to undertake physical and social activities and implementation of jointly agreed delivery mechanism to address these | Evidence of need, delivery plan Analysis of need and current provision Implementation and programmes to meet gaps put in place | In place by December 2007 Commissioning strategy and performance management in place by April 2008 for Family Support Physical and social activity plan fully in place and operational by October 2008 | Children's Trust, Primary Care Trust, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol Team, Council Plan Local Area Agreement Lead: PCT & Local Children's Board |

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

LSP Objective:

To reduce health inequalities and to improve quality of life for the residents of Wear Valley

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|--------|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| SCS H3 | Reduce the number of conceptions for under 18 year olds | Number of conceptions per 1000 in women under 18 | Reduction of 55% by 2010 from 1998 baseline | Implement the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy for County Durham and meet agreed targets Increase opportunities for young mothers to access jobs and | Number of conceptions per 1000 in women under 18 Reduction in number of NEETS locally who are 16-19 year old young mothers | Reduction of 55% by 2010 based on 1998 baseline Reduction of 2% by 2010 based on 2003 baseline | Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, NEET Strategy, Children's Trust Lead: PCT & Local Children's Board |

HOUSING

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant improvement in the built environment

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|------------|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| SCS HS1 | To ensure everyone in Wear Valley has the opportunity to live in a decent home | Decent Homes Standard Stock Condition Survey | Social housing meets decent homes target by 2012 Private sector meets decent homes standard by 2015 | Decent Homes Programme implemented Stock Condition survey and Housing Needs Survey informs sustainable housing plan implementation | Decent Homes Standard Housing Needs Survey Stock Condition Survey | 100% compliance by 2010 for social housing and 75% by 2010 for private sector Housing Needs survey gap analysis undertaken by March 2008 Implementation Plan agreed by April 2008 | Coalfields Regeneration, Registered Social Landlords Dale and Valley Homes, Private landlords, Housing developers, District Council Lead: Dale and Valley Homes, & Wear Valley District Council |

HOUSING

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant improvement in the built environment

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|------------|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| SCS HS2 | Increase the number of affordable and homes that meet the accessibility needs of people in the district | Reduction in homelessness | Reduction in homelessness year on year | Baseline developed through Housing Market Assessment and plan implemented to meet identified need | Reduction of homelessness Definition of affordable agreed and level of problem identified Action plan in place for affordable housing | Reduction year on year Action Plan in Place June 2008 | Housing Associations, Home Improvement Agency, Adult Social Care, Dale and Valley Homes, Housing developers, District Council |
| | | Reduction in numbers waiting for adaptations | Reduction of year on year in number on waiting list for adaptations | Baseline for adaptations agreed and analysis of need undertaken and implementation | Numbers waiting for adaptations | Year on Year reduction in numbers waiting for adaptations | Lead: Dale and Valley Homes, & Wear Valley District Council |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | plan in place | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---------------|--|--|--|

HOUSING

LSP Objective:

To work for a significant improvement in the built environment

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|------------|--|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| SCS HS3 | Increase the energy efficiency of dwellings in Wear Valley, reducing fuel poverty and carbon footprint | Increase SAP rating Increase in energy efficiency enquiries Increase in energy efficiency grants agreed | Increase of 1% per year Increase of 5% per year for 3 years Increase of 5% per year for 3 years | Undertake feasibility study Negotiate with utility companies for additional funding | Increase of SAP rating Increase in energy efficiency enquiries Increase in energy efficiency grants agreed | Increase of 1% per year Increase of 5% per year for 3 years Increase of 5% per year for 3 years | Utility companies, District Council, Developers, Lead: Dale and Valley Homes, & Wear Valley District Council |

CHILDREN

LSP Objective:

To ensure children and young people are healthy, safe, achieving, economically healthy and making a positive contribution to life in Wear Valley

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| SCS CH1 | Children and young people can make healthy lifestyles choices | Healthy Schools Award Obesity levels of children | All schools meet the standard by Halt rise in obesity in children under 11 | Implementation of children and young peoples plan Commissioning strategy locally supports this outcome | Number of schools meeting revised standard Reduction of children who are obese in Wear Valley | 55% by December 2007 and year on year improvement Reduction on 2006 baseline | Children's Trust, PCT, Children's Services Authority, District Council Lead: Local Children's Board and Children's Services Authority |

CHILDREN

LSP Objective:

To ensure children and young people are healthy, safe, achieving, economically healthy and making a positive contribution to life in Wear Valley

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|------------|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| SCS CH2 | Ensure young people enjoy and achieve at school and in other learning settings, particularly vulnerable young people | See Lifelong Learning Number of young people achieving qualifications in community settings | See Lifelong Learning Current mapping and baseline to be developed | See Lifelong Learning Develop baseline and map existing opportunities | See Lifelong Learning No of training places available post 16 year olds | See Lifelong Learning Increase training opportunities available Reduction in number of NEETS year on year | Children's Trust, PCT, Children's Services Authority, District Council Lead: Local Children's Board and Children's Services Authority |

CHILDREN

LSP Objective:

To ensure children and young people are healthy, safe, achieving, economically healthy and making a positive contribution to life in Wear Valley

Priority Actions to deliver

| Ref | Key Outcomes | Outcome Indicator | Target | Key Actions | Output Indicators | Target | Links |
|------------|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| SCS CH3 | Empower young people in positively participating in activities within their community | Increase in numbers of young people participating in service improvement, formally and informally Numbers of young people volunteering in local communities | Increase in number participating in Local Children's Board activity | Robust performance measures to be agreed and target set by March 2008 | Number of topics that young people report on. Number of hours work undertaken with participation workers Response rates to satisfaction survey with young people Number of volunteer under 19 registered with volunteer centre | 4 projects in 2008 and outputs annually reviewed Year on year increase based upon agreed definitions Response to annual satisfaction survey increasing year on year | Children's Trust, PCT, Children's Services Authority, District Council Lead: Local Children's Board and Children's Services Authority |

GENERAL FUND FINANCIAL FORECAST 2007/08 - 2009/10

| 2006/07 Actual £000 | Service | 2007/08 Budget £000 | 2008/09 Forecast £000 | 2009/10 Forecast £000 |
|---------------------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2,982 | Recreation and Tourism | 3,188 | 3,198 | 3,239 |
| 2,263 | Corporate Services | 3,933 | 3,921 | 3,973 |
| 1,480 | Refuse Collection & Disposal | 1,648 | 1,721 | 1,745 |
| 623 | Housing (General Fund) | 450 | 444 | 453 |
| 1,282 | Planning and Economic Development | 1,397 | 1,631 | 1,644 |
| 430 | Environmental Health | 471 | 478 | 484 |
| 722 | Highways | 832 | 866 | 849 |
| 9,782 | Total Expenditure | 11,919 | 12,259 | 12,387 |
| 7,158 | Government Grant | 7,441 | 7,590 | 7,742 |
| 3,866 | Council Tax | 4,146 | 4,279 | 4,416 |
| 40 | Collection Fund Surplus | 60 | 40 | 40 |
| (762) | Use of Reserves | 334 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | Revenue Contributions to Capital | (560) | 0 | 0 |
| 10,302 | Total Income | 11,421 | 11,908 | 12,197 |
| 520 | Net Surplus / (Deficit) | (498) | (351) | (190) |
| 1,254 | Surplus / (Deficit) Reserves Brought Forward | 1,774 | 1,276 | 925 |
| 1,774 | Surplus / (Deficit) Reserves Carried Forward | 1,276 | 925 | 736 |

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FINANCIAL FORECAST 2007/08 - 2009/10

| 2006/07 Actual | Service | 2007/08 Budget £000 | 2008/09 Forecast £000 | 2009/10 Forecast £000 |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6,087 | Management and Maintenance | 6,429 | 6,434 | 6,489 |
| 1,790 | Debt Charges | 1,765 | 1,766 | 1,767 |
| 2,884 | Housing Subsidy | 3,210 | 3,037 | 4,000 |
| 38 | Bad Debts | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10,799 | Total Expenditure | 11,404 | 11,237 | 12,256 |
| 11,149 | Rental Income | 11,375 | 11,603 | 11,836 |
| 34 | Interest on Balances | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| 11,183 | Total Income | 11,405 | 11,633 | 11,866 |
| 384 | Net Surplus / (Deficit) | 1 | 396 | (390) |
| 1,227 | Surplus / (Deficit) Reserves Brought Forward | 1,611 | 1,612 | 2,008 |

| | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1,611 Surplus / (Deficit) Reserves Carried Forward | 1,612 | 2,008 | 1,618 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|

Capital Forecasts 2007/08 - 2009/10**Annex B**

| | <u>2007/08</u> | <u>2008/09</u> | <u>2009/10</u> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <u>Value (£)</u> | <u>Value (£)</u> | <u>Value (£)</u> |
| Renovation of Housing Stock | 8,458,860 | 8,718,800 | 9,133,360 |
| Asset Management | 179,000 | 170,000 | 170,000 |
| Public Realm Enhancements | 3,423,000 | 307,000 | 200,000 |
| Private Sector Housing | 334,000 | 434,000 | 434,000 |
| Liveability | 590,000 | 376,000 | 50,000 |
| Fleet Replacement | 430,000 | 700,000 | 580,000 |
| IT Systems | 100,000 | 73,000 | 73,000 |
| Economic Regeneration | 512,000 | 523,000 | 200,000 |
| Leisure Facilities | 50,000 | 6,050,000 | 50,000 |
| Total | 14,076,860 | 17,351,800 | 10,890,360 |
| Funding: | | | |
| Supported Borrowing | 5,800,000 | 5,800,000 | 6,300,000 |
| Major Repairs Allowance | 2,650,000 | 2,650,000 | 2,650,000 |
| Specified Capital Grants | 140,000 | 140,000 | 140,000 |
| Capital Receipts Applied | 4,926,860 | 8,761,800 | 1,800,360 |
| Revenue Contributions | 560,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Resources | 14,076,860 | 17,351,800 | 10,890,360 |
| Surplus / (Deficit) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Land / Property Sales: | | | |
| Sale of Council Houses | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| General Fund Land / Property Sales | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Application of Usable Capital Receipts: | | | |
| Usable Receipts Brought Forward | 13,089,000 | 10,162,140 | 3,400,340 |
| Receipts in Year | 2,000,000 | 2,000,000 | 2,000,000 |
| Receipts Applied in Year | 4,926,860 | 8,761,800 | 1,800,360 |
| Usable Receipts Carried Forward | 10,162,140 | 3,400,340 | 3,599,980 |

General Fund Growth List

| <u>Ref.</u> | <u>Proposal</u> | <u>Value (£)</u> | <u>Commentary</u> | <u>Link to Corporate Objective</u> |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Strengthening Health and Safety capacity | 80,000 | 3 new posts to improve Health & Safety provision. The increased resources will ensure a reduction in the overall corporate risk through ensuring that both operational and corporate aspects of health and safety are more effectively considered and managed. | Health |
| 2 | Extension of Street Warden Scheme - additional 2 fte wardens (50% to HRA) | 19,000 | Will contribute towards the Council's objectives by reducing crime and fear of crime, improving the environment by reducing fly tipping, graffiti and abandoned vehicles | Crime |
| 3 | Home Improvement Agency | 63,000 | To appoint two additional technical officers to meet the growing number of referrals for disabled facilities and repairs grants. The HIA will be unable to deal with the recent doubling of its grant budget without additional staff resources. | Environment |
| 4 | Stanhope Market Town Programme | 35,796 | Matched funding to mainstream two posts no longer fully funded by grant regimes. Future programme is linked to Eastgate Renewable Energy Village project and will pursue other programme initiatives. | Economy |
| 5 | Mental Health Support Work | 42,600 | To fund the employment by 2D of a full time project co-ordinator and part time development worker who will between them publicise the support arrangements and raise awareness of mental health issues in the community | Health |
| 6 | Senior Planner | 34,365 | Additional post to have a mentoring role in respect of the development control planners and a supervisory role for the enforcement officers | Environment |
| 7 | Project Co-ordinator - Coundon and Leeholme Community Partnership | 35,000 | Mainstreaming of post following end of Settlement Renewal Initiative programme to continue partnership initiatives | Economy / Life long learning |
| 8 | Free Swimming for Children in Summer Holidays | 6,000 | By offering free swimming it is hoped to increase participation amongst those who are unable to afford to do so. Consultation with children has shown that cost has been put down as a barrier to their participation. | Health |
| 9 | Planning Enforcement Officer | 26,200 | Extra post to deal with complaints and free up officer time to concentrate on pro active enforcement. | Environment |
| 10 | Wear Valley citizens panel (development, management and training) | 15,000 | To provide a systematic and comprehensive approach to consultation as a means of informing policy and service development | Organisational Development |
| 11 | Christmas Lighting | 10,000 | To provide christmas lighting in a variety of locations | Economy |
| 12 | Horticultural improvements | 20,000 | Winter bedding planting | Environment |

Total General Fund Proposals**£386,961****Housing Revenue Growth List**

| | | | | |
|---|---|--------|--|----------------------------|
| 1 | Extension of Street Warden Scheme (50% to General Fund) | 19,000 | Will contribute towards the Council's objectives by reducing crime and fear of crime, improving the environment by reducing fly tipping, graffiti and abandoned vehicles | Crime |
| 2 | District housing manager | 43,000 | To monitor the delivery of public sector housing management services to its customers by Dale and Valley Homes | Environment |
| 3 | Customer Panel funding | 10,000 | To provide further training to develop the role of the customer panel | Organisational Development |
| 4 | Strengthening Health and Safety capacity | 27,000 | 3 new posts to improve Health & Safety provision. The increased resources will ensure a reduction in the overall corporate risk through ensuring that both operational and corporate aspects of health and safety are more effectively considered and managed. | Health |

Total Housing Revenue Account Proposals**£99,000**

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

**Report of the Chief Executive
DESIGNATION OF A DISPERSAL ORDER FOR CROOK**

purpose of the report

1. To seek approval for the designation of a Dispersal Order for the Low Mown Meadows area of Crook.

background

2. The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, (Sec 30) enables the police and local authorities to work together to identify problem areas where people feel threatened by groups hanging around causing intimidation and acting in an anti-social manner. The purpose of the legislation is to prevent people from feeling frightened and discouraged from using public spaces because they feel threatened by the actions and behaviour of groups of people. It is also intended to protect young people from the risks of being unaccompanied on the streets late at night.
3. Where there is a persistent problem with such groups, senior police officers can designate an area for up to six months with local authority agreement. Dispersal Orders can be used to restrict anti-social behaviour in designated places such as towns or villages. The designated area must be clearly defined, usually by a description of the streets or roads bordering the area. The decision to designate an area must be published in a local newspaper and by notices in the local area.
4. Within designated areas, the police and police community support officers (PCSOs) have the power to disperse groups where the relevant officer has reasonable grounds for believing that their presence or behaviour has resulted, or is likely to result, in a member of the public being harassed intimidated, alarmed or distressed. Individuals can be directed to leave the locality and may be excluded from the area for up to 24 hours. The police also have the power to direct persons under 16 to return home and may, if necessary, take them home.
5. Use of the powers adds to the tools available to the Council and local police to combat crime and disorder.

process

6. Before proceeding with an order it is necessary to identify if nuisance or annoyance to the public or disorder has occurred in a particular place. This will require evidence from the local police, Local Authority or individuals. An authority cannot rely on isolated incidents. There must be evidence of an ongoing problem, which will be solved or alleviated if an order is made. The area concerned must be capable of being clearly defined geographically.
7. A Council must follow a statutory procedure when considering an order. It is obliged to consult the following;
 - The police
 - Durham and Darlington Fire Service
 - Representative from Durham County Council Community Safety
 - Representative from the Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group
 - Social Care and Health
 - Youth Engagement Service
 - Education
 - DAAT
8. The making of the Designation Order must be publicised in a locally circulated newspaper. The notice must state the authorisation has been given, specify the relevant locality and the period it will be enforced. Signage needs to be erected in the designated area warning the public before the order take effect. Notices must be placed seven days before the start of the Order. Local Elected Members will also be informed.

the problem

9. Whilst there are individual incidents of anti-social behaviour throughout the District, it is possible to discern a worrying trend in the Low Mown Meadows area of Crook. This relates to the period surrounding Bonfire Night each year. For the same period between 8th October and 18th November from 2003 to 2007, each year, there has been an increase in the number of fire related anti-social behaviour incidents in the Low Mown Meadows area. In 2003 there were 12 actual incidents. This has risen to 52 separate fire related anti-social incidents in 2006 for that same period. It is likely that this trend will continue and that residents will continue to suffer increasing levels of disturbance, unless action is taken to control such incidents.

the response

10. It is considered that a Dispersal Order is an appropriate response to this problem. The evidence indicates that the incidents are perpetrated, in the main, by groups of young people who congregate in the area. A Dispersal Order will enable the police to ask youths to move on before they have the opportunity to engage in such anti-social activity.
11. The necessary consultation outlined in paragraph 7 above has been carried out and there is unqualified support for the making of a Dispersal Order for this area during the Bonfire Night period. The making of the

Dispersal Order will be publicised in the press and by way of warning notices. There will be community education activities and a leaflet drop to houses in the area. Details will be available of diversionary activities available for young people in the area. It is also proposed to place waste skips on the estate to reduce the amount of combustible material available around the estate.

12. It should be remembered that the Dispersal Order will not prevent young people from engaging in normal, lawful activities. The police will operate a sensitive approach to the enforcement of the Dispersal Order and will only use the Order to address incidences of actual and potential anti-social behaviour.

financial implications

13. The cost of the signs will be met from the Crime and Disorder Budget.

legal and human rights implications

14. The making of a Dispersal Order is an additional weapon in the Council's fight against anti-social behaviour. There is a strict legal procedure, set out above, which must be complied with.
15. The European Convention on Human Rights promotes freedom of assembly and expression and restricts unreasonable interferences with a person's private and family life. However, the Convention recognises that interference with those rights may be necessary for the benefit of wider society in certain situations. The making of a Dispersal Order can be considered a proportionate response to the problem of anti-social behaviour in this area.

human resource implications

16. There will be no extra resources required.

IT implications

17. There are no IT implications to this report.

equalities and diversity implications

18. It must be acknowledged that a Dispersal Order will have a proportionally greater effect on young people. However, it must be recognised that the evidence suggests that it is this group which is most likely to perpetrate anti-social behaviour of this nature. The Dispersal Order will not affect those young people who are not engaging in anti-social activities. The need to enforce the Order sensitively is recognised by the police and any concerns regarding implementation of the Order will be thoroughly addressed.

crime and disorder implications

19. The Dispersal Order should reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour and secondary fires in the designated area. The Wear and Tees Community Safety Partnership has a statutory duty to reduce crime and disorder and this dispersal order has been supported by other crime and reduction partners.

RECOMMENDED

- i. That the Policy and Strategic Development Committee agree to the designation of a Dispersal Order for the Low Mown Meadows area of Crook for a period of four weeks, starting 15th October 2007.
- ii. That the designated 'Local Authority Officer' necessary under the statutory procedure for the implementation of the Dispersal Order be the Strategic Director for the Community.

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POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
HEALTH AND SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

purpose of the report

To seek Committee agreement to changes in the Council's health and safety arrangements.

background

1. Following my appointment as Acting Chief Executive in June 2007 I have reviewed the health and safety arrangements in the Council. Working with colleagues from every Department I have examined the current systems. This report proposes:-
 - increasing our health and safety staffing establishment
 - setting up a dedicated health and safety budget
 - widening our inspection regime
 - learning lessons from recent events
 - speeding up our response to incidents within the scheme of delegation to officers
 - the adoption of an action plan
 - external validation
2. The overall objective of this report is not only to satisfy our legal duties. It is to exceed those duties and give Councillors, customers and staff the re-assurance that they are safe and that we take health and safety seriously.

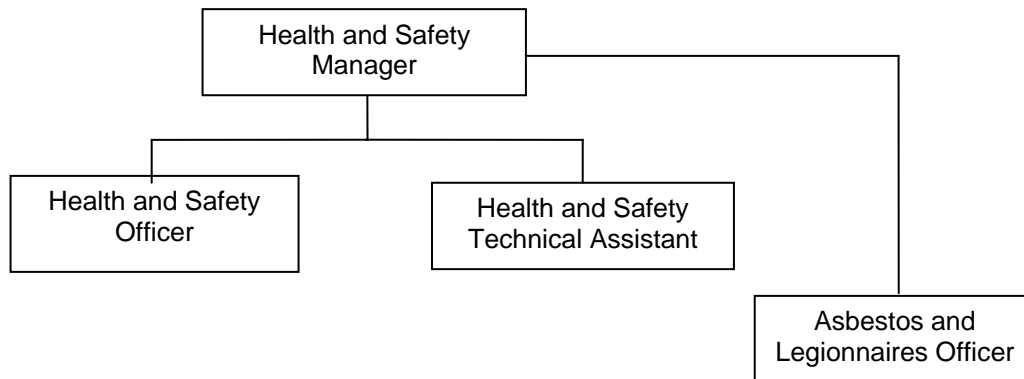
health and safety staffing establishment

3. To deliver the action plan and meet our legal duties I propose to strengthen our health and safety staffing establishment. I propose to create a health and safety team consisting of :-
 - Health and Safety Manager
 - Health and Safety Officer
 - Asbestos and Legionnaires Officer
 - Health and Safety Technical Assistant

4. The cost of these proposals are shown below in Table 1.

| Position | Current Spend | New Spend | Variance |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| Health and Safety Manager | £36,123 | £42,523 | £6,400 |
| Health and Safety Officer | £0,000 | £35,000 | £35,000 |
| Health and Safety Technician | £0,000 | £25,000 | £25,000 |
| Asbestos and Legionnaires Officer | £36,123 | £36,123 | £0,000 |
| Total variance | | | £66,400 |

5. The proposed structure is shown below:-



health and safety budget

6. We have budgets covering health and safety related matters but we do not have a dedicated budget for training, in year improvements or changes in regulations. I propose a budget of £25,000 is established for this purpose. The budget will be managed by the Health and Safety Manager in conjunction with the Health and Safety Panel.

inspection regime

7. Your officers have reviewed the inspection regime. I attach at Annex P their findings which include an inspection schedule for Council assets and open spaces. I propose to continue with the implementation of this regime.

learning lessons

8. Committee will be aware of the recent health and safety issue at Woodhouse Close Leisure Centre. The Council needs to learn lessons from this event. I propose to commission the Health and Safety Panel to carry out a wide ranging enquiry into the health and safety event at Woodhouse Close Leisure Centre. As well as officers the

Health and Safety Panel includes Councillors. The findings of the Health and Safety Panel would be reported back to this Committee. The Health and Safety Panel would be asked to make recommendations based on their enquiry.

response to incidents

9. The Council has a scheme of delegation to offers which gives officers discretion to commit expenditure up to the value of £30,000. This does not cover our response to health and safety incidents such as commissioning works, making payments and covering any costs relating to health and safety incidents.
10. Many health and safety matters require a speedy response to protect people or prevent injury. I propose that the Council's three statutory officers – Monitoring Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Executive – are given delegated authority to commit expenditure of up to £30,000 to resolve health and safety matters, any expenditure will be reported to this Committee .

action plan

11. Your officers have reviewed the Council's health and safety activity in general. They have developed an action plan to guide our work in future.
12. I propose that Committee approves the action plan attached at Annex P. The Health and Safety Manager will monitor the action plan and report progress to this Committee on a quarterly basis.

external validation

13. I believe that it is important to have our health and safety arrangements externally validated on at least an annual basis. This is most likely to be done by an external consultant. I propose to allocate a sum of £10,000 for this purpose and go through a tendering process to appoint a properly qualified consultancy.

legal implications

14. A failure to adhere to our procedures will result in the authority being in breach of its legal requirements as all of the procedures have associated regulations. On investigation these failures may lead to an improvement notice, a prohibition notice or prosecution from the HSE or other enforcing body.
15. The Management of Health and Safety and Work Regulations 1999 (Regulation 7) states that '*When seeking competent assistance employers should appoint one or more employees, with the necessary means, or themselves, to provide the health and safety assistance required.*' Given the size of the workforce and diversity of working environments it would be considered reasonable for more than one person to provide health and safety assistance within this organisation and to assist in the provision of assistance to Dale and Valley Homes.

financial implications

16. The appointment of a Health and Safety Officer will mean that a new post will have to be established and it is proposed that the post will be graded using the existing job evaluation scheme. However, for the purposes of this report this position is graded at SO2.
17. The appointment of a Health and Safety Technical Officer will also mean that a new post will have to be established and it is proposed that the post be graded using the existing job evaluation scheme. However, for the purposes of this report this position is graded at Scale 5.
18. As a major element of the duties associated with the post will be carried out supporting the work done by Dale and Valley Homes it is proposed that should the new post be approved, then a contribution is sought from them towards the costs associated with the new post.
19. The creation of a revised structure to better manage health and safety across the Council will mean a significant change to the duties and responsibilities of the current Health and Safety Officer. This would include additional management responsibilities. It is considered likely that this would lead to a regrading of the current post (estimated for this report as a £6,400 increase) and a change of title to the Health and Safety Manager.
20. The proposals also put forward expenditure of a £50,000 health and safety budget and a £10,000 external validation budget.
21. In summary the additional cost to the General Fund would be £80,000 and HMA £27,000. The Strategic Director for Resource Management has identified underspends within current budgets to meet these costs. This is considered further to a separate report on this agenda regarding budget proposals. This must be considered against the potential cost of failure to comply with health and safety regulations.

human resources implications

22. The report proposes
 - An increase in the salary and changed title of the Health and Safety Officer
 - The creation of two new posts and their recruitment.
23. The overall increase in the staffing budget is £66,400.
24. The action plan and inspection regime will strengthen staff training and change work patterns.
25. As employers the Council has a duty to protect its employees as detailed in the section on legal implications.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Committee agrees to increase the health and safety staffing establishment.
- 2 Committee agrees to the creation of a £50,000 health and safety budget and £10,000 external validating budget.
- 3 Committee agrees to the inspection regime as detailed in Annex P.
- 4 Committee agrees to commission the Health and Safety Panel to review the health and safety issue at Woodhouse Close Leisure Centre and make recommendations.
- 5 Committee agrees to giving delegated authority to the Council's three statutory officers as detailed in this report.
- 6 Committee agrees to adopt the action plan as detailed in Annex P.
- 7 Committee agrees to establish a system of external validation of the Council's health and safety arrangements.

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