

corporate plan

2007- 2011



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Delivering promises, providing better services and creating futures

This document is Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2007/2011, and explains the Council's ambitions and priorities. If English is not your first language and you need help in translating this document, contact **Simone Wade** on **01604 838569**

এটি হলো নর্থাম্পটন বোরো কাউন্সিলের 2007/2011 সালের কর্পোরেট প্ল্যান, যা কাউন্সিলের লক্ষ্য ও অগ্রাধিকারগুলো বর্ণনা করে। ইংরেজী যদি আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হয় এবং এ কাগজপত্রের অনুবাদের পয়োজন হয় তবে পান সিলাভান ৫৭ 01604 838569। এ লোকের যোগাযোগ করুন।

這份文件是諾咸頓市議會提出的 2007/2011 年度綜合規劃，內容說明市議會的願景和優先推展項目。如果英語不是你使用的主要語言而需要翻譯這份文件的幫助，請致電與 Simone Wade 聯絡，電話 01604 838569

Văn kiện này là Bản Kế Hoạch Tổng Hợp Năm Khóa 2007/2011 của Hội Đồng Thành Phố Northampton. Nội dung giải thích các hoài bão và việc ưu tiên của Hội Đồng. Nếu tiếng Anh không phải là ngôn ngữ chính của quý vị và quý vị cần giúp đỡ phiên dịch văn kiện này, hãy gọi điện thoại số 01604 838569 liên lạc với Simone Wade

આ દસ્તાવેજ નોર્થમપ્ટન બોરો કાઉન્સિલનો 2007/2011નારનો કોર્પોરેટ પ્લાન છે. અને તે કાઉન્સિલની મહત્વાહિણીઓ અને અગ્રતાઓ સમજાવે છે. જો અંગ્રેજી તમારી પહેલી ભાષા ન હોય અને તમને આ દસ્તાવેજના આધારમાં મદદ જોઈતી હોય, તો શોન સિલ્વરનો 01604 838569 પર સંપર્ક કરો.

सिंह उत्तरांचल नैरवर्षीयप्लान यह कंसल की सीमितक जनना 2007/2011मेंघड़ी है अने इस सिंघ कंसल से सिंदेता अने उवनीतां खाते सिंघिया वीजता है। ते अंगुनी उवनीतां पघिनी उता नगीं वी अने उवनीतां सिंघ का उवनीता करन लनी सवघिउता की लैत वी उं विवपा लखे सेन सिंघर नाल 01604 838569 उे संपुख लती।

Acest document din planul colectiv al Consiliului Northampton pe anul 2007/2011 explică ambițiile și prioritățile Consiliului. Dacă engleza nu e limba dvs. principală și aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru traducerea acestui document, contactați-l pe Simone Wade la numărul 01604 838569.

Dokumentigen ah Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2007/2011 wuxuuda sharxayaa Koor-salka hlyigga iyo mudnaantooda. Haddii uu Ingiriisiga kuqadaada kuwead ansyn oo aadna caawimaad uga baahahan tahay in dokumentigan lagu tujumo, waa oo xiriir Simone Wade 01604 838569

Kanuni hii ni ya Northampton Mpango wa Borough Council's Corporate ya kipindi cha 2007/2011 na inaelezea mipanyo ya maendeleo na kipaumbele. Kama English sityo Lugha yako ya kwanza na unahitaji tafsiri ya kanuni hii,wasiliana na Simone Wade simu namba 01604 838569

یہذا کیونسیٹ اور کونسل کے کارپوریت پلان 2007/2011 میں شامل ہے، اور یہ کونسل کی اہمگیوں اور ترجیحات کی وضاحت کرتا ہے۔ اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو اس کی تفسیر کے لئے مدد کی ضرورت ہے، براہ کرم Simone Wade (01604 838569) سے رابطہ کریں۔

For further information on council services Telephone: 01604 837837 or visit: www.northampton.gov.uk

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01604 838569

Introduction



This Plan will incorporate our Best Value Performance Plan so that the Council will have one key plan driving its business



This is Northampton Borough Council's draft Corporate Plan - our promise to deliver services and community leadership for the people of Northampton. It is in reality a re-launched plan. As such it takes account of and builds on our earlier Corporate Plan. We have captured the lessons from our planning process to ensure that subsequent plans are robust and appropriately aligned with our service planning and performance management framework.

This Plan takes account of our Local Area Agreement and recognises that Northampton is no longer an independent organisation providing services to the people of the town. Rather it is an interdependent organisation which in collaboration and cooperation with other local authorities and a range of other bodies will work to create a better town in a better county.

This Plan will incorporate our Best Value Performance Plan so that the Council will have one key plan driving its business. It will also include our Delivery Plan which will incorporate our Improvement Plan. However, since Management Board has not approved these documents they are not included at this stage. We intend to consult separately on those.

We intend to begin work immediately on a new plan with the Council's new administration with a new mandate. I anticipate that this will become a core priority for the new Chief Executive who will be appointed during the summer months.



John Edwards
Interim Chief Executive

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1

The Plan in context



Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan is a key driver for the organisation. It will enable us to deliver our part of the Community Vision. This is a programme for which the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is responsible. Northampton Borough Council is a fully participating member of the LSP.

The Plan links to existing Corporate Plans, service plans and our performance management framework. It sets out a range of high-level corporate measures which will be reflected in service and team plans.

The Cabinet and Management Board will monitor progress, ensure that targets and milestones are met and that corrective measures are taken where appropriate. Progress will be reported to the Cabinet.

The Council's Corporate Plan brings together the Community Vision, corporate objectives and annual priorities and translates these into a small number of high level measures and targets.

These measures and targets are then delivered through service plans, team plans and individual objectives. Service plans themselves may be supported by improvement plans, action plans and/ or specific project plans. Our performance management framework ensures that all of these are delivered. It means that all of our activity is aligned with the Community Vision and ultimately improving the quality of life for local people.

The Council's Corporate Plan is designed to provide a management focus to improvement activity. Each performance perspective has measures and targets which have been agreed by the Corporate Board. They will monitor progress against the plan and take remedial action where necessary to maintain our direction of travel along our improvement journey.

Staff should ensure that everything they do contributes to at least one of the corporate objectives in this plan and staff appraisals will be focussed on the delivery of corporate objectives and priorities.

The development of this Plan

The Plan has been developed through discussions with local people, communities and partners. The Plan reflects their priorities. It takes account of potential synergies which may be realised through the alignment of the strategic plans of other public services within the town.

Northampton Borough Council is committed to working in partnership with other local authorities across Northamptonshire to implement 'Enhancing Local Government in Northamptonshire' (ELGIN). An emerging vision of this partnership is to develop a Customer Service Academy where a consistent approach to developing Customer Service across Northamptonshire can be agreed and implemented for the benefit of all of our customers.

This Plan incorporates the salient themes emerging from the discussions around the formation of the Community Vision which was led by the Local Strategic Partnership and supported by the Council. Local people's views about their expectations of the Council have produced a number of key themes.

The following are the top 5 things that people said they liked most about Northampton:

- **Parks & the countryside**
- **Its historic buildings**
- **The wider range of shops**
- **The availability of health care**
- **The quality of schools**

1.

The Plan in context

People also told us what they thought needed improvement:

- **The way the town looks**
- **Community safety**
- **Public transport choices**
- **Roads and highways**
- **Entertainment**

People said they want the Council and its partners to concentrate on getting the basics right first, whilst putting plans in place to bring about a more ambitious vision of the future Northampton.

The Corporate Plan in a real world context

This Plan reflects our current performance as assessed by a number of independent auditors and inspectors and current commitments. It also reflects the realignment of this year's objectives and priorities to meet with existing financial resources.

Where services have been assessed as weak, there are improvement plans in place. These are covered within a separate strategy to be agreed by Board. These will prepare the Council for an inspection by the Audit Commission.

Delivering promises, providing better services and creating futures

People want, expect and are entitled to a broad range of services delivered by its local Council and that those services give them value for money. Partnership is a key vehicle through which better services will be delivered. This approach allows resources to be aligned, needs to be met by the most appropriate organisation, efficiencies to be gained and confusion to be removed.

The Council is committed to working through strategic partnerships, working and co-operating with partners. The Council also recognises that its work is a subset of a wider strategy; the Community Vision. The body responsible for driving, monitoring and delivering the Community Vision is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The Local Strategic Partnership is a body of organisations that work together to improve the quality of life for the people of Northampton. NBC is a key partner within the LSP and is currently working along side the other partners to develop a Community Strategy that shows how the new Community Vision for 2031 can deliver year on year, the agreed improvement which will result in better services for local people. Each organisation will have its own strategic internal plans to deliver agreed priorities. This Corporate Plan shows how we will play our part in delivering this new, shared vision of the future of Northampton.

The Council will play its full part by becoming an organisation that provides quality services, as well as being a great place to work. To achieve this we will need to succeed in the priority improvement areas. However we will also have to improve in other areas where there is no additional funding. This will mean realising cashable savings as well as working more efficiently, innovatively and creatively.

We are confident that our plans are ambitious, realistic and achievable. By working with our staff, partners and the community we will make the improvements that are needed to deliver our shared vision for the future.

“ We are confident that our plans are ambitious, realistic and achievable ”

2.

Key facts about Northampton



Northampton is an historic town with the first known human habitation in Briar Hill in 4000 BC. Over the years it has made its name through being a seat of Parliament in the 1300s, the famous Queen Eleanor Cross, a market place since 1189 and the boot and shoe industry. More widely Northampton is known for its football, rugby, cricket and motor sports. It is also home to major business head quarters such as Carlsberg, Barclaycard, Avon, & Travis Perkins.

Northampton has a diverse population with its ethnic communities forming 12.3 per cent of the population. The Council is ranked 135th out of 354 local authorities in the Indices of Deprivation. No wards are in the worst 10 per cent for deprivation but 33 per cent of Northampton's wards are in 25 per cent of the most deprived wards in England. Unemployment is lower than the national average with lower than average take-up of benefits by working

age people.

Regeneration is therefore a key priority for the town. The Government has identified West Northamptonshire, including Northampton as an area for major growth. This will provide over 141,000 additional jobs and 167,000 new homes by 2031. Northampton Borough Council works with the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, to ensure that local peoples' views are represented and the best outcomes delivered for the future of the town.

This presents a fantastic opportunity for Northampton to fulfil its vision. The revitalisation and upgrading in quality facilities of Northampton's central area are essential to the regeneration of the town as a whole and to its ability to accommodate any planned growth, for example the planned development of Grosvenor & Greyfriars, St John's area, and Castle Station.

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Regeneration is therefore a key priority for the town

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3.

Northampton Borough Council

Local government functions are divided between county and district councils, to the level where they can be practised most efficiently.

Northampton Borough Council is the largest district council in Northamptonshire and covers an area of 81km². The town is part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth area identified for economic and population growth as part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) Sustainable Communities Plan. Currently the population is about 194,500, living in 85,000 households, and as part of the planned expansion the population is due to reach 300,000 by 2031.

District and Borough Councils are responsible for local planning and building control, council housing, environmental health, markets and fairs,

refuse collection and recycling, cemeteries and crematoria, leisure services, parks, and tourism.

County councils are responsible for running the larger services covering a wider geographical area, such as education, social services, libraries, main roads, public transport, consumer protection, waste disposal and strategic planning.

To exercise its role as a community leader Northampton Borough Council must be at the heart of its communities, listening and reacting to the views of local people. This means recognising the diversity of the communities we serve. It also means ensuring that the delivery and design of services take account of, as far as is possible, communities' needs, wants and aspirations.



4.

The Council's work set in a strategic context

The starting point for this plan is to ensure that the Council is able to deliver its part of the Community Vision for Northampton. In January 2007 the Local Strategic Partnership agreed the Community Vision for Northampton.

The Vision was informed by regional and national priorities, consultation with the public, partner organisations and staff. The Council facilitated the development of the Community Vision. Its role in achieving the vision is supported by five corporate objectives. Each year a small number of improvement priorities are identified under each corporate objective.

In developing the first phase of the Community Vision, by 2011 Northampton will be:

- Safer
- Cleaner
- Healthier
- Recognised for good quality, environmentally friendly housing
- Well served by modern and efficient public services

The Community Vision 2031

"Close your eyes and imagine where you want to be. Imagine the complete journey you need to take in order to get there. Now go pack... Your reservations have been made"

Imagine Northampton in 2031! - A place of PRIDE, RESPECT, EXCITEMENT, VITALITY, FUN, and PASSION.

The spirit, commitment and determination of the people of Northampton will be there for everyone to see. Northampton will build upon its historic market town roots to become a 21st century city with diverse multi-cultural communities.

People who visit Northampton will look upon it as a place where they would want to live, work and bring up a family and those who live here will want to stay. We will celebrate all that is good about Northampton and Northampton will be all these things because:

By 2011 it will....

Be recognised for good quality, environmentally friendly housing:

We will continue to promote good affordable, well-designed housing for all, with attention to the environment and the use of sustainable resources

Be well served by modern and efficient public services:

Local Councils will have defined their role as community leaders, working in

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We will celebrate all that is good about Northampton

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4.

The Council's work set in a strategic context

“ We will celebrate all that is good about Northampton ”

partnership to deliver this vision for Northampton. Their decisions will be easy to understand, transparent and will involve local people.

Be safer:

People will use the city centre and move around all of Northampton at night without fear.

Be cleaner:

All of Northampton will be clean and litter-free. We will work together to build a community culture of no tolerance of those who litter and pollute our streets.

Be healthier:

Our green spaces, the street -scape and urban design will help to make the healthiest environment so that people have good physical and mental health and live longer.

By 2021 it will....

Be a city:

With a population approaching 240,000 over the next 15 years, Northampton will become city sized and as such we will develop an infrastructure that ensures that during this rapid period of growth there are enough schools, health care services, emergency services, roads, affordable quality housing and green space to support the rest of our vision. There will be excellent public services, healthy, skilled and prosperous residents who are proud of where they live and aspire to improve their lifestyle and opportunities.

Be a place made up from caring communities:

Communities will be developed and built upon respect and understanding of people of all ages, status and ethnicity. We will invest in, support and promote the family in all the forms that it takes so that there is the opportunity and desire to stay together, learn from and support each other.



And by 2031 it will...

Be a major regional cultural and economic centre:

Northampton will be a centre for educational excellence our schools will help develop good citizens and produce exceptional results. Our colleges and university will work with local businesses to increase the skills base and develop and retain the jobs and workers of the future, improving the quality of life for all.

Our traditional architecture will be mixed with new urban design. The Cultural Mile will snake through the city, joined together by our integrated transport system. Included within the Cultural Mile will be a heritage trail that celebrates our boot and shoe past. We will take full advantage of all that the River Nene has to offer and develop a water-based experience for all ages. All of this plus a specialist niche shopping experience like no other makes Northampton a tourist destination of choice.

4.

The Council's work set in a strategic context



Northampton will be a place of quality and distinction!



Be defined by its excellent transport system

People will be able to move about the city and all of Northampton easily, hopping on and off an environmentally friendly transport system. They will have more choice of how they travel. This will free us from our dependence upon our cars to move around Northampton. Pollution and congestion will be virtually eliminated.

Northampton will be a place of quality and distinction!

Other strategic drivers

In developing the new Community Vision, the community strategy and the Council's priorities, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) has provided focus and drive and ensures that joint-working delivers agreed outcomes as well as providing another check on the delivery of its services.

The LAA is a three year agreement that sets out priorities for Northamptonshire and a range of targets against which Local Strategic Partnership including councils, must deliver. The LAA guides the Local Strategic Partnership in the development of its Community Strategy and as such impacts upon the Council's priorities.

The LAA priorities are split into four areas:

1. Healthier Communities & Older People
2. Safer & Stronger Communities
3. Children & Young People
4. Economic Development, Enterprise & Growth

The LSP priorities are:

- Building a City
- Better Quality of Life
- Better Prospects and Opportunities

Building a City

We are now in a very important period for the future of Northampton. We stand on the cusp of an exciting growth and expansion of the town; the building of a city.

This brings with it fantastic opportunities for businesses, for education & for communities to be involved in the successful growth of Northampton. We must now invest in the planning and regeneration of Northampton, providing economic development and growth to support the future image, infrastructure and influence of Northampton. The Council will work in partnership with key organisations such as West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, the County Council, East Midlands Development Agency and English Partnerships to lever in public sector investment and ensure delivery of key infrastructure. The Council is also engaging with the private sector to attract investment and delivery of major capital projects. The Council will work collaboratively with adjacent local authorities.

West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) has been formed to secure the sustainable regeneration and growth of Northampton, Towcester and Daventry. Supported by English Partnerships and Northampton Borough Council, WNDC is leading in delivering a programme of regeneration such as Northampton Waterside, South West District and Dallington and Kingsheath involving approximately £100m.

The Council's immediate priorities are the regeneration of Grosvenor/Greyfriars bus station and the St John's are around Royal & Derngate Theatre involving the investment of over £400m.

Better Quality of Life

We know that people want a decent quality of life. Research shows that

4.

The Council's work set in a strategic context

people want to live in a place that is safe. They want to feel safe to move around and about at all hours of the day and night. Local people want to live in a place that is clean. This means that it is free from litter, graffiti, gum and abandoned vehicles.

We will work with our statutory partners, including the Police, to reduce all forms of crime and anti-social behaviour and to help local people feel safer.

Better Prospects and Opportunities

Part of improving people's quality of life is to make sure that people have access to good quality health care, education and the services provided by the public sector such as social housing, social services etc. Working with our partners and councils across the county we will make sure that these priorities are a key part of our plans for delivering services now and in the future.



5.

Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Objectives 2007 - 2011



ensure that our
communities
are
safer, greener
and cleaner



The Council's corporate objectives set out what the Council wants to achieve over the next four years. These provide the context for all of our services and activities.

The five objectives are

- To ensure that our communities are safer, greener and cleaner
- To improve housing and health to enhance the wellbeing of our communities
- To deliver quality services to our customers and communities
- To promote economic development and growth in Northampton
- To strengthen our commitment to partnership working and engaging with our communities to deliver better outcomes

Corporate Priorities 2007/ 08

Priorities have been set for each of the corporate objectives, which provide a focus for the Council's improvement work over the next year. These priorities are cross cutting and are contributed to by services across the Council. The following pages give details of the key actions, targets and measures of evaluation together with the priority sponsor responsible for their delivery.

In addition, the Council plans its activities and allocates resources within a business planning framework. This is used to manage competing priorities and achieve value for money. The Council has recently undergone a challenging budget setting process to deliver savings of approximately £5million through reconfiguration of service delivery and efficiency savings. This process has ensured that the Council has a sound financial base from which to plan for future years.

The priorities explored

To ensure that our communities are safer, greener and cleaner

- To improve the quality of the environment in which we live
- To help people feel safer through reducing crime and anti-social behaviour

To improve housing and health to enhance the wellbeing of our communities

- To deliver an excellent housing service and provide affordable housing for those in need
- To promote equality, social inclusion and improve health

To deliver quality services to our customers and communities

- To continue to improve our weakest services
- To ensure clear, decisive political and managerial leadership to drive cultural change
- To continue to strengthen our financial management

To promote economic development and growth in Northampton

- To work with partners to support economic and infrastructure development to promote communities that are sustainable

To strengthen our commitment to partnership working and engaging with our communities to deliver better outcomes

- To improve our interaction with the public to ensure we are providing good quality services
- To improve work with partners to deliver better outcomes and services

6.

Organisational readiness for delivery

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We will work with our 'family' within local government to improve the services that we provide

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The Council has put in place a range of processes and actions to support the development of this Corporate Plan. We will work with our 'family' within local government to improve the services that we provide.

People Management

The Council adopted a 3-year Human Resources (HR) Strategy and Action Plan - "Enabling Success Through People" - in December 2005. The purpose of the strategy is to support the Corporate Plan and improvement of the Council by ensuring that the Council has an HR function that is effective and that it recruits, retains and develops our people to meet the challenges we face. The strategy recognises the urgent need to improve management and leadership capacity, embed performance management, improve job satisfaction and employee engagement in the Council's plans and priorities, and ensure we have a diverse, healthy workforce who are fairly paid for the jobs they do.

The one-year HR Action Plan takes each element of the strategy and specifically commits the Council to actions in each of these areas to drive improvement for the year ahead. Our key activities in the last 12 months have included significantly reducing our level of sickness by approximately 30%, providing nationally accredited leadership and management development programmes to all our managers, undertaking an employee survey and acting on the results, and introducing an Employee Assistance programme to give staff access to independent advice and support any time they require it.

Over 70% of our staff have received a performance appraisal and the Council is well underway to completing the national pay and grading review by April 2008 which

will make single status a reality, regardless of gender.

Culture

The Council is currently revisiting previous work on organisational culture under the auspices of its improvement plan. This is to ensure that behaviours and work processes are aligned to organisational values and delivery.

Value for money

This brings together cost and quality aspects of providing goods and services. The Council will deliver its services within tight resource constraints. The Council will continue its journey of service improvements with a focus on achieving value for money measuring the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of services. The Council will measure the extent to which we achieve value for money by assessing our performance against the following criteria:

- Improving customer satisfaction ratings for services.
- Achieving the Council's priorities and improvement targets.
- Achieving a minimum of 3% efficiency savings per annum as required by government.
- Assessment of service costs in comparison to other local authorities.
- Working within the resource framework, achieving a level of reserves at or above the minimum acceptable level.
- Implement a programme of value for money reviews that lead to service improvements.
- Achieving positive feedback or improved scores from all external inspections and

6.

Organisational
readiness for
delivery

reviews, including an endorsement of how the Council has improved the way it manages its resources.

Medium Term Planning (MTP)

The Medium Term Planning process (MTP) is a business planning tool whose main objective is to deliver the Council's priorities and maximise value for money. In anticipation of the changing expectations of our customers and other stakeholders, such as central government, MTP seeks to shape the current and future delivery of services so that we provide value for money services.

In order to do this the Council has to make the best use of scarce resources. Hence MTP also involves delivering services within what the Council is able to afford by working to a medium term financial strategy. It also involves managing risk and procuring goods and services wisely.

The MTP seeks to deliver services in the most effective, economic and efficient manner possible. This invariably involves examining why services are provided at all and the quantity and quality of what is provided. Such examination may lead to ceasing to provide services, or reducing the level at which services are provided, or providing services in more innovative ways or differently.

Use of Resources

In providing value for money the Council must make the best use of its resources. Indeed, the Council is subject to an annual review by the Audit Commission of its use of resources. The Council's medium term financial strategy is an important component of how resources are utilised. It is used to manage both capital and revenue expenditure and to ensure that resources are directly linked to Council priorities. Levels of Council tax, investment plans, risk management and procurement are all key elements of the Council's financial strategy.

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6.

Organisational
readiness for
delivery

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As a planning guideline the
predicted council revenue position
for 2007-08 is as follows:

General Fund Revenue Summary

Funding	Budget
Government Grant	
Revenue Support Grant	-2,644,924
Non-Domestic Rate	-15,760,424
Total Grants	-18,405,348
Council Tax	
Borough related Precept	-12,219,260
Parish related Precept	-825,447
Total Precept	-13,044,707
Total Income	-31,450,055
Expenditure	
Cash Limits	
Customer Services	3,040,380
Performance, IT, & Improvement	2,960,550
Human Resources	2,131,900
Community Safety, Leisure, & Town Centre Ops	-468,010
Development, Building Control,&	
Environmental Health	2,241,300
Finance & Asset Management	622,120
Regeneration, Growth, & Community Development	4,668,960
Street Scene & Property Maintenance	10,886,200
Housing Services	1,767,090
Governance, Resources, & Communications	2,917,980
Chief Executives	766,660
Net Expenditure (Cash Limit)	37,135,130
Recharge to Other Funds	-7,069,000
Net General Fund Cash Limit	30,066,130

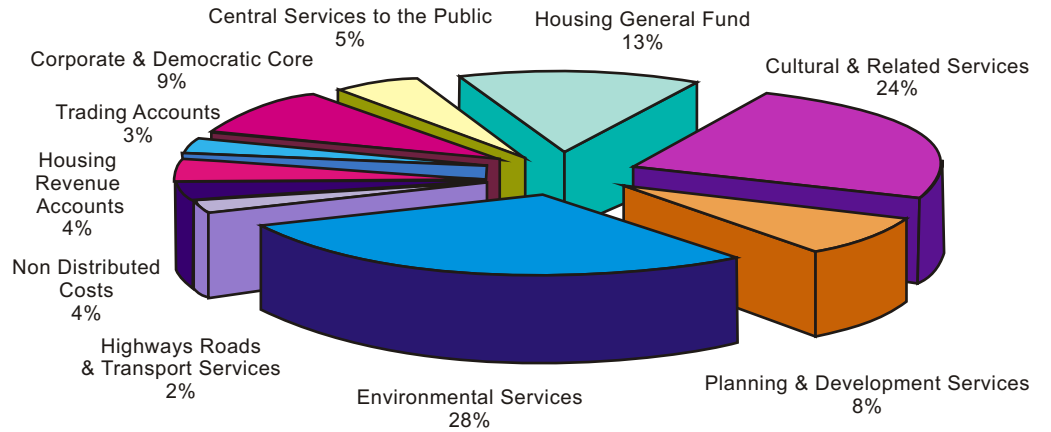
Corporate Items

Debt Charges	237,000
Collection Fund Deficit	19,868
Parish Precepts	825,447
Parish Grants	-59,124
Contingency - Contribution	
To Balance	1,250,000
	2,323,191
Net General Fund Budget Requirement	32,339,321
Contribution To/From (-) Balances	
	-889,266
	31,450,055
Balances B/F	-3,091,485
Contributions to/from (-) Balances	
	-360,734
Balance c/f	-3,452,219

6.

Organisational readiness for delivery

Indicative % Split of Cost Per Service for 2007/08



- Trading Accounts
- Corporate & Democratic Core
- Central Services to the Public
- Housing General Fund
- Cultural & Related Services
- Planning & Development Services
- Environmental Services
- Highways Roads & Transport Services
- Non Distributed Costs
- Housing Revenue Accounts

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 We will work with our 'family' within local government to improve the services that we provide
 ”

6.

Organisational
readiness for
delivery

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services
that we provide

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Customer Satisfaction

The Council has now adopted a 3 year Customer Services Strategy incorporating findings from consultation and engagement with our customers. This followed research stating that customers received a poor quality of service.

During 2006 we have focused on improving in these areas and have:

- Purchased new telephony systems, improving our call handling performance,
- Recruited new staff with appropriate skills and experience and relocated staff in a telephone based Customer Contact Centre,
- Actively managed and monitored queues,
- Reviewed our corporate standards where performance is measured,
- Invested in training and development of staff,
- Introduced local performance indicators,
- Reviewed our complaints procedure and introduced a 'customer feedback' procedure

The Council also joined the Institute of Customer Services. An established Customer Services Board, responsible to Corporate Board, will monitor the implementation of the strategy by conducting an annual review of progress.

Council Tax

The Council has a strong commitment to keep levels of Council Tax as low as financially prudent. Due to difficult financial circumstances, the Council Tax increase has been set at 4.95%. In order to deliver services within the

overall financial envelope the Council will exercise strong control over performance, efficiency and value for money.

Investment

The Council is looking at how best to allocate the income it receives from the disposal of its assets, for example from the sale of land.

Levels of Reserves

These reserves allow the Council to deal with unexpected financial costs in a planned way, ensuring that the risk of service failure is minimised. It is planned to build up the level of reserves to a minimum level over time from the next medium term strategy. This level will be determined by an annual robust risk assessment covering all services.

Risk Management

The Council will continue to develop its approach to risk management, with a clear framework for identifying and managing risks across all services. This will include assessing significant risks of any options before taking key decisions. Risk management contributes to the delivery of the Council's priorities and plays a key role in delivering effective services.

Procurement

The Council is working in partnership with other districts in Northamptonshire to create a shared procurement service, delivering efficiencies and economies of scale.

Efficiency

In addition to procurement the Council will continue to develop a programme of efficiency projects helping us to find savings across the organisation by improving our business processes, using new technology and smarter purchasing.

7

Other strategic delivery partnerships

Northampton Borough Council delivers its priorities in collaboration with organisations across Northamptonshire. The services and level of quality and efficiency expected by local people can only be achieved through partnership working.

The development of the new Community Strategy by the Local Strategic Partnership and its revitalised way of working is an exemplar of how the various agencies join together at a strategic level to bring about growth and regeneration on a scale in line with the Community Vision, making sure that we have enough schools, hospitals, transport systems and good public services to support a new city.

Northampton Borough Council plays a key role in the Northampton Safer and Stronger Community Partnership, which has benefited from a review by a Home Office specialist team in February 2007. Alongside partners, who include Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire County Council, the Probation Services and the Voluntary Sector, the Council is active in tackling burglary, town centre violence, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse among other things.

In order to deliver a more efficient and cost effective waste service for the local community, the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership is investigating future waste disposal options and the opportunity for sharing the service between the neighbouring authorities.

Northampton Borough Council, together with Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Police Authority, Northamptonshire Fire and Safety Service and the seven Districts and Boroughs, work

in partnership to remove abandoned vehicles under an umbrella called ELVIS. The partners work closely together to ensure abandoned vehicles are removed as quickly as possible.

In 2007 the Council will be looking to extend its existing partnership with Stonham Housing Association, enabling vulnerable people to access supported housing that would not otherwise be available to them.

Northampton Borough Council is playing a key part in developing a county-wide Customer Service Network where key individuals come together to learn, share and exchange knowledge across authorities. This successful joint working and networking has resulted in 5 other local authorities across Northamptonshire joining the Institute of Customer Service in a partnership model. Staff from four local authorities in Northamptonshire are already working together to develop Coaches and Practitioners to achieve an ICS Professional Award.

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The services and level of quality and efficiency expected by local people can only be achieved through partnership working

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8

Reviewing previous performance

This section reviews a range of previous priorities and outlines successes. A full analysis of all our performance indicators for 2006/07 will be produced on 30 June 2007 in line with all other Councils. This document will be an appendix to this Corporate Plan and will be called the Best Value Performance Plan.

Crime and Community Safety - Summary of performance 2006 - 2007

In February 2007 the Council took part in a review by the Home Office's Partnership Support Programme of the Northampton Community Safety Partnership. The Partnership will agree actions on the resulting recommendations early in the new financial year. The CPA direction of travel assessments made no recommendations in respect of community safety.

Crime generally has been declining in Northampton in 2006-7, although it remains higher than we would expect. The partnership was set some very demanding targets for crime reduction, which it has come close to meeting in respect of violent crime. Vehicle crime has seen the largest percentage reduction, although not enough to reach the target, but unfortunately burglary remains significantly higher than the required figure. The number of robberies has slightly risen since last year.

The Council has taken part in developing and re-launching the community safety partnership. An Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy has been approved and is now being delivered. Training of key staff in their statutory responsibilities to consider crime and disorder has been delivered. The Council has improved its service to actual and potential victims of domestic abuse, with the

launch of the Sanctuary Scheme and improved co-ordination through the Sunflower Centre. This is supported by the Community Safety Partnership. The relationship between the Council's CCTV system and the police is much stronger with improved sharing of information, and has scored some notable successes. Information sharing on crime generally, and assigning of tasks between the Council, police and other agencies, has been formalised and is now frequent and beginning to bear fruit.

Planning - Summary of performance 2006 - 2007

Performance improvement in Planning is being driven by means of a structured and timetabled 12-month Improvement Programme, which is monitored continually. The Improvement Programme addresses the weaknesses identified in the Service Inspection Report and focuses on four main interlinked areas: performance, organisation and resources, Committee procedures/Member development, and process improvement. It also includes actions, which are specific to the various services within Planning: development control, building control, policy and conservation.

Performance against established indicators shows a sustained and significant improvement over the last two quarters of 2006-07, although weaker performance in the first 6 months has reduced the level of overall performance for the year. This recovery is fragile, and the Improvement Programme sets out actions to ensure that resources are available to sustain these improvement gains over the long term. These actions are being implemented. Planning Committee arrangements have been improved and a comprehensive training programme is



Crime generally has been declining in Northampton in 2006-7



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Reviewing
previous
performance

underway for members of the Planning Committee. The principles of a revised Scheme of Delegation have been agreed and this will also contribute to sustaining improved performance.

Development Control procedures have been reviewed and a range of improvements have been put in place to improve customer care and stakeholder involvement. These include the expansion of the reception area at Cliftonville House, conducting an ongoing customer satisfaction survey and the establishment of Development Control and Building Control Users Forums.

Customer Service Summary of performance 2006 - 2007

Improvements to the One Stop Shop have been achieved in 2006-07 in line with the Council's improvement priorities to increase customer satisfaction and improve partnership working. Specifically the One Stop Shop has reduced customer waiting times and provides a faster response to a broader spectrum of services. Additionally a continuous improvement plan is now in place. An improved Corporate Complaints Procedure is now in place and is improving services as a result. Customer standards have been produced and work is underway for partner organisations to adopt the same standards.

Housing Services Summary of performance 2006 - 2007

Progress has been made in voids management. All long term voids have been re-let and the number of voids reduced by half in 12 months.

In meeting the Decent Homes standard, an Asset Management Strategy has been commissioned

and an Housing Revenue Account Business Plan developed.

Temporary accommodation numbers have reduced by half.

Improvement plans are in place for Benefits and Housing and progress is monitored by the Government Monitoring Board (GMB) Sub Groups. How the Government monitors the Council's improvement can be found in **Section 9**.

Benefits Services Summary of performance 2006- 2007

Benefits Services achieved all its primary targets in line with the agreed performance framework.

Consistent improvements are planned for 2007/08 inline with the performance framework indicating how standard or higher figures will be achieved.

Department for Work and Pensions are looking at disengagement from Benefits Services from Sept 2007, provided existing direction of travel is maintained.

The development of sustainability will continue with the appointment of a Benefits Manager in the autumn.

Regeneration & Growth - Summary of performance 2006 - 2007

Working with South Northamptonshire Council and Daventry District Council, a revised Local Development Scheme was submitted to GOEM and approved on the 16th March 2007. Joint working has also been with the support of GOEM, NCC and WNDC through a series of Project Board and Steering Panel meetings. These have been chaired by NBC over the past year and involved the Leaders and Portfolio holders of all three Local Authorities, senior managers and a joint Planning team. In order to

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Reviewing
previous
performance

progress this important work further resources have been made available, such as joint accommodation. The Chair of both Project Board and Steering Panel has been successfully passed to South Northamptonshire Council from the 1st April 2007 for a period of 12 months underlining the true partnership spirit and commitment.

Additionally, the approved Local Development Scheme will allow the formal consultation of the Local Delivery Framework over the next year.

The Council has led regeneration partnership working by bringing forward a Central Area Framework with its partners West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, the County Council and English Partnerships. The Council has also secured East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) support for its regeneration plans and investments. The study was widely circulated and presentations made to Councillors of NBC, NCC and WNDC, together with the Town Centre Commission, the Town Centre Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnership Board.

Whilst the Community Vision for Northampton has been developed, the joint Local Authority Group is waiting to bring forward a joint vision for West Northamptonshire by August 2007 through engagement with the West Northamptonshire communities.

The appointment of an interim Regeneration manager in 2006 and recent permanent appointment of an Economic Intelligence Manager, has led to increased joint working with key partners, in particular:

- Confirmation of key regeneration principles by Cabinet and adoption of key priority regeneration projects has come forward in December 2006
- Rejuvenation of the Grosvenor/Greyfriars project is a high priority regeneration project. It has involved partners and a collaboration agreement has been drawn up with the private sector. The Council is working together with Legal and General and Stagecoach and is targeting a signed development agreement by June 2007.
- The Council has worked in partnership with WNDC and contributed to its Growth Delivery Plan Steering Panel and supported each of its 5 sub groups.
- The Council has brought forward through a cross-service Project Board and a cross-partner Council Steering Panel a Housing Strategy that has been approved as 'fit for purpose' by GOEM on 24th March 2007.



9

Targets for 2007-08 and how we will ensure they are delivered

This section of the plan sets out the general direction of what the Council is seeking to achieve. Additionally, we have identified key actions that are detailed within the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) which will be appended to this plan and published at the end of June 2007. Included within the appendix will be specific measurable targets. These targets will be set against statutory Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPis) and national targets, together with locally defined indicators, specific to each service area. In addition to monitoring our performance against these targets we also monitor progress against other priority areas such as our Strategic Improvement Plan.

The Council will also be monitored by external bodies through audit mechanisms and also by the Government Monitoring Board in

respect of the progress we are making to improve.

We have a range of internal mechanisms that we use to monitor performance and hold people to account. This is achieved through our performance management framework that includes:

- Team meetings at least once a month in service areas,
- 1:1 meetings with line managers at least once a month,
- Corporate appraisal scheme whereby performance and behaviours are measured and reviewed twice a year.
- Bi-monthly performance reviews
- Weekly and monthly monitoring of service data.

Council Priority 1	To improve the quality of the environment in which we live
Policy Sponsor	David Taylor

Key Actions

These will be our targets to measure performance against the Key Actions

1a To help local people feel safer by tackling anti social behaviour and by working with the police to reduce crime

Working with the Safer, Stronger Communities Partnership to deliver the recommendations as laid out in the Home Office Partnership Support Programme Report.

To reduce anti-social behaviour and crime by March 2008

Council Priority 2	To deliver an excellent housing service and provide affordable housing for those in need
Policy Sponsor	David Taylor

2a To improve the effectiveness of our Housing Services by reducing homelessness, improving the quality of homes and reducing delays in service provision

To improve the quality of all our housing stock within agreed criteria, in line with Government criteria for decent homes.

9.

Targets for
2007-08 and
how we will
ensure they
are delivered

Council Priority 3 To promote equality, social inclusion and improve health

Policy Sponsor John Edwards, Chief Executive

Key Actions

**These will be our targets to
measure performance against
the Key Actions**

- 3a** Achieve the Equality Standard for Local Government, Level 2: Assessment & consultation/participation
- Developed systems for self-assessment, scrutiny and audits as the basis for continuous improvement
 - Engaged in equality impact assessment
 - Undertaken self-assessment across the authority
 - Involved designated community, staff and stake holder groups in service planning
 - Engaged in the development of information and monitoring systems
 - Engaged in an equality action planning process for employment, pay and service delivery

Council Priority 4 To continue to improve our weakest services

Policy Sponsor Corporate Directors

- 4a** To continue to make improvements in service delivery, with short term focus on our three weakest services
- Housing services improving
 - Planning services improving
 - Benefits PIs show consistent improvement trend as evidenced by 06/07 outturn data plus part-year data at time of Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) assessment
- 4b** To strengthen arrangements to secure the continuous improvement of all services
- Clear approach evident by 2008
 - Value for Money (VFM) arrangements improving
 - Clear performance framework, including reporting to members
 - Robust Financial management evidenced by an improvement in the Use of Resources Score to level 2 by March 2008

9.

Targets for 2007-08 and how we will ensure they are delivered

Key Actions

These will be our targets to measure performance against the Key Actions

- 4c** To increase the effectiveness of our revenues and benefits services

 - Increase customer satisfaction by a minimum of 10% each year
 - Achieve an overall satisfaction rate of 80% in the benefits service by March 2008
 - Ensure new claimants receive benefit payments within 25 days by March 2009

- 4d** To improve the effectiveness of our Planning Service

 - Reduce the time taken to process 'minor' planning applications to 86% within 8 weeks by March 2009
 - Recruit and train staff to deliver an integrated planning service over three years with 75% customer satisfaction
 - Improve working with strategic partners to deliver the sustainable communities and growth agendas by achieving and approved Local Development Framework by August 2011.

Council Priority 5	To ensure clear, decisive political and managerial leadership to drive cultural change
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Policy Sponsor	John Edwards, Chief Executive
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- 5a** Demonstrate stronger joint political leadership across all parties

 - A clear joint agreement, post elections, for political co-operation to deliver improvement and agreed arrangements in place
 - Co-operation is sustained and effective
 - A balanced budget for 2007/08 is set
 - A detailed, agreed, robust, project plan in place for the delivery of the identified budget reductions and efficiency savings with clear (financial) targets, timelines and accountabilities. Implementation will be underway.
 - Clear arrangements in place for officer and member accountabilities for the delivery of the budget reductions and efficiency savings
 - Arrangements in place - and being actioned - to monitor the 2007/08 budget to ensure that appropriate action is being taken to deliver the Budget. This will include clear reporting arrangements. There will be evidence already, if necessary, of timely and effective corrective action

9.

Targets for
2007-08 and
how we will
ensure they
are delivered

Key Actions

These will be our targets to measure performance against the Key Actions

5b Demonstrate effective managerial leadership to deliver improvement and drive cultural change

A clear plan, which the Council has started to implement, for how it is going to ensure its most senior managers have the necessary leadership capacity, skills and expertise including:-

- a) A clear, timed plan for the recruitment of the Chief Executive's post, including how the Council will seek to ensure that it makes a sound appointment.
- b) The Acting Chief Executive to assess the capacity and skills of the paid service and identify gaps and agree plans to address them.

Evidence that actions agreed at top management team are actioned, reported back and have impact.

Robust, SMART Corporate Plan and service plans for 2007/08 in place and in use.

Organisational culture where responsibility and accountability is clear and staff and Councillors are clear on their roles

5c To develop clear protocols and agreements between Councillors to ensure that pre-election periods do not adversely impact on services or our improvement programme

To develop a framework and agreed standards for all Councillors to operate within which are transparent and understandable to all

To allow for vigorous, focussed political debate without risk to agreed improvement activities

Councillors to be actively and appropriately engaged in progressing the work of the Council through effective participation in Council, committee and scrutiny meetings and through development opportunities

9.

Targets for
2007-08 and
how we will
ensure they
are delivered

Key Actions

These will be our targets to measure performance against the Key Actions

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|-----------|---|---|
| 5d | To publish a new Council Constitution and improve the way in which Council meetings operate | <p>To have clear standards for our governance, through which we will monitor compliance</p> <p>To have clarity about the Council's aims together with clear, unambiguous decisions</p> <p>To improve the quality of debate and application of recognised standards</p> <p>To make Council meetings more relevant to local people</p> |
| 5e | To produce a vision for the town, based on consultation with local people, which sets out for the short, medium and longer-term the type of place we want Northampton to be | <p>To set priorities, informed by consultation and the needs of the area, to provide a clear framework for decision making</p> |
| 5f | To refocus our improvement strategy to ensure achievement of better outcomes | <p>To target our efforts more effectively on specific priorities for improvement</p> <p>To identify potential barriers at an early stage and take steps to address them</p> |
| 5g | To strengthen our management capacity by joint working on leadership development, providing management development opportunities and recruiting to vacant posts | <p>Management capacity will be measured and all our managers and team leaders will benefit from leadership training and accredited management development appropriate to their needs</p> <p>To increase the percentage of staff satisfied with the Council as their employer to 80% by March 2009</p> <p>To reduce sickness absence to an average of 9 days by March 2009</p> <p>To strengthen capacity of services by achieving a recruitment cycle time of 27 days by March 2008, to process vacancies and through increasing the percentage of posts filled after first advert, following measurement of these activities in November 2006</p> <p>To achieve Investor in People Status by March 2008</p> <p>To use our programme delivery office to embed programme and project management disciplines across the Council and to increase our capacity for systematic organisational learning.</p> |

9.

Targets for
2007-08 and
how we will
ensure they
are delivered

Key Actions**These will be our targets to measure performance against the Key Actions**

- 5h** To embed a performance management culture throughout the organisation to ensure continuous, sustainable improvement
- To achieve performance improvement in all priority areas and have no services in the bottom quartile by March 2008
- To maintain performance levels in non-priority areas to prevent service failure and deterioration
- Portfolio Holders, Scrutiny and all staff actively using performance management tools to monitor service performance and achieve improvement

Council Priority 6	To continue to strengthen our financial management
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Policy Sponsor	Isabell Procter
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- 6a** To address weaknesses in the management and capacity in the finance function
- A clear recruitment and retention plan which is being actioned urgently, plus robust contingency and short-term plans to ensure the 2007/08 budget and financial management processes are not compromised
- 6b** To achieve a robust, balanced budget by February 2007
- To enable the movement of resources to priority areas from February 2008
- To ensure that our priority services are adequately resourced to achieve identified levels of improvement by February 2008
- 6c** To deliver a robust, updated Medium Term Financial Strategy based on a realistic assessment of available resources and service pressures and priorities
- To develop a framework for aligning resources to priorities by February 2008
- To link together revenue budget and capital investment in accordance with prudential guidelines by February 2008
- 6d** To deliver a robust Housing Revenue Account budget strategy, explicitly linked to the achievement of the Decent Homes Standard
- To allow resources to be moved to deliver priorities
- To improve the quality of all our housing stock within agreed criteria in line with Government standards for decent homes

9.

Targets for
2007-08 and
how we will
ensure they
are delivered

Key Actions

These will be our targets to measure performance against the Key Actions

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| 6e | To develop an Asset Management Plan, linked to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which will ensure that we manage our investments in line with our priorities | To begin the process of changing our property use to reflect our priorities by March 2008 |
| 6f | To achieve Level 2 in key areas of the Use of Resources for the assessment year ending March 2008 | <p>To enable ownership of devolved budgets by managers</p> <p>To improve financial and performance management</p> <p>To deliver improved value for money by using our resources more efficiently, evidenced through improved Use of Resources assessments</p> <p>To enable Councillors to have clear and regular reports which set out our financial situation and any corrective actions to be taken</p> <p>To facilitate and efficient annual audit of final accounts</p> |

Council Priority 7	To work with partners to support economic infrastructure development to promote communities that are sustainable
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Policy Sponsor	Clive Thomas
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| 7a | To deliver sustainable growth that meets the aspirations of current and future generations | <p>To help to develop, with local people and other stakeholders, an agreed shared direction for the growth of the area of West Northamptonshire in order to underpin future planning</p> <p>To increase investor confidence for the successful economic regeneration of the Borough</p> |
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9.

Targets for
2007-08 and
how we will
ensure they
are delivered

Council Priority 8	To improve our interaction with the public to ensure we are providing good quality services
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Policy Sponsor	David Taylor
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Key Actions

These will be our targets to measure performance against the Key Actions

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| 8a | To improve our understanding of customers needs in order to ensure we are providing relevant good quality services | <p>Customers from ethnic minority groups will have improved access to services, which will meet their highest priority needs by 2009</p> <p>Increase opportunities to shape and influence service delivery through focus groups, systematic surveys and other sampling by March 2008, to ensure services meet the needs of customers</p> |
| 8b | To increase customer satisfaction with Council services overall by setting stretch targets following the three yearly customer satisfaction survey in October 2006 | <p>Provide a more efficient and accessible response to customers by completing phases 2 and 3 of the customer contact centre</p> <p>Embed new corporate complaints procedure in order to bring about improved customer service</p> <p>Provide a range of choices for customers to access services and achieve 100% interactions enabled by electronic delivery by March 2008</p> |

Council Priority 9	To improve work with partners to deliver better outcomes and services
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Policy Sponsor	David Taylor
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|-----------|--|---|
| 9a | To strengthen commitment to engagement in strategic partnership working and co-operation with partners | <p>Evidence of increased engagement and the reputation of the Council amongst its partners will have improved.</p> <p>Evidence of active collaboration and participation with partners to deliver some services jointly</p> <p>Clarity on consultation and engagement processes</p> <p>Community Vision completed but needs to be given profile</p> <p>Increase profile of LSP and LAA</p> <p>Clear Corporate Planning cycle for medium/long term</p> |
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9.

Targets for
2007-08 and
how we will
ensure they
are delivered

Key Actions

- 9b** To improve our work with partner organisations to provide services which meet the needs of customers and which helps to build capacity with communities

These will be our targets to measure performance against the Key Actions

Deliver more 'joined up' and seamless service provision through co-ordinated delivery of Local Area Agreement outcomes by 2008

To ensure that customers are empowered to take part in local decision making on matters that affect them by 2008

To use a high profile to more effectively secure high quality outcomes and improvements for our communities

This Corporate Plan will incorporate the Best Value Performance Plan, and as such we will publish in June 2007, as an appendix to this document specific and measurable targets against the Statutory Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and our local performance indicators, specific to service areas. In addition, we will publish the Council's performance in 2006/07 against the BVPIs and local performance indicators.