

**DRAFT KEY PRIORITY OBJECTIVES 2009/10**

REF	PROPOSED PRIORITY OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER(S)	JUSTIFICATION
<b>CORPORATE (LEADERS' PORTFOLIO)</b>			
1.	To help mitigate the impact of the current economic conditions on local people and businesses, through appropriate initiatives.	Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, All Directors	The Council has already identified a number of initiatives to support the local economy, including the faster payment of local supplier invoices, an increase in the number of rental loans provided to homeless people to help them access private accommodation; consideration of additional funding for the continuation of the Home Ownership Grant Scheme (enabling Council tenants to enter home ownership and free up Council properties for re-letting) and the introduction of a Mortgage Rescue Scheme (in partnership with the CAB and Moat) to assist home-owners experiencing financial difficulties with existing mortgages. Consultation is to be undertaken with the Federation of Small Businesses to explore other options to assist local people and businesses.
2.	To improve access to and information about the Council's services, through the implementation of a Customer Transformation Programme.	Deputy Chief Executive	Building on the initial feasibility work undertaken in 2005, the Customer Transformation Task and Finish Panel has developed a number of practical proposals to improve access to information and improve the customer experience when visiting the Civic Offices. In addition, the development of a Customer Relationship Management system will assist in the identification of areas for further improvement arising from National Indicator 14 (Avoidable Contact).

3.	To ensure the Council provides good value for money, through the development of a comprehensive Value For Money Strategy;	Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, All Directors	The Council undertook a detailed corporate 'Value For Money Review' in 2008/09 order to explore the facts that underlie the views previously expressed by the Audit Commission on the authority's provision of value for money. A thorough review and updating of the Council's existing Value for Money Strategy is to being progressed as part of this ongoing value for money process.
4.	To achieve accreditation for the Council's Environment and Neighbourhood Officers under the Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme by June 2009.	Director of Environment and Street Scene	As part of the Council's Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, a team of Environment and Neighbourhood Officers has been established. Accreditation under the Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme is necessary before certain extra powers which are available at the discretion of the Chief Constable can be conferred on officers of the Environment and Neighbourhood Team.
5.	To complete the strategic review of North Weald Airfield, through the continuing work of the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee.	Director of Environment and Street Scene	The review of options for the future of North Weald Airfield needs to be completed in view of its possible use as the site of a waste transfer station, the possible site of a new depot as an alternative to the existing Langston Road Depot, the possible designation of part of the airfield as a gypsy/traveller site location, changes in aviation/leisure use, and designation within the Olympic plan.

6.	The delivery of a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan.	Director of Planning and Economic Development	The Government has issued a legal direction requiring the Council to submit a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan by 30 September 2009. The authority is currently consulting residents and other stakeholders on options for meeting current and future requirements for gypsy and traveller site provision within the district.
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**FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO**

7.	To maintain the Council's sound financial position and its policy of not increasing Council Tax by more than 2.5%.	Director of Finance and ICT	The Council has an established policy of remaining a low tax authority. In the current economic climate it is considered to be particularly important not to further burden local residents with unacceptable rises in Council Tax levels.
8.	To improve performance on the processing of benefit claims and changes of circumstances.	Director of Finance and ICT	The benefits service is a key service area for some of the most vulnerable residents of the district. The current level of performance is not acceptable and, following the introduction of a new ICT system, significant performance improvements are anticipated. Performance against the processing of benefit claims and changes of circumstances, is measured by National Indicators 180 and 181 and the Council's relevant local performance indicators.

9.	To develop a strategy for the achievement of the level of efficiency savings identified within the Council's medium-term financial strategy.	Director of Finance and ICT	The medium-term financial strategy sets challenging savings targets for future years, in order to bring the Council's budget back into balance. For these targets to be achieved without reducing levels of service in key areas, a clear strategy will be required. Efficiency savings are measured by National Indicator 179.
<b>CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES AND ICT PORTFOLIO</b>			
10.	To review the Council's landholdings in order to coordinate competing land use proposals, to fulfil the authority's operational requirements and achieve value for money.	Director of Corporate Support Services	There are a number of proposals at varying stages of progress, involving Council owned land in and around The Broadway and the Langston Road Depot at Loughton, the Town Mead Depot, at Waltham Abbey, the Epping Depot and North Weald Airfield. These possible redevelopments together with the need to provide operational facilities for various services potentially displaced such as refuse vehicles, must be coordinated in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for the Council
11.	To externally review the future provision of the Council's Estates and Valuation Service.	Director of Corporate Support Services	To ensure the provision of value for money in the delivery of the Estates and Valuation service

**HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

12.	To improve the responsive repairs service to tenants, particularly response times, through a partnership with a large private repairs management company	Director of Housing	Although tenant satisfaction with the repairs service is high, the Council has poor response times, and there is a need to introduce improved working methods, to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Large private repairs companies now have a wealth of experience, and can apply modern management techniques to a building maintenance workforce. The Council will also benefit from their ICT, budgetary control, stores procedures and excellent supply chain
13.	To significantly increase the number of people receiving financial support provided to private occupiers, to help meet the decent homes standard, improve thermal efficiency and install disabled adaptations – through a new, properly resourced, Private Sector Housing Strategy	Director of Housing	The Council receives significant capital resources from the Government to provide grants and loans to private occupiers to help them meet the decent homes standard, improve thermal efficiency and install disabled adaptations. However, the current Private Sector Housing Strategy was only partly introduced, due to insufficient revenue funding being allocated due to uncertainties about the future costs of the waste management service at the time. The Strategy now needs to be updated and properly resourced.

**PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO**

14.	To continue work towards the future development of key sites at The Broadway in Loughton and the St John's area of Epping	Director of Planning and Economic Development	Continuing priority from 2008/09. The development brief for The Broadway was adopted in September 2008. The development brief for the St John's area of Epping has had to follow because of capacity issues among other factors, although the scoping document and agreement of Council to undertake the St John's brief has been secured and consultants have been engaged in conjunction with Essex County Council and an inception meeting has been held.
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15.	To deliver the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework	Director of Planning and Economic Development	Continuing priority from 2008/09. The development of a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan is presently at consultation stage, and it is intended that the delivery of the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework will follow in mid-2009.
16.	To improve performance on the processing of planning applications, as measured by National Indicator 157	Director of Planning and Economic Development	Performance on the processing of planning applications, as measured by National Indicator 157, is behind target as at the third quarter of 2008/09. Investigation of means to improve performance is underway, but improvements may be dependent on changes to the current scheme of delegation.
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PORTFOLIO</b>			
17.	With the Council's contractor Sita, to commence the implementation of agreed changes to the waste management service by September 2009	Director of Environment and Street Scene	The Council is committed to playing a full part in achieving the targets and aspirations of the Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. Changes to the service to improve recycling and diversion performance are critical in meeting this commitment.

**COMMUNITY WELLBEING PORTFOLIO**

18.	To complete and publish the Executive Summary to the Safer Communities Partnership Plan for the district by 31st May 2009.	Director of Environment and Street Scene	Under the The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007, each CDRP/Safer Communities Strategy Group has a statutory obligation to prepare a partnership plan for their area. This plan is a restricted document and so there is a further obligation to prepare an executive summary of that plan for publication.
19.	To play an active part in the delivery of initiatives being co-ordinated by the Local Strategic Partnership, aimed at reducing Health Inequalities in the areas of greatest need across the district.	Deputy Chief Executive	A presentation on health inequalities and the Essex wide report published in February 2008 by the Audit Commission and PKF (UK) LLP, was made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 November 2008, by the Director of Public Health of the West Essex Primary Care Trust. In response, the Council intends to participate in the development of local Health Inequalities Strategy and action plan, through its membership of the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership.

**CIVIL ENGINEERING AND MAINTENANCE PORTFOLIO**

20.	To implement 'localism' in respect of the local County highways service and to ensure that the Council's Environmental Response Team and the County Council's 'Highway Ranger' service provide complementary services to the residents of the district	Director of Environment and Street Scene	Essex County Council are delegating some decision making on local highway matters down to the District Council. This follows pilot schemes in Essex which have demonstrated benefits to the local community through a greater understanding of issues and the ability to influence local priorities.
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**LEISURE AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

21.	Subject to the outcome of the feasibility study, to commence the construction of a sports hall and changing rooms at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool.	Director of Environment and Street Scene	The achievement of this objective will enable the continuation of some leisure facilities which may be lost due to the Council withdrawing from the Joint Use Agreement with King Harold School at Waltham Abbey Sports Centre in January 2010.
22.	To implement the operational changes required following the completion of the review of the North Weald Airfield Strategy by the Cabinet Committee.	Director of Environment and Street Scene	To ensure the continuation of the present service and/or manage any changes for the airfield or on the land adjacent to the airfield.
23.	To build on the work of the Epping Forest Youth Council in its first full year of operation, and implement the actions arising from the 'Big Youth Debate' in 2008.	Deputy Chief Executive	The Youth Council has been active in a number of areas and undertaken a substantial piece of consultation with young people. In 2009/10 it is hoped to deliver a number of practical outcomes to improve young people's provision across the district.



24.	To maximise the legacy benefits of the 2012 Olympic white water canoe venue, in liaison with the Borough of Broxbourne and the Lee Valley Park Authority.	Deputy Chief Executive	The Olympic venue could be a catalyst for social and economic regeneration of Waltham Abbey and the surrounding area.
25.	To work with partners and the local community to provide improved facilities at Limes Farm Hall.	Deputy Chief Executive	The current hall has fallen into poor repair and does not meet the needs of local people. An opportunity exists to work with other partners to provide a venue for the delivery of a range of community services.
26.	To develop a multi-sports facility at Ongar Leisure Centre, providing high quality facilities for a range of outdoor sports.	Deputy Chief Executive	Capital provision has been made for the development of the pitches at Ongar Leisure Centre. Match-funding is currently being sought from the Football Foundation to add to the £200,000 already secured from the Essex Legacy 2012 Olympic Fund.