

KEY PRIORITY OBJECTIVES 2009/10 – PROGRESS REPORT

REF	PRIORITY OBJECTIVE	LEAD MEMBER/OFFICER(S)	PROGRESS (30 NOVEMBER 2009)
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LEADERS' PORTFOLIO

1.	To improve access to and information about the Council's services, through the implementation of a Customer Transformation Programme.	Leader/Deputy Chief Executive	Justification (February 2009)
			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).
			Progress (November 2009)
			As a result of the Customer Transformation Programme, an additional member of staff has been appointed on a three-year fixed term contract to support the development of the Council's Website, to improve access and the number of transactions that can be undertaken on-line. The Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel has undertaken a prioritisation of the outstanding recommendations arising from the customer transformation review, and has requested additional information to access the feasibility of improving the Council's telephony systems, as poorly signposted calls are the main source of avoidable contact across the authority.
			An initial approach has been made to Harlow Council around exploring capacity for sharing the resources of their contact centre. The possibility of joint working in this respect is currently being pursued with Harlow's Customer Services Manager.

2.	The delivery of a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan.	Leader/Director of Planning and Economic Development	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>A very considerable response was received as a result of the consultation exercise in respect of the delivery of a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan, which raise many issues. For a number of reasons the date of September 30 was not met. Counsel is currently undertaking a 'stocktake', and the final submission is due to be received shortly. The Council has successfully argued for a reduction in the required pitch numbers for the district, although some further provision has already been authorised. Further reports in respect of the delivery of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan are to be made to the Cabinet and the Council in December 2009.</p>
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3.	To work with Essex County Council, Epping Forest College and local schools to further the educational opportunities and facilities for local young people.	Leader/Deputy Chief Executive	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>Key priority identified at Cabinet meeting on 5 February 2009.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>Liaison with the district's secondary schools has improved, with the Council now being represented on the Area Planning Group, and the Leader of the Council has been appointed as Chairman of the Corporation Board of Epping Forest College. A 14-19 years review has been undertaken by Essex County Council and, as a result, a more collaborative approach to 'A' Level provision will take place in future. There was been an overall improvement in GCSE results for the district in 2009.</p> <p>The Leader of the County Council has stated a desire to see a vocational centre established in the Waltham Abbey area, when resources become available.</p>
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4.	To deliver the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework	Leader/Director of Planning and Economic Development	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>Work on the development of the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework has proceeded, but has been delayed by legal challenges to the East Of England Regional Plan, and by the work the Council has been directed to undertake on the development of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. A Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee has been established to consider all aspects of the Local Development Framework.</p>
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FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

5.	To continue work towards the future development of key sites at The Broadway in Loughton and the St. John's area of Epping	Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder/ Director of Planning and Economic Development	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>There has been some delay on the preparation of the development brief for the St John's area of Epping, whilst the results of a parking review were awaited, and whilst some options and land value issues have been considered in more detail. A report to Cabinet seeking agreement to the public consultation on the development brief is imminent.</p>
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6.	To complete the strategic review of North Weald Airfield, through the continuing work of the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee.	Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder/ Director of Environment and Street Scene	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>The North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee last met on 27 July 2009, but the minutes of this meeting were unfortunately not reported to the Cabinet until October 2009. The aviation consultancy bid document has been approved and steps are underway to advertise the tender invitation in appropriate trade/professional publications. There remains interest from a range of parties in respect of enhanced aviation activities, waste management facilities, depot facilities and usage in support of the London Olympic Games in 2012. Reports in respect of the possible relocation of depot facilities from Langston Road are to be considered by the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee and the Cabinet during December 2009.</p>
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7.	To help mitigate the impact of the current economic conditions on local people and businesses, through appropriate initiatives.	Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder/ Management Board	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>There has been no increase in car parking charges throughout 2009/10, with an intention to retain this position in 2010/11. Recommendations are to be made to members to apply the same rational to licenses insofar as they apply to smaller business such as pet shops, animal boarding establishments etc.</p> <p>A number of initiatives have been introduced by the Housing Directorate, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Community Legal Service Partnership for the district to give good impartial advice to homeless applicants; • Continuing to support the Epping Forest Housing Aid Scheme (EFHAS). EFHAS is a registered charity operating on a voluntary basis to provide rent deposit guarantees (equivalent to one month's rent) to private landlords on behalf of private tenants to help them secure accommodation in the private rented sector. Due to increased demand, the Cabinet agreed that the Council would increase its financial support to the scheme, so that further rent
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			<p>deposit guarantees could be granted to applicants. It was also agreed that £7,500 received from the Government's 'Recession Busting Grant' would be passed to EFHAS to fund more deposit guarantees;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last year, the Council was awarded an additional £10,000 grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in recognition of its excellent performance in homelessness prevention work. As a result, the Council has introduced a Rental Loan Scheme to help housing and homeless applicants secure private rented sector accommodation. A loan is granted to meet the cost of the first month's rent in advance, repayable interest-free over two years. The Cabinet agreed an increase in the amount available for loans by a further £20,000 in 2009/10; • The Council has introduced a Mortgage Rescue Scheme, in conjunction with Moat Housing. The scheme assists vulnerable households under the threat of homelessness due to mortgage arrears or repossession. It applies to those who have less than 20% negative equity, and a property value of less than £200,000. As part of the process, applicants see a debt advisor from the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Two types of help are available, the sale of property to Moat in return for a tenancy of the same property, or the provision of equity loan (to reduce the applicant's mortgage payments). The Council has been congratulated by the Government on its involvement with the scheme and completing one of the first rescues in the country; • The Council works with lenders to encourage them to help householders who may be experiencing mortgage arrears due to a temporary 'income shock', through the Homeowner Mortgage Support Scheme. Households having difficulties meeting mortgage repayments due to loss of employment or relationship breakdown will be considered for support by many lenders, and have up to 70% of their mortgage interest payments frozen for twenty-four months;
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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council has received a 'Repossession Funding Grant' of £47,500 from DCLG, to allocate small loans to families at risk of homelessness through repossession or evictions. Financial assistance, through small loans ranging from £1,000 to £3,000 per household, capped to a maximum of £5,000 is available interest free. Homeowners and private tenants are eligible. Loans are agreed by senior housing officers and are repayable over one to five years. |
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Through a Task and Finish group of the Local Strategic Partnership, the impact of the 'credit crunch' has been considered in detail and a number of initiatives have been taken by the Council, including:

- The appointment of 'Business Champion';
- The freezing of parking charges;
- Quicker payments of invoices;
- Encouragement to consider local businesses when providing goods and services; and
- Promotional events.

8.	To ensure the Council provides good value for money, through the development of a comprehensive Value For Money Strategy;	Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder/ Management Board	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>A thorough review and updating of the Council's Value for Money Strategy has been completed following the corporate 'Value For Money Review' undertaken in 2008/09. All Directorates consider ways of reducing their costs through providing services in more streamlined ways. For example, over the last four years the Housing Directorate has saved around £1.15 million (cumulatively) through the introduction of more innovative ways of working.</p> <p>The Council has refocused its annual Value for Money 'Cost and Performance Analysis' to concentrate on the use of the national cost and performance information published by the Audit Commission through its Value For Money Profiles tool, in order to improve the Council's existing arrangements for the annual scrutiny of its Value for Money performance. The Cost and Performance Analysis examines and comments on the Council's costs and performance as identified by the Audit Commission, to provide an initial indicator of the relationship between service costs and performance and identify areas where further more detailed and targeted analysis may be required.</p> <p>The detailed Cost and Performance Analysis was considered by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel on 17 November 2009, and the Scrutiny Panel has identified a need to keep the ongoing performance of the Council's Benefits Division under review, particularly following a review of the service to be undertaken in early 2010. The</p>
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			Council's score for the Value for Money theme of the Organisational Assessment for 2009 was Level 2.
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9.	To maintain the Council's sound financial position and its policy of not increasing Council Tax by more than 2.5%.	Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder/ Director of Finance and ICT	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved by Cabinet on 16 November 2009, has Council Tax increases of 2.5% as one of the key assumptions. The MTFS also demonstrated that, with a structured savings, efficiency and investment programme, the Council can remain in a sound financial position over the medium-term.</p>
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10.	To improve performance on the processing of benefit claims and changes of circumstances.	Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder/ Director of Finance and ICT	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>A new ICT system has been implemented and performance was improving. To build on the progress, the Cabinet approved a re-structure of the Benefits Service in July 2009, although further progress has unfortunately been hampered by an increase in staff turnover. An external inspection of the Benefits Service is scheduled for January 2010, and this should provide guidance on the further steps that are necessary. As part of its recent consideration of the Council's annual Cost and Performance Analysis, the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel has identified a need to keep the ongoing performance of the Benefits Service under review, particularly following the forthcoming inspection of the service.</p>
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11.	To develop a strategy for the achievement of the level of efficiency savings identified within the Council's medium-term financial strategy.	Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder/ Director of Finance and ICT	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>The Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee has established a Working Group to identify areas for efficiency savings review. The initial recommendations of the Working Group were approved by the Cabinet Committee on 23 November 2009, and work has commenced on some of the agreed projects.</p>
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LEGAL AND ESTATES PORTFOLIO

12.	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.	Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder/ Director of Corporate Support Services	Justification (February 2009)
			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
			Progress (November 2009)
			<p>An Asset Management Co-ordinating Group has been established, chaired by the Chief Executive, with representatives from all Directorates at Director or Assistant Director level together with the Principal Valuer and Estate Surveyor. The terms of reference for the group are:</p> <p>(a) To consider and recommend to Corporate Executive Forum, Management Board and Cabinet proposals for the use, development or disposal of key sites to achieve best consideration by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generating capital receipts from outright sale; • investment in re-development to generate new revenue streams through ground leases/unit rentals; or • achieving efficiency gains through relocation of Services. <p>(b) To consider annually revisions to the Asset Management Plan and to approve the draft plan before submission to Cabinet ensuring compatibility and consistency with the Council's Capital Strategy;</p> <p>(c) To have regard to previous Cabinet decisions relating to increasing the amount of affordable housing in the District when considering</p>

			<p>any general fund assets which may become surplus to requirements;</p> <p>(d) To consider strategic and management issues in relation to Depots that cannot be resolved at an operational level; and</p> <p>(e) To consider strategic matters in relation to the office accommodation strategy to ensure the most effective use of the available accommodation.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Environment and Street Scene are both members of the group, and also attend the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee which ensures coherence between the work of the two groups, particularly when considering North Weald Airfield as a potential location for the relocation of some Council services.</p> <p>Considerable progress has been made on developing a strategy for relocating Council services from Langston Road Depot to free up the site for sale or redevelopment, and reports will be submitted to the Cabinet and the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee in December 2009, on the various implications for member consideration, including budgetary requirements for undertaking feasibility studies for this and other key sites within the district.</p> <p>The Coordinating Group is currently meeting at four-weekly intervals, which reflects the importance of the work being undertaken and the need to ensure that unnecessary delays do not occur in progressing the development of key sites.</p>
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13.	To externally review the future provision of the Council's Estates and Valuation Service.	Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder/ Director of Corporate Support Services	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>To ensure the provision of value for money in the delivery of the Estates and Valuation service</p> <hr/> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>An external review of the Council's Estates and Valuation Service has been conducted by CIPFA Consulting, the findings of which were reported to the Cabinet in June and July 2009. The main conclusions reached by CIPFA were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the retention of the in-house service, coupled with procuring specialist outside advice as required, represented the best value for money for the delivery of an Estates and Valuation Service; • That the service was not suitable for outsourcing or externalisation through contract; and • That the Estates and Valuation Section was under resourced compared with other authorities with similar size portfolios and levels of activity. <p>The Cabinet accepted the findings of the review and, at its meeting on 13 July 2009, agreed to maintain the in-house service subject to there being no increase in current establishment costs.</p>
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HOUSING PORTFOLIO

14.	To improve the responsive repairs service to tenants, particularly response times, through a partnership with a large private repairs management company	Housing Portfolio Holder/Director of Housing	Justification (February 2009)
			<p>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</p>
			Progress (November 2009)
			<p>The Cabinet has agreed a Strategy for a step-change in responsive repairs performance, following the incorporation of the former Works Unit within the Housing Directorate, which has been branded as the “Repairs Refresh Programme”. In summary, the Strategy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the Council’s direct labour workforce to a core team; • Increase the use of contractors appointed under framework agreements’; • Procure private sector ways of working through the appointment of a Private Repairs Management Contractor to manage the Council’s Housing Repairs Service; • Relocate the Housing Repairs Section from the Civic Offices to the Epping Depot, so that all officers involved in the provision of the Repairs Service are co-located in the same location;

- Structurally combine the existing Housing Repairs Section and Works Unit into one Housing Repairs Service;
- Form a Housing Repairs Advisory Group, comprising senior members and representatives of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, to oversee the implementation of the Repairs Refresh Programme;
- Through the above initiatives, significantly improve the performance and efficiency of the Council's Housing Repairs Service, whilst maintaining the continuing high levels of tenant satisfaction with the Repairs Service.

The Repairs Advisory Group has been formed, and has met three times, including a visit to the Epping Depot. A specialist public sector procurement consultant, Cameron Consulting, has been appointed to assist the Council with preparing the specification, tendering and appointment of the Private Repairs Management Contractor. They have produced a Project Initiation Document (PID), met with staff and the Advisory Group, and will be producing a Procurement Strategy early in the new year

The direct workforce has been reduced by 8 posts, saving £182,000. More repairs orders have been placed with framework contractors, with competitive rates, and there has been less use of sub-contractors (whose work has reduced by £184,000 over the past year). Staff in the Housing Repairs Section relocated from the Civic Offices to the Epping Depot at the beginning of November 2009. Following consultation with staff and the unions (from which no formal comments were received), in November 2009, the Cabinet approved a new structure for the combination of the Housing Repairs Section and the Works Unit, which is now being implemented. The new structure will save around £60,000 per annum.

Following implementation of the Repairs Refresh Programme, the four

			key targets for repairs response times were all met or exceeded in both Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2009/10 (which is the first time since records have been kept), whilst tenant satisfaction with the repairs service has been maintained at 99% general satisfaction.
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15.	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	Housing Portfolio Holder/Director of Housing	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2007-09 was approved by the Cabinet in December 2006, and explains how the Council intends to ensure good quality housing in the private sector; how IT will offer financial assistance in certain circumstances' and how legal powers will be used to secure improvements where private sector properties fall below the minimum standard.</p> <p>In July 2009, the Housing Scrutiny Panel received a progress report on the Strategy, highlighting the fact that its success has been inhibited, mainly as a result of uncertainties at the time of adopting the Strategy over the likely cost of the waste management contract, which affected members' ability to properly fund the Strategy, particularly in relation to the staffing levels required. In October 2009, the Cabinet extended the provisions of the Strategy until 2011.</p> <p>In November 2009, the Cabinet agreed the appointment of a part-time post, temporary for three years, to help assist the implementation of the Strategy, with a particular emphasis on minimising/reducing the number of empty homes, and introducing - and monitoring compliance with – licences and standards for mobile home sites.</p>
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PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

16.	To improve performance on the processing of planning applications, as measured by National Indicator 157	Performance Management Portfolio Holder/Director of Planning and Economic Development	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>As at the second quarter of 2009/10, current performance is just behind target on two of the three elements of National Indicator 157 (NI157(a) 'Major' applications and NI157(b) 'Minor' applications). However, NI157(c) ('Other' applications) has seen its highest ever performance, reflecting the achievement of a very high turnaround of planning applications dealt with under delegated powers. The introduction of the three-week Area Plans Sub-Committee cycle has also contributed to improved performance but, in general, those applications missing target deadlines are those either referred to a Sub-Committee or subject to the signing of a legal agreement.</p>
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ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

17.	With the Council's contractor Sita, to commence the implementation of agreed changes to the waste management service by September 2009	Environment Portfolio Holder/Director of Environment and Street Scene	Justification (February 2009)
			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.
			Progress (November 2009)
			<p>The revised waste management service was implemented on schedule on 7 September 2009. Although there were the expected teething difficulties, with very high volumes of calls from the public, performance looks encouraging with a recycling rate of more than 60% for the first three weeks of the service (i.e. to the end of September 2009). If this level were to be maintained, the overall recycling level at the end of 2009/10 would be around 54%. This would result in a significant improvement in the level of recycling credit income, possibly as high as £450,000 over the budgeted sum. However, this is based on limited data and the financial position will be better understood once the new system has been operating for a few months.</p> <p>The Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) has been signed by all Essex waste collection authorities, except Colchester Borough Council, and the IAA Officer Support Group has been established. Discussions are underway in respect of changes to the present member arrangements including, in particular, a review of the three existing Area Joint Waste Committees. The Essex Waste Partnership has been awarded £100m in PFI credits to support the development and construction of the infrastructure required to deliver the Joint Waste Strategy.</p>

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO

18.	To complete and publish the Executive Summary to the Safer Communities Partnership Plan for the district by 31st May 2009.	Community Safety and Transport Portfolio Holder/Director of Environment and Street Scene	Justification (February 2009)
			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.
			Progress (November 2009)
			Although the deadline date of 31 May 2009 was not achieved, the Executive Summary to the Safer Communities Partnership Plan has been completed and published

19.	To achieve accreditation for the Council's Environment and Neighbourhood Officers under the Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme by June 2009.	Community Safety and Transport Portfolio Holder/Director of Environment and Street Scene	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>The Council is now an accredited organisation and all Environment and Neighbourhood Officers have successfully attained individual accreditation.</p>
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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	Community Safety and Transport Portfolio Holder/Director of Environment and Street Scene	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>The Local Highways Panel has been established and has met on two occasions this year. Criteria have been established for dealing with member 'sponsored' highway schemes. Whilst the Council's own Response Officer and the Highway Ranger Services are fully established, they tend at present to operate independently of each other, although this has not led to any duplication of effort due to the different ways they receive work. However, discussions are underway between the Council and Essex County Council with a view to the services being 'merged', with the County Council providing direct funding to this Council for the provision of ranger services.</p>
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21.	To complete all the outstanding parking reviews within the district.	Community Safety and Transport Portfolio Holder/Director of Environment and Street Scene	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>Key priority identified at Cabinet meeting on 5 February 2009. Priority relates to the parking reviews for Epping, Buckhurst Hill and the Broadway at Loughton.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>Progress has been made against all three outstanding parking reviews.</p> <p>The reviews for Epping and Buckhurst Hill have completed all the informal stages of consultation, and are now with Essex County Council's Portfolio Holder prior to formal publication of the respective Traffic Regulation Orders. Once published, there is a formal twenty-one day period of consultation, following which the County Portfolio Holder will make a final decision on changes ahead of final publication and implementation. This process will extend into the early New Year.</p> <p>The Broadway, Loughton review has completed its initial public consultation period, the outcome of which is currently being assessed by officers of the County Council. Once undertaken, there will be an opportunity for a final overview by members of this Council before the review follows the same procedural route as those for Epping and Buckhurst Hill. Given the similar timeframes, the scheme will probably not be implemented on the ground until the summer of 2010.</p>
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LEISURE AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

22.	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.	Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder/Deputy Chief Executive	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>A key contribution to improving health inequalities across the district is made through the Council's 'Active Health' programme, which offers a wide range of physical activity opportunities for older people. The programme is delivered through the Councils Sports and Health Development team, who also contribute to the health inequalities agenda via targeted work in areas of most need, and through work delivered in conjunction with Tottenham Hotspur Foundation.</p>
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23.	Subject to the outcome of the feasibility study, to commence the construction of a sports hall and changing rooms at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool.	Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder/Director of Environment and Street Scene	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>As requested by the Cabinet, SLM have brought forward proposals to link together consideration of an early extension to their current contract alongside the construction and management of the new hall at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool. However, at present these proposals do not meet the underpinning requirement of Cabinet that the construction and management of the new hall at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool should at worst be revenue neutral and preferably income generating. Recent statements by King Harold School stating its intention to retain community/club use after the Council's withdrawal from the Joint Use Agreement, may merit a further appraisal of this project</p>
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24.	To implement the operational changes required following the completion of the review of the North Weald Airfield Strategy by the Cabinet Committee.	Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder/Director of Environment and Street Scene	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>To ensure the continuation of the present service and/or manage any changes for the airfield or on the land adjacent to the airfield.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>No progress has been possible against this priority objective, given delays in the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee process. However, there remains interest from a range of parties in respect of enhanced aviation activities, waste management facilities, depot facilities and usage in support of the London Olympic Games in 2012, utilising land both on and off the airfield.</p>
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25.	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.	Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder/Deputy Chief Executive	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>Following on from the Big Youth Debate in November 2008, the Youth Council adopted the following five core themes to address over 2009/10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environment; • Transport; • Safety and Social; • Activities for Young People; and • Perceptions of Young People. <p>Respective sub-groups were set up to look at each of these themes and a detailed presentation on work undertaken in relation to these was given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November. As Youth Councillors were due to reach the end of their terms of office in December 2009, elections were held in local schools during September 2009, and a new Youth Council consisting of twenty-three young people is now in office for the next two years.</p> <p>The Youth Council has expressed a wish to be able to report directly to the Cabinet on issues affecting its work. This approach has been agreed in principle by the Leader of the Council, and appropriate arrangements are to be implemented.</p>
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26.	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.	Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder/Deputy Chief Executive	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>The Olympic venue could be a catalyst for social and economic regeneration of Waltham Abbey and the surrounding area.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>The Council is represented on the Stakeholder Group for the 2012 Olympic white water canoe venue, and a number of working groups aimed at maximising the social, sporting, tourist and general economic legacy of the canoe venue.</p> <p>In terms of shorter-term benefits presented by the London 2012 Olympic Games, the Council has agreed to explore several opportunities at North Weald Airfield around caravanning, park and ride facilities and business aviation.</p>
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27.	To work with partners and the local community to provide improved facilities at Limes Farm Hall.	Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder/Deputy Chief Executive	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>Following the success in securing £270k from Essex County Council towards the development of new community facilities at Limes Farm, an external options and feasibility study was undertaken in October 2009. The study identified five options for development, ranging from the simple refurbishment of the existing building, to the establishment of a large purpose built multi-agency facility. Option 2b was considered and agreed by the Cabinet in November 2009 as the most realistic proposal for Limes Farm, and this will see a complete refurbishment of the existing hall, plus two new extensions to incorporate a mini-service centre with housing and benefits advice and a new youth facility with availability for daytime use by older residents. This option also enables the Primary Care Trust, Police and other service providers to be accommodated on the same site. Officers are now pursuing further external funding for the project.</p>
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28.	To develop a multi-sports facility at Ongar Leisure Centre, providing high quality facilities for a range of outdoor sports.	Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder/Deputy Chief Executive	<p>Justification (February 2009)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Progress (November 2009)</p> <p>Following the decline of an application to the Football Foundation and subsequently Sport England Rural Fund, the Olympic Legacy funding offer for the multi-sports facility was withdrawn, as the project could no longer meet required timescales.</p> <p>Options for alternative funding for the provision of a multi-sports facility Ongar continue to be pursued. However, in the event that alternative funding is not secured, the use of the existing grass pitches will be continued and options for the potential development of an astro-turf pitch in another part of the district will be considered.</p>
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