

Best Value Performance Plan

2006/07

Epping Forest District Council

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Welcome to our Best Value Performance Plan

Introduction by the Leader of the Council Councillor

This is our seventh Best Value Performance Plan. In it you will find our priorities and objectives and you can see how we have performed against last year's key aims and targets, and the aims and targets we have set ourselves for the coming year. We have again linked the themes of this plan to those of the Community Strategy for the Epping Forest District. The Community Strategy covers the period from 2004 to 2021 and addresses the key challenges facing the district over the forthcoming years. The strategy was developed by a partnership of statutory and voluntary agencies active in the district, following extensive consultation with our residents and stakeholders.

Over the last year we have been working hard to make continual improvements to our services. We take seriously the comments we receive from you, and use them to help guide our priorities. We have been classified as a 'Good' performing council in a Comprehensive Performance Assessment process undertaken by the Audit Commission. Our overall aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in or visits our district, and this plan shows how we intend to do that.

We hope you find the plan informative and interesting.

Our Customer Charter

We have developed our Customer Charter to let our customers and partners know the overall standards that they can expect from the council and how we will work to provide the best services for the district.

We will

Consult with our customers, listen to what they say and respond in the best way we can.

Be open in all financial matters and always remember we are spending public money.

Constantly search for ways in which we can improve our services.

Respond to changes which affect our customers.

Be open and honest in all our dealings and treat everyone equally and fairly.

Strive towards excellence in all our services and provide the best value available.

Invest in our staff through training and development so we can provide the best service.

Do our best to care for the environment for today and for the future.

Section 1	About the Best Value Performance Plan	
	Our Customer Charter	3
	Background	5
	Comprehensive Performance Assessment	6
	How We Work	7
	Our Finances	7
	Customer Focus	7
	Direction of Travel	7
	Value for Money	7
	Quality Services	7
	Equal Opportunity and Accountability	7
	Our Priorities and Aims	8
	Our Performance	8
Section 2	Our Community Priorities and Performance	
	Our Medium Term Priorities	10
Section 3	Green and Unique	
	Environmental Protection	12
	Civil Engineering and Maintenance	18
	Planning and Economic Development	20
Section 4	Homes and Neighbourhoods	
	Housing	26
Section 5	A Safe Community	
	Community Wellbeing	32

Section 6	Fit For Life	
	Leisure	37
Section 7	Economic Prosperity	
	Economic Development	42
Section 8	Our Resource Management Priorities and Performance	
	People First	44
	Finance and Performance Management	47
	Information and Communication Technology, and Corporate Support Services	52
Section 9	Review, Audit and Inspection	
	Service Reviews	57
	Contracts	57
	Audit and Inspection	58
	Customer Focus assessment	58
	Direction of Travel assessment	58
	Value for Money assessment	58
Section 10	Further information	
	Useful documents and contacts	59

1 Background

At Epping Forest District Council we are committed to constantly improving everything that we do. The Local Government Act 1999 introduced legislation requiring all councils to provide Best Value in their services and to continually improve performance. The purpose of Best Value is to establish a culture within local government that delivers efficient, effective and economic services that meet users' needs. Best Value ensures that councils deliver continuous improvement in services with regard to the needs and expectations of service users. It focuses on achieving high standards rather than lowest cost, emphasises challenge to existing ways of doing things and encourages the involvement of service users and staff in creative ways. Our progress in achieving Best Value is closely monitored by the Audit Commission, which is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent to secure high-quality national and local services for the public. Each year we produce this Best Value Performance Plan to:

- summarise last year's successes in meeting our key priorities, objectives and targets;
- show where those key priorities, objectives and targets were not achieved;
- inform you of this year's aims and targets; and
- compare this year's performance with that for the previous years.

The plan is for our residents, customers, partners, staff, government bodies and other interested parties. A summary of the plan is included in the leaflet sent to all households with the Council Tax bills each March.

Copies of this full plan can be provided in large print or on audio tape on request. Similarly, copies of the summary plan can be supplied in other languages on request. The performance plan is available at local libraries, our information centres and on our website. Further copies can be obtained from:

The Performance Management Unit, Epping Forest District Council.
Civic Offices, Epping, Essex, CM16 4BZ
Phone: 01992 564180 Fax: 01992 578018
E-mail: bestvalue@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

The Community Strategy and Council Plan

The Community Strategy for the Epping Forest District was published in April 2004. The strategy was drawn up by a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) of the statutory and voluntary agencies that work in the district, and addresses the key challenges facing the district until 2020, including significant housing growth in the area and its potential impact on the environment, social facilities and issues such as local transport provision. The LSP carried out extensive consultation with residents and stakeholders to produce the strategy, and will monitor the progress of its constituent agencies in achieving its aims. Responsibility for delivering objectives is identified in the strategy, which will enable the public to check how well the objectives are met. The Community Strategy is a blueprint for the long-term development of the Epping Forest District and the wellbeing of the people who live here. Copies of the Community Strategy can be obtained from Marina Sheriff on 01992 564423 (or e-mail msherriff@eppingforestcvs.org.uk).

Our new four year Council Plan reflects the council's medium-term aims and priorities, and reflects the aspirations of the Community Strategy. The new Council Plan is due to be published during mid 2006 and will be available from our information centres, and on our website, or direct from the Performance Management Unit.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

In our last Best Value Performance Plan we reported on the result of our first Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) undertaken during February 2004.

CPA is a new system of inspection of councils, and is intended to help them deliver better services to local people, bringing together evidence from a range of sources to assess the quality of performance. Unlike the Best Value Service Reviews and inspections that have been made of some of our individual services over the last few years, CPA considered our performance as a whole, and how effectively we delivered services. It also considered how well the organisation is run, as this impacts on how well we deliver services. Council's judged by CPA to be excellent or good will benefit in the future from less audit and inspection, and from

additional freedom and flexibility, although the nature and extent of these rewards has still to be determined by the Government. Poorer performing authorities will receive targeted support to help them improve and, in extreme cases, may be subject to government intervention in their management.

The CPA process aims to remove restrictions and requirements on planning, spending and decision-making for high-performing authorities and to provide targeted support, capacity building, and intervention where necessary elsewhere. The CPA was undertaken by the Audit Commission, which carries out inspections on behalf of the Government, and the process examined in particular:

- the quality of our core services;
- how we use our resources;
- our capacity to improve;
- how we manage public spaces; and
- our management of local housing.

The Council was awarded a CPA rating of 'Good' on the five point scale of Excellent, Good, Fair, Weak and Poor, and the full inspection report can be obtained from the Performance Management Unit or on our website.

Following the publication of our CPA result, we identified our priorities for improvement, in liaison with the Audit Commission to ensure that resources were targeted to deliver improvement where it was needed most. The outcomes of this improvement planning included:

- the identification of clear priorities for improvement, drawing on the findings of CPA and service inspections; and
- the development of future audit and inspection programmes offering a force for continuous improvement, that are focused on outcomes for service users, and proportionate to performance and risk.

Summary details of our CPA improvements are set out in the sections three to eight of this plan. The full version of our Improvement Plan can be obtained from the Performance Management Unit or on our website.

How we work

Our work is organised into nine themes or 'Portfolios'. Each portfolio is allocated to a councillor who serves on the Cabinet, which is the main body where the Council makes decisions about services. The nine portfolios are:

- People First
- Community Wellbeing
- Housing
- Leisure
- Planning and Economic Development
- Environmental Protection
- Civil Engineering and Maintenance
- Finance and Performance Management
- Information and Communications Technology, and Corporate Support Services

Our Finances

We have a number of systems in place to ensure our budget is set so we can deliver the right services. These include:

- four-year financial strategy
- four-year capital strategy
- budget monitoring and review.

As part of the latest settlement, the government has made several significant changes to the grant allocation system. Overall these changes have considerably benefited the Council. Growth in grant had previously been at a long-term average of 1% per annum. The major changes to the system for 2006/07 have made it difficult to compare with the 2005/06 settlement, but the Government has provided adjusted figures for 2005/06 and on the basis of these, the Council's grant will increase by 9% in 2006/07. This will allow future increases in the Council Tax to be restrained without needing to reduce service levels.

Another welcome change has been increasing the settlement period beyond one year. previously it has been difficult to prepare meaningful financial

Best Value Performance Plan 2006/07

plans beyond one year, as grant figures were only known for one year. The latest settlement covers both 2006/07 and 2007/08 and the Government has stated that the next settlement will cover a three-year period.

Customer Focus

Our medium term priorities show our commitment to the key policy and service delivery issues that are important to our customers. We regularly consult our community and maintain a register and forward plan of consultation exercises that we undertake each year, in order that this work informs our future priorities and contributes to the improvement of our services so that they are responsive to the needs of our customers. During the last year the Council adopted a new public consultation and engagement strategy, and the Audit Commission assessed the authority's approach to user focus. The results of this assessment can be found in the Audit and Inspection section of this Plan.

In recognition of the importance of understanding the experiences of service users, from 2000/01 onwards, the Government has required local authorities to survey residents' 'user satisfaction' every three years. The second survey was carried out in 2003/04 and the results were reported in our Best Value Performance Plan 2004/05. The surveys are due to be carried out again during 2006/07 and the results will be reported in our Best Value Performance Plan for 2007/08.

Direction of Travel

During 2005/06 the Audit Commission assessed how well the Council had improved since the CPA. The results of this assessment can be found in the Audit and Inspection section of this Plan.

Value For Money

During 2005/06 the Audit Commission assessed how the council used its resources, including in particular whether it provided value for money services. The results of this assessment can be found in the Audit and Inspection section of this plan.

Quality Services

We need to know how we are doing. If you are not happy with the way we have treated you, you can complain directly to us. Where possible, we will put things right straight away. In other cases, we may need to investigate further. Details of a four-step Customer Compliments and Complaints procedure can be obtained from our complaints officer. If you follow this procedure but are still not happy, you can take your case to the Local Government Ombudsman. Staff quality and competence is important for the provision of effective services. We train and develop our staff to provide you with more efficient and effective services, and we have been re-accredited with the prestigious Investors in People standard. We have reviewed our procurement arrangements to ensure we obtain value for money in the goods and services that we purchase, and have joined a consortium of Essex authorities to develop joint purchasing arrangements.

Equal Opportunity and Accessibility

Epping Forest District Council is committed to providing services to the community which reflect the needs and diversity of all its customers and service users. We recognise that discrimination in society exists and seek to provide services to the community regardless of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, political or religious beliefs, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age or marital status. We also want to celebrate diversity, and the richness that this brings to our community. Our Race Equality Scheme is available on our website or from the Performance Management Unit.

Our Priorities and Aims

Over the following sections of this plan we set out our Medium Term Priorities, which are the foundation of our services and contribute to everything that we do, together with details of our performance in 2005/06 and our aims for 2006/07 for each portfolio. For our aims, where appropriate we have included the following references relating the aim to various assessments of our performance and other strategic plans for improvement. Where aims are to be achieved by the Council working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies (e.g. Community Strategy, Social Inclusion Strategy) we have not included these references, as we are not solely responsible for their achievement.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:

Council Plan (CP) - Where an aim is specifically included in our Council Plan for 2003 to 2007 (see page 5), we have identified the appropriate reference.

Medium-Term Priority (MTP) - We have linked each aim to our current priorities (see pages 9 and 43).

Target - Where appropriate, we have set a target date for the completion of each aim during 2006/07.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) - Where relevant, we have linked aims to the appropriate section of our CPA Improvement Plan (see page 5).

Performance Indicators (BVPI/LPI) - Where an aim is specifically covered by a Best Value or Local Performance Indicator (see the 'Our Performance' section on this page), we have identified the appropriate indicator reference.

Our Performance

In this plan we also compare our performance against BVPIs with the performance of the average and top 25% performing District Councils for 2004/05, the most recent year for which audited national performance information is available. Targets for performance indicators are set for a future period of three years (except for deleted indicators) and are used by our auditors as evidence of our ambition and future priorities, and as an indication to our customers of how we intend to improve. Comparison of our performance with that of other local authorities is not available for new BVPIs. Comparison with the performance of other local authorities is also not possible for LPIs as these are not applicable to all authorities.

We have adopted some BVPIs and LPIs as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The KPIs are crucial to the Council's core business and its corporate priorities, and the aim of these indicators, which comprise a mixture of existing Best Value and Local Performance Indicators, is to focus improvement actions on key areas and to move performance against each into the top quartile of performing local authorities. The targets we have set for the KPIs for 2006/07 onwards represent the most recently published national performance information for district and borough Councils. We aim for our performance against these KPIs to match or exceed these top quartile targets.

2

Our Community Priorities and Performance

We have developed medium term priorities as the foundations of our key community services. Our priorities reflect the core issues and aims that we face. The priorities link closely with the Community Strategy published in 2004, and we have linked this Best Value Performance Plan with the themes of the Community Strategy. The Community Strategy seeks to address important issues facing the district over the forthcoming years. We contribute to the achievement of the aims of the Community Strategy that mirror our own aspirations, and work to support and implement those aims where we can be of influence.

Community Strategy Theme	Policy Theme (1)	Medium Term Priorities
Green and Unique	A Safe, Healthy and Attractive Place	(a) To maintain the special character and advantage of the district, and address local environmental issues
Homes and Neighbourhoods		(b) To address key housing need
A Safe Community		(c) To create safer communities
Fit for Life		(d) To address leisure need
Economic Prosperity		(e) To encourage sustainable economic development

3

Green and Unique

One of the key objectives of the Epping Forest District Community Strategy for 2004 to 2021 is that the district will maintain a unique, green and sustainable environment in which communities prosper.

This vision is reflected in the Council's own medium-term priorities, which seek to maintain the special character and advantage of the district and address local environmental issues. Our Environmental Protection and Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolios, and certain planning functions of the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio, are included in this section of our Best Value Performance Plan.

For more detailed information not included in this plan please see:

Environmental Protection

- Local Agenda 21
- Food Safety Plan
- Housing Strategy Statement
- Food Premises Public Register
- Audit Commission Report on Epping Review of Environmental Control

Civil Engineering and Maintenance

- Essex County Council Local Transport Plan
- Epping Forest District Council Local Transport Plan
- Epping Forest District Council High Level Flood Targets (with Environment Agency)
- Engineering Services Service Plan

**Environment Protection and Civil Engineering and Maintenance Lead Officer John Gilbert (Head of Environmental Services) Phone: 01992 564062
E-mail: jgilbert@eppingforestdc.gov.uk**

Planning and Economic Development

- Local Plan
- Economic Development Strategy 2002 - 2007

**Planning and Economic Development Lead Officer John Preston (Head of Planning and Economic Development) Phone: 01992 564111
E-mail: jpreston@eppingforestdc.gov.uk**

Environmental Protection

The Environmental Protection Portfolio covers a diverse range of services, many of which are very important to our residents. Some of these are obvious, such as refuse collection, street cleansing, the removal of abandoned vehicles, and recycling services; but equally important are services such as food safety, health and safety, air quality and energy conservation.

The Council's key environmental protection issue for 2006/07 is the need to increase the recycling and diversion of waste from landfill, through the implementation of the wheeled bin alternate weekly collection system. With this new arrangement we aim to double our current recycling performance, thereby avoiding environmental damage and financial penalties.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We introduced a revised waste management service to increase levels of recycling from 21% in 2004/05 to approximately 30% to move towards the Council's overall recycling target of 40% by 2008/09;
- We completed, with Essex County Council, procurement arrangements for the county wide waste disposal contract for the West Essex area;
- We assessed the highest priority contaminated land sites in the district, so that land is appropriately treated and made fit for purposes such as recreation, public open space or development;
- We improved street cleansing service standards in the district through the introduction of estate/area based street cleansing teams in Theydon Bois and Waltham Abbey; and
- We agreed methods for the remediation of a contaminated former landfill site at Bobbingworth.

Current Issues

The following issues will be faced by the Environmental Protection Portfolio over the next year.

Waste Management

In order to have a good quality environment, we must try to achieve or ensure the minimisation of waste, continue to increase levels of recycling and deal with issues such as fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To invest further in recycling and waste diversion in order to attain levels of recycling in the order of 40%

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
4	Aim 1a	March 2007	27,37	BV82,84,86,91

Street Scene

We recognise that our residents would like to see a cleaner environment in our towns, villages and countryside.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To continue to improve local environmental standards through the increased use of locally based cleansing teams and new enforcement powers available to local authorities.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
1	Aim 1a	March 2007	None	BV199

Contaminated Land

The demands arising from the contaminated land regime continue to grow, through the need to provide detailed information as part of the planning and development process.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To provide additional resources to meet the demands for advice on contaminated land arising from planning applications, and working in partnership with the Environmental Agency, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and relevant landowners.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1a	March 2007	None	BV216

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Since our Comprehensive Performance Assessment in February 2004, we have made progress in relation to a number of areas identified for improvement. These issues are linked by reference to our CPA Improvement Plan (see page 6), where we set out full details of what we have achieved.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following CPA improvements.

- We introduced the doorstep collection of glass recyclables; (CPA 27,37);
- We agreed further options for increased recycling opportunities, including the phased introduction of wheeled bins (CPA 27,37); and
- We filled the vacant post of Environmental Co-ordinator in order to pursue environmental initiatives across the district. (CPA 36).

Environmental Protection – Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicators - Waste Management								
KPI - BV82a(i) The percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for recycling	1	TBA	20%	25%	26%	TBA	1	1
KPI - BV82a(ii) The total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for recycling	1	TBA	10000	12500	13000	TBA	1	1
KPI - BV82b(i) The percentage of household waste sent by the authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion	1	TBA	10%	11%	11%	TBA	1	1
KPI - BV82b(ii) The total tonnage of household waste sent by the authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion	1	TBA	5000	5500	5500	TBA	1	1
BV84a The number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population	430.0	TBA	430.0	425.0	420.0	TBA	412.5	380.8
BV84b The percentage change from the previous financial year in the number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population	1	TBA	0%	-1.2%	-1.2%	TBA	1	1
BV86 The cost of waste collection per household	£36.98	TBA	£42.66	£46.09	£47.50	TBA	£43.11	£35.62

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

Environmental Protection – Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicators - Waste Management								
BV91a The percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by kerbside collection of recyclables	1	TBA	97%	98%	98%	TBA	1	1
BV91b The percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by a kerb side collection of at least two recyclables	1	TBA	97%	98%	98%	TBA	1	1
BV166a The council's score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health/trading standards	80%	80%	80%	85%	90%	TBA	82.1%	93.4%
KPI - BV199a The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level	1	TBA	25%	20%	18%	TBA	1	1
KPI - BV199b The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) of which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible	1	TBA	25%	20%	18%	TBA	1	1
KPI - BV199c The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) from which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible.	1	TBA	25%	20%	18%	TBA	1	1
KPI - BV199d The year-on-year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with 'fly-tipping'	1	TBA	Grade 2 or 3	Grade 2 or 3	Grade 1	TBA	1	1

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

Environmental Protection – Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicators - Contaminated Land								
BV216a The number of 'sites of potential concern' within the local authority area, with respect to land contamination	1	1	100%	100%	100%	TBA	1	1
BV216b The number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all sites of potential concern	1	0.56%	0.85%	1.7%	2.5%	TBA	1	1
Best Value Performance Indicators -Pollution Control								
BV217 The percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time	1	1	90%	90%	90%	TBA	1	1
BV218a The percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours of notification	1	TBA	50%	60%	70%	TBA	1	1
BV218b The percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the local authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle	1	TBA	50%	65%	80%	TBA	1	1

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

Environmental Protection – Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Local Performance Indicator - Street Scene (Medium Term Priority 1(a))								
WM1 The number of missed refuse collections per 100,000 collections	1	TBA	100	95	90	TBA	2	2
WM2 The number of missed exemption collections as a % of exemptions granted	1	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	2	2
WM3 The number of missed glass collections per 100,000 collections	1	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	2	2
WM4 The number of missed dry recyclable collections per 100,000 collection	1	TBA	100	95	90	TBA	2	2
WM5 The number of missed garden waste collections per 100,000 collections	1	TBA	100	95	90	TBA	2	2
EH 1 The percentage of requests for environmental health services responded to within relevant target times	1	94%	90%	91%	92%	TBA	2	2
EH 3 The percentage of statutory Environmental Protection Act Part B processes undertaken	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	TBA	2	2
EH 4 The percentage of accidents reported through the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995, within the statutory period	1	88.10%	100%	100%	100%	TBA	2	2
EH 5 The number of food safety inspections carried out in accordance with Food Standards Agency targets	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	TBA	2	2
EH 6 The percentage of licence applications processed within the statutory period	1	95.9%	100%	100%	100%	TBA	2	2
EH 7 To achieve Food Standards Agency target food safety programmed inspections	1	92.8%	100%	100%	100%	100%	2	2

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

Civil Engineering and Maintenance

This portfolio was previously responsible for the roads, pavements and footpaths in the district. As from 1st April 2005 highway services are now delivered directly by Essex County Council (the Highway Authority) rather than by this council. Whilst we are able to exercise some discretionary powers over local roads, highways staff are no longer employed by the district council, although we continue to put out own resources into local projects, such as traffic calming and speed reduction schemes.

The district has suffered in the past from significant flooding problems, and alongside the Environment Agency we try to ensure that rivers, streams and ditches remain free flowing. Detailed studies of the areas most at risk are under review to see whether affordable protection works can be provided, along with continued monitoring and maintenance of the existing flood defence assets.

There remain local issues of concern especially regarding parking reviews and local traffic calming schemes. In 2006/07, assuming that budget provision continues to be made, schemes will be delivered on this Council's behalf by the County Council either directly or through external procurement. It will be important to establish and maintain close liaison with the County highways service to ensure that this district receives its fair share of the maintenance and improvement resources.

The Grounds Maintenance Service continues to maintain many of the grass verges and green open spaces in towns and villages, providing service frequencies over and above that provided by Essex County Council. This ensures a better quality of environment within the district.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We implemented the results of parking reviews for Epping and Buckhurst Hill; and a programme of traffic management and safety schemes included in the council's priority list and the Essex Local Transport Plan;
- We closely monitored the performance of the Highways Local Service Agreement, to secure the best level of service for the district in relation to matters such as traffic calming, highway repairs and pothole reinstatement;
- We developed proposals for a major flood alleviation project in the district;
- We worked with the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Environment Agency to secure the best arrangements for transfer of the Council's flood defence assets;
- We provided twentyfour free car parking spaces in Waltham Abbey to support local traders; and
- We entered into an agreement with the Environment Agency in respect of the management of watercourses that may be liable to flood.

Current Issues

The following issues will be faced by the Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio over the next year.

Highways

The last year has been a transitional period following the transfer of highway functions from the Council back to Essex County Council (the Highway Authority). This Council has no staff now directly involved in the delivery of highway services although we have retained our responsibilities for the enforcement of on and off street parking. The Local Service Agreement, which sets out the relationship between the Council and the

County Council, will be closely monitored as part of our new overview and scrutiny arrangements

Our Aims for 2006/07

To maintain and develop further liaison arrangements with Essex County Council to ensure the best possible service and levels of infrastructure investment for Epping Forest District.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
42	Aim 2d	March 2007	None	None

To complete the agreed programme of parking and traffic management reviews and agree proposals for local parking controls.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
43	Aim1c	March 2007	None	None

To closely monitor the performance of the Highways Local Service Agreement, to secure the best level of service for the district in relation to matters such as traffic calming, highway repairs, and pothole reinstatement

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
42	Aim 2c	March 2007	None	None

Flooding

Major changes are expected in the management of the larger water courses (known as Critical Ordinary Watercourses or COWs). The responsibility for these, and a number of the Council's flood alleviation schemes are transferring to the Environment Agency. However, consideration is being given to day to day management being contracted back to the Council to be undertaken by the engineers in the land drainage section. These changes will also affect the arrangements for provision of additional flood alleviation schemes, and it is now likely that no further schemes will be progressed.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To re-evaluate the current commitments for capital spend on schemes and consider re-allocation of capital moneys into locally controlled watercourses.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1a	March 2007	None	None

To complete negotiations with the Environment Agency for the possible contracting back of COWs to the Council.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1a	March 2007	None	None

To commence a programme of enhancements to some of the Council's car parks.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
43	Aim 1a	March 2007	None	None

CPA Improvements

There were no Civil Engineering and Maintenance improvements identified in our Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Performance Indicators

There are no Best Value Performance Indicators for the majority of services covered by this portfolio. The Council has not adopted any local performance indicators in respect of this function. All performance indicators in relation to highway matters are the responsibility of Essex County Council. Performance against these indicators will be reported in the County Council's Best Value Performance Plan for 2005/06.

Planning and Economic Development

The Council plays a vital role creating and maintaining a sustainable long term future for Epping Forest District with a good quality of life for those who live and work here. The Government has determined that the district is part of a growth area, and the process of producing a regional plan is under way. This, combined with the Governments desire to see greater housing provision in areas of high demand, suggests it is likely that the district will see more growth in future than it has in the recent past. We will continue to debate precise numbers, and to remind Government that adding to our existing households must be done with care.

We continue to struggle to recruit professional staff and have recently completed a restructure of Planning Services, to ensure that we make the most of the systems and staff that we already have in place, and to make improvements in our performance.

The portfolio is responsible for guiding controlling local development, local land charges and for town centre enhancement schemes. The economic development responsibility of the Portfolio is dealt with in the Economic Prosperity and Managing Resources sections of this plan.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We completed a review of the town centre enhancement scheme for The Broadway at Loughton and developed comprehensive proposals for an area based regeneration scheme;
- We completed Phase 1 of the Loughton Town Centre Enhancement scheme;
- We sought the provision of increased levels of affordable housing on development sites in the district, through alterations to the Local Plan;

- We further sought to influence the draft regional plan providing for necessary development while respecting the character of the district; and
- We updated the existing Local Plan and commenced preparation of a new Local Development Framework for the district.

Current Issues

The following issues will be faced by the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio over the next year.

Town Centre Enhancement and Regeneration

Phase One of the town centre enhancement scheme in Loughton High Road was completed in April 2006. These works have been jointly funded by the Council and Sainsbury's. Progress has continued with developing proposals for the enhancement of Loughton Broadway, and work will start work in July 2006.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To complete Phase Two of the Loughton Town Centre enhancement scheme and commence work on the Loughton Broadway enhancement scheme.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
44	Aims 1e, 2d	March 2007	None	None

Forward Planning

We have continued to defend the characteristics of the district from proposals contained in the draft regional plan (draft East of England Plan). We have progressed our amendments to the existing Local Plan and expect to adopt these in July 2006. We aim to deliver genuine sustainable local communities together with a requisite infrastructure. We have started work on a Local Development Framework which will eventually replace the Local Plan, (as required by law) and this will comprise a number of Local Development documents.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To continue the preparation of a Local Development Framework for the district

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
12	Aims 1a, 1b, 1e	Ongoing	None	BV200a,BV200b

Development Control and Local Land Charges

Planning Services has invested resources to improve the services that it offers, and has supplemented our budget with extra resources. A major new computer system has been introduced which allows many more actions to be undertaken electronically. The system has already led to us changing the tasks we do, and there will be further changes to our processes and the ways we work.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To implement a new information technology system to its full specification.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 3a	Dec 2006	20	BV157

To continue to improve local land charge and planning application turnaround times, particularly in respect of major applications.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 3a	Dec 2006	20	BV179, BV109a

Planning Delivery Grant

Planning Delivery Grant was first introduced in 2003/04 and has been extended for a six year period. The system rewards councils which have improved their performance, and the grant that we have received has been invested in areas such as computer systems and staff training to enable us to further improve our services.

Our Aims for 2006/07

Following the restructure of Planning Services to consider further steps to strengthen the number of professional officers in the Building Control team.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aims 2a,3a,3b,3c	May 2006	9,20	None

Our Aims for 2006/07

To adjust methods used to hold planning data electronically and check its quality.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aims 3a,3c	April 2007	None	BV157

To achieve and maintain top quartile performance for our development control function.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aims 2c,3a,3c	March 2007	6,20	BV109a,b,c, BV204

- We continued to influence the draft East of England Plan development proposals to seek to protect the special character and advantage of the district, whilst also securing increased levels of local affordable housing (CPA 30); and
- We dedicated additional resources of £100,000 to establishment of a temporary 'hit squad' of professional officers to clear a backlog of planning applications.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Since our Comprehensive Performance Assessment in February 2004, we have made progress in relation to a number of areas identified for improvement. These issues are linked by reference to our CPA Improvement Plan (see page 6), where we set out full details of what we have achieved.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following CPA improvements:

- We ensured full use of revised delegation arrangements in respect of the determination of planning applications (CPA 20);
- We reviewed the use of casual/agency staff to address peaks in planning workload (CPA 20);
- We undertook process mapping reviews for major planning applications (CPA 20);

Planning and Economic Development - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicators- Planning								
KPI - BV106 The percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	94%	98.65%	70%	90.10%	90.10%	90.10%	69.18%	90.10%
KPI - BV109a,b,c The percentage of planning applications determined in line with the Government's new development control targets to determine a) 60% of major applications in 13 weeks b) 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks c) 80% of other applications in 8 weeks.	a) 41% b) 57% c) 77%	a) 54% b) 57% c) 80%	a) 60% b) 65% c) 80%	a) 71.25% b) 75.33% c) 88.03%	a) 71.25% b) 75.33% c) 88.03%	a) 71.25% b) 75.33% c) 88.03%	a) 59.05% b) 67.54% c) 82.78%	a) 71.25% b) 75.33% c) 88.03%
BV179 The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days	60.6%	52.5%	86%				94.87%	100%
BV200a Did the local planning authority submit the Local Development Scheme by 28th March 2005 and thereafter maintain a 3-year rolling programme?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
BV200b Has the local planning authority met the milestones which the current Local Development Scheme sets out?		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available
- 3 Indicator deleted from 2006/07

Planning and Economic Development - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
BV200c Did the Local Planning Authority publish an annual monitoring report by 31st December of the previous year?	1	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	2
KPI - BV204 The number of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications, as a percentage of the total number of appeals against refusals of planning applications	29%	22%	25%	24%	24%	25%	30.1%	24%
BV205 The council's score against a 'quality of planning services' checklist	72%	89%	83%	89%	94.4%	94.4%	77.5%	88.9%
BV219a The total number of conservation areas in the local authority area	1	25	25	25	25	25	2	2
BV219b The percentage of conservation areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal	1	4%	4%	8%	8%	16%	2	2
BV219c The percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals	1	4%	4%	8%	12%	16%	2	2

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

4

Homes and Neighbourhoods

One of the key objectives of the Epping Forest District Community Strategy for 2004 to 2021 is that the district has safe, decent and attractive housing that meets the needs of those who want to live in the district. This vision is reflected in the Council's own medium-term priorities which seek to address key housing need. The Housing Portfolio is included in this section of our Best Value Performance Plan.

For more detailed information not included in this plan please see:

- Housing Strategy
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Housing Charter
- Tenant Participation Agreement
- Housing Service Strategies
- Best Value Service Review Report on Housing Services

Housing Lead Officer
Alan Hall (Head of Housing Services),
Phone: 01992 564004
E-mail: ahall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Housing

Housing has a major impact on the quality of our lives and influences health, educational achievement, employment opportunities and society in general. The Council is responsible for assessing housing need, overseeing and co-ordinating the provision of new housing in the district (especially additional affordable housing for rent and housing for those with special needs), dealing with homelessness, assisting with the improvement of privately owned properties, and managing and maintaining its own housing stock.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We received a government grant to enable us to introduce a choice based lettings scheme for council housing vacancies and housing association nominations in partnership with neighbouring councils;
- We completed the installation of PVCu window frames in all council houses;
- We doubled the number of properties covered by our Fresh Start scheme, where a housing association leases private accommodation to homeless families nominated by the Council;
- We consulted on the use of introductory tenancies for all new tenants, allowing us to evict tenants if they engage in anti-social behaviour;
- We undertook a Private Sector House Condition Survey to inform our private sector strategy;
- We enabled 77 new affordable homes to be built; and
- We consulted residents of our sheltered housing scheme at Wickfields in Chigwell on transferring to Warden Housing Association to enable a major improvement scheme to convert bed-sits with shared bathrooms into self-contained flats.

Current Issues

The following issues will be faced by the Housing Portfolio over the next year.

Housing Need

We aim to provide more affordable homes for people in the district, including those with special needs, through our work with housing associations.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To implement a choice based lettings scheme for council housing vacancies and housing association nominations, in partnership with five neighbouring councils.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1b	April 2007	None	None

To commence the development of eight council-owned housing sites, to provide around 40 affordable homes subsidised by the sale of other properties on the sites.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1b	April 2007	None	None

Repairs and Maintenance

We aim to ensure that all our properties will meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To commence a major improvement scheme at Springfields, Waltham Abbey.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1b	March 2006	None	BV184

Housing Management

We aim to be a responsible landlord to our 6,600 tenants and 870 leaseholders, offering reasonable rents, and managing our properties effectively and efficiently.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To commence the use of introductory tenancies for all new tenants, in order to assist the Council to reduce anti-social behaviour during the first twelve months of new tenants' tenancies.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1b	Sept 2006	None	None

Supported Housing for People with Special Needs

We provide facilities, services and help for people with special needs (e.g. the disabled and the elderly) to enable them to live in appropriate housing for their needs, or to remain in their own homes for as long as is practicable.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To transfer the Council's sheltered housing scheme at Wickfields, Chigwell to Warden Housing, in order to enable a major improvement/ conversion scheme to be undertaken.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1b	Sept 2006	None	None

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Since our Comprehensive Performance Assessment in February 2004, we have made progress in relation to a number of areas identified for improvement. These issues are linked by reference to our CPA Improvement Plan (see page 6), where we set out full details of what we have achieved.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following CPA improvements.

- We provided nine units of temporary accommodation for homeless families at Hemnall House (CPA19);
- We reviewed our existing Allocations Scheme and increased the number of allocation bands to give additional priority to homeless families in temporary accommodation (CPA 19);
- We reviewed the success of the Fresh Start scheme and extended the scheme beyond the current maximum number of properties (CPA 19);
- We extended the Homelessness Prevention Service until April 2005 and reviewed the future of the service (CPA 19);
- We started a feasibility study for the redevelopment of Leader Lodge at North Weald to provide additional accommodation for homeless families (CPA 19); and
- We sought alterations to the Local Plan to require the provision for increased levels of affordable housing on development sites.

Housing - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicators - Housing								
KPI - BV63 The average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	69	65	72	67	67	67	64	67
KPI - BV64 The number of non local authority owned vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished during the financial year as a direct result of action by the local authority	0	0	20	25	25	TBA	19.88	25.0
KPI - BV66a The rent collected by the local authority as a proportion of rents owed on Housing Revenue Account dwellings	97.8%	98.58%	98.0%	98.74%	98.74%	98.74%	97.68%	98.74%
BV66b The number of local authority tenants with more than seven weeks of (gross) rent arrears as a percentage of the total number of council tenants	1	8.24%	12%	12%	10%	10%	1	1
BV66c The percentage of local authority tenants in arrears who have had Notices Seeking Possession served	1	20%	17%	20%	20%	20%	1	1
BV66d The percentage of local authority tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	1	0.21%	0.26%	0.26%	0.26%	0.28%	1	1
KPI - BV164 Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in Rented Housing and the Good Practice Standards for Social Landlords on Tackling Harassment included in Tackling Racial Harassment - Code of Practice for Social Landlords	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	61% said yes	2
KPI - BV183 The average length of stay in (i) bed and breakfast accommodation and (ii) hostel accommodation of households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	(i) 0 Weeks (ii) 16.8 Weeks	(i) 0 Weeks (ii) 18.11 Weeks	(i) 0 Weeks (ii) 16.5 Weeks	(i) 1 Week (ii) 0 Weeks	(i) 1 Week (ii) 0 Weeks	(i) 1 Week (ii) 0 Weeks	(i) 4 Weeks (ii) 13 Weeks	(i) 1 Week (ii) 0 Weeks

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

Housing - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
BV184a The proportion of local authority dwellings which were non-decent at the start of the financial year	7.3%	7.31%	5.5%	6%	5%	3%	29%	17%
BV184b The percentage change in proportion of non-decent dwellings between the start and end of the financial year	52.7%	19.50%	25%	12.5%	14.2%	16.6%	2	2
BV202 The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the authority	1	1	0 - 10	0 - 10	0 - 10	0-10	2	2
BV203 The percentage change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation	+7.5%	+67.16%	-2%	-13.25%	-15%	-15%	12.87%	-9.4%
BV211a The proportion of planned repairs and maintenance expenditure on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwellings, compared to responsive maintenance expenditure on HRA dwellings	1	Indicator deleted during 2005/06	3	3	3	3	1	1
BV211b The proportion of expenditure on emergency and urgent repairs to HRA dwellings compared to non urgent repairs expenditure to HRA dwellings	1	Indicator deleted during 2005/06	3	3	3	3	1	1
BV212 The average time taken to re-let local authority housing	1	46 days	42 days	42 days	42 days	42 days	1	1
BV213 The number of households who considered themselves as homeless who approached the local authority's housing advice services, and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation	1	4	10	4.2	4.4	4.4	1	1

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available
- 3 Indicator deleted from 2006/07

Housing - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Local Performance Indicators (Medium Term Priority 1(b))								
H1a The amount of former tenant rent arrears collected per annum	£60,071	£65,351	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	2	2
H1b The rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	2.21%	1.53%	2.1%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	2	2
H2a The percentage of repairs undertaken within target time: Emergency	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	2	2
H2b The percentage of repairs undertaken within target time: Urgent	85%	81%	90%	95%	95%	95%	2	2
H2c The percentage of repairs undertaken within target time: Routine	83%	86%	90%	95%	95%	95%	2	2
H2d The percentage of repairs undertaken within target time: Priority (Within 3 Days)	1	N/A	90%	95%	95%	95%	2	2
H3e The level of satisfaction with repairs: General standard of service received	98%	98%	97%	97%	97%	97%	2	2
H10a The average number of homeless households during the year in (i) B & B accommodation (ii) Hostel accommodation (iii) Other temporary housing	(i) 11 (ii) 20 (iii) 108	(i) 19.25 (ii) 25.5 (ii) 170	(i)6 (ii)36 (iii)60	(i)15 (ii)32 (iii)130	(i)10 (ii)32 (iii)100	(i) 5 (ii) 32 (iii) 80	2	2
KPI - H15a The number of affordable homes completed and ready for occupation during the year	113	74	74	33	59	75	2	2
KPI - H15b The amount of affordable housing required as part of all Section 106 Agreements that have been signed during the year, for all large residential development sites (in excess of 25 properties or 1 hectare expressed as a percentage of the total number of homes to be provided on large residential development sites).	30%	28%	30%	33%	40%	40%		
EH 2 The percentage of requests for care and repair services responded to within relevant target times	1	92.8%	90%	91%	92%	TBA	2	2

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

5

A Safe Community

One of the key objectives of the Epping Forest District Community Strategy for 2004 to 2021 is to be a district where people will be reassured that criminal and disorderly behaviour is unusual and, where it does occur, that the police, other agencies and members of the community will do their utmost to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice. This vision is reflected in the Council's own medium-term priorities which seek to maintain the district as a safe, healthy and attractive place. The Community Wellbeing Portfolio is included in this section of our Best Value Performance Plan.

For more detailed information not included in this plan about Community Wellbeing, see:

- A Compact for Epping Forest
- District Emergency Response Plan
- Grant Aid Scheme
- Crime and Drugs Strategy
- Communication Strategy
- Corporate Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Plan
- Policing Plan (written by the Essex Police)
- Epping Forest Primary Care Trust Plan
- Health Improvement Plan,
Community Strategy and Action Plan

Community Wellbeing Lead Officer John Scott
(Joint Chief Executive (Community Services))
Phone: 01992 564050
E-mail: jscott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Community Wellbeing

Our Community Wellbeing responsibility includes a range of services to make sure our district is a safe and healthy place to live and work in. We do this through our involvement on the Epping Forest Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Making sure the district is safe also extends to being in a state of readiness to respond effectively to emergencies, which is achieved through our Emergency Planning Team. We have worked with our partners on the Local Strategic Partnership to promote health and wellbeing in recent years and are seeking to further reduce the impact of social exclusion. We provide grant aid to a wide number of community and leisure-based organisations, provide concessionary fares for older people, and work with the voluntary sector. The Portfolio is also responsible for the licensing of persons and premises for the sale of alcohol and the provision of public entertainment.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We implemented the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 in partnership with other agencies which have an emergency response role;
- We funded the provision of six additional Police Community Support Officers for the district, jointly with Essex Police;
- We appointed an Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator to develop an operational and strategic response to antisocial behaviour issues.
- We invested £55,000 to enhance the existing scheme for concessionary travel into London, and increased the number of passes issued under the scheme;
- We began to integrate Codes of Practice within the Epping Forest District Local Compact that set out the commitments of the Council and the community and voluntary sectors, in relation to joint working;
- We began the implementation of targets in the Community Strategy;
- We implemented a three year funding agreement with Voluntary Action Epping Forest as part of a comprehensive review of voluntary sector assistance; and

- We successfully implemented the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003, in respect of all persons and premises involved with the sale of alcohol and/or the provision of public entertainment.

Current Issues

The following issues will be faced by the Community Wellbeing Portfolio over the next year.

Crime and Disorder

The three-year Epping Forest Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy was published in April 2005. The Epping Forest Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has developed crime reduction targets for specific offences to be achieved by March 2008 in conjunction with some of the objectives detailed in the strategy.

The Council plays a major role within the partnership and continues to lead on key crime reduction initiatives across the district, including graffiti removal, free security for the elderly, addressing anti social behaviour through the work of problem solving groups, the targetting of prolific offenders, and tackling hate crime. As the community safety agenda widens, the Council's Crime Reduction Team will continue to play a proactive role in this area.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To expand hate crime awareness and its reporting by including parish and town council staff as part of the existing training schedule.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1c	September 2006	None	BV174

To hold the second Crucial Crew event for all year six pupils across the district at North Weald Airfield.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
41	Aim 1c	September 2006	None	None

To continue to work closely with police around the targetting of known prolific offenders through the actions of the Priority and Prolific Offender Group.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
41	Aim 1c	September 2006	None	BV126,BV127a, BV127b, BV128

To produce a district-wide anti-social behaviour pack, to provide information to the community on how to report anti social behaviour.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
41	Aim 1c	September 2006	None	BV127a

Concessionary Fares

The Council continues to operate a unique concessionary fare scheme with Transport for London (TfL). Due to changes in TfL's fare structure from January 2006, the tube concession has been withdrawn as people can travel more cheaply using an Oyster card, although the scheme still offers bus travel far beyond the district boundaries for a modest charge. The benefits available under the countywide concessionary fares scheme have increased from half fare to free travel, and passes for this scheme continue to be free of charge.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To implement a system for issuing bus passes by post in order to reduce inconvenience to users of the countywide concessionary fare scheme.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 2d	September 2006	None	None

Grant Aid

Proposals put into effect following a review of voluntary sector assistance in 2004 have alleviated the effects of the previous reductions in the amount available for grant aid. This year we will be looking to ensure that funds available are distributed on an equitable basis and where appropriate provide a degree of additional financial security to voluntary groups.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To further integrate the Epping Forest District Local Compact and Codes of Practice that set out the commitments of the Council and the community and voluntary sectors, within the Grant Aid Scheme.

Social Inclusion

The Social Inclusion Forum was set up in 2000 and made vigorous strides to address those social needs masked by the district's generally affluent image. The responsibility for the further development of social inclusion initiatives rests with the Local Strategic Partnership. The partnership has identified a number of measures to help combat problems in the more deprived areas in the district. It will be seeking to further assist social inclusion in the future through the implementation of targets identified in action plans forming part of the Community Strategy.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To address social inclusion through the Community Strategy and accompanying action plans, (details of the individual targets aimed at improving social inclusion are set out within the action plans produced by the LSP arising from the finalisation of the Community Strategy).

Voluntary Sector Support

A funding agreement with Voluntary Action Epping Forest covering the period from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2007 has been agreed.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To continue the implementation of the three year funding agreement with Voluntary Action Epping Forest and determine further improvements in accordance with the government's modernisation agenda for the voluntary sector.

Licensing

2005/06 saw the implementation of the new licensing regime throughout the district which included taking responsibility for the licensing of all premises selling liquor. Whilst the immediate pressure of new applications has passed, the new arrangements are still settling down. 2006/07 will see the introduction of the new Gambling Act, which will transfer to local authorities the licensing of premises such as casinos and betting shops as well as all gambling (slot) machines.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To implement the provisions of the Gambling Act.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1e	March 2007	None	None

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Since our Comprehensive Performance Assessment in February 2004, we have made progress in relation to a number of areas identified for improvement. These issues are linked by reference to our CPA Improvement Plan (see page 6), where we set out full details of what we have achieved.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following CPA improvements:

- We continued to identify measures to alleviate specific deprivation issues through analysis of the 2004 Indices of Deprivation, and work with our partners to tackle deprivation issues.
- We began an audit of community safety actions to identify weaknesses and opportunities in the Council's approach to community safety (CPA 38).

Community Wellbeing - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicators - Equality								
BV2a The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1		
BV2b The quality of an authority's Race Equality Scheme and the improvements resulting from its application	42%	53%	47%	47%	47%	55%	49%	63%
Best Value Performance Indicators - Community Safety								
BV126 The number of domestic burglaries per year per 1000 households in the local authority	13.86	16.67	11.96	11.82	12.19	TBA	8.95	6.18
BV127a Amended - The number of violent crime per year, per 1,000 population in the Local Authority area	¹	13.92	14.43	13.93	13.43	TBA	5.59	2.45
BV127b Amended - The number of robberies per year, per 1,000 population in the Local Authority area	¹	1.49	0.77	0.71	0.66	TBA	8.33	5.22
BV128 The number of vehicle crimes per year, per 1,000 population in the local authority area	13.98	14.86	12.92	12.19	11.47	TBA	9.67	6.84
BV156 The percentage of local authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people.	76.9%	76.9%	76.9%	76.9%	76.9%	TBA		
BV174 The number of racial incidents reported to the local authority and subsequently recorded per 100,000 population	144.76	105.06	134.83	136.49	148.9	TBA		
BV175 The percentage of racial incidents reported to the local authority and that resulted in further action	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	TBA		
BV225 The overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence	¹	TBA	66.6%	75%	75%	TBA		

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

6

Fit For Life

One of the key objectives of the Epping Forest District Community Strategy for 2004 to 2021 is to be a district where people of all ages and abilities can lead a healthy lifestyle by having access to effective high quality leisure and cultural services. This vision is reflected in the Council's own medium-term priorities which seek to address leisure need. The Leisure Portfolio is included in this section of our Best Value Performance Plan.

For more detailed information not included in this plan about leisure see:

- Sports Development Strategy
- Arts Policy
- Marketing Strategy

Leisure Lead Officer Derek Macnab (Head of Leisure Services)
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Leisure

In recent years there has been an increasing understanding of the importance that wide ranging leisure provision can make to health improvement and social cohesion. The Community Strategy for the district highlights a vision for the area where people of all ages and abilities can live a healthy lifestyle by having access to effective high quality health, leisure and cultural services.

Many factors in modern life can lead to social exclusion particularly amongst vulnerable groups within our community, such as elderly, people with disabilities and those on low levels of disposable income. By working closely with local people, and utilising leisure and cultural activity as a means of meeting need, stronger cohesive communities can be built.

Although the Council plays an important role in the provision of leisure and cultural opportunities, it does not have a statutory responsibility to provide them. A wide range of other private, public and voluntary sector partners also have an important part to play. The provision of leisure services is resource intensive particularly in relation to leisure facilities such as leisure centres and swimming pools. In reflecting the Council's commitment to achieve value for money and continuous improvement, an external partner has been appointed to manage its four main leisure facilities. This will not only transfer risk from the Council but also guarantee investment at £1.5m over the next few years and a total revenue saving of £1.1million over the course of the seven year contract.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We entered into an external management contract with Sports and Leisure Management Limited for the future management of our main leisure facilities, and secured £1.5m of investment for new health and fitness facilities at Ongar Leisure Centre and Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool;
- We increased access to information about services for young people;
- We provided an extensive programme of activities for children across

the district over the school summer holidays;

- We enhanced the quality of life in the more rural parts of the district through the 'Beyond Suburbia' rural regeneration project, which improved the provision of cultural opportunities, tourism and related economic development initiatives;
- We reviewed future management arrangements for the Roding Valley Local Nature Reserve, in advance of the termination of the existing management agreement with Essex Wildlife Trust in 2007;
- We implemented an 'Active For Life' physical activity and health programme in conjunction with Sport England and the local Primary Care Trust, aimed at enabling communities to develop healthier lifestyles;
- We increased out of hours security at North Weald Airfield in response to risk assessments and increasing incidents of theft and vandalism;
- We secured funding to improve awareness and interpretation of our social history through better access and display of the collections of the Epping Forest Museum;
- We began to provide new health and fitness facilities at Ongar Leisure Centre, with the assistance of our alternative management partner; and
- We reviewed opportunities for young peoples' representatives to present issues of importance and become more engaged in the democratic process.

Current Issues

The following issues will be faced by the Leisure Portfolio over the next year.

Sports and Leisure Centres

The expectations of customers are increasing with respect to choice, availability and quality of leisure facilities. As an area of provision which is intensive in terms of financial, physical and human resources, it is important that services are delivered in a cost effective way. To this end the Council has appointed an External Contractor to undertake the future management of its leisure centres, seeking a partnership which also encourages investment in new facilities.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To work in partnership with our leisure management contractor to improve the quality of facilities at the Council's leisure centres and increase participation by people of all ages and abilities.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1e	Sept 2006(Investment complete)	None	None

Young People

We want to ensure that young people can express informed views on issues that affect their lives and actively participate in democratic processes.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To increase opportunities for young people in the district to be involved in decisions that affect their lives by promoting citizenship and supporting the work of local youth councils and the Essex Young People's Assembly.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
60	Aim 2c	June 2006	4	L5,L11

Rural Issues

Epping Forest is an area of distinctive towns and rural villages with a special character. Yet within the district, many services are located in the more southerly urban fringe, with a public transport system that is not adequate. This can lead to issues of isolation and access in the more rural areas of the district. "Beyond Suburbia" is an innovative project targeted at addressing such issues.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To work in conjunction with external funding agencies, Matching Parish Council and the local community, to refurbish playing fields at Matching Tye into an amenity area.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1e	September 2006	None	None

With financial assistance from East of England Arts, to undertake an innovative Community Arts Project, "Border Dialogues" which celebrates the unique rural character of the district.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 2c	September 2006	4	L5,L11

Healthy and Active Lifestyle

With an ageing population and a health profile that reflects national trends in illness, particularly levels of heart disease, cancers and diabetes, the importance of leading an active lifestyle is clear. Rates of childhood obesity are rising, with poor diet and inactivity, with an increase in home media entertainment being one of the key factors. There is a need to encourage people to improve their health through partnerships between education, health and leisure providers, working closely with communities to identify what will assist them most.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Since our Comprehensive Performance Assessment in February 2004, we have made progress in relation to a number of areas identified for improvement. These issues are linked by reference to our CPA Improvement Plan (see page 6), where we set out full details of what we have achieved.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To expand the range of accessible opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to lead a healthier lifestyle through the Council's "Active Life" programme.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
61	Aim 1e	April 2006 onwards	None	L10

Social History

The Council's museum at Waltham Abbey tells the story of the people who have lived and worked in this part of Essex from the earliest inhabitants to the present. Housed in a building dating back to 1520, the museum displays some of the key archaeological finds from around the district and provides an introduction to the history of our villages and towns.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To improve access and interpretation of the Social History Collection at the Museum as well as increasing awareness through a new Community Outreach Programme

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 1e	March 2006	None	BV170, BV170a

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following CPA improvements:

- We have established a corporate Child Protection Group to ensure our child protection policies are consistent and reflect best practice; and
- We have undertaken market research with non-users of our services and developed a programme of marketing activity to increase participation in leisure facilities.

Leisure - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
KPI - BV170a The number of visits to/usage's of local authority funded or part-funded museums and galleries in the area per 1,000 population	1	524.48	309	811	811	811	726	811
BV170b The number of those visits to local authority funded, or part funded museums that were in person per 1,000 population.	1	110.28	131.47	128.09	128.09	135	369	466
KPI - BV170c The number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups	3178	3294	3600	3181	3181	3181	2927	3181
Local Performance Indicators (Medium Term Priority 1(e))								
L1 The number of parishes in the district in which the council directly provides leisure opportunities.	1	14	16	17	17	17	2	2
L2 The number of parishes in the district in which the council has enabled other organisations to provide other leisure opportunities	1	15	14	15	15	15	2	2
L3 The number of individuals on low income who benefited from special activity prices	1	422	2200	2350	2400	550	2	2
L4 The number of new leisure facilities enabled by the council	4	81	1	2	2	2	2	2
L5 The number of patients referred by a medical professional to a council health-based activity scheme	157	81	157	13	14	20	2	2
L6 The number of new leisure opportunities enabled by the council	16	31	3	4	5	10	2	2
L7 The number of organisations with whom leisure services has worked in partnership to promote healthy living and enable social inclusion	1	143	50	55	60	70	2	2
L8 The number of new leisure opportunities directly introduced by the council	38	186	50	50	50	60	2	2
L9 The number of swimming lessons given to 0-16 year olds.	11,290	12,387	10,500	10,500	10,500	15000	2	2
L10 The number of event days held at NorthWeald airfield	118	75	135	140	145	150	2	2
L11 The number of new activities for 13 to 19 year olds enabled or directly provided by the council	1	30	12	15	17	20	2	2
L12 The percentage of leisure centre users who rated the service received as good or excellent	1	94	75%	80%	82%	85%	2	2

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

7

Economic Prosperity

One of the key objectives of the Epping Forest District Community Strategy for 2004 to 2021 is that the district will have a thriving and sustainable local economy, which extends opportunity for local residents and promotes prosperity throughout the district.

This vision is reflected in the council's own medium-term priorities which seek to encourage sustainable economic development. The economic development function of the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio is included in this section of our Best Value Performance Plan.

For more detailed information about Planning and Economic Development not included in this plan, see:

- Local Plan
- Economic Development Strategy 2002 - 2007 (Five Year Plan)

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Economic Development

We aim to work with local businesses and other partners to promote business efficiency and help local firms to develop. We also enhance local town centres, assist the rural economy and promote tourism in the district.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We continued to promote business investment locally and to ensure an adequate long-term supply of business sites and premises;
- We continued to help small enterprises meet accommodation and operational needs;
- We continued to assist the rural economy and support the vitality of rural communities; and
- We continued to promote leisure and tourism opportunities within the district.

Our Aims in 2006/07

- To appoint an Economic Development Officer; to further improve economic development within the district; and
- To participate in the achievement of economic development targets within the Essex Local Area Agreement.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

There were no economic development improvements identified as part of our CPA.

Performance Indicators

There are no Best Value Performance Indicators in relation to Economic development. The Council has not adopted any local performance indicators in respect of this function.

8 Our Resource Management Priorities and Performance

<p>Policy Theme (2)</p> <p>An organisation that listens and leads to resolve local issues</p>	<p>Medium Term Priorities</p> <p>(a) Political leaders give clear direction (b) communicate with the public about service delivery (c) prioritise objectives and services (d) co-operate and plan with partners</p>
<p>Policy Theme (3)</p> <p>Accessible affordable and improving services</p>	<p>Medium Term Priorities</p> <p>(a) identify and target resources, realise capacity and manage performance (b) procure services in the most beneficial and cost effective way (c) develop services, staff and the working environment</p>

Our People First, Information and Communications Technology and Corporate Support Services, and Finance and Performance Management Portfolios are included in this section of our Best Value Performance Plan and details of our performance in these areas can be found in the following sections.

In addition to the medium term priorities which reflect our commitment to high quality services provided directly to the community, we have developed additional medium term priorities which show the importance of our corporate services. These provide essential support to the work of the Council.

For more detailed information not included in this plan about these service areas please see:

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- Asset Management Plan
- Council Budget 2005/06

Leadership and Democracy Lead Officer
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Performance Management Lead Officer
 Tony Tidey (Head of Human Resources and Performance Management)
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- CPA Improvement Plan

Legal, Administration & Estates Services
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- Access to information

People First

The People First Portfolio primarily deals with the external relations of the council and its democratic and decision-making processes. The portfolio also covers media relations, the website and a range of other issues such as the constitution, democratic services, compliments and complaints, liaison with local councils and the standards of conduct expected of elected members. This is not a portfolio with the same level of spending as other service-based portfolios, but is influential in that it sits at the corporate centre of the authority.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We implemented our Corporate Communications Strategy;
- We implemented a review of the Council's design guide as part of our Access to Information Strategy;
- We finalised new information centre arrangements in conjunction with the Essex County Library Scheme;
- We participated in a review of parliamentary electoral arrangements;
- We continued to develop the interactive elements of our website;
- We agreed the introduction of a single customer contact centre for all of the council's services;
- We implemented an arrangement for the local investigation of complaints against councillors;
- We introduced new arrangements to improve the effectiveness of our overview and scrutiny function, in order that we concentrate on priority issues and improve our performance; and
- We reviewed our current portfolio of member training courses to ensure greater take-up.

Current Issues

The following issues will be faced by the People First Portfolio over the next year.

Leadership and Democracy

The process for preparing the register of electors and the administration of postal voting is the subject to a new act of Parliament. We will review the effect of the final changes in the law so that resources can be applied. It will be important for the Council to ensure that these new procedures are funded as there is much public concern about elections in general and postal voting in particular.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To make improvements in electoral registration and voting arrangements

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 2b	March 2007	None	None

To implement proposals for overview and scrutiny arising from the first review of new arrangements.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
68	Aim 2b	March 2007	None	None

Access to information and Services

We have reviewed our information facilities at the Civic Offices in Epping, Ongar and at Traps Hill, Loughton. We are developing our website to encourage e-transactions and enhance public information and e-application options. In making our services accessible to everyone we are producing jargon free information and making this available in formats accessible to people with special needs.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To commence the implementation of a Customer Services Transformation Programme to improve services to the community, by the establishment of a Customer Contact Centre.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 2b	December 2006	None	None

To introduce new joint arrangements for the provision of information services at Loughton Library.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 2b	May 2006 to March 2007	None	None

Democratic Services

The Council continues to work towards the implementation of its remuneration scheme for members. 2006/7 is a further stage in that process, one of reflecting the value placed on being a Councillor and the special responsibilities they bear. The civic ceremonial budget supports the civic activities of the Council carried out by the Chairman of the Council. This has been static for some years and it is becoming difficult to accommodate the cost of civic events within the funding. Members have reviewed how to maintain standards in this areas.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To implement a staged Member Remuneration Scheme.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 2b	March 2007	None	None

To re-launch the Councillors training programme.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 2b	March 2007	None	None

To review arrangements for the funding of civic ceremonial matters.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
91	Aim 2b	March 2007	None	None

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Since our Comprehensive Performance Assessment in February 2004, we have made progress in relation to a number of areas identified for improvement. These issues are linked by reference to our CPA Improvement Plan (see page 6), where we set out full details of what we have achieved.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following CPA improvements:

- We reviewed our current member training courses to ensure greater take-up, and engaged training providers to deliver the programme (CPA 8);
- We engaged consultants to undertake a scoping exercise in relation to the possible introduction of a single customer contact centre (CPA 28);
- We agreed a new use of resources protocol (CPA 8);
- We reviewed our overview and scrutiny system (CPA 11); and
- We introduced new arrangements to improve the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny.

People First - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
BV226a The total amount spent by the local authority on advice and guidance services provided by external organisations	1	£133,250	£133,250	£137,580	£137,580 + inflation	£137,580 + inflation	2	2
BV226b The percentage of monies spent on advice and guidance services provision which was given to organisations holding the CLS Quality mark at 'General Help' level and above.	1	77%	TBA	100%	100%	100%	2	2
BV226c The total amount spent on advice and guidance in the areas of housing, welfare benefits and consumer matters which is provided directly by the authority to the public.	1	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	2	2
Local Performance Indicators - Public Relations (Medium Term Priority 2(b))								
PR2 The number of press enquiries to which responses given within 3 hours of receipt	69.88%	64.88%	70%	70%	70%	70%	2	2
PR3 The number of visits to the Council's website per month	438,000	440,301	481,800	529,980	600,000	650,000	2	2

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

Finance and Performance Management

Finance and Performance Management is about financial and quality control, providing the foundations needed for financial stability and continuous improvement, and the mechanisms to see whether or not improvements have been achieved. Our overall objective is to continually improve the balance between the quality and level of service, and the cost to you. To achieve this we aim to: maximise income generated from fees, charges and rents, continually improve the accuracy, timeliness and cost-effectiveness of payments and actively manage all financial resources, investments and assets to ensure maximum benefit and minimum risk to the people of the district.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We commenced the implementation of an electronic records document management system in our Benefits Service;
- We introduced quarterly financial monitoring reports to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel;
- We conducted a tendering exercise for the Council's insurance portfolio, to save in excess of £1million over the five years of the new contract;
- We made significant improvements to the Revenues and Benefits sections of the website which included the provision of on-line forms and introducing the ability for people to make payments via the website; and
- We completed the accounts closure process more quickly than in previous years and achieved the statutory target.

Current Issues

The following issues will be faced by the Finance and Performance Management Portfolio over the next year.

Financial and Asset Control

Our Aims for 2006/07

To investigate the development potential of some Council-owned car parks, whilst ensuring that we retain adequate public car parking.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 3a	March 2007	None	None

To complete the sale of the 'Parade Ground' site at North Weald Airfield.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
76	Aim 3a	March 2007	None	None

To update the strategic risk register and involve councillors more actively in risk management.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 2a	September 2006	None	BV76-79

Income Generation

Our Aims for 2006/07

To keep any Council Tax increase below 3%

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
77	Aim 3a	March 2007	None	None

To expand the number of services for which payment can be made via the website

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
78	Aim 3a	March 2007	None	None

Payment Services

Our Aims for 2006/07

To introduce the Essex Marketplace electronic ordering system across the council.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
92	Aim 3a	September 2006	25	None

Performance Management

Our Aims for 2006/07

To implement a new performance management system so that we have more timely and accurate information about our performance.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
91	Aim 3a	April 2007	None	None

To carry out customer satisfaction surveys in accordance with Government requirements

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 3a	March 2007	None	None

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Since our Comprehensive Performance Assessment in February 2004, we have made progress in relation to a number of areas identified for improvement. These issues are linked by reference to our CPA Improvement Plan (see page 6), where we set out full details of what we have achieved.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following CPA improvements

- We reviewed and revised as necessary the council's existing Performance Management Framework and business planning guidance, including the incorporation of SMART targets and aims focused on our medium-term priorities (CPA 5,23);and
- We introduced revised processes for the collection, reporting and monitoring of performance information, (CPA 6,13,14,16).

Finance and Performance Management - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicators - Finance								
KPI - BV8 The percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services paid by the authority within 30 days receipt or within agreed payment terms	94.47%	93.88%	97%	97%	97%	97%	93.28%	97%
KPI - BV9 The percentage of Council Tax collected by the authority in the year	97.6%	98.02%	97.8%	98.5%	98.5%	98.5%	97.8%	98.5%
KPI - BV10 The percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the authority	98.7%	98.86%	98.7%	99.2%	99.2%	99.2%	98.63%	99.2%
BV76a The number of housing benefit claimants in the local authority area visited per 1,000 caseload	207.9	253.81	150	150	150	150	232.09	296.6
BV76b The number of fraud investigators employed by the local authority per 1,000 caseload	0.33	0.47	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	2	2
BV76c The number of Housing and Council Tax Benefit fraud investigations carried out by the local authority per year per 1,000 caseload	38.76	45.5	65	65	65	65	46.56	59.3
BV76d The number of Housing and Council Tax benefit prosecutions and sanctions per year, per 1,000 caseload in the local authority area	3.30	2.65	5.25	5.50	6.0	6.0	5.02	6.25
KPI - BV 78a The average processing time for all new Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims submitted to the local authority, for which the date of decision is within the financial year being reported	44.4 days	29.28	31 days	28 days	28 days	28 days	35.6 days	28 days

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

Finance and Performance Management - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicators - Benefits								
KPI - BV 78b The average processing time for all written notifications to the local authority of changes to a claimant's circumstance that require a new decision on behalf of the authority	24.7 days	11.94	7.2 days	6.8 days	6.8 days	6.8 days	10.5 days	6.8 days
KPI - BV79a The percentage of cases within a random sample for which the authority's calculation of Housing and Council Tax Benefit is found to be correct	99.6%	99.6%	99%	99%	99%	99%	97.56%	99%
BV79b(i) The amount of Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments recovered during the period being reported on, as a percentage of HB deemed recoverable overpayment during that period	1	43.23%	45%	45%	50%	55%	2	2
BV79b(ii) Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments received during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period plus the amount of HB overpayments identified during the period	1	28.73%	45%	45%	50%	55%	2	2
BV79b (iii) Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period, plus the amount of HB overpayments identified during the period	1	7.04%	15%	10%	10%	10%	2	2

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

Finance and Performance Management - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Local Performance Indicators - Internal Audit (Medium Term Priority 3(a))								
SS4a The percentage of projects in the approved audit plan completed	86%	86%	85%	85%	85%	85%		
							2	2
SS4b The productive time of the Internal Audit Unit as a percentage of total time	64%	67%	65%	65%	65%	65%		
							2	2
SS4c The overall user satisfaction level of the Internal Audit Unit	81%	85%	80%	80%	80%	80%		
							2	2
SS4f The average cost per productive audit day	£297	£292	£280	£290	£300	£310		
							2	2
Local Performance Indicators - Finance (Medium Term Priority 3(a))								
F13 The percentage of telephone calls to the Benefits Division answered within 10 seconds	89.8%	90.12%	94%	94%	94%	94%		
							2	2

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

Information and Communication Technology, and Corporate Support Services

We are looking at ways of using electronic methods to improve access to services and service delivery. We seek to exploit information technology to provide a joined-up and common approach to service delivery, allowing many council functions to be focused directly on the needs of the customer. This task is well under way with the upgrading of many 'back office' systems and the development of partnership arrangements across Essex to ensure consistency of approach. Corporate Support Services refers to the wide range of services that provided essential support to the work of the Council. These include legal services, payroll and human resource services, secretarial and administrative services, democratic and member services, and the provision of depot and office accommodation.

The Council has re-emphasised its commitment to the e-Government theme by adopting an e-Government Strategy that will, over the next two to three years, allow the Council to move the customer to the centre of its operation. We are currently developing a Programme Plan for the introduction of a Customer Contact Centre that is spearheading this new approach to customer services.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following:

- We continued our participation in the Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) funding process to ensure that we receive further government capital grants;
- We introduced the electronic delivery of democratic processes such as the publication of agenda and minutes of our committee meetings;
- We met the target date of January 2006 for all appropriate interactions with the public to be available on-line;
- We successfully achieved the reaccreditation of the Investors In People standard for the whole council:

- We completed the assessment of our services to address the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and began work on an overall equalities strategy;
- We further developed the Council's recruitment and retention strategy;
- We registered 40% of the Council's unregistered titles in advance of the computerisation of our land register, to provide greater protection for our land ownership records; and
- We upgraded our legal services time recording systems to support an application for Lexcel quality accreditation.

Current Issues

The following issues will be faced by the Information and Communications Technology and Corporate Support Services Portfolio over the next year.

E-Government and Communications

E-Government means using the power of information and communications technology to improve the accessibility, quality and cost-effectiveness of public services, and to help revitalise the relationship between customers and citizens and the public bodies who work on their behalf.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To develop an information technology training programme for our councillors.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
91	Aim 3c	April 2007	8	None

To implement the planned elements of the Corporate ICT Strategy

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
92	Aim 3a	April 2007	None	None

To implement electronic services for our councillors.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 2c	April 2007	None	None

To implement an e-Bookings System.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
90	Aim 2b	Dec 2006	None	BV157

To develop public access to services through the Government Connect (Direct.Gov) website.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
92	Aim 2b	December 2006	None	BV157

To implement a "Selling to the Council" and "Contract opportunities" web portal for suppliers.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
90	Aim 2b	April 2007	None	BV157

To implement a corporate procurement strategy.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
83	Aim 3b	April 2007	None	BV157

Human Resources

The Council continues to experience staff shortages in key areas.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To carry out a review of the Council's Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
87	Aim 3c	March 2007	6,9	BV11a,11b,11c, 12,14,15,16,17a

Legal Services

The Council's Land Terrier, (its land ownership records), are currently only held in hard copy and are at high risk in terms of business continuity.

Our Aims for 2006/07

To fully computerise the Land Terrier.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 3c	December 2006	None	None

To achieve the independently assessed Lexcel quality accreditation for our legal services, to improve the services that we provide.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	CPA :	BVPI/LPI:
None	Aim 3c	December 2007	None	CLE1

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Since our Comprehensive Performance Assessment in February 2004, we have made progress in relation to a number of areas identified for improvement. These issues are linked by reference to our CPA Improvement Plan (see page 6) where we set out full details of what we have achieved.

Our Achievements in 2005/06

During the last year we achieved the following CPA improvements:

- We made substantial savings on recruitment advertising and temporary agency contracts as a result of partnership working (CPA 9);
- We rolled out a new managing absence process across the council (CPA 12); and
- We introduced a Workforce Development Plan in four services (CPA31).

ICT and Corporate Support Services - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicators - Corporate Health								
KPI - BV11a The percentage of the top-paid 5% of local authority staff that are women	23.21%	27%	24%	28.93%	28.93%	28.93%	22.8%	28.93%
KPI - BV11b The percentage of the top 5% of earners from black and ethnic communities	2.19%	2.15%	3%	1.98%	1.98%	1.98%	1.38%	1.98%
KPI - BV11c The percentage of the top 5% of local authority staff who have a disability	¹	8.59%	6.0%	6.25%	6.5%	6.5%	²	²
KPI - BV12 The number of working days/shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness absence	10.68	10.66	9.5	8.48	8.48	8.48	9.78	8.48
KPI - BV14 The percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce	0.18%	0.18%	0.10%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.75%	0.0%
BV15 The percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill-health as a percentage of the total workforce	0.35%	0.18%	0.35%	0.35%	0.35%	1.85%	0.33%	0%
KPI - BV16a The percentage of local authority employees with a disability	1.62%	2.75%	1.55%	4.10%	4.10%	4.10%	3.40%	4.10%
BV16b The percentage of the economically active population in the authority area who have a disability	11.35%	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	35.57%	34.77%
KPI - BV17a The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities compared with the percentage of the economically active minority ethnic community population in the local authority area.	2.36%	4.13%	2.75%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.1%	2.5%

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

ICT and Corporate Support Services - Our Performance

Performance Indicator	2004/05 Outturn	2005/06 Outturn	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	District Council Average 2004/05	District Council Top 25% 2004/05
Best Value Performance Indicator - Corporate Health								
BV17b The percentage of the economically active population from ethnic minority communities in the local authority area	5.15%	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	84.5%	108.5%
KPI - BV157 The number of types of interactions that are enabled for electronic delivery as a percentage of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for electronic delivery	70%	97.06%	100%	84.69%	84.69%	84.69%	73.02%	84.69%
Local Performance Indicators - Legal Services (Medium Term Priority 3(a))								
LP1 The percentage of letters seeking ownership details in relation to Section 106 Agreements sent within seven working days of full instructions being given to the Head of Legal, Administration and Estates.	1	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	2	2
LP2 The percentage of first draft Section 106 Agreements sent to applicants/agents within seven days of the information required by indicator LP1	1	100%	80%	85%	90%	90%	2	2

Key

- 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
- 2 Audited national performance information not available

9

Review, Audit and Inspection

This section of our Best Value Performance Plan sets out how we aim to achieve the provision of the best possible services at the best value to our customers. We have also included the results of audit and inspection processes undertaken during the last year by the Audit Commission, which is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively.

For more information on the services in this section, see

Performance Management Lead Officer
Tony Tidey (Head of Human Resources and Performance Management)
Phone 01992 564054
E-mail: ttidey@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Service Reviews

To achieve Best Value we must make sure that we are delivering 'value for money' services. We recognise that, over time, people's needs and expectations change, so we review how we provide our services by:

- consulting with service users and the local community
- comparing our performance against other organisations that provide similar services
- deciding whether someone else could provide that service more competitively
- challenging why services are provided in the way that they are
- seeking continuous improvement in the way we perform.

We consult with our community on the quality of services we offer, to ensure that we reflect your needs wherever possible.

We compare our performance by benchmarking against other authorities in our group of councils of similar geography and demography. The Best Value performance indicators give a comparison of where we stand nationally.

The review process challenges our services, and leads us to the continuous improvement that we strive to achieve. Best Value Service Reviews help us to improve by: meeting and setting new performance targets, identifying financial savings, comparing the cost of, and the ways in which we deliver our services, with other organisations in both the public and private sectors.

The Council has carried out the following Best Value Service Reviews:

- Community Safety (jointly with Essex County Council)
- Housing Needs (including homelessness)
- Community and Cultural Services
- Human Resources
- Development Control and Local Land Charges
- Leisure Management and Grounds Maintenance
- Accountancy and Exchequer
- Projects and Partnerships
- Environmental Control
- Housing Services

The results of these reviews have been set out in previous editions of our performance plan.

Contracts

The Government requires the Council to certify that since 13 March 2003, all contracts which involved the transfer of its staff complied where applicable with the Code of Practice on matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.

In April 2005 a number of our highways staff transferred to Essex County Council as part of the return of the Highways Agency contract to the County Council. The transfer took place in accordance with the terms of the Code of Practice.

In January 2006 a number of our leisure staff transferred to the employment of Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) Limited, as part of a seven year contract for the management of the Council's main leisure facilities. This transfer also took place in accordance with the terms of the Code of Practice.

Audit and Inspection

The Audit Commission reviews the Council's main financial and performance systems each year. For 2004/05 the Commission reported as follows:

Council Performance

"Epping Forest District Council is in a period of significant change including a refocusing of corporate objectives, a revision of the performance management system and service delivery reviews. The impact of these changes and outcomes for local residents are not yet clear. The Council's performance is mixed with 58 % of performance indicators below the average for all district councils in England and 48 % improving since 2002/03.

Accounts and Governance

Accounts

We gave an unqualified audit opinion on the Council's 2004/05 financial statements on 28 October 2005. The Council's overall corporate governance arrangements are satisfactory in most key areas however further improvements need to be made with respect to risk management. The draft financial statements were approved by the Council prior to the statutory deadline of 31 July 2005. Following material amendments made as a result of our audit the accounts were re-approved on 27 October 2005.

Financial Standing

The Council's financial position is sound and it has established proper arrangements to monitor the financial position and take remedial action when necessary, although regular financial reporting to members throughout the year has only started recently.

Systems of internal financial control

Overall we found that the Council has arrangements in place to ensure the proper conduct of its financial affairs but, that risk management arrangements need to be improved.

Standards of financial conduct and prevention and detection of fraud and corruption and legality of transactions

We have not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, but have suggested that a code of conduct is adopted for staff as soon as possible".

Direction of Travel

During 2005 the Audit Commission completed a 'Direction of Travel' assessment of the Council's improvement since the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2004. The results of this assessment can be found on the Council's website.

Customer Focus

In assessing the Council's approach to customer focus, the Audit Commission reported that our strengths outweighed weaknesses. In response to this assessment we have adopted a new Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy and Policy.

Value for Money

During 2005 the Audit Commission completed an assessment of the effectiveness of the way in which the Council uses its resources and how well it provides value for money. The results of this assessment can be found on the Council's website.

10

Further Information

Links with other documents

This Best Value Performance Plan does not tell the full story of our performance and strategic aims. It refers to, and has been drawn up from, a number of documents that have an impact on our district. To read these, please contact the person named. Some of these documents are also on our website.

Access to Information Strategy

Contact: Ian Willett 01992 564243
iwillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

A Compact for Epping Forest

Contact: Chris Overend
01992 564247
coverend@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Anti Fraud Strategy

Contact: Joe Akerman
01992 564447
internalaudit@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Asset Management Plan

Contact: Michael Shorten
01992 564124
mshorten@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Local Agenda 21

Contact: Jim Nolan 01992 564083
jnolan@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Business and Continuity Disaster Recovery Plan

Contact: Mike Tipping 01992 564280
mtipping@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Business/Service Plans

Contact the appropriate Head of Service for copies of the annual business plans

Capital Strategy

Contact: Bob Palmer 01992 564279
bpalmer@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Code of Conduct for Councillors

Contact: Ian Willett 01992 564243
iwillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Contaminated Land Strategy

Contact: Jim Nolan 01992 564083
jnolan@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Communication Strategy

Contact: Tom Carne 01992 564039
tcarne@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Community Strategy

Contact: John Scott 01992 564050
jscott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Compliments and Complaints

Contact: Shirley Hawkins 01992 564051
shawkins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Consultation Strategy

Contact: Val Loftis 01992 564471
vloftis@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Corporate ICT Strategy

Contact: Adrian Scott 01992 564457
ascott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Council Budget

Contact: Bob Palmer 01992 564279
bpalmer@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Council Constitution

Contact: Ian Willett 01992 564243
iwillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Council Plan

Contact: Stephen Tautz 01992 564180
stautz@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Countrycare Annual Report

Contact: Paul Hewitt 01992 788203
phewitt@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Crime & Disorder Strategy

Contact: Simon Ford 01992 564122
sfordx@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Cultural Strategy

Contact: Derek Macnab 01992 564260
dmacnab@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

District Emergency Response Plan

Contact: Mike Tipping 01992 564280
mtipping@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Economic Development Strategy 2002 - 2007 (Five Year Plan)

Contact: John Preston 01992 564111
jpreston@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Food Safety Plan

Contact: Jim Nolan 01992 564083
jnolan@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Food Premises Public Register

Contact: Jim Nolan 01992 564083
jnolan@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Contact: Adrian Scott 01992 564457
ascott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Grant Aid Scheme

Contact: Chris Overend 01992 564247
coverend@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Health Improvement Plan

Contact: John Scott 01992 564050
jscott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Housing Strategy

Contact: Alan Hall 01992 564004
ahall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

Contact: Alan Hall 01992 564004
ahall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Homelessness Strategy

Contact: Russel Wallace 01992 564024
rwallace@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Insurance and Risk Management

Contact: Bob Palmer 01992 564279
bpalmer@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Implementing Electronic Government

Contact: Adrian Scott 01992 564457
ascott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Local Plan & Local Development Framework

Contact: John Preston 01992 564062
jpreston@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Private Sector Housing Strategy

Contact: Jim Nolan 01992 564083
jnolan@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Race Equality Strategy

Contact: Tony Tidey 01992 564054
ttidey@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Roding Valley Nature Reserve Management Plan

Contact: Paul Hewitt 01992 788203
phewitt@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Sports Development Strategy

Contact: Derek Macnab 01992 564260
dmacnab@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Statement of Accounts

Contact: Bob Palmer 01992 564279
bpalmer@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Tenant Participation Agreement

Contact: Alan Hall 01992 564004
ahall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk



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