

Best Value Performance Plan

2007/08



Epping Forest District Council









Welcome to our Best Value Performance Plan

Introduction by the Leader of the Council
Councillor Mrs Diana Collins







This is our eighth Best Value Performance Plan. In it you will find details of our priorities and objectives, how we performed against key aims and targets in 2006/07, and the aims and targets we have set for the year ahead. As in previous years the themes of the Best Value Performance Plan have been linked to the Community Strategy for the Epping Forest District for 2004 to 2021. The Community Strategy addresses the key challenges facing the district over the forthcoming years, and was developed by a partnership of statutory and voluntary agencies, following extensive consultation with residents and stakeholders.

Over the course of the last year, we have made the following progress against the priorities adopted by the Cabinet in June 2006. The Cabinet is the main body where the Council makes decisions about services.

-  We reviewed existing waste collection arrangements across the district and re-introduced weekly collections from May to September in response to concerns raised by residents;
-  We introduced free Saturday parking in some of the town centre pay and display car parks in the district, to support local businesses;
-  We continued to improve the local environment by keeping streets clean and further developing our recycling facilities;
-  We continued to protect the green belt areas of the district, through opposition to the proposed development of significant levels of new housing;
-  We supported local young people through support for projects such as drop-in centres; and
-  We continued to support local democracy through the devolution of responsibility to the local level.

The Council is in a strong financial position and has set one of the lowest council tax levels in Essex. Over the last year we have continued to make improvements to our services and this approach will continue to ensure that we can make further service improvements and save money. We were classified as a 'good' performing council in a Comprehensive Performance Assessment process undertaken by the Audit Commission in 2004, and aim to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in or visits the district. This Best Value Performance Plan shows how we intend to achieve that and we hope that you find it informative and interesting.

The Cabinet has adopted the following priority objectives for 2007/08:

-  To make the Epping Forest District cleaner and greener, and to further improve levels of recycling and street cleansing;
-  To protect local heritage and the green belt areas of the district from development;
-  To encourage the provision of affordable housing for local people;
-  To build safer communities in order to make the district a better place for our residents;
-  To continue to look at ways to revitalise local town centres and increase economic prosperity; and
-  To be a Council that always puts residents first, and listens not lectures.

Our Customer Charter

We aim to always put our customers first and for customers to be at the heart of everything that we do. 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.

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About the Best Value Performance Plan

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 residents and stakeholders of this year's key priorities, objectives and targets;
- compare last year's performance with that for previous years.

The plan is for our residents, customers, partners, staff, government bodies and other interested parties. A summary of the plan was included in the leaflet sent to all households with the Council Tax bills in March 2007.

The Council's management structure will be fully reviewed during 2007/08. This Best Value Performance Plan reflects the organisational structure in place up to its publication in June 2007.

Copies of this 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 (www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk). 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 monitors the progress of its constituent agencies in achieving its aims. Responsibility for delivering objectives is identified in the strategy, which enables residents to check how well the objectives are met. The Community Strategy continues to be 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 msheriff@eppingforestvcs.org.uk). Our four year Council Plan reflects the Council's medium-term aims and priorities, and the aspirations of the Community Strategy. The Council Plan is available from our information centres, and on our website, or direct from the Performance Management Unit.

Our Community Priorities and Performance

We have developed three policy themes and a range of medium term priorities as the foundations of our services. The following themes and priorities reflect the core issues and aims that we face in respect of the provision of community services. The themes and priorities link closely with the Community Strategy published in 2004, and we have also 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, and 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

Green and Unique
Homes and Neighbourhoods
A Safe Community
Fit for Life
Economic Prosperity

Policy Theme One

A Safe, Healthy and Attractive Place

Medium Term Priorities

- (a) To maintain the special character and advantage of the district, and address local environmental issues
- (b) To address key housing need
- (c) To create safer communities
- (d) To address leisure need
- (e) To encourage sustainable economic development



Customer Focus 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 services so that they are responsive to the needs of our customers.

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' satisfaction with local services 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 were carried out again during 2006/07 and the results can be found on page 9 of this Best Value Performance Plan.

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 our Customer Compliments and Complaints procedure can be obtained from our Complaints Officer (Jenny Filby (01992 564512), or email: jfilby@eppingforestdc.gov.uk). 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.

Our work is organised into 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 portfolios for 2006/07 were:

- The Leader's Portfolio
- Community Wellbeing
- Housing
- Leisure and Young People
- Planning and Economic Development
- Environmental Protection
- Civil Engineering and Maintenance
- Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services
- Customer Services, Media, Communications and Information Technology

The Customer Services, Media Communications and ICT Portfolio has been removed from this structure for 2007/08, and its responsibilities redistributed amongst the remaining portfolios.

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:

- a four-year financial forecast
- a four-year capital strategy
- budget monitoring and review

These robust processes will prove invaluable in the current financially challenging environment. In the Best Value Performance Plan for 2006/07, we reported on an improved grant settlement from central government and our strong financial position. Since then the

We train and develop our staff to provide 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.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity is about creating a fair and equitable society where everyone can participate. Through valuing difference, the Council aims to deliver services that recognise, respect and harness diversity for the benefit of its customers.

At the heart of this duty to promote equality are the Council's Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes, which together aim to further the Council's duty to promote equality and diversity.

The Council recognises that in some instances services can be delivered in a way that may unintentionally pose a barrier to certain groups within the district. Where these instances are identified, it is the goal of the Council to make reasonable adjustments and promote inclusion through removing such barriers and promoting equality of opportunity for all of our customers.

How we work

Council has had to manage the effects of its waste management contractor being placed in administration. This created a considerable amount of additional work and impacted on both reserves, as additional expenditure was required that had not been budgeted for, and the Council's ongoing budget, as the costs of waste management are likely to increase under any new contractor. There is also considerable uncertainty about the future costs to the Council of concessionary fares and staff pensions. From 1 April 2008 the basis of the concessionary fares scheme will change fundamentally, as pass holders will no longer be restricted to travel within the boundaries of their local scheme. However, the Department for Transport has so far provided little information on the costs of this change and how they are to be met. Future pension costs are another significant unknown. The latest triennial valuation of the pension fund was calculated as at 31 March 2007 but the results, and the consequent levels of funding for the deficit, have not yet been published.

Having mentioned some of the major uncertainties on cost, it is necessary to mention the position on government grant as well to give a complete picture. The Government has put back the reporting date for the Comprehensive Spending Review that is currently being conducted. Proposed levels of grant for the next three years will not be available until the autumn at the earliest. Councils generally are likely to suffer from efficiency targets being deducted from grant settlements and individual authorities may also suffer from changes to the grant formulas.

8 The Council has acknowledged these issues



and will be using the four-year financial forecast as the basis for a new Medium Term Financial Strategy to find a way through these difficulties. This strategy will seek to reduce the predictions for overall expenditure so that the Council is able to adhere to its policy on the maintenance of reserves, whilst remaining a low tax authority.

Our Performance

In this plan we compare our performance against Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) with the performance of the average and top 25% performing district councils for 2005/06, 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 Local Performance Indicators (LPI's) which we set ourselves and which represent local priorities, as these are not applicable to other 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 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 set for the KPIs represent the most recently published national performance information for district councils. We aim for our performance against at least 50% of these KPIs to match or

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 2006/07 and our aims for 2007/08 for each portfolio. For our aims, we have included, where appropriate, 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:	BVPI/LPI:

Council Plan (CP) - Where an aim is specifically included in our Council Plan for 2006 to 2010 (see page 6), we have identified the appropriate reference.

Medium-Term Priority (MTP) - We have linked each aim to our current priorities (see pages 6 and 34).

Target - Where appropriate, we have set a target date for the completion of each aim during 2007/08.

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.

Customer Satisfaction

During the last year we collected data to meet the requirements of a number of performance indicators which measure customer satisfaction. This included finding out people's level of satisfaction with the overall service we provide, and issues such as satisfaction with waste management and planning, benefits and housing services, and leisure and cultural facilities. We also asked people who had complained about our services how satisfied they were with the way their complaints had been handled.

The surveys were carried out with the other councils in Essex including the County Council, and each authority asked the same questions. The benefits of carrying out this exercise with other authorities were that:

- we achieved economies of scale, which reduced our costs;
- we enhanced our degree of partnership working; and
- it was a sound basis for benchmarking the results.

The General Survey consisted of a postal questionnaire sent out to randomly selected households in the district. The Planning, Benefits and Housing Surveys were conducted amongst users of our services in these areas. The Best Value Performance Indicators collected were:

BV3	The percentage of people satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council.
BV4	The percentage of people making complaints that were satisfied with the handling of those complaints.
BV89	The percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness standards in the district.
BV90(a,b)	The percentage of people satisfied with the Council's household waste collection and waste recycling services.
BV119 (a,c,d, and e)	The percentage of residents satisfied with the Council's cultural services (sports and leisure facilities, museums, arts activities and venues, parks and open spaces).
BV111	The percentage of people making a planning application, satisfied with the Council's planning services.
BV80	The percentage of people making a benefit application that were satisfied with various aspects of the Council's benefits service.
BV74	The percentage of tenants of council housing satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council.
BV75	The percentage of tenants of council housing satisfied with opportunities for participation in management and decision-making in relation to the Council's housing services.

These surveys reflect residents' perceptions of the level and quality of services at the time they were completed.

A full set of the indicator results can be found on the following pages of this Plan. Copies of the full reports for each survey are available on our website.

Over the next few months we will be considering the results of all of the surveys in detail, in order to determine appropriate improvement priorities.

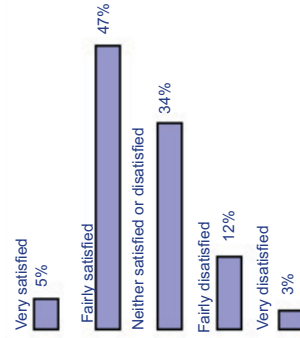
Customer Satisfaction

What you thought of our performance

General Survey

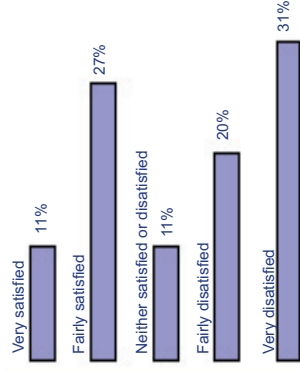
The key findings of the General Survey for 2006/07 are as follows:

Indicator BV3 Satisfaction with the way the authority runs things



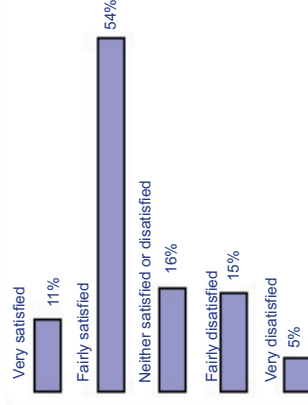
■ 52% of respondents were satisfied with the way that the Council runs things, a slight decline from the results of the 2003/04 survey (55%). A decline in satisfaction against this indicator has been identified as a national trend for 2006/07.

Indicator BV4 Satisfaction with the way complaints were handled



■ 38% of people that had contacted the Council with a complaint were satisfied with the way the complaint was handled, an improvement against the results of the 2003/04 survey (32%). Whilst improvement in satisfaction against this indicator has been identified as a national trend for 2006/07, responses to this issue should be viewed with some caution, as experience shows that satisfaction with the way a complaint is handled can be significantly affected by the outcome of the complaint, rather than purely how it was handled.

Indicator BV89 Satisfaction with the way the Council keeps land clear of litter and refuse



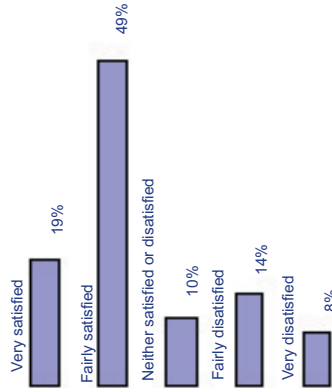
■ 65% of respondents were satisfied that the Council keeps all open public land it controls clear of litter and refuse, an improvement against the results of the 2003/04 survey (63%). Improvement in satisfaction against this indicator has been identified as a national trend for 2006/07.



Customer Satisfaction

General Survey

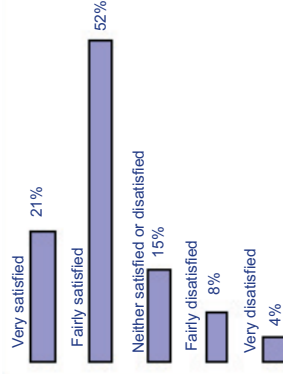
Indicator BV90a Satisfaction with waste collection services overall



■ 67% of respondents were satisfied with the Council's household waste collection arrangements, a decline in satisfaction from the results of the 2003/04 survey (85%). A decline in satisfaction against this indicator has been identified as a national trend for 2006/07. The survey was completed towards the end of 2006, at a time when waste collection arrangements had reverted to an alternate weekly system in place of the weekly collections that had operated throughout the Summer months. This might therefore have had a negative impact on satisfaction levels although, at the time of the publication of this Best Value Performance Plan, weekly collections had re-commenced for Summer 2007.

What you thought of our performance

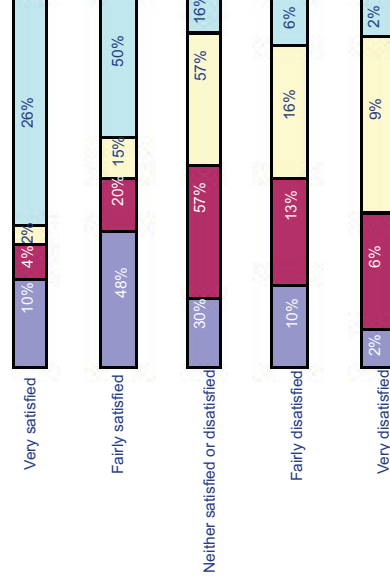
Indicator BV90b Satisfaction with recycling facilities overall



■ 73% of respondents were satisfied with the Council's recycling facilities, a decline in satisfaction from the results of the 2003/04 survey (78%). This decline in satisfaction is contrary to a nationally identified trend for improvement against this indicator for 2006/07.

Indicator BV119 Satisfaction with cultural and recreational activities and venues?

- Sports and leisure facilities
- Museums and galleries
- Theatres and concert halls
- Parks and open spaces



■ 59% of respondents were satisfied with the Council's sports and leisure facilities, an improvement from the results of the 2003/04 survey (46%). Improved satisfaction against this indicator has been identified as a national trend for 2006/07.

■ 24% of respondents were satisfied with museums and galleries within the district, an improvement from the results of the 2003/04 survey (22%). This increase in satisfaction is contrary to a national trend for a decline in performance against this indicator for 2006/07.

■ 18% of respondents were satisfied with theatres and concert halls within the district, a slight decline from the results of the 2003/04 survey (20%). A decline in satisfaction against this indicator has been identified as a national trend for 2006/07.

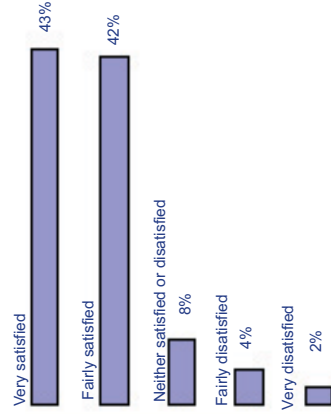
■ 76% of respondents were satisfied with parks and open spaces within the district, an improvement from the results of the 2003/04 survey (74%). Improved satisfaction against this indicator has been identified as a national trend for 2006/07.

Customer Satisfaction

Housing (Tenants) Survey

The key findings of the other service specific surveys are as follows. At the time of the publication of this Best Value Performance Plan, national trends were not available for these indicators for 2006/07.

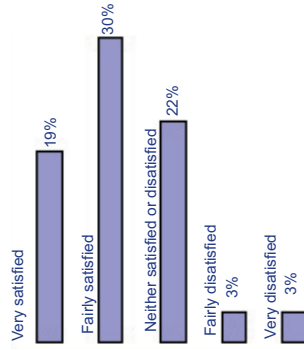
Indicator BV74 Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord



■ 85% of respondents to the Housing (Tenants) Survey were satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council as landlord, compared with 84% in 2003/04.

What you thought of our performance

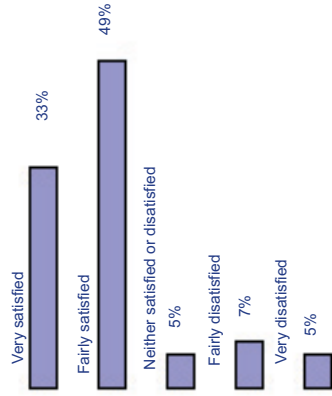
Indicator BV75 Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with opportunities for participation in management and decision-making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord



■ 49% of respondents to the Housing (Tenants) Survey were satisfied with existing opportunities for participation and decision making in relation to housing services provided by the Council, compared to 51% in 2003/04.

Planning Survey

Indicator BV111 Satisfaction with planning services by those making a planning application



■ 82% of respondents to the Planning Survey were satisfied with the way that the Council dealt with planning applications, compared with 71% in 2003/04.



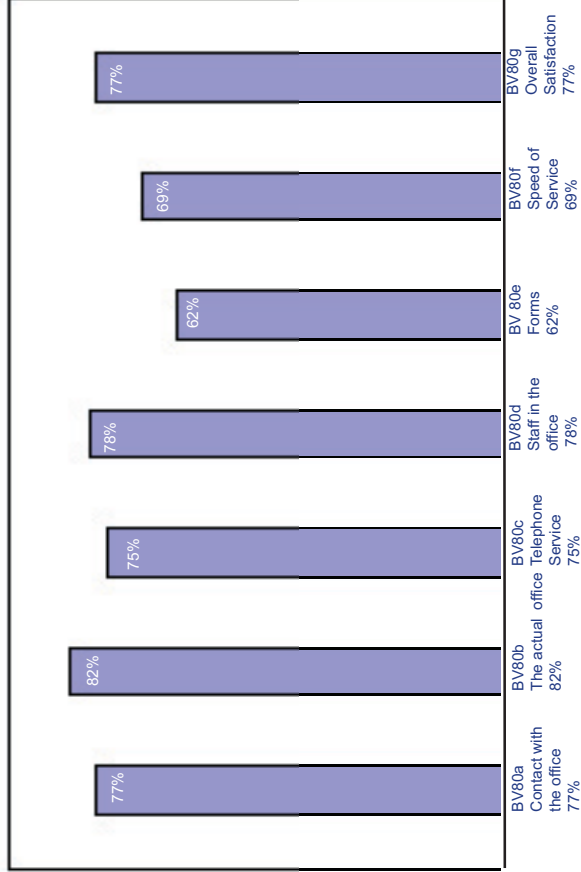
Customer Satisfaction

What you thought of our performance

Benefits Survey

Indicator BV80 Satisfaction with the benefits service:

- BV80a The facilities to get in touch with the benefits office
- BV80b The actual office
- BV80c The telephone service
- BV80d The staff in the benefits office
- BV80e The clarity and understandability of the forms.
- BV80f The amount of time it took them to tell claimants whether claims were successful
- BV80g The overall satisfaction with the Benefits Service



- 77% of respondents to the Benefits Survey were satisfied with facilities to get in touch with the benefits office, compared with 74% in 2003/04;
- 82% of respondents to the Benefits Survey were satisfied with the benefits office, compared with 75% in 2003/04;
- 75% of respondents to the Benefits Survey were satisfied with the telephone service for the benefits office, compared with 72% in 2003/04;
- 78% of respondents to the Benefits Survey were satisfied with the staff in the Benefits Office, compared with 80% in 2003/04;
- 62% of respondents to the Benefits Survey were satisfied with the clarity and understandability of forms used by the benefit office, compared with 65% in 2003/04;
- 69% of respondents to the Benefits Survey were satisfied with the time taken to determine claims, compared with 74% in 2003/04; and
- 77% of respondents to the Benefits Survey were satisfied with the overall benefits service, compared with 81% in 2003/04.

2 Green and Unique

One of the key objectives of the Epping Forest District Community Strategy for 2004 to 2021 is that the district maintains 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 the 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

- Food Premises Public Register;
 - Local Agenda 21;
 - Contaminated Land Strategy; and
 - Food Safety Plan
- Contact: Jim Nolan 01992 564083
E-mail: jnolan@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Civil Engineering and Maintenance

- Essex County Council Local Transport Plan
 - Epping Forest District Council High Level Flood Targets (with Environment Agency)
- Environmental Protection and Civil Engineering and Maintenance Lead Officer: John Gilbert (Head of Environmental Services) Phone: 01992 564062
E-mail: jjgilbert@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Planning

- Countrycare Annual Report
- Roding Valley Nature Reserve Management Plan
Contact: Paul Hewitt 01992 788203
E-mail: phewitt@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Local Plan
Planning Lead Officer John Preston (Head of Planning and Economic Development) Phone: 01992 564111
Planning and Economic Development
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, energy and conservation, and a range of licensing functions. The Council's key environmental protection issue throughout 2006/07 and into 2007/08 is the waste management service and the need to continue to drive forward the levels of recycling and diversion from landfill. The introduction of the wheeled bin and alternate weekly collections of residual waste has markedly increased recycling levels but brought with it concerns regarding the collection regime during the summer months. However, there is more to Environmental Protection than just 'waste' and good progress has been made in bringing the remediation of the former landfill site at Bobbingworth to a final conclusion as well as preparing for the transfer of responsibility for licensed gambling premises to the Council in 2007/08. We are also developing strategies for the protection of the environment overall with particular emphasis being given to managing the amount of energy we use and the long term harmful effects which can arise.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Our Aims for 2007/08

Waste Management

The Council has responded to and addressed problems with waste management following the contractor operating the service on its behalf, going into administration. The Council arranged to continue the service without interruption, and has now secured some service improvement leading to better value for money in this area. The current objective is now to develop the new waste management contract in such a way that we continue to improve recycling and diversion whilst striving to meet our residents wishes on the nature of the service.

- We reinstated a system of weekly waste collections during Summer 2006, in response to concerns raised by residents;
- We invested further in recycling and waste diversion in order to attain levels of recycling in the order of 40%;
- We completed the introduction of a new wheeled bin waste collection and recycling service throughout the district; and
- We continued to improve local environmental standards through the increased use of locally based cleansing teams and new enforcement powers available to local authorities, and revised cleansing frequencies in town centres in response to residents' concerns

- To let a new waste management contract.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	1a	July 2007	Various

- To protect the environment of the district through the use of statutory powers, education and the adoption of good environmental practice.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
GU4	1a	Ongoing	BV166a

Contaminated Land

The Council continues to face demands from the contaminated land regime through the need to provide detailed information on contaminated sites through the planning and development process.

- We commenced the remediation of Bobbingworth Tip;
- We provided additional resources to meet the demands for advice on contaminated land arising from planning applications, and working in partnership with the Environment Agency, the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority and relevant landowners.

- To complete the remediation of Bobbingworth Tip.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	1a	March 2008	None

Licensing

The Council will review licensing generally in order to implement the provisions of the Gambling Act.

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

- To adopt and develop the Council's statutory policies on gambling to ensure the protection of the public and young people.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	1c	March 2008	LPI EH6

Environmental Protection – Our Performance

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

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
Best Value Performance Indicators - Waste Management								
KPI - BV82a(i) The percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for recycling	16.1%	25.31%	25%	26%	28%	30%	18.55%	21.72%
KPI - BV82a(ii) The total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for recycling	7982.33	12,654.59	12500	13,000	13,930	14775.75	7361.51	9082.98
KPI - BV82b(i) The percentage of household waste sent by the authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion	7.4%	11.78%	11%	12%	12%	12%	9.44%	14.67%
KPI - BV82b(ii) The total tonnage of household waste sent by the authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion	3681.73	5,891.50	5500	6000.00	5970	5910.30	3945.75	6048.83
BV84a The number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population	410.44	409.88	416.0	410.0	405.00	400.00	410.3	381.0
BV84b The percentage change from the previous financial year in the number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population	-4.6%	-0.14%	-1.02%	0.0%	-0.50%	-1.0%	-0.24%	-3.29%
BV86 The cost of waste collection per household	£42.19	£64.29	£54.31	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£49.71	£40.28
BV91a The percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by kerbside collection of recyclables	89.65%	89.99%	98%	95%	97%	100%	94.8%	100%
BV91b The percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by a kerbside collection of at least two recyclables	89.65%	89.99%	98%	95%	97%	100%	92%	100%
BV166a The council's score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health	80%	80%	85%	100%	100%	100%	87.2%	98.7%
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	13%	2%	10%	5%	5%	5%	13.7%	8%
KPI - BV199b The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible	0%	0%	10%	5%	5%	5%	3%	0%
KPI - BV199c The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) from which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible.	0%	0%	10%	5%	5%	5%	1%	0%
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'	Grade 4	Grade 1	Grade 2 or 3	Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1
							2	2



Environmental Protection – Our Performance

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

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
Best Value Performance Indicators - Contaminated Land								
BV216a The number of 'sites of potential concern' within the local authority area, with respect to land contamination	5825	5825	5825	5825	5825	5825	2	2
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	0.44%	0.44%	1.7%	1.70%	1.75%	1.80%	9%	8%
Best Value Performance Indicators - Pollution Control								
BV217 The percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time	100%	100%	90%	90%	90%	90%	86%	100%
BV218a The percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours of notification	24%	48.6%	60%	70%	75%	75%	80.12%	96.12%
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	76%	78.17%	65%	80%	85%	85%	70.67%	93.95%
Local Performance Indicators - Street Scene (Medium Term Priority 1(a))								
WM1 The number of missed refuse collections per 100,000 collections	172.72	66.74	95	90	90	90	2	2
WM2 The number of missed exemption collections as a % of exemptions granted	1.04%	0.63%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2	2
WM3 The number of missed glass collections per 100,000 collections	40.74	40.65	95	90	90	90	2	2
WM4 The number of missed dry recyclable collections per 100,000 collection	174.07	150.02	95	90	90	90	2	2
WM5 The number of missed garden waste collections per 100,000 collections	130.2	97.27	95	90	90	90	2	2
EH 1 The percentage of requests for environmental health services responded to within relevant target times	94%	94.5%	91%	92%	92%	92%	2	2
EH 3 The percentage of statutory Environmental Protection Act Part B processes undertaken	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	2	2
EH 4 The percentage of requests for Consumer Protection services responded to within target times.	88.0%	93.9%	90%	90%	90%	90%	2	2
EH 5 The percentage of accidents reported through the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995, within the statutory period.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	2	2
EH 6 The percentage of licence applications processed within the statutory period	95.9%	98.3%	100%	95%	95%	95%	2	2
EH 7 The number of food safety inspections carried out in accordance with Food Standards Agency targets.	93%	100%>	90%	90%	90%	90%	2	2

Civil Engineering and Maintenance

This portfolio was previously responsible for the roads, pavements and footpaths in the district. As from April 2005 highway services are 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 our resources into local projects, such as traffic calming and speed reduction schemes. With the transfer of most highway functions to the County Council, local highway activity in 2006/07 has been related in the main to parking reviews. The reviews for Buckhurst Hill, Epping and Loughton High Road were concluded and implemented bringing into place a range of new parking controls and the removal of others. Similar reviews were commenced for Waltham Abbey and Loughton and are scheduled to be completed during 2007/08. The Grounds Maintenance Service continues to maintain many of the Council's grass verges and green open spaces in towns and villages, providing service frequencies over and above that provided for by the County Council's highway service, which ensures a better quality of environment within the district.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Our Aims for 2007/08

Parking

The Council's parking enforcement contract will be re-tendered in 2007/08 and this will need to reflect the changes to existing legislation and the newly enacted Traffic Management Act, which seeks to make parking enforcement more transparent and open for motorists to understand.

- We provided free parking on Saturdays throughout the year in some of our car parks;
- We commenced a programme of enhancements to some of the Council's car parks; and
- We developed liaison arrangements with Essex County Council to ensure the best possible service and levels of infrastructure investment for Epping Forest District.

- To review parking policy and re-letting of a new parking enforcement contract

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	1a	Oct 2007	LPI

Watercourses and Private Sector Drainage

The responsibility for all of the larger watercourses in the district reverted back to the Environment Agency, although the Council still undertakes their management through an operating agreement with the Agency. The decision on the major flood alleviation scheme for Waltham Abbey has been deferred by the Environment Agency pending a review of resources and priorities.

- We re-evaluated the current commitments for capital spend on schemes and considered re-allocation of capital moneys in locally controlled watercourses; and
- We competed negotiations with the Environment Agency for the possible contracting back the management of Critical Ordinary Water Courses to the Council.

- To reduce the risks of localised flooding through the maintenance and enforcement of controls relating to watercourses in the district

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	1a	Ongoing	None

Highways

We seek to ensure that the highway infrastructure in the district is adequately maintained and improved through formal liaison arrangements with Essex County Council.

- We 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.

- To liaise with Essex County Council (the Highway Authority) to ensure that the district's highway infrastructure is adequately maintained and improved.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	1a	Ongoing	None



Civil Engineering and Maintenance– Our Performance

Key 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
 2 Audited national performance information not available
 3 Indicator deleted from 2007/08

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
Local Performance Indicators - Parking								
CEM1(a) The number of Penalty Charge Notices issued during the year in relation to on-street parking	1	13,102	Not set	3	3	3	2	2
CEM1(b) The number of Penalty Charge Notices issued during the year in relation to off-street parking	1	9350	Not set	3	3	3	2	2
CEM1(c) The number of Penalty Charge Notices issued during the year that were subject of an informal challenge	1	3623	Not set	3	3	3	2	2
CEM1(d) The number of Penalty Charge Notices issued during the year that were subject of a formal challenge to the Head of Environmental Services	1	0	Not set	3	3	3	2	2
CEM1(e) The number of Penalty Charge Notices issued during the year that were subject of a formal challenge to the National Parking Adjudication Service	1	23	Not set	3	3	3	2	2
CEM1(f) The percentage of challenges allowed against the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice during the year.	1	12.70%	Not set	3	3	3	2	2
CEM1(g) The percentage of Penalty Charge Notices issued during the year where collection was obtained	1	81.46%	Not set	3	3	3	2	2

The Council is encouraged not to set targets for the issue of Penalty Charge Notices and these details are reported for trending purposes only.

Planning

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio is responsible for guiding and controlling local development, and for town centre enhancement schemes. The economic development responsibility of the Portfolio is dealt with in the Economic Prosperity and Managing Resources section of this plan. The Council continues to play a vital role creating and maintaining a sustainable and prosperous long-term future for the District. The East of England Regional Plan has determined that the district is part of a growth area, and will therefore see greater growth in future than the recent past. We continue to debate the levels of likely growth and believe that decisions in this respect should be determined locally. Planning Services continues to invest resources to improve the services that we offer and the public response to changes made to the service has generally been very positive. The restructure of the Service, is ensuring that we make the most of the systems and staff that we already have in place, and make improvements where we compare unfavourably.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Forward Planning and Development Control

The Local Plan was amended last year and has created new local frameworks to provide and deliver genuine sustainable local communities together with requisite infrastructure. We work with our partners on the new procedures of the East of England Plan, the Local Area Agreement for Essex and our Local Development Framework.

- We reduced the number of planned house builds from the Government's required growth plan, in the district from 18,600 to 7,000, in order to maintain and respect the unique character of the district; and
- We completed a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

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

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
GU4	1a	Ongoing	BV200a,b,c

- To seek a further reduction in the amount of new housing proposed for the district.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
GU1	1b	Sept 2007	BV219a,b,c

Improving Services

A major new computer system has been introduced which allows many more actions to be undertaken electronically.

The Council continues to struggle to employ professional staff with senior level experience, particularly in our Building Control team, but the service has continued to improve since last year.

- We implemented a new information technology system and improved performance for our development control function, despite losing long-standing staff;
- We adjusted methods used to hold planning data electronically and quality control;
- We improved and maintained planning application turnaround times; and
- We implemented a restructure of our planning services to improve service delivery.

- To continue to improve local land charge and planning application turnaround times.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	3a	Ongoing	BV109a,b,c

- To continue to invest in and establish an in-house professional team within Building Control.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
GU4	3c	March 2008	None



Planning - Our Performance

- Key 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
 2 Audited national performance information not available
 3 Indicator deleted from 2007/08

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
Best Value Performance Indicators - Planning								
KPI - BV106 The percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	98.65%	95.65%	90.10%	89.67%	89.67%	89.67%	72.85%	89.67%
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	a) 54%	67.20%	a) 71.25%	74.75%	74.75%	74.75%	65.49%	74.75%
b) 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks	b) 57%	72.96%	b) 75.33%	80.39%	80.39%	80.39%	73.73%	80.39%
c) 80% of other applications in 8 weeks.	c) 80%	89.5%	c) 88.03%	91.61%	91.61%	91.61%	86.71%	91.61%
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	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
BV200c Did the Local Planning Authority publish an annual monitoring report by 31st December of the previous year?	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	3	3		
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	22%	29.10%	24%	25%	25%	25%	30.6%	25%
BV205 The council's score against a 'quality of planning services' checklist	89%	83%	89%	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	88.9%	94.4%
BV219a The total number of conservation areas in the local authority area	25	25	25	3	3	3		
BV219b The percentage of conservation areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal	4%	16%	8%	8%	16%	20%	19.87%	26%
BV219c The percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals	4%	16%	8%	3	3	3	8.04%	5.50%

3 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
- Homelessness Strategy
- Tenant Participation Agreement

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

- Private Sector Housing Strategy
Contact: Jim Nolan 01992 564083
E-mail: jnolan@eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Housing

Housing has a major impact on the quality of people's 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 the Council's own housing stock.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Meeting Housing Need

The Council has around 3,600 applicants on its Housing Register seeking affordable housing. The latest housing needs survey identified that 665 new affordable homes needed to be provided each year to meet the need. Due to limited house building in the district at present, very few affordable housing opportunities are coming forward. The objective is to provide more affordable homes in the district, including first time buyer initiatives, through our work with housing associations.

Homelessness is a problem, but our Homelessness Prevention Service has proved very successful.

Housing Management, Repairs and Maintenance

The Council owns and manages around 6,550 homes and 915 leasehold properties. The government has set all councils a target to have no non-decent homes by 2010.

It is important to ensure that value for money is achieved in the delivery of housing services. The Council is seeking the re-accreditation of its Charter Mark Award for Customer Service Excellence, for the whole of Housing Services.

Anti-social behaviour is increasing, for which the Council has introduced a number of initiatives in response.

Our Aims for 2007/08

■ We adopted a Private Sector Housing Strategy and introduced an Empty Homes Strategy and associated initiatives to reduce the number of empty properties in the private sector;

■ We amended our Local Plan to require developers to provide 40% affordable houses on developments of more than 15 homes (or 0.5 Hectares); and

■ In partnership with housing associations we enabled the completion of a supported housing scheme for people with learning difficulties and commenced a scheme for people with physical disabilities and a rural housing scheme for local people in Matching Tye.

■ To introduce the operation of a "choice based lettings scheme" for Council and housing association vacancies in partnership with all five neighbouring councils.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
HN5	1b	Oct 2007	None

■ To complete the first development(s) of 7 Council-owned housing sites, to provide around 35 affordable homes, subsidised by the sale of other properties on the sites.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
HN1	1b	March 2008	H15a,b

■ We reduced the number of non-decent council homes to 5% of all our housing stock;

■ We transferred the Wickfields sheltered housing scheme to Home Housing, to enable a major improvement scheme to be undertaken; and

■ We commenced the use of introductory tenancies for all new tenants, in order to assist the Council to reduce anti-social behaviour.

■ To meet, and sign up to, the Government's Respect Standard for Housing Management, giving a public commitment to the Council's approach for dealing with anti-social behaviour.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
HN5	1b	March 2008	None

■ To commence a major £4m improvement scheme at Springfields, Waltham Abbey .

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
HN5	1b	Sept 2007	None



Housing - Our Performance

Key 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
 2 Audited national performance information not available
 3 Indicator deleted from 2007/08

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
Best Value Performance Indicators - Housing								
KPI - BV63 The average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	65	66	67	67	69	69	66	69
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	25	38	38	38	28.04	38
KPI - BV66a The rent collected by the local authority as a proportion of rents owed on Housing Revenue Account dwellings	98.58%	98.83%	98.74%	98.84%	98.84%	98.84%	97.32%	98.84%
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	8.24%	8.39%	12%	8%	7.75%	7.5%	6.01	3.39
BV66c The percentage of local authority tenants in arrears who have had Notices Seeking Possession served	20%	22.34%	20%	21%	20%	19%	26.32%	13.55%
BV66d The percentage of local authority tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	0.21%	0.20%	0.26%	0.15%	0.15%	0.15%	0.5%	0.15%
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	3	3	3	2	2
KPI - BV183(i) The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation	0 Weeks	2.67 Weeks	0 Week	3	3	3	3.32 Weeks	1.12 Weeks
KPI - BV183(ii) The average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	18.11 Weeks	20.23 Weeks	5 Weeks	26 Weeks	26 Weeks	26 Weeks	11.77 Weeks	0 Weeks
KPI - BV184a The proportion of local authority dwellings which were non-decent at the start of the financial year	7.31%	6%	6%	5%	3%	0%	26%	12%
BV184b The percentage change in proportion of non-decent dwellings between the start and end of the financial year	19.50%	10.90%	12.5%	16%	40%	100%	23.1%	28.9%
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	0
BV203 The percentage change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation	+67.16%	-17.22%	-12.3%	3	3	3	8.31%	-17.87%
BV212 The average time taken to re-let local authority housing	46 days	51 days	42 days	41 days	41 days	41 days	41 days	27 days
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	4	10	4.2	12	12	12	18	5
BV214 The proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same authority within the last two years	0.5%	6.48%	0.5%	3	3	3	3.17	0



Housing - Our Performance

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

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
Local Performance Indicators (Medium Term Priority 1(b))								
H1a The amount of former tenant rent arrears collected per annum	£65,351	£119,465	£40,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	2	2
H1b The rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	1.53%	1.69%	1.6%	1.6%	1.55%	1.50%	2	2
H2a The percentage of repairs undertaken within target time: Emergency	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	2	2
H2b The percentage of repairs undertaken within target time: Urgent	81%	89%	95%	95%	95%	95%	2	2
H2c The percentage of repairs undertaken within target time: Routine	86%	90%	95%	95%	95%	95%	2	2
H2d The percentage of repairs undertaken within target time: Priority (Within 3 Days)	N/A	N/A	95%	95%	95%	95%	2	2
H3e The level of satisfaction with repairs: General standard of service received	98%	98%	97%	98%	98%	98%	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) 19.25 (ii) 25.5 (iii) 170	(i) 17.3 (ii) 22.8 (iii) 154.3	(i)15 (ii)32 (iii)130	(i)11 (ii)25 (iii)75	(i) 10 (ii) 25 (iii) 75	(i) 10 (ii) 25 (iii) 50	2	2
KPI - H15a The number of affordable homes completed and ready for occupation during the year	74	25	33	13	143	145	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 15 properties or 0.5 hectare expressed as a percentage of the total number of homes to be provided on large residential development sites).	28%	30.80%	33%	35%	40%	40%	2	2
EH 2 The percentage of requests for care and repair services responded to within relevant target times	92.8%	98.6%	91%	92%	92%	92%	2	2

4

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:

- District Emergency Response Plan
 - Business and Continuity Disaster Recovery Plan
Contact: Mike Tipping Phone: 01992 564280
Email: mtipping@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
 - Local Compact for the Epping Forest District
■ Grant Aid Scheme
Contact: Chris Overend Phone: 01992 564247
E-mail: coverend@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
 - Crime and Drugs Strategy
■ Anti-graffiti Policy
Contact: Caroline Wiggins Phone: 01992 564122
E-mail: cwiggins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
 - Anti-social Behaviour Policy
Contact: Paul Gardener Phone: 01992 564
E-mail: pgardener@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
 - Policing Plan (written by Essex Police)
 - Epping Forest Primary Care Trust Plan
 - Health Improvement Plan,
 - Community Strategy and Action Plan
- Community Wellbeing Lead Officer (at time of publication)
John Scott (Joint Chief Executive (Community Services))
Phone: 01992 564050
E-mail: jscott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Community Wellbeing

The Council's 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 in 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, and work with the voluntary sector.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Our Aims for 2007/08

Crime and Disorder

The Council is working actively with partners to promote safer communities. Neighbourhood policing is being implemented. We provide CCTV, anti-graffiti and other measures. Data for 2006/07 shows that robberies, burglaries and motor crime are decreasing. The Council also works with the Epping Forest Children and Young People's Partnership and Essex County Council to deliver services for young people. Regular meetings are held with the Police to determine solutions to problems in specific areas. We are seeking to complete the review of graffiti removal policy and procurement.

- We expanded hate crime awareness and its reporting by including parish and town council staff as part of the existing training schedule;
- We held a second Crucial Crew event for all year six pupils across the district at North Weald Airfield;
- We continued to work closely with police around the targeting of known prolific offenders through the actions of the Priority and Prolific Offender Group;
- We produced a district-wide anti-social behaviour pack, to provide information to the community on how to report anti-social behaviour;
- We worked in partnership with Essex County Council to provide 'Road Runner' courses aimed at reducing the number of road deaths and serious accidents amongst 16 - 17 year olds; and
- We started work on a review of the Council's policy for removing graffiti.

- To implement the legislative requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
SC3	1c	March 2008	None

- To develop a monitoring strategy for Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
SC2	1c	March 2008	None

- To develop a strategy with Essex Police on the deployment of Police Community Support Officers.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
SC2	1c	March 2008	None

Voluntary Sector Support and Grant Aid

We implemented a three year funding agreement with Voluntary Action Epping Forest to assist with the government's modernisation agenda for the voluntary sector.

- We increased the number of Service Level Agreements for community groups in receipt of long-term funding; and
- We agreed funding with Voluntary Action Epping Forest through a Service Level Agreement covering the period to 31 March 2007, with a view to determining a further agreement for the next three years

- To further integrate the terms of the Epping Forest District Local Compact within the District Council procedures.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
SC3	1c	March 2008	None

Concessionary Fares

We provide concessionary fares for older and disabled people.

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

Community Wellbeing - Our Performance

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

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
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 2	Level 2	Level 2	2	2
KPI - BV2b The quality of an authority's Race Equality Scheme and the improvements resulting from its application	53%	89%	63%	89%	89%	89%	57%	73%
Best Value Performance Indicators - Community Safety								
BV126 The number of domestic burglaries per year per 1,000 households in the local authority	16.67	14.09	11.82	12.19	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	8.2	5.7
BV127a Amended - The number of violent crime per year, per 1,000 population in the Local Authority area	13.92	13.79	13.93	13.43	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	15.6	11.1
BV127b Amended - The number of robberies per year, per 1,000 population in the Local Authority area	1.49	1.28	0.71	0.66	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	0.6	0.2
BV128 The number of vehicle crimes per year, per 1,000 population in the local authority area	14.86	13.93	12.19	11.47	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	9.2	6.4
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%	83.33%	76.9%	76.9%	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	2	2
BV174 The number of racial incidents reported to the local authority and subsequently recorded per 100,000 population	105.06	119.94	136.49	148.9	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	2	2
BV175 The percentage of racial incidents reported to the local authority and that resulted in further action	100%	100%	100%	100%	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	Essex Police set targets one year in advance	93.29%	100%
BV225 The overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence	1		66.6%	75%	75%	75%	2	2
BV226a The total amount spent by the local authority on advice and guidance services provided by external organisations	1	£136,580	£136,580	£137,580	£137,580 + 2 years inflation	£137,580 + 2 years inflation	1	1
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	78.80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	1	1



5

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 Services Portfolio is included in this section of our Best Value Performance Plan.

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

- Sports Development Strategy
- Arts Policy
- Marketing Plan
- Play Strategy

Leisure Lead Officer: Derek Macnab
(Head of Leisure Services)
Phone: 01992 564561
E-mail: dmacnab@eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Leisure Services

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 the 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 has an important part to play in meeting this objective, a wide range of others in the private, public and voluntary sectors also play an important role.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Leisure and Cultural

Following a competitive tender process, the Council appointed SLM (Sports and Leisure Management Ltd.) to undertake the management and development of four of the Council's leisure facilities. After a successful hand over the results of significant capital investment by the Contractor are beginning to be apparent both in financial and service terms. There is the opportunity for the Council to share in this success by means of an income share in 2007/08.

The outcome of reviews of the future management of Roding Valley Nature Reserve, Waltham Abbey Sports Centre and the potential extension of the Contract for Epping Sports Centre, will be considered in 2007/08.

■ We worked 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;

■ We increased 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;

■ We worked in conjunction with external funding agencies, Matching Parish Council and the local community, to refurbish playing fields at Matching Tye into an amenity area;

■ With financial assistance from East of England Arts, we undertook an innovative Community Arts Project, "Border Dialogues" which celebrated the unique rural character of the district; and

■ We improved access and interpretation of the Social History Collection at the Epping Forest Museum as well as increasing awareness through a new Community Outreach Programme.

With the percentage of older residents of the District increasing on an annual basis along with concerns about childhood obesity, the importance of promoting an active lifestyle has been recognised as a priority for Leisure Services.

Healthy Living

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

Our Aims for 2007/08

■ To enter into an extended management agreement with our leisure contractor to manage and improve the facilities offered at Epping Sports Centre, bringing this Sports Centre into line with the rest of the leisure management contract.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
FL1	1d	Jan 2008	None

■ To seek to improve opportunities for local people of all ages and abilities to become more involved in arts and community events;

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
FL3	1d	March 2008	BV170a,b,c

■ To become involved in plans for the London Olympics in 2012.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	1e	Ongoing	None

■ To implement an enforcement regime in relation to smoke-free legislation covering enclosed public places and work places, focusing on education, raising awareness and understanding to ensure compliance.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
FL5	1d	March 2008	None



Leisure Services - Our Performance

Key 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
 2 Audited national performance information not available
 3 Indicator deleted/changed from 2007/08

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
KPI - BV170a The number of visits to/uses of local authority funded or part-funded museums and galleries in the area per 1,000 population	524.48	636.44	811	861	861	861	636	861
BV170b The number of those visits to local authority funded, or part funded museums that were in person per 1,000 population.	110.28	129.02	128.09	460.0	460.0	460.0	365	460
KPI - BV170c The number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups	3294	4531	3181	3302	3302	3302	3039	3302
Local Performance Indicators (Medium Term Priority 1(e))								
L1 The number of parishes in the district in which the council directly provides leisure opportunities.	14	20	17	3	3	3	2	2
L2 The number of parishes in the district in which the council has enabled other organisations to provide other leisure opportunities	15	16	15	3	3	3	2	2
L3 The number of individuals on low income who benefited from special activity prices	422	289	300	325	350	350	2	2
L4 The number of new leisure facilities enabled by the council	81	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
L5 The number of new leisure opportunities directly introduced by the council	81	88	13	25	30	35	2	2
L6 The number of new leisure opportunities enabled by the council	31	34	4	10	12	13	2	2
L7 The number of organisations with whom leisure services has worked in partnership to promote healthy living and enable social inclusion	143	246	55	100	100	110	2	2
L8 The number of patients referred by a medical professional to a council health-based activity scheme	186	185	50	168	200	210	2	2
L9 The number of swimming lessons given to 0-16 year olds.	12,387	12,500	11,500	13,500	14,500	14,750	2	2
L10 The number of event days at North Weald Airfield	75	109	140	145	150	150	2	2
L11 The number of new activities for 13 to 19 year olds enabled or directly provided by the council	30	28	15	17	19	20	2	2
L12 The percentage of leisure centre users who rated the service received as good or excellent	94	81.74%	80%	3	3	3	2	2

6 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 Economic Development not included in this plan see:

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



Economic Prosperity

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. We aim to co-ordinate our land use and planning policies, and the housing, transportation and infrastructure of the district in a way that ensures economic prosperity. There are no performance indicators for this portfolio.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Economic Development

- We want to further develop the Town Centre Partnerships and encourage participation by local businesses thereby strengthening links with the Council. We want to respond to issues of local deprivation in the district by continuing to identify measures to alleviate specific problems identified through the analysis of the 2004 Indices of Deprivation, and to work with our partner agencies to tackle deprivation issues. We aim to rise to the challenges of the East of England Plan in helping to provide homes and jobs in the district.
- We appointed an Economic Development Officer to further promote and encourage economic development within the district;
- We worked towards the achievement of economic development targets within the Essex Local Area Agreement; and
- We continued to promote leisure and tourism opportunities within the district.

Our Aims for 2007/08

- To work with the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) to build 7 Children's Centres across the district.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVP/ILPI:
None	1e	March 2008	None

- To develop new performance indicators and to target resources to them.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVP/ILPI:
None	3a	March 2008	None

Town Centre Enhancement and Regeneration

- We completed a review of the town centre enhancement scheme for The Broadway at Loughton and developed comprehensive proposals for an enhancement scheme.
- We completed Phase Two of the Loughton Town Centre enhancement scheme and commenced work on the Loughton Broadway enhancement scheme.

- To continue economic growth and prosperity at Langston Road, Loughton through the sale of appropriate Council assets.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVP/ILPI:
EP3	1a	March 2008	None

- To complete the town centre enhancement scheme for The Broadway at Loughton, together with the local business community.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVP/ILPI:
EP2	1a	July 2008	None



7 Our Resource Management Priorities and Performance

Our Leader's Portfolio and the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services, Customer Services, Media, Communications and Information Technology 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.

Policy Theme 2 - An organisation that listens and leads to resolve local issues

Medium Term Priorities

- (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

Policy Theme 3 - Accessible affordable and improving services

Medium Term Priorities

- (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

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

- Consultation Strategy: Contact: Val Loftis
Phone: 01992 564471 vloftis@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Council Plan Contact: Stephen Tautz
Phone: 01992 564180 stautz@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Race Equality Strategy
- CPA Improvement Plan
- Performance Management Lead Officer Tony Tidey
(Head of Human Resources and Performance Management) Phone: 01992 564054
E-mail: ttidey@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Data Protection Policy
- Procurement Strategy
- Corporate ICT Strategy
- Implementing Electronic Government
- Adrian Scott (Head of Information and Communications Technology Lead Officer Technology) Phone: 01992 564457
Email: ascott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Communication Strategy Contact: Tom Carne
01992 564039 tcarne@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Compliments and Complaints Contact: Shirley Hawkins
01992 564051 shawkins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Constitution
- Access to Information Strategy
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Leadership and Democracy Lead Officer Ian Willett (Head of Research and Democratic Services) Phone: 01992 564243 Email: iwillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Anti Fraud Strategy Contact: Joe Akerman
01992 564446 internalaudit@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Council Budget 2007/08
- Capital Strategy
- Insurance and Risk Management
- Statement of Accounts
- Finance Lead Officer Bob Palmer (Head of Finance) Phone 01992 564279 E-mail: bpalmer@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Asset Management Plan Contact: Michael Shorten
Phone: 01992 564124 mshorten@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Legal, Administration & Estates Services Lead Officer Colleen O'Boyle (Head of Legal, Administration and Estates) Phone: 01992 564475 E-mail: coboyle@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Business/Service Plans: Contact the appropriate Head of Service for copies of the annual business plans



The Leader's Portfolio

The Leader's Portfolio primarily deals with the external relations of the Council and its democratic and decision-making processes. The portfolio also covers a range of other issues such as the constitution, civic ceremonial matters, democratic services and elections, compliments and complaints, liaison with local councils and the standards of conduct expected of elected members. At the beginning of 2006/07, the portfolio also took on responsibility for major estates management and development proposals, and Local Land Charges. 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. There are no performance indicators for this portfolio, which oversees the work of the other portfolios.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Leadership and Democracy

The portfolio aims to support the devolution of responsibility to the local level, particularly in relation to issues such as the reorganisation of County Councils, the Police, Local Primary Care, and to review the recent Local Government White Paper and initiate change where appropriate.

The Council has strengthened its risk management arrangements. This is included as part of all service plans and a corporate Risk Management Strategy. There are now systems in place to ensure that councillors review risks on a regular basis and take necessary action to mitigate risks to the Council's business.

- We implemented proposals for overview and scrutiny arising from the first review of new arrangements;
- We implemented a staged Member Remuneration Scheme;
- We re-launched the councillor training programme;
- We reviewed arrangements for the funding of civic ceremonial matters;
- We updated the strategic risk register and involved councillors more actively in risk management; and
- In collaboration with Overview and Scrutiny, we reviewed Contract Standing Orders, officer delegated authorities and started on a review of Financial Regulations.

Democratic Services

The process for preparing the register of electors and the administration of postal voting is 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.

- We made improvements in electoral registration and voting arrangements; and
- We carried out a review of funding for elections, including the requirements for the Electoral Services for 2006.

Our Aims for 2007/08

- To continue the on-going review of the Overview and Scrutiny Member Training Programme.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	3a	March 2008	None

- To respond to legislative changes affecting the Council's governance arrangements and constitution proposed by the Government, with particular reference to the form of Executive Governance.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	2a	April 2008 *	None

* subject to the Parliamentary timetable for bringing the legislation into force.

- To implement the new statutory requirements for elections and the electoral register.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	2c	March 2008	None

- To review the policy for District elections by thirds and to complete another review of Financial Regulations.

CP:	MTP:	Target:	BVPI/LPI:
None	2c	March 2008	None



Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services

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. Corporate Support Services refers to the wide range of services that provide 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.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Our Aims for 2007/08

Income Generation

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 current objective is to complete a review of our external funding policy.

- We investigated the development potential of some Council-owned car parks, whilst ensuring that we retain adequate public car parking;
- We completed the sale of the 'Parade Ground' site at North Weald Airfield;
- We had the lowest percentage increase in Council Tax amongst District Councils in Essex; and
- We started work on a review of external funding of Council services.

- To keep the Council Tax increase below the increase in the Retail Prices Index.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVPI/LPI:
EP1	2c,3a	March 2008	None

- To consider opportunities for shared service delivery across Essex, as part of the Transformational Government initiative.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVPI/LPI:
IP4	2d,3b	Ongoing	None

Payment Services

- We expanded the number of services for which payment can be made via the website; and
- We introduced the Essex Marketplace electronic ordering system across the council.

- To commence data conversion and system implementation work on the new Revenues and Benefits System.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVPI/LPI:
IP2,5	2a,2c	March 2008	None



Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Our Aims for 2007/08

Managing Resources and Performance

The Council has recently started to review its top management structure to ensure that the arrangements are fit for purpose by Autumn 2007.

The Council continues to address recruitment and retention issues through a range of initiatives including the use of trainee posts and appointments to address specific skills needs, including the appointment of a Learning and Development Adviser and strengthening the capacity of the Performance Management Unit.

Sickness absence remains a challenge for the Council. Councillors have highlighted this as a concern and have taken action to reduce the potential threat to the capacity of the Council to deliver effective services.

The Council has enhanced arrangements for consulting with, and engaging local people and has adopted a new Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy and Policy in 2006.

■ We implemented a new performance management system so that we have more timely and accurate information about our performance;

■ We carried out a review of the Council's Recruitment and Retention Strategy;

■ We carried out customer satisfaction surveys in accordance with Government requirements; and

■ We achieved Lexcel accreditation for our legal services.

■ To reduce levels of sickness absence in the Council.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVPI/LPI:
IP4	3c	Ongoing	BV12

Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services - Our Performance

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

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
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	93.88%	97%	99.2%	97.3%	97.3%	97.3%	93.7%	97.3%
KPI - BV9 The percentage of Council Tax collected by the authority in the year	98.02%	98.20%	98.5%	98.53%	98.53%	98.53%	97.84%	98.53%
KPI - BV10 The percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the authority	98.86%	99.01%	99.2%	99.30%	99.30%	99.30%	98.69%	99.30%
BV76a The number of housing benefit claimants in the local authority area visited per 1,000 case load	253.81	215.98	150	3	3	3	2	2
BV76b The number of fraud investigators employed by the local authority per 1,000 case load	0.47	0.49	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 case load	45.5	67.39	65	68	68	68	2	2
BV76d The number of Housing and Council Tax benefit prosecutions and sanctions per year, per 1,000 case load in the local authority area	2.65	6.67	6	6.8	6.8	6.8	2	2
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	29.28 days	28.53 days	28 days	25.5 days	25.5 days	25.5 days	33.5 days	25.5 days
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	11.94 days	12.40 days	6.8 days	8.5 days	8.5 days	8.5 days	13.9 days	8.5 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%	99.40%	99%	99%	99%	99%	97.56%	99%
BV79b(i) The amount of Housing Benefit (HB) over payments recovered during the period being reported on, as a percentage of HB deemed recoverable overpayment during that period	43.23%	42.14%	45%	45%	48%	50%	69.48%	79.46%
BV79b(ii) Housing Benefit (HB) over payments 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 over payments identified during the period	28.73%	32.54%	45%	35%	38%	40%	35.10%	41.22%
BV79b (iii) Housing Benefit (HB) over payments 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 over payments identified during the period	7.04%	6.4%	10%	10%	10%	10%	2	2



Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services - Our Performance

Key 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
 2 Audited national performance information not available
 3 Indicator deleted/changed from 2007/08

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
Local Performance Indicators - Internal Audit (Medium Term Priority 3(a))								
SS4a The percentage of projects in the approved audit plan completed	86%	82%	85%	85%	85%	85%	2	2
SS4b The productive time of the Internal Audit Unit as a percentage of total time	67%	67%	65%	70%	70%	70%	2	2
SS4c The overall user satisfaction level of the Internal Audit Unit	85%	83%	80%	83%	83%	83%	2	2
SS4f The average cost per productive audit day	£292	£314	£290	£300	£310	£320	2	2
Local Performance Indicators - Finance (Medium Term Priority 3(a))								
F13 The percentage of telephone calls to the Revenues Division answered within 10 seconds	90.12%	92.29%	94%	94%	94%	94%	2	2
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.	75%	100%	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	100%	100%	85%	90%	90%	100%	2	2

Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services - Our Performance

Key 1 New indicator from 2005/06. No data available
 2 Audited national performance information not available
 3 Indicator deleted/changed from 2007/08

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
Best Value Performance Indicators - Corporate Health (Medium Term Priority 3(c))								
KPI - BV11a The percentage of the top-paid 5% of local authority staff that are women	27%	24.47%	28.93%	31.25%	31.25%	31.25%	25.15%	31.25%
KPI - BV11b The percentage of the top 5% of earners from black and ethnic communities	2.15%	2.89%	1.98%	3.37%	3.37%	3.37%	1.88%	3.37%
KPI - BV11c The percentage of the top 5% of local authority staff who have a disability	8.59%	11.57%	6.25%	11.00%	11.00%	11.00%	3.28%	5.91%
KPI - BV12 The number of working days/shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness absence	10.66	10.98	8.48	8.29	8.29	8.29	9.64	8.29
KPI - BV14 The percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce	0.18%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.61%	0.0%
BV15 The percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill-health as a percentage of the total work force	0.18%	0.55%	0.35%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.29%	0.0%
KPI - BV16a The percentage of local authority employees with a disability	2.75%	9.67%	4.10%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	3.69%	4.37%
BV16b The percentage of the economically active population in the authority area who have a disability	11.35%	11.35%	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	Cannot set target	2	2
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.	4.13%	3.78%	2.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	2.1%	2.7%
BV17b The percentage of the economically active population from ethnic minority communities in the local authority area	5.15%	5.15%	Cannot set target	3	3	3	2	2



Customer Services, Media, Communications and Information Technology

For 2006/07 this portfolio had primary responsibility for important customer service issues and concentrated on customer service issues for other portfolios as and when the need arose, including the review of waste management arrangements. The portfolio promoted the use of electronic methods to improve access to services and service delivery, and sought to exploit information technology, allowing many council functions to be focused directly on the needs of the customer. This portfolio has been deleted from 2007/08 and its responsibilities have been redistributed amongst the remaining portfolios.

Current Issues

Our Achievements in 2006/07

Our Aims for 2007/08

E-Government and Communications

The E-Government initiative has, over the past year evolved into the 'Transformation Government' (T-Gov) initiative. T-Gov is a Central Government initiative that aims to embrace all the new technology that has been implemented as part of e-Gov. T-Gov extends the benefits of e-Gov by using technology to provide a joined-up and common approach to the service delivery process across multiple Local Government Authorities. This will give opportunities to drive through further efficiencies by a collective and shared approach to service delivery.

Access to information and Services

- We introduced new joint arrangements for the provision of information services at Loughton Library;
- We developed an information technology training programme for our councillors;
- We implemented electronic services for our councillors; and
- We developed public access to services through the Government Connect (Direct.Gov) website.

- To consider new opportunities offered to the Council by shared service delivery across Essex.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVPI/LPI:
IP1	3c	March 2008	None

- To implement the planned elements of the Corporate ICT Strategy 2006- 2008).

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVPI/LPI:
IP1	3c	March 2008	None

- To implement phase 2 of the Electronic Records and Document Management System (ERDMS).

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVPI/LPI:
IP1	3c	March 2008	None

Managing Resources and Performance

The Council has improved its website and introduced web casts of significant meetings from April 2006, which is having an increasing number of viewers.

Our objective for procuring products and services is to implement the new Procurement Strategy working closely with the Procurement Agency for Essex and the Essex Procurement Hub.

- We achieved efficiency savings in excess of £30,000 from joint purchasing opportunities

- We implemented a "Selling to the Council" and "Contract opportunities" web portal for suppliers.

- We adopted a new procurement strategy and joined with other local authorities the Essex Procurement Hub

- To implement new ICT performance indicators

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVPI/LPI:
IP1	3c	March 2008	None

- To engage local businesses by working with the procurement Agency for Essex in the provision of a supply portal.

CP:	MTP :	Target :	BVPI/LPI:
IP1	3c	March 2008	None

Customer Services, Media, Communications and Information Technology - Our Performance

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

Performance Indicator	2005/06 Outturn	2006/07 Outturn	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	District Council Average 2005/06	District Council Top 25% 2005/06
Local Performance Indicators - Public Relations (Medium Term Priority 2(b))								
PR3 The number of visits to the Council's website per month	440,301	664,562	529,980	697,000	732,000	768,000	2	2

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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 this section, contact:

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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 occasionally 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 a group of other authorities 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. 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. There were no such transfers in 2006/07.

Audit and Inspection

This section of the plan is taken from comments made in the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, which provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council, drawing on audit, inspection and performance assessment.

The Audit Commission reviews the Council's main financial and performance systems each year. These findings are an important component of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework. In particular the Use of Resources score is derived from the assessments in the following areas:

- Financial Reporting (How good are the Council's financial accounting and reporting arrangements);
- Financial Management (How well does the Council plan and manage its finances);
- Financial Standing (How well does the Council safeguard its financial standing).
- Internal Control (How well does the council's internal control environment enable it to manage its significant business risks); and
- Value for Money (an assessment of how well the Council balances the costs and quality of its services).

Council Performance

Epping Forest District Council was assessed as a 'Good' authority in the CPA carried out in 2004. These assessments have been completed in all district councils and are now being updated in councils where there is evidence of change.

Direction of Travel

The Audit Commission reported that: "Epping Forest District Council is making progress in achieving its six priority objectives. The Council engages effectively with local communities and joint working with partners is resulting in positive outcomes. It is addressing some key local issues such as waste and planning to service performance and these are starting to show improvements. However, in other areas performance is not showing demonstrable signs of improvement. In common with many other councils, the Council is finding it difficult to meet the affordable housing needs of the district. Although it is working actively with partners to promote safer communities, this has not yet led to reductions in crime.

There is now clearer political leadership and direction within the Council. Performance management and risk management arrangements have been strengthened and value for money is starting to show signs of improvement. The Council is taking steps to address known weaknesses in its corporate capacity but high levels of sickness absence remain a barrier to further improvement."

Evidence of Improvement

The Audit Commission reported that: "The Council has made progress in achieving its six priority objectives for 2006/07. The Council has reviewed car parking in town centres on Saturdays and will be implementing new arrangements from April 2007. The Council has also had some success in revising proposals contained in the East of England Plan for locating 11,000 new homes in the district.

Based upon an Audit Commission basket of performance indicators, the Council has improved performance in 60 per cent of a selected range of key indicators, which is just above the average rate of improvement for all district councils of 58 per cent. However, the Council has only 18 per cent of these indicators in the best performing 25 per cent of all councils, which is below the average of 31 per cent of all district councils."

Use of Resources Assessment

The annual Use of Resources Assessment evaluates how well Councils manage and use their financial resources. For 2006/07 the Audit Commission reported that the Council is performing adequately in this area, and has identified key findings and areas for improvement for the Council to act upon.



Consulting and Engaging the Public

The Audit Commission reported that: "The Council has listened to local residents and stakeholders and responded. It consulted local residents following concerns about revised waste collection frequencies and reinstated a weekly collection during the summer period. The findings from this exercise were used to plan the waste service specification for the re-tendering exercise. The Council has also introduced static cleansing teams and revised frequencies in town centres in response to residents concerns. As a result, cleansing standards have improved."

How much progress is being made to implement improvement plans to sustain future improvement?

The Audit Commission reported that: "The Council has strengthened its plans to help achieve wider community ambitions. A new Council Plan was adopted in 2006 that covers the period up to 2010. This now follows more closely the aims of the Community Strategy and priorities of the Essex Local Area Agreement. The Council has developed a range of actions and targets designed to achieve these priorities, Service plans now have links to the Council Plan.

There is now a clearer political leadership and direction within the Council. After a period of no-overall control, a new administration was formed in May 2006, which gained a majority in December 2006. This has provided a clearer focus and the Council is now better able to

make difficult decisions. An example of this was the decision to defer the customer services transformation project until the cost of the new waste contract became clear."

Equality

The Audit Commission reported that: "The Council has now achieved level 1 Equality Standard and completed impact assessments of services. The council's duty to promote racial equality is now showing some signs of improvement."

Performance Management

The Audit Commission reported that: "Performance management is developing. The Council has reviewed performance management arrangements in line with the Council Plan. It monitors 57 indicators against which performance in key areas is measured, although in some areas this is only done on an annual basis which limits its effectiveness. A new monitoring system introduced in June 2006 enables officers and Councillors to concentrate on those areas of performance that will make a difference to local people."

CPA Improvement Plan

The Audit Commission reported that: "The Council is making progress on delivering the actions in the CPA improvement plan. Most have been completed, but a few are behind schedule or not yet achieved, for example the introduction of e-procurement."

Value for Money

The Audit Commission reported that: "Value for money is starting to show signs of improvement. The Council has introduced a Value for Money Strategy and awareness of service costs has improved. The overall spend per head on services is reducing down towards the average for similar Councils, although costs currently remain high in some key services such as planning.

The Council is taking steps to improve the cost and quality of services. The management of the council's leisure centres was transferred to a private sector partner in January 2006 and this has resulted in improvement in user participation, costs and service delivery. The Council is also in the process of re-tendering the waste services contract with the aims of delivering lower costs and service enhancements."

Financial Management and Value for Money

The Audit Commission reviews the Council's main financial and performance systems each year. For 2005/06 the Commission reported as follows:

Accounts and Governance

An unqualified opinion on our accounts was given by the Audit Commission. The Commission also reported that:

key issues arising from the audit, which are as follows:

- "Financial Reporting arrangements have improved significantly since our previous assessment and the Council should now ensure that this continues for the 2006/07 accounts process.
- Financial management arrangements continue to be well managed within the Council.
- The Council has a good track record of maintaining a sound financial position and has now improved its systems for monitoring the effectiveness of income collection.
- The Council actively promotes probity and propriety in the conduct of its business".

The Audit Commission also reported that: "Value for money arrangements were adequate except in respect of meeting the following criteria:

- The Council has put in place arrangements to manage its significant business risks, and has put in place arrangements to manage and improve value for money.

Since issuing this opinion the Council has made good progress in developing its arrangements for risk management and to manage and improve value for money.

- Risk management arrangements have significantly improved over the past year and they are currently being embedded throughout the organisation.
- The Council is a relatively high spending Council per head of population, although where costs are higher this can generally be explained (for example in leisure services).
- The Council has concentrated on improving its understanding of the relationship between its costs and performance. The Council has adopted a comprehensive Value for Money Strategy supported by a Value for Money Analysis tool. Procurement is being strengthened and there are some examples of collaborative working and partnership working in order to achieve efficiency savings and improve services".

The Council will use the findings and recommendations of the Audit Commission as the basis for securing improvement in these areas in 2007/08.

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