

Performance Report 2010 – 2011

Summary



Welcome to a summary of our Performance Report, which sets out South Cambridgeshire District Council's vision, and strategic aims for April 2011 – March 2012 and looks back at our performance and achievements in 2010/11.

Our vision was agreed back in 2009 to describe our long-term aspirations for service delivery:

To make South Cambridgeshire a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live, and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation. We will be a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all.

Our five strategic aims, along with the approaches that provide a framework for achieving these aims, set out how we will deliver the vision. In order to maintain a consistent approach and to reflect the long-term nature of these goals, it was decided to retain the same vision, aims and approaches for 2011-12.

During the past year we've been working hard to carry out 11 key actions to deliver our strategic aims. This report sets out how we've performed against these actions, as well as the other successes we've achieved for the community in terms of services provided and an enhanced quality of life. These actions have now been embedded in the organisation and will be ongoing as part of our day-to-day work. For 2011 -12, we've set 17 new actions and these are outlined at the end of the report.

In terms of achievement the council's record is impressive. From playing a key role in the

major growth agenda locally to achieving one of the highest recycling rates in the country to being an 'Achieving' authority under the Equality Framework for Local Government, we believe this clearly exhibits the council's drive and ambition. Whether we look at financial management and capacity, personnel management and investment or simply delivering top quality services with due regard for value for money, we stand favourably in comparison with any other authority in the country.

Strong political and managerial leadership has focussed the council through its plans to deliver priorities that matter to local people. This, when coupled with a record of strong financial planning and management, provides the clear evidence linking planning, priorities and outcomes.

The council's record of low council tax coupled with high levels of service provision shows a long history of effective planning and prioritisation. High levels of capital investment, combined with maintaining our debt free status, are further evidence of good long term effective management.

The council is very clear about focusing on its priorities and key areas for improvement. The outcomes of this focus in 2010 have been remarkable and are detailed in the following pages.



Cllr Ray Manning
Leader of Council



Jean Hunter
Chief Executive

What we have achieved in 2010/11

The previous page sets out the Council's vision, under which we have agreed a series of strategic aims, approaches and actions through which we can work towards achieving that vision.

For each aim we have agreed;

Approaches – which provide a framework showing how we will achieve our aims

Actions – which are specific actions we will undertake to deliver the aims.

In 2010-11 we had 11 key actions to deliver these aims. Achievements made against these are detailed below.

Preparing the Council to achieve Customer Service Excellence accreditation during 2011 (Action One)

This project has been driven forward by the Customer Services Co-ordinator with valuable support from across services to a point where the Council is in a position to proceed to full assessment against the national Customer Services Excellence standard in 2011. The project has involved a comprehensive self-assessment audit which has increased the organisation's self-awareness of its strengths and development areas in respect of customer service. It has also led to the carrying out of a focussed improvement plan under which a number of new initiatives have been developed. These include a revamped scheme to recognise staff who have gone the extra mile in providing excellent customer service, the development of updated satisfaction and insight surveys, and a corporate framework for mapping customer journeys to understand customers' experience of our services.

Increasing the number of teenagers taking part in positive activities by 500 on the 2009-10 total (Action Two)

The Council has exceeded this target through the successful undertaking of a number of initiatives, including:

- a range of ArtSmash projects as well as Cambourne Youth Festival, Sawston Cinema, Gamlingay Youth Group & Arts Development, a film-making project to engage young people who are disengaged and could potentially display antisocial behaviours, etc.
- Street football, mini Olympics, rural athletics, youth games plus, events for disabled athletes, free swimming and Park Life.
- Over 130 children (Year 8s) also took part in the Northstowe School Design Days and there continues to be workshops and visits to the Connections Youth Bus to involve young people (age 11 - 19 yrs) in the development of SCDC's Young People's Plan (approximately 80 children to-date).

Positive activities and engagement with children and young people will become further embedded at SCDC through the carrying out of actions within the Young People's Plan, which was developed in conjunction with young people before being formally adopted by the Council.

Meeting or surpassing a 65% recycling and composting rate by 2012 (Action Three)

The new blue bin recycling service was successfully launched in Autumn 2010 and is a key milestone towards our 65% target by 2012. Over 90% of residents have expressed satisfaction with the new service. With the addition of plastic packaging, cartons and batteries, residents now have one of the most comprehensive recycling services in the country.

Improving and maintaining the appearance of our villages in 2010-11 by:

4(a) Continuing our programme of installing litterbins at a further 10 lay-bys on the major routes in the District

We have installed bins at our 10 dirtiest lay-bys on the major roads into and out of the District – the A14, A11, A505, A428, A10.

4(b) Continuing enhanced street cleansing within 10 of our larger villages past 2010-11

This was being funded by a grant from central government that was withdrawn in mid 2010. Nonetheless, street cleansing continues to be undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis, subject to resources being identified from within existing budgets.

4(c) Undertaking a further 10 community clean-up events

The Council has facilitated considerably more than the 10 events targeted, providing support through carrying out joint village audits, co-ordination of National Probation Service in graffiti clearance, litter picking and fly tipping removal, the provision of equipment, and collection and disposal of rubbish.

4(d) Maintaining our street cleansing and envirocrime operations, including the litter picking of the A11 and A14 verges

The A11/A14 litter pick has been successfully carried out, whilst the Council continues to be proactive in taking action against envirocrime, for example:

- Issuing 15 statutory notices requiring land owners to clear waste from land, 4 Litter Clearance Notices and 1 Duty of Care Notice;
- Securing 5 convictions for fly tipping (and the associated offence of not being a registered waste carrier), and 5 convictions in respect of the householder's duty of care regarding waste;
- Issuing 48 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering.

Specific actions included:

- The clearance of 24 tonnes of fly-tipped waste at Fen Road, Chesterton, using local firms and goodwill, without cost to the Council;
- Installing gates at a fly tipping hot spot at Milton;
- Clearing graffiti, in conjunction with the Probation Service, from play areas at Comberton and Cherry Hinton.

Achieving a 10% reduction in CO₂ emissions from Council's operations and publicising the outcome in order to set an example to other organisations (Action Five)

The Council has achieved a 7% reduction in CO₂ emissions for the last year, which although just missing the target remains a significant achievement. The Council already has a headquarters building designed to high energy efficiency standards (BREEAM 'Excellent'), although it is not best located from a sustainable transport perspective. We have no other operational buildings that we own/can easily influence. We have a relatively small and tight establishment, and are constantly looking to reduce fleet vehicle running costs and other miles travelled on business.

The Council has prepared and consulted upon a corporate action plan setting out the range of actions that SCDC is undertaking to further reduce CO₂ emissions, both from its business operations and across the district in its service provision, (especially Planning & New Communities, Housing and Environmental Services).

Working with parish councils to complete at least 6 local projects (or other quantified targets to be developed) supported by LPSA funding to contribute to the county target for the reduction of CO₂ emissions (Action Six)

The Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership (SPEP) has proved particularly successful and has exceeded its target and now includes 25 parishes. Over the year, officers have supported a range of projects including thermal imaging, car sharing, developing a parish energy booklet, the loan of energy monitors, and modelling CO₂ emissions.

In addition, links are being made to the Northstowe Demonstrator Project at Rampton Drift. A new Parish Energy Project Officer, Siobhan Mellon, is now in post and will be working with parishes in 2011-12 to continue to develop local initiatives and establish local indicators to demonstrate the impact of their projects on CO₂ emissions.

Carrying out specific actions to promote the district to new businesses, building links with the Cambridge University to assist start-ups and grown-on companies on the Cambridge Science Park and hosting and enabling at least 12 business development workshops within the district (Action Seven)

The target to stage 12 business development workshops has been achieved, and surpassed through the provision of further events in partnership with Business Link. An Economic Strategy for the district was adopted in March 2011. The strategy has been drafted following a thorough [economic assessment](#) of the District with the aid of economic consultants, PACEC (Public & Corporate Economic Consultants). It includes work with residents, businesses and organisations to identify objectives and actions for the economic benefit of the district. It aims, with partners, to deliver benefits to the whole of the district.

Supporting local people to establish community orchards (Action Eight)

We have met our target of providing 6 Community Orchards for 2010/11. The projects included restoration and planting at the Harston Community Orchard, and new orchards at Landbeach, Melbourn, Coton and Rampton. Grants have been given for three of the orchards. We have worked with Emmaus at Landbeach and Cambridgeshire, Past, Present and Future at Coton. We have run and supported community training and planting events and the projects have involved local volunteers.

Implementing actions from the Community Transport Strategy 2010-2012 to increase coverage and better publicise existing provision (Action Nine)

Progress has been made being made on the following actions:

- Camsight research has been carried out, and a report submitted to the steering group in March 2011;
- Representations have been made regarding the importance of Community Transport provision in the district, as part

of the development of the County Local Transport Plan. Following focussed lobbying, South Cambs's community transport has been given appropriate weight within the draft plan;

- 60,000 Community Transport leaflets are currently being distributed.

Reviewing and restructuring the Affordable Homes Service to enable us to continue to provide our tenants with the best possible service within the resources available, and to meet new regulatory standards (Action Ten)

The majority of key actions and projects under this Action have been completed within timescale:

- First and second phase restructuring measures identified and completed;
- Rent Recovery team re-aligned;
- Sheltered Housing team consolidation complete;
- Peer review of service completed, with follow-up actions built into service improvement plan for 2011-12;
- New staff appointed in accordance with new structure and timescale;
- Service re-aligned to achieve Tenant Services Authority (TSA) standards.

The procurement of the responsive repairs contract is ongoing, with a target award date of September 2011.

Signing up to the Member Development Charter to enable members to develop skills to meet new challenges for local government (Action Eleven)

The Leaders of the Council and Major Opposition Groups formally signed the Charter following the Cabinet meeting on 11 November 2010. A number of initiatives are underway in pursuance of the charter, led by the carrying out of an interview programme with all Members in order to establish individual development needs.

The Council is committed to supporting its members to be the best representatives possible, and has signed up to achieve the Quality Charter for Elected Member Development. A cross-party Member Development Task and Finish Group, reporting to the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder, as the lead member for training and development, leads this project and is developing personalised training plans for councillors based on individual training needs surveys and 1:1 interviews. Members' input is driving a programme of regular member briefings on a variety of topics, delivered internally. These include the detailed background to major decisions about to be taken, an in-depth look at individual Council services and policies, and more wide-ranging issues which affect everyone (like changes to the health service or new legislation). Other seminars help members develop the skills a modern councillor needs:

communications and public speaking skills, time management, speed reading and IT.

Other Achievements

'Achieving' authority under the Equality Framework for Local Government - The council has been formally recognised, through a LGID Peer Review, for its commitment to equal opportunities in its employment of staff, how it delivers its services and for being a community leader. The improvement journey the authority has travelled on is remarkable and shows a real achievement from its low baseline only a few years ago. The Peer Review team reflected this, stating:

“South Cambridgeshire District Council has demonstrated excellent engagement with residents and customers and shown that it can and will respond to needs. It has a good combination of leadership, effective policies and processes and robust engagement with some parts of the voluntary sector. This has resulted in many good examples of responsive services to meet the needs of its diverse communities.”

LGID Peer review team

Stonewall - SCDC is one of only 27 local authorities signed up to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. Our score in 2010 has increased by 51%, showing that real progress is being made.

Resilience - South Cambridgeshire as a district was found to be the most resilient area in the east in terms of economics (BBC commissioned Experian research). This is partly as a result of a number of initiatives led by SCDC outlined in this report.

Best places to live in the country - Residents in South Cambridgeshire live in one of the best places in the country, according to the Halifax Quality of Life Survey. The district was ranked fifth nationwide, and the top place to live outside London and the South East. This position has been achieved for several years running.

The survey looks at factors such as: GCSE attainment rates, house prices, local crime rates and green space for people to enjoy. SCDC plays a key role in this achievement through the work outlined in this submission.

Financial achievements - SCDC's investment strategy is netting it above average returns, consistently higher than our entire comparable group, and better than the national average since 2005. Making low-risk investments has helped the council maintain its relatively low council tax charge for years.

Council Tax collection - Council Tax collection rates are consistently high with figures in 2009/10 putting us joint first of all local authorities (99.3%), with levels being maintained into 2010/11. This is a remarkable achievement in the current economic climate and a testament to new systems/initiatives introduced by the authority to help council taxpayers such as paperless direct debits, customer access to Council Tax and benefit accounts via a secure web link, bar coding on bills and payment via Paypoint.

Partnership working - South Cambridgeshire has a strong history of partnership working. In 2010, SCDC established a joint LSP with Cambridge City Council.

"The council has shown a strong ethos of collaborative working with various partners and is making place shaping a reality."

LGID Peer review team

SCDC takes relationships with its parishes very seriously and has forged good links through the appointment of a dedicated liaison officer who acts as a first point of contact. Working relationships have also been enhanced through the development of an innovative Parish Charter between the County Council, parishes and ourselves.

Community Pride Awards - In 2010 we successfully ran our inaugural Community Pride and Village Hero awards. All parish councils were invited to showcase their work and also to nominate one local resident for the Village Hero Award. A large number of nominations were received and the winners were announced at a gala event in October, which was sponsored by local businesses. The awards will now be held annually as part of our on-going liaison with parish councils and our community.

Neighbourhood Panels - SCDC plays a key role in these important community meetings, working closely with the police and the County Council to address community concerns. All panels are attended by a member of the Executive Management Team and have recorded a number of successes and achievements in 2010 in the areas of community safety (reduction of antisocial behaviour in villages) and environmental services (removal of graffiti, fly tipping etc). They play a key role in communities being able to set their own priorities for action.

Financial Information

Strong political and managerial leadership has focused the council through its plans to deliver priorities that matter to local people. This, when coupled with a record of strong financial planning and management, provides clear evidence linking planning, priorities and outcomes.

This strong leadership and a pro-active approach to financial management have placed the authority in a strong position. As is reported below, all budgets are forecast to be underspent. This has not happened by accident or as a consequence of poor planning. It is the result of a specific, managed approach to budgetary planning and ensuring that budgets are used in the most efficient and effective manner possible and that potential income to the authority is maximised. The authority is looking to actively find efficiency savings and in this context performance has been good this year.

The forecast outturn on the Revised General Fund is a net underspend of **£269,900**.

This net underspend amounts to 1.80% of the Revised Net District Council Expenditure for the financial year ending 2010/11.

The Housing Revenue Account predicted underspend of **£113,700** on the revised estimate equates to 0.50% of gross expenditure.

Capital has a predicted underspend of **£67,900** on the revised estimate, which is 0.75% of gross expenditure.

These figures represent variance levels within the 3% target, the results of sound financial planning and monitoring throughout the year.

This position statement (on the following page) is reporting on the variance between the working estimates and the projected outturn at the end of May. The working estimates are the revised estimate approved by Council and approved virements agreed since those budgets were set. Below is a summary of May's projections and, for comparative purposes, the corresponding February's projections. Further updates will be published in due course.

	Projected Outturn		February's Projected Outturn		Movement
	Compared to Working Estimate		Compared to Working Estimate		
	Overspend + / Underspend ()				
	£	%	£	%	£
General Fund	(269,900)	(1.80)	(238,800)	(1.59)	(31,100)
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	(113,700)	(0.50)	(53,300)	(0.23)	(60,400)
Capital	(67,900)	(0.75)	(236,600)	(2.61)	168,700

Highlighted below are any significant items.

General Fund

- a. **Refuse Collection** is predicted to underspend by £60,000 because of vacancies and, additionally, overtime payments have been less than anticipated. This has not impacted on service provision because sickness levels have improved;
- b. **Street Cleansing** is predicted to underspend by £7,000 because of vacancies;
- c. **Kerbside Recycling** will underspend by £56,000. A potential charge from the previous external contractor was allowed for which is not now due and overtime payments have been less than anticipated;
- d. **Homelessness** has a predicted underspend of £28,000 on payments for accommodation because of how staff are managing clients' needs;
- e. **Development Control Expenditure** is expected to overspend by £74,000 partly due to costs awarded against the Council at the judicial review of the planning decision on the West Wratting Camgrain Facility;
- f. **Development Control income** is expected to be £68,900 more than the revised estimate. This has reduced from the previous month as the high levels in December to February has not materialised in March;

- g. **Policy and Performance** will underspend by £13,000 as the Customer Service Excellence project assessment will now be in June 2011 on the recommendation of the external assessor;
- h. **Corporate Management** is expected to overspend by £61,500 because of additional provision for early retirement costs;
- i. The **Home Improvement Agency** is expected to overspend by £10,000 because fee income has not been as great in March as expected;

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- j. **Housing Repairs Revenue** is anticipated to overspend by £19,200;
- k. The **Building Maintenance Contractor** is predicted to have a surplus of £30,000 because of additional work done particularly on Change of Tenancies;
- l. **Supported Housing** is predicted to underspend by £50,000 because of savings achieved in the use of agency staff;

Capital

m. Housing Repairs Capital

Improvements in the programming of capital works and the achievement of meeting the Decent Homes target by December 31st 2010, meant the Council had spent most of its housing capital maintenance budget on essential areas such as:

- Heating replacements £655,608 (213 properties);
- Electrical rewiring £269,481 (227 properties);
- Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements £1,310,824 (304 properties);
- Re-roofing £86,312 (15 properties).

The Council has also prioritised the fast turnaround of vacant homes to ensure that they are available as quickly as possible to people on the waiting list and to maximise the rental income to the Council, making us one of the best performing landlords in the country. This is a demand led area of work and it is not easy to predict in advance how much money a property needs spending on it to bring it up to the standard for re-letting or how many properties become void at the end of each financial year. The predicted expenditure in February,

based on the overall spend on both capital and revenue void works, was £922,804, which was within the overall voids budget of £1,080,000.

- n. This year 86 voids were passed for payment in March at a cost of £313,696. The 86 voids turned around in March means that homes have been made available to 170 people on the waiting list. This final surge of void work led to a total overspend of just under 3% of the housing capital programme just below the 3% tolerance level.

This year was the first year that the maintenance programme has had to adjust to the reduction in capital funding from around £8M in 2008/9 to £3.5M in 2010/11. In that context the capital programme has been managed very well but further tightening of controls have now been introduced to ensure that the capital programme is managed within budget.

o. ICT Development

The revised estimate shows an underspend of £209,500. However, the majority of these funds will be used in 2011-12 for a PC virtualisation project that will result in ongoing savings.



Key Actions for 2011/12

Below are set out the 17 principal actions to be carried out during 2011-12 in order to achieve our vision and strategic aims.

We will provide excellent customer service through specific actions aimed at getting it right first time, led by:

- i) Enabling customers to use our website to access more information and services;
- ii) Putting in place 'tell us once' arrangements across services by identifying and eliminating unnecessary repeat contacts
- iii) Making it easier to access Council information and services by reviewing how customers contact us, and introducing new methods.

We will engage proactively with parish councils and local communities through the promotion of a more open section 106 system and explore the opportunities for local people to influence community priorities for funding by developers in light of forthcoming government policy.

We will take an inclusive approach to enhancing the quality of life for older people in our community through actions:

- i) within our Community Transport Strategy to identify need and access to Community Transport;
- ii) within our planning guidance to ensure appropriate design of new developments and open spaces;
- iii) arising from our programme of Equality Impact Assessments to eliminate age discrimination as an employer and service provider, and from the wider community;
- iv) with our partners, to enable more older people to live actively and independently within their communities - as a first step, to organise a workshop to bring together the needs of local voluntary groups and older people to plan for the growing older population.

We will encourage the development of existing, and the creation of new, sporting opportunities for all age groups:

- i) maximising developer contributions towards new sporting facilities to serve developments of over 10 dwellings;
- ii) working with dual-use sports centres, local clubs and partners to increase participation and signpost opportunities for funding;
- iii) working with partners to run specific events as part of the build-up to London 2012 and prepare to take advantage of the Olympic legacy for participation and economic development.
- iv) continuing to work with statutory and voluntary health and community partners to increase participation in sport and recreation.

We will work with our villages to ensure they are well prepared and more resilient in times of community need and local emergencies by providing training and guidance in the development of parish emergency plans which complement county-wide business continuity plans which are already in place.

We will work with local health and social care partners to ensure that the District Council's contribution to public health is recognised in the new public health arrangements, and that local peoples' health needs are properly addressed.

We will achieve a 65% recycling and composting rate during 2012 through the continuation of initiatives to make recycling activities as accessible and user-friendly to our customers as we can.

We will carry out a 'Pride in South Cambs' campaign to bring the community together and improve the environment for everyone, through the following specific actions:

- i) reward residents for positive work to maintain the attractiveness of their homes and local communities via a public competition for the best kept village, streets and individual gardens;
- ii) work with our County and Parish Council partners to develop a system to identify and remove unnecessary street clutter from our roadsides, which make areas less attractive and distract road users;

iii) help the district celebrate a traditional Christmas;

iv) celebrate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 through a flag-flying campaign and advice and guidance advising on protocol and issues relating to planning consent.

We will develop and implement action plans following the strategic housing and housing landlord inspections.

We will investigate further ways to develop recycling services for producers of commercial waste.

We will work with our partners as part of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and complete key actions within our Economic Development Strategy to:

- i) encourage jobs for local people through the use of our own policies and procedures;
- ii) look for ways to reduce unemployment and filling training and qualification gaps amongst hard to reach groups within our community;
- iii) create and maintain a favourable climate in which local businesses can start-up and flourish, helping to make sure that we attract a highly-skilled workforce and that there is no shortage of suitable space.

We will build our reputation as a 'business-friendly' authority by carrying out further actions to promote the district to new businesses, building on the local area's international reputation for excellence in learning and research to assist start-ups and grown-on companies especially in its very high calibre research and business parks. This will include hosting and enabling at least 12 business development workshops within the district.

We will build on the success of the first Step Up event for local entrepreneurs to organise a second event to seek and discover local start-ups with world-class prospects of success.

We will allocate specific funding of £150,000 to continue our support for businesses during the continuingly difficult economic climate.

We will build on our successful work with parish councils in the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership to complete key projects set out in our Climate Change Action Plan to contribute to the county-wide target for the reduction of CO2.

We will take advantage of the Government's Clean Energy Cash Back scheme to install appropriate renewable energy technologies within our housing stock and complete key projects from our Climate Change Action Plan to promote renewable energy generation tied to council assets and for the wider community.

We will work with parish councils and local communities, providing advice and support to encourage local ownership of environmental enhancement schemes, led by:

- i) further support to develop the successful Community Orchard initiative launched during 2009-10 and explore a similar scheme for community hedgerows;
- ii) a tree-planting campaign of long-lived and large species for the enjoyment of future generations and review of our arboriculture policies to ensure a wide range of species is planted including non-native specimen trees;
- iii) work to identify suitable areas for tree planting, landscaping and walking paths for public enjoyment and the protection of wildlife, including corridors of trees and other vegetation to connect existing woodlands;
- iv) work with local history and archaeological societies to identify and preserve sites of historical and cultural interest, including use of the Conservation award scheme.

Alongside and beneath these actions lie many supporting objectives that each service will be working towards in 2011 -12. The services have each produced comprehensive service plans, which consist of service overviews, together with improvement plans that show what new things each service will be doing to improve and innovate in specific and measurable ways.

Improvement actions and operational targets that enable us to measure our performance as a basis for continually improving it are set out in our performance management system and monitored by our senior management and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

For more information please contact the Policy and Performance Team on 01954 713366 or policy.performance@scambbs.co.uk