

CORPORATE PLAN 2009

Foreword

This Corporate Plan sets out our programme for achieving our objectives and meeting the challenges facing the Council in 2009/10 and the two subsequent years.

We have adopted a new Vision and five Council Aims to give direction and ambition to the development of the services we provide. Our Aims are set out in this Plan and we believe that they reflect what people are looking for from the Council. We want to provide first class, accessible services; show that we are a listening Council; and work with partners to create a safe and healthy place and opportunities for employment, enterprise and innovation.

We have committed to over thirty specific Council Actions which we will deliver in 2009/10 to make real progress on our Aims.

In 2009/10 we will also need to respond to the challenges facing the Council and the district.

In common with all other organisations and individuals, we are facing the effect of the economic downturn. We have done, and will continue to do, all we can to help local businesses and residents to weather the impact of the recession.

The most significant impact on the Council's plans has been the downturn in housebuilding and the implications for major new developments such as Northstowe. Working with developers and partners to adapt the development programme to the new economic situation will be a continuing challenge over the medium term.

Another major uncertainty going into next year is the decision on the future of our housing stock. We have worked hard in laying the foundations to enable tenants to take an informed view about the possible transfer the housing stock to a newly formed housing association, South Cambridgeshire Village Homes, in a ballot to be held early in 2009/10. There will be significant challenges in 2009/10 in implementing the ballot decision, whatever the outcome.

Over the last two years we have made great strides in improving the Council following an Audit Commission Corporate Governance Inspection in 2007. A re-inspection in February 2008 recognised that the Council had made some real progress although there was still some way to go. An Improvement Board was set up in 2007 to oversee and support our progress. The Board concluded at its meeting in January 2009 that the Council had now made sufficient progress to make its own way and the Board could disband. This signifies a major milestone in the Council's improvement journey and one of which everyone connected with the Council can be proud.

We are now well on the way to creating a Council that can move confidently forward to tackle the challenges mentioned above and focus on our core business of improving the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the district.

This plan provides the basis to enable us to make a real difference in 2009/10 and we call upon everyone connected with the Council to read the plan and contribute to its achievement.

Ray Manning, Leader of the Council
Greg Harlock, Chief Executive

1. Our Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan is a high level plan setting out our Council priorities and demonstrating our commitment to achieve them in 2009/10 and beyond. The corporate plan brings together proposals from various sources – including the Improvement Plan, service plans, the Sustainable Community Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy and other strategies and policies.

Each year the Council carries out an annual business planning cycle, starting with setting high level objectives in June/July; then continuing with service planning and budget planning in the Autumn; and ending with the final approval of budgets and service plans in February/March. The Corporate Plan is revised and rolled forward at the end of that process and reflects all the planning that has taken place before.

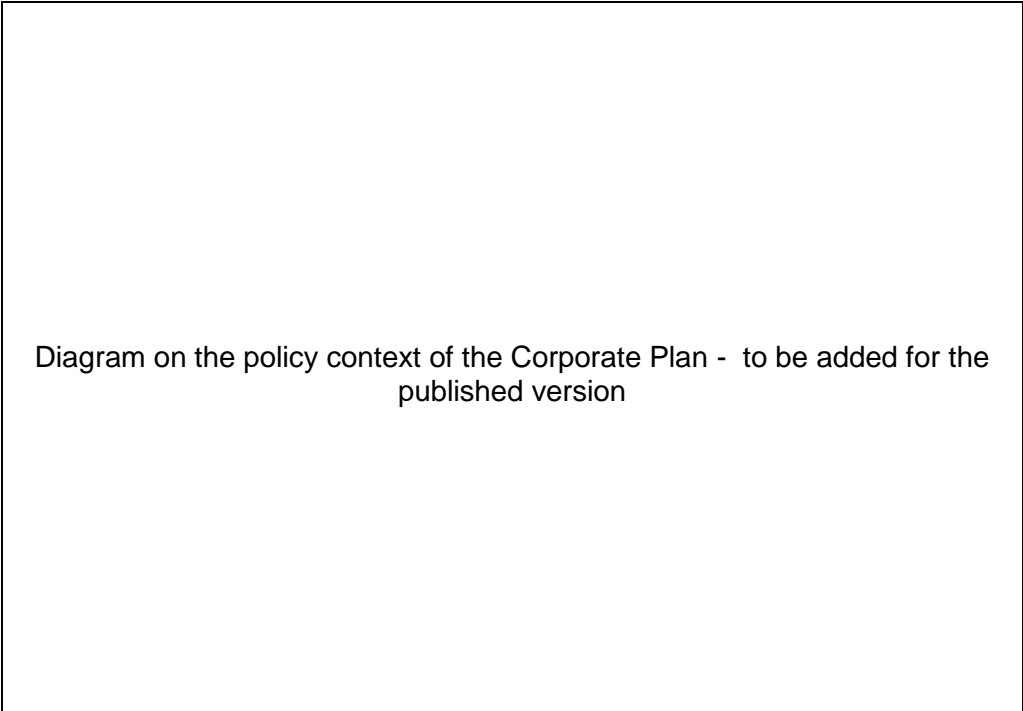


Diagram on the policy context of the Corporate Plan - to be added for the published version

2. Our Vision, Aims and Values

Councillors have developed a framework to give direction to the Council's long-term service delivery aspirations.

Our Vision:

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.

The following **Aims** set out how we will deliver the Vision.

Our Aims. We are committed to –

1. being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all
2. ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family
3. making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live
4. assisting provision of local jobs for you and your family
5. providing a voice for rural life

For each aim we have agreed –

- **Approaches** – which provide a framework showing how we will achieve our Aims
- **Actions** – which are specific actions which we will undertake to deliver the aims

These can be seen in more detail in Appendix 1.

The Council has also adopted Values to guide the way that we work and provide services to the public. The Values will help us work effectively together to achieve our aims. They govern every aspect of our working relationships within the Council, with the public and our partners.

Our Values.

- Customer Service
- A commitment to Improvement
- Mutual Respect
- Trust

We have initiated a programme to embed the values into the Council. We will ensure that we have a common understanding of what the values mean. Cabinet and senior managers will provide leadership on the values. Our aim is that the values guide our decision-making; our training and skills development; our relationships; and our processes and procedures.

Diagram linking Vision, 3As, Values etc – to be added for the published version

3. How have we performed?

Key Achievements in the Last Year. In 2008/09 the Council's objectives were:-

To Work in Partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future - our achievements have included –

- The Cambridgeshire Horizons partnership has become established as an effective vehicle for delivering sustainable growth in the sub-region, with joint development control committees for Northstowe and the Cambridge fringes
- A joint Urban Design team has been established
- Completions of affordable housing have continued despite the economic downturn
- The Orchard Park task and finish group worked with stakeholders to improve quality of life for residents and learn lessons to apply to future large-scale development.

To Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community – our achievements have included -

- The introduction of a new service for kerbside collection of plastics for recycling has been successfully introduced.
- Key stages towards the tenants' ballot on transfer of the housing stock have been completed – including consultation with tenants and other stakeholders; creation of the Shadow Board for South Cambridgeshire Village Homes; approval of offer to be made to tenants for stock transfer.
- Training on complaint handling has been undertaken and improvements have been achieved in the time taken to process complaints.
- Continued high performance of our Contact Centre which was ranked as the best public sector contact centre in a wide-ranging independent survey.

To enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work – our achievements have included -

- Using the Sustainability Innovation Fund for the Orchard Park housing development to deliver renewable energy technologies at the primary school (wind turbine and solar hot water heating) and run travel planning projects for residents
- Launching the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership to build local leadership and ownership in delivering savings in energy costs and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Securing high sustainability standards within the draft Section 106 agreement for the new housing development at Trumpington Meadows.

We did not achieve all our plans - progress was slower than anticipated in a number of areas – such as in equalities, developing a community engagement strategy and service reviews. Progress on Northstowe was affected by the economic downturn.

Performance Indicator Summary. The latest complete year where comparisons are available for national indicators is 2007/08. For that year –

- 26.7% of Council performance indicators were in the top quartile (25%) of district councils
- 52% of indicators were in the top two quartiles
- 21.6% of Council indicators were in the bottom 25% of district councils.

This represents an overall performance better than the average council. We are pleased that 65% of indicators had improved from the previous year showing an overall trend of improvement.

Some services are performing excellently and compare with the best nationally – these include Council Tax collection (99.1% collected); non-domestic rates (99.8% collected); recycling (with 53.2% of waste recycled or composted) and low levels of violent crime.

In other cases we recognise that we need to achieve more consistency or improvement. For example, the proportion of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks fell (second quartile), but for other planning applications the percentage decided within 8 weeks improved, although still in the third quartile. Burglaries and robberies have increased and we are working with the police and other partners to address this.

On the basis of 2007/08 figures, some housing indicators compare unfavourably with other councils (for example, in relation to homelessness, the percentage of homes which do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, and the time taken to re-let vacant housing). However, the Council has made significant improvements in homelessness provision and this will feed through into figures for later years. Great improvements have been made in the time taken to re-let vacant Council housing from 46 days in 2006/07 to a current level of 12 days, which would put the Council among the best performing authorities.

We also perform very successfully in areas not covered by national performance indicators. For example, we have an outstanding track record in our provision of affordable housing and preparation of local plans.

Our aim is to provide consistently first class services and we have adopted a Council Value to pursue a commitment to improvement. To support this ambition, in 2009/10 we will –

- Ensure that our new performance management system – CorVu – is used effectively by Members and officers to improve performance.
- Establish a Performance Management Group to take the lead in establishing a performance management culture within the Council
- Embed a management competency framework within the Council to develop performance management skills.

For 2008/09 onwards, the Government has changed the national indicator set. The Best Value indicators have been replaced by a set of National Indicators, which are focused less directly on the services we provide and more on the impact that we and our partners are achieving in improving quality of life. These new indicators will enable us to assess the impact of our contribution to the Sustainable Community Strategy of the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership and our contribution to the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement.

Satisfaction with Services. In the autumn of 2008 all local authorities carried out a Place Survey to find the views of local people on quality of life their areas. The results for South Cambridgeshire show –

- A very high proportion of residents (90.5%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live

- There are high levels of people who - participate in volunteering (33%); feel that they belong to their local area (64%); and feel that their area is a place where people of different backgrounds get on well together (82.5%)
- There are low levels of concern about anti-social behaviour, but only 27% feel that the police and other local services are doing enough to address anti-social behaviour and crime.
- 34% of people feel that they can influence decisions in their locality.
- Among older people, 91% are satisfied with their home and neighbourhood, but only 30% feel that they receive the support they need to live independently.
- 77% of people feel that they are treated with consideration and respect by local services.

The results show some real positives about the quality of life in South Cambridgeshire. We are disappointed that only 44% of people are satisfied with the way that the Council runs things (which is lower than previous surveys) and 33% feel that it provides value for money. Later in this plan we show what we are doing to maintain and improve value for money. We will consider the implications of the survey results and actions to respond to them, when national comparisons are available.

Other surveys have been carried out in the last year to assess users' satisfaction with our services. For example, housing tenants and the users of waste management, recycling and environmental health services have been asked for their views and have largely responded positively. We will look at the results in detail to see where we need to improve services.

Inspection and Audit. The Council has been successful in improving its score on the Audit Commission **Use of Resources** assessment for 2008/09. It has increased its overall score from 2 to 3. The detailed scores are as follows:

Element of Scoring	Score
Financial Reporting	3
Financial Management	3
Financial Standing	3
Internal Control	2
Value for Money	2

For 2009/10 onwards the existing inspection arrangements will be replaced by the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which will consist of two parts:-

- The **Area Assessment** will assess how well the County Council and all its partners are doing in meeting the needs of local people through the Local Area Agreement.
- The **Organisational Assessment** will assess the capacity of the Council to provide improving services - focusing on financial management; governance arrangements; use of resources; and performance management.

Our Progress since the Corporate Governance Inspection in 2007. Following the 2007 Corporate Governance Inspection, a re-inspection was carried out and a report published in March 2008. The finding of the report was that the Council had made "some real progress". The Council was said to have "well developed plans to build on its successes, but still have a long way to go". The report made three recommendations –

1. The Council must ensure recent improvements in political conduct and leadership are sustained, deepened and broadened

2. The Council must ensure that the process of improvement continues to aim for profound and sustainable change in the way it operates
3. The Council must ensure that, concurrent with improvements in processes and procedures, its policies and behaviours address the needs of, and promote the well being of, all sections of its community.

We have continued to make good progress in all these areas. For example -

- We have developed and strengthened leadership through the adoption of a “strong” leadership model. Cabinet has enhanced its leadership role by developing the Vision, Aims, Approaches and Actions which are the basis of this plan. Executive Member capacity has been improved through the Leadership Academy and mentoring. There has been emphasis on training for Members and a Member Development Strategy has been adopted and is being implemented.
- Scrutiny and Overview Committee has improved – through member training; the development of a more productive relationship with the Executive; and the successful completion of Task and Finish projects on Orchard Park and Financial Management.
- Senior management has been strengthened through the creation of an additional Executive Director post (with responsibilities for finance and support services). Corporate Managers and the Executive Management Team have developed their roles and effectiveness. Delegations have been reviewed and enhanced.
- Progress has been made in achieving cultural change. We have achieved Investors in People accreditation. The Council has approved Values and is working to embed them into the work of the organisation. Service planning has been improved, with over 200 staff involved in service planning away days and improvements to the quality and completion of plans.
- Level 1 of the Equalities Standard for Local Government has been achieved and good progress made towards Level 2. Equality Impact Assessments have been introduced; pilots have been completed; and a programme of assessments covering all services has been agreed and is progressing. A Gender Equality scheme and a new Gypsy and Traveller policy have been approved for consultation.

We are proud of what we have achieved. While progress has been slower than we would have wished in some areas (for example, equalities) we are now on course to make real progress in all areas identified by the CGI inspectors and we have firm plans to continue our improvement journey in 2009/10.

The Improvement Board was established in 2007 with representatives from a range of partners such as the Audit Commission, Go-East, the IDeA and Improvement East to oversee and support our post – CGI progress. After two years of meetings, the Board agreed in January 2009 to disband. The Board congratulated the Council on the progress made and felt that the Council was now in a sufficiently strong state to make its own way on its improvement journey within the normal audit and inspection framework.

4. Challenges for the Council in 2009/10

Working with Our Partners to achieve positive outcomes. The Council works with a range of partners in the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership to deliver improvements in quality of life. Partners include Cambridgeshire County Council, NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, businesses, representatives of parish councils, third sector organisations and others. In the last year the LSP has –

- Adopted a new Sustainable Community Strategy
- Provided funding of £1.6m to a range of projects from LPSA “reward money” (examples to be given)
- Carried out a review of partnerships.

The Council is also an active partner in **Cambridgeshire Together**, a county-wide partnership set up to develop and deliver the Local Area Agreement, which is a three year agreement with the Government to deliver stretching quality of life targets. Challenges for the next year include –

- Achieving challenging LAA stretch targets in areas such as:-
 - anti-social behaviour
 - adult participation in sport
 - community cohesion
 - provision of affordable housing
 - enhancing the ability of people to influence decision making
- Improving partnership work with parish councils through quarterly meetings; support for parish plans; and other means.
- Rolling out the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership to establish a network of up to ten parish councils delivering local projects to reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Delivering and Managing Growth. South Cambridgeshire is one of the government’s major growth areas and is identified for substantial development over the next 10-12 years. The plan is for the population to grow to 162,000 by 2016. This plan includes the new town of Northstowe with a projected population of 24,000 by 2025, the first town in a district which is currently made up of over 100 villages.

The Council has put in place a dedicated team to deliver the growth agenda and has joined the City and Cambridgeshire councils in joint planning and delivery arrangements.

The challenges for the next year and beyond include -

- Working with developers to bring forward development sites in a difficult financial climate
- Continuing to strengthen partnership arrangements with Cambridgeshire Horizons and local authority and other partners
- Ensuring that the needs of local communities will be met.

Supporting People through the Economic Downturn. The current global financial position has impacted upon residents, businesses and organisations in the voluntary and community sector. Even in a relatively strong economic area such as South Cambs many

people are affected by the recession. This is demonstrated, for example, by greater demands for services such as housing advice and benefits (a 32% increase in telephone enquiries to the homelessness team and a 22% increase in housing and Council Tax benefit claims). One of our 5 Aims is to provide and protect jobs. To address the situation the Council has -

- Set aside £150,000 to help people and businesses in the economic downturn during 2009/10 - for example by
 - funding specialist business support with Business Link or the Chamber of Commerce
 - freezing fees for taxi licensing, trade refuse collection and other environmental health services
 - publicise and review policy for Hardship Rate Relief to assist businesses at imminent risk of failure
 - Business Seminar/Workshop on surviving the economic downturn
- Lobbied Government departments to make a range of changes to support people and businesses through the recession.
- Set a target to speed up the payment of invoices to local firms
- Continued to work with Cambridgeshire Horizons, the County Council and Cambridgeshire Together to explore ways to use the Housing Growth Fund to bring forward infrastructure projects and stimulate housing growth

Work to address the economic situation and pursue our aim to assist the provision of local jobs will continue in these and other ways during 2009/10

Ensuring a sustainable future for the Council's Housing Stock. The Council's housing stock comprises nearly 5,800 dwellings, and over 1,100 garage units, spread over most of the 102 villages of South Cambridgeshire. There is a relatively high proportion of sheltered accommodation across 43 schemes representing approximately 25% of the total homes. There are also around 500 leasehold households.

The national framework for housing finance will make it increasingly difficult for the Council to provide to tenants the standard of housing service that we consider appropriate. Three quarters of capital receipts from the sale of Council housing and half of the rent that tenants pay is pooled nationally. This will prevent the Council from maintaining Decent Homes standard and otherwise provide the service that tenants rightly expect and place continuing pressures on the Housing Revenue Account. Such restrictions would not apply to a housing association.

The Council has set up the Housing Futures project and in the last year has evaluated the options available; informed and involved tenants; and established a shadow housing association, South Cambridgeshire Village Homes, which has prepared an offer which will be the basis for a tenants' ballot in May/June 2009 on whether to transfer the Council's housing to the new association or retain ownership by the Council.

Key steps in 2009/10 will include –

- Hold the tenants' ballot and make the decision on the future of the housing stock.

- If it is decided to transfer the housing stock, we will support the development of South Cambridgeshire Village Homes, arrange for the effective transfer of assets and functions to the housing association in a way which maintains services; and address structural and financial issues facing the remaining Council organisation.
- If it is decided to retain the stock, we will work to reduce costs and provide the best service we can to tenants within the reduced resources available.

Managing our finances to support our Aims. We continue to manage our resources and achieve value for money from them in order to deliver our Aims.

The Council's income stream is relatively low because of the low level of Council Tax (the 12th lowest district in England); the limited opportunities for other income given the nature of the district; and the low level of government grant. We also have spending pressures to meet the needs of a growing population. For 2009/10, the economic downturn makes the position more difficult as a result of reduced income (from the lower number of new houses to be built; lower income from planning and land charges fees; and lower interest rates)

We provide good value for money in that we provide services to a good standard (see How have we Performed?), but with lower income and spending than most councils. This fact has been recognised by the Audit Commission and our low spending position confirmed by an independent diagnostic report in 2007. We have consistently achieved year on year efficiency savings and have set a savings target of £325,000 for 2009/10. We will also be working to ensure that we address value for money on a more structured basis in our service and financial planning and use unit costs to compare our costs.

For 2009/10 the Council has set a Council Tax of £112.10, giving the following planned levels of expenditure:

Portfolio	Budget £m	%
Environmental Services	6.462	37
Finance	3.560	21
Planning Services	2.370	14
Housing (General Fund)	1.333	8
New Communities	2.490	14
Staffing, Communications and Policy	1.371	8
Support for economic downturn	0.150	1
Efficiency and other savings	-0.325	-2
Other (net)	-0.115	-1
Total 2009/10 General Fund Budget	17.296	100

Within this budget, provision of some £500,000 has been made for expenditure to finance our Council Actions for 2009/10 and to meet additional essential new costs

The Council has approved a medium term financial strategy for the period 2009/10 to 2013/14. This confirms that it will be possible for us to continue to spend at this level up to 2013/14 through the continued achievement of efficiency and other savings and through the use of £1m to £1.2m per annum from reserves from 2010/11. However, at some point, reserves will fall to a point where this is no longer possible.

In 2009/10 we will face the challenge of meeting our efficiency savings target and of planning for 2010/11 and 2011/12 with no planned provision for additional spending to finance new Council Actions or other unforeseen new spending pressures for that year.

The Council's **capital programme** covers expenditure on maintaining or acquiring new assets such as housing, community facilities and equipment. The table below sets out the planned programme for 2009/10:

Areas of spending	Budget £m	%
Housing	8.175	77
Information Technology	0.734	7
Community Services Grants	0.265	3
Housing Improvement and other grants	1.120	11
Conservation Grants	0.106	1
Other services	0.097	1
Total 2009/010 Capital Budget	10.497	100

The major aspect of the capital programme is housing; mainly on the improvement and maintenance of the Council's own stock. The programme is financed largely from capital receipts, however these are decreasing largely as a result of the decision by the Government to require 75% of housing receipts to be paid into a national pool. As a result the capital programme will have to be significantly reduced from 2009/10 onwards.

Engaging with the Community. From April 2009 all local authorities have a legal duty to involve local communities in all their functions. This includes the provision of information; consultation on policies and priorities; involvement of customers in deciding how and to what standard services will be provided; and the empowerment of citizens to take a greater part the design and delivery of services. Two of our Aims are to be a Listening Council and to provide a Voice for Rural Life. The Council already involves the public in a range of ways – including –

- Arrangements for public speaking at Planning Committee
- Involving tenants in the management of the housing stock
- The Agents Forum which meets to obtain feedback on the development control process
- Annual community safety consultation
- Holding Scrutiny and Overview Committee meetings in locations around the district
- Working with parish councils on clean up events
- Youth participation work
- Consulting local communities on proposals for growth areas.

In 2009/10 the Council will prepare, consult on and adopt a Community Engagement Strategy to build on what the Council already does and define priorities for further community engagement work. A number of Council Actions for next year also focus on community engagement – eg:

- Working with voluntary organisations to establish a relationship with hard-to-reach and vulnerable residents
- Setting up user groups of residents that will look at three areas of service delivery by 2010 to help guide service delivery in the future
- Setting up a forum of parish councils, housing associations and others to examine the workings of our exception sites policy

- Assisting parish councils to produce parish plans.

An important outcome of the Council's approach will be to achieve the LAA target to increase the number of people who feel satisfied at the opportunities available to influence decision making processes.

Improving Customer Satisfaction. Improving customer service and customer satisfaction are key elements of the Aims, Approaches and Actions. We want to provide first class services accessible to all. In 2005, the "Service First" project was initiated in order to drive improvement of customer service across the Council, and to embed and foster a culture of customer care. Much has been achieved since then –

- Customer service standards have been introduced and performance has improved against them.
- The complaints system has been standardised and publicised and complaints are now dealt with more speedily
- Customer stakeholder groups have been established for some services
- Customer service has been successfully promoted within the Council by participation in National Customer service week
- Our Contact Centre was ranked as the best public sector contact centre by an independent survey
- A range of service specific improvements have been achieved – for example the planning duty officer system; and the quicker processing of benefits and planning applications.

In 2009/10 Service First will take stock and review its approach and set long term goals to improve customer service. It will assess the Council against the national Customer Excellence Standard. It will place greater emphasis on developing a culture of customer care in support of the Council's values; and engaging with customer in accordance with the Community Engagement strategy. More emphasis will be placed on learning from complaints. The challenge will be to continue to improve customer service at a time of financial restraint.

Achieving Equality and Diversity. As an authority we are committed to delivering services to our diverse community and to developing a culture which values difference, both in employment and service delivery. In December 2007 we achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and we expect to achieve Level 2 by June 2009. We will then put in place a work programme to achieve Level 3 (which equates to Level 2 "Achieving" in the new Equality Framework to come into effect in 2009).

Equality is an important element of our Aim to make our services accessible to all and our Value of Mutual Respect. In 2009/10 we have a challenging work programme to embed equality and diversity within the Council and to build networks with external communities around equalities issues. The main tasks to be addressed in 2009/10 include –

- undertaking equality impact assessments for high and medium priority services
- building the Equalities Consultative Forum
- Agreeing a new policy to direct our work with the Gypsy and Traveller community
- Adopting a Gender Equality scheme and revising our Race and Disability schemes.

5. Delivering our Council Aims

Appendix 1 sets out in detail our plans for delivering each of our Council Aims in 2009/10 and a summary is given below.

Aim A: We Are Committed To Being A Listening Council, Providing First Class Services Accessible To All

The views of the local community are essential in enabling the Council to improve services in ways that meet the needs of residents and service users. In 2009/10 we will adopt a new Community Engagement Strategy and set up user groups to enable customers to guide service delivery. It is important that we meet the needs of vulnerable people within the community and we will be working with voluntary organisations to run a series of workshops to understand better the needs of hard to reach and vulnerable groups and how to make services accessible to them.

We want to ensure that the services we provide continue to improve. In 2009/10 we will run satisfaction surveys to assess how well the Council is doing and we will continue to focus on meeting high standards in key customer facing services such as those which receive and determine planning and benefits applications. We will look to how we can improve efficiency and the customer experience by identifying where avoidable transactions can be avoided or reduced.

Achieving value for money is a part of providing a good service. We have set a target of £325,000 efficiency savings in 2009/10 and we will use unit costs more effectively to demonstrate and improve value for money.

Aim B. We Are Committed to Ensuring that South Cambridgeshire Continues to be a Safe And Healthy Place for You and Your Family

Reducing crime and anti social behaviour are high priorities for our residents and in 2009/10 the Council will continue to work with the Police and other partners in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to reduce crime and fear of crime and to combat anti social behaviour.

South Cambridgeshire is already a healthy place to live, but we will work to ensure that all residents enjoy good standards of health by encouraging take up of sport and exercise, addressing obesity among the young; and working with partners to provide opportunities for sport and recreation and tackle fuel poverty for the most vulnerable groups.

Aim C: We are Committed to Making South Cambridgeshire a Place in which Residents can Feel Proud to Live

Pride in the area comes from such factors as knowing that there is decent housing for all, the needs of vulnerable people are being met; people from different backgrounds get on well together; our villages are clean; and the area is making its contribution to global environmental problems.

So, in 2009/10 we will continue to work to achieve high levels of provision of affordable housing as far as possible in the current economic downturn. We will adopt a new Gypsy and Traveller Policy to meet the needs of this significant ethnic community in the district and promote respectful relations with settled communities. We will also develop a Gypsy and

Traveller Development Plan Document developing a policy framework for the identification of Gypsy and Traveller sites and the policy towards illegal encampments.

The Council will take a number of initiatives to improve the cleanliness of the district such as running Community Clean Up events; improving litter picking on high visibility locations such as the A14 and A11; and enhancing street cleaning in 10 of our larger villages. We will adopt a Climate Change Action Plan and work with parish councils on schemes for renewable energy and low carbon living.

Aim D: We are Committed to Assisting Provision of Local Jobs for You and Your Family

South Cambridgeshire has enjoyed successful economic growth, but the current economic situation has emphasised the need for the Council to support economic development and jobs. In 2009/10 we will continue our plans to support local businesses and people through the recession. We will take into account the needs of businesses in carrying out our regulatory functions and in paying invoices promptly. It is planned to set up a Business Forum and introduce a series of Business meetings in order to gain a better understanding of the needs of employers. We will also explore potential benefits for the district arising from the 2012 Olympics.

Aim E: We are Committed to Providing a Voice for Rural Life

The district is a largely rural community and we will work to support village life and other features which give the area its character. We will engage with parish councils with more a new system of quarterly meetings and support them by assisting with parish plans. We will aim to protect existing villages and the countryside through conservation and promoting biodiversity. We will play our part in improving rural transport by developing a Community Transport Plan.

6. Enhancing our Capacity to deliver our Council Aims

If we are to successfully achieve our service delivery aims, we need also to ensure that the Council is working effectively as an organisation. For example, we need to ensure that –

- We have effective governance arrangements
- We have an appropriately skilled and motivated workforce to deliver the Council's aims
- There is an organisational culture which supports our Aims
- Finances are effectively managed.
- Arrangements are in place to manage and improve performance.

The Council has made real progress in all the above areas in the last two years. The challenge facing us is to maintain our improvement journey in a way which promotes cultural change and builds the foundation for continuous improvement in the years ahead. To do this we will build on the Council values and other initiatives started in 2008/09 and we will focus on the requirements of the organisational assessment of the new CAA.

Appendix 2 sets out key actions in 2009/10 to continue the Council's improvement journey, building on the progress made since the Corporate Governance Inspection.

7. Ensuring that we achieve this Plan and preparing for 2010/11

The plans in Appendix 1 and 2 will be developed into clearer actions and timescales and will be included in our performance management system. The actions will be monitored by teams, managers and Councillors through the normal reporting systems, with quarterly reporting to Executive Management Team and Cabinet.

Work will continue imminently to start the planning process for 2010/11 onwards, through reviewing our progress, considering the results of consultations, and developing priorities and plans which build on the Council Aims and Actions and other aspects of our policy framework.

ACHIEVING OUR COUNCIL AIMS What we will do in 2009/10

Aim A: We Are Committed To Being A Listening Council, Providing First Class Services Accessible To All

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

Approach 1: listening to and engaging with our local community

- Setting up user groups of residents that will look at three areas of service delivery by 2010 to help guide service delivery in the future **(Council Action)**
- Preparing and consulting on a Statement of Community Involvement on planning issues **(Council Action)**
- Consulting on and adopting a Community Engagement Strategy.

Approach 2: working with voluntary organisations, Parish Councils and Cambridgeshire County Council to improve services through partnership

- Working with voluntary organisations to establish a relationship with hard-to-reach and vulnerable residents **(Council Action)**
- Promoting an environment for a thriving third sector (NI 7, **LAA target**)

Approach 3: making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible

- Working with voluntary groups to provide information and advice at events in 20 villages a year by 2010 **(Council Action)**
- Actions to achieve 34% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (NI 4, **LAA target**)
- Bringing forward proposals for potential improvements to full Council meetings as a forum for meaningful participation as a “community event”

Approach 4: achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services

- Establishing a system of satisfaction surveys by May 2010, that will be used to improve all the services that we provide **(Council Action)**
- Establish systems for collecting data on NI 14 (avoidable contact) and identify potential areas where avoidable contact could be investigated and reduced.

- Assessing the Council against the Customer Service Excellence standard and using the outcome to draw up a plan to identify improvements required.
- Producing an annual report on how we have handled and learnt from complaints.
- Achieving improved performance against key customer service indicators –
 - Time taken to process planning applications (NI 157)
 - Time taken to process housing/Council Tax benefits claims and change events (NI 181)
 - Customer satisfaction with processing of planning applications (SP944).
 - Percentage of customers who feel they have been treated fairly (NI 140)

Approach 5: ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works

- Reviewing the current grant scheme by May 2009 with a view to reintroducing grants to talented performers, and promising competitors with an eye on London 2012 (**Council Action**)
- Achieving £325,000 of efficiency savings in 2009/10 and achieving targets on NI 179 (the total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains since 2008/09)
- Extending our use of benchmarking information to compare our costs and performance with those of other organisations - in particular in Affordable Homes and Revenues and Benefits.
- Produce, benchmark and investigate unit costs for key services and include in budget reports in order to demonstrate value for money.

Aim B. We Are Committed to Ensuring that South Cambridgeshire Continues to be a Safe And Healthy Place for You and Your Family

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

Approach 1: working closely through our Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to reduce crime and the fear of crime

- Carrying out a Fear of Crime and Public Reassurance Survey in 2009 **(Council Action)**
- Supporting the CDRP to reduce the serious acquisitive crime rate (NI 16, **LAA target**)
- Supporting the CDRP to reduce assault with less serious injury (NI 20, **LAA target**)
- Supporting the CDRP to reduce repeat incidents of domestic violence (NI 32, **LAA target**)

Approach 2: working with partners to combat Anti Social Behaviour

- Setting up an Anti Social Behaviour Working Group by May 2009 to report on key areas of concern and identify areas for resources to be targeted accordingly **(Council Action)**
- Carrying out a review by 2010 of the provision and effectiveness of existing CCTV in the District **(Council Action)**
- Actions to reduce perceptions of anti-social behaviour by 3 % points (NI 17, **LAA target**)
- Working with partners to increase the percentage of residents who agree that the police and local services are successfully dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues (NI 21, **LAA target**)

Approach 3: promoting active lifestyles and increasing opportunities for sport and recreation to improve the health of all age groups

- Increasing the number of residents taking up sport or formal exercise by 1.5% in 2009 **(Council Action)**
- Increasing young people's participation in positive activities through 400 new participants (NI 110, **LAA target**)
- Actions to reduce obesity among primary school children in year 6 (NI 56, **LAA target**)

Approach 4: understanding where health inequalities exist and focusing on areas of need

- Working closely with partners including NHS Cambridgeshire to identify and target key groups and provide increased opportunities for sport and recreation for the most vulnerable groups **(Council Action)**
- Supporting actions to reduce the prevalence of smoking (NI 123, **LAA target**)

- Tackling fuel poverty to ensure that reductions in CO2 emissions are achieved in the home and people live in warm homes (NI 187).
- In partnership with Cambridge City Council pilot Healthy Eating Award Scheme in South Cambridgeshire for completion by March 2010

Aim C: We are Committed to Making South Cambridgeshire a Place in which Residents can Feel Proud to Live

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

Approach 1: making affordable housing more available to local people

Approach 2: ensuring that affordable housing is in balance with the community

- Setting up a forum of Parish Councils, housing associations and others to examine the workings of our exception sites policy in light of recent experience and current market conditions (**Council Action**)
- Including an appropriate proportion of retirement homes and accommodation designed for the elderly in the affordable housing allocation of each new major development (**Council Action**)
- Achieving our target for net additional homes provided (NI 154, **LAA target**)
- Achieving our target for 398 affordable new homes (NI 155, **LAA target**)
- Achieving our target (85.4%) for the supply of ready to develop housing sites (NI 159, **LAA target**)
- Enable housing to be available to reduce delayed transfers of care from hospital through our performance on the completion of home improvements (NI 131, **LAA target**)
- Adoption and publication of the Affordable Housing SPD by January 2010.

Approach 3: achieving a sustainable future for the Council's housing stock

- Holding tenants' ballot on the transfer of the housing stock to South Cambridgeshire Village Homes
- (If it is decided to transfer the housing stock) supporting the development of South Cambridgeshire Village Homes, arranging for the effective transfer of assets and functions to the housing association in a way which maintains services; and addressing structural and financial issues facing the remaining Council organisation.
- (If decided to retain the stock) working to reduce costs and provide the best service we can to tenants within the reduced resources available.

Approach 4: working with local residents to promote community cohesion and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in the community

- Working with other agencies, adopt a revised Gypsy and Travellers policy by September 2009 (**Council Action**)
- Actions to increase the percentage of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together (NI 1, **LAA target**)
- Public participation on preferred GTDPD (Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document) options and sustainability appraisal report by November 2009.

Approach 5: extending and encouraging the use of recycling opportunities

- Extending plastic bottle recycling so that all villages and schools are served by 2010 **(Council Action)**
- Introducing further opportunities for businesses to recycle their waste **(Council Action)**
- Achieving a target of 55% for the percentage of household waste recycled and composted (NI192)

Approach 6: working to improve the cleanliness of our villages

- By 2009 establishing a programme of at least 10 Community Clean Up events per year throughout the District **(Council Action)**
- On top of our regular litter picks, improving the verges alongside the A14 and A11 by in depth Spring and Autumn litter picks **(Council Action)**
- Installing and emptying litter bins at our 10 dirtiest lay-bys on the major roads into and out of the District **(Council Action)**
- In addition to our regular street cleaning activities improving the appearance within 10 of our larger villages by increasing the amount of street cleaning that is undertaken **(Council Action)**
- Introducing our own Best Kept Village Competition **(Council Action)**
- Improving street and environmental cleanliness targets Litter 1%, detritus 30%, Fly posting 2%, and graffiti 3% (NI195)

Approach 7: taking account of climate change in all the services that we deliver

- Having a Climate Change Action Plan in place by 2010 **(Council Action)**

Approach 8: promoting low carbon living and delivering low carbon growth through the planning system

- Working with Parish Councils on schemes for renewable energy and low carbon living **(Council Action)**
- Reducing per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area by 7.3% from the 2005 baseline (NI 186, **LAA target**)
- Adapting to Climate Change – achieving Level 1 (NI 188, **LAA target**)
- Adopting and publishing a Sustainable Design and Construction SPD by 2010

Aim D: We are Committed to Assisting Provision of Local Jobs for You and Your Family

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

Approach 1: working closely with local businesses

- Setting up a Business Forum and introduce a series of regular Business Breakfast meetings in the District by 2009 **(Council Action)**

Approach 2: promoting economic development

- Supporting businesses to comply with the law while targeting those who flout it **(Council Action)**
- Promoting the development and uptake of business space already allocated in the District **(Council Action)**
- Supporting an increase in new business VAT registrations to achieve a county wide target of 101% of the regional average (NI 171, **LAA target**)
- Achieving 75% satisfaction level of businesses with local authority regulation (NI 182, LAA)
- Achieving 80% of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days (BV 8)

Approach 3: using cultural activities effectively to promote tourism

- Explore possible spin-offs from the London 2012 Olympics **(Council Action)**

Aim E: We are Committed to Providing a Voice for Rural Life

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

Approach 1: protecting existing communities, villages and the countryside

- Assisting at least three Parish Councils to produce Parish Plans from 2009 (**Council Action**)
- Improving local biodiversity by the active management of 45% local sites target (NI197, **LAA target**).
- Number of historic buildings at risk taken off the register as a % of all buildings at risk target 3 (SP903)

Approach 2: working more closely with Parish Councils and local Groups

- Introducing a new system of quarterly meetings to which all parish councils will be invited to send up to 2 representatives from 2009 (**Council Action**)
- Ensuring that each Cabinet Member attend at least three Parish Council meetings a year from outside their ward from 2009 (**Council Action**)

Approach 3: implementing planning policies to achieve successful new communities

- By May 2009 assessing the need for provision of new premises for small businesses (**Council Action**)

Approach 4: maximising planning gain for neighbouring communities

- [Currently no measures]

Approach 5: playing our part in improving rural services including transport links

- Working with other organisations to develop a Community Transport Plan for the District by 2010 (**Council Action**)

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF OUR COUNCIL AIMS - What we will do in 2009/10

Managing Finances

(Planning and using financial resources to deliver our priorities and value for money)

In 2009/10 we will –

- (a) Improve our arrangements for consulting the public on our spending priorities
- (b) Implement recommendations from the Scrutiny Task and Finish report on financial management – eg
 - Clarify/confirm future annual corporate policy and financial planning process
 - Closer working between accountancy team and budget holders
 - Controlling over/underspends
 - Linking financial and performance information
 - Financial training for Members
- (c) Agree and implement an action plan to maintain a score of 3 on financial management aspects of Use of Resources assessment.

Governing the Business

(Demonstrating the principles and values of good governance; managing risk; sound decision making; and delivering services that meet local needs)

In 2009/10 we will –

- (a) Develop Council Actions for 2010/11 which will take forward Council Aims and Approaches
- (b) Take up Member Leadership Academy places for at least four members in order to broaden the base of leadership potential within the Council
- (c) Implement the Member Training and Development Plan
- (d) Continue to improve and develop the Scrutiny function - by –
 - developing a full annual programme of issues for scrutiny
 - initiating at least two task and finish groups, involving non-scrutiny members
 - implementing the scrutiny role in Call for Action
- (e) Continue to engage with Members and parish councils in relation to the ethical governance agenda
- (f) Revise the Member and officer Codes of Conduct.
- (g) Make an annual report to EMT on the effectiveness of decision-making structures.

- (h) Deliver a programme to deliver the Council's commitment to eliminate discrimination and prejudice, and develop a culture which values difference – by –
- completing Equality Impact Assessments for high and medium priority services
 - establishing an Equalities Consultative Forum
 - Achieving Level 2 of the current Equalities Standard (Level 1, "Developing", of the new framework) and agreeing a programme to meet Level 2, "Achieving", of the new framework
 - adopting a Gender Equality scheme and revising the Race and Disability schemes.
- (i) Devise and deliver a programme to embed the Council's Values in decision making and other Council activities – by
- Running workshops with Cabinet and senior managers; key groups in the delivery of the values (eg Service First and the Equality and Diversity Steering Group); and other Members and officers to define behaviours which reflect the values.
 - Facilitating services in agreeing how they can embed the values
 - A programme to reflect the values in corporate processes such as decision making, training and development; etc
- (j) Further embed risk management within the organisation by the implementation of the CorRisk risk module.
- (k) Agree revisions to the constitution for the Council Leader to be elected for the remainder of his/her term of office (ie up to 4 years) and for all executive power to lie with the Leader of the Council (in accordance with recent legislation)

Managing Resources

(Managing people, natural resources and physical assets)

In 2009/10 we will –

- (a) Build on the achievement of IIP accreditation with a programme to continue to improve and secure re-accreditation.
- (b) Formulate and implement a programme to respond to the 2008 staff survey and carry out a new survey in September 2009.
- (c) Establish and extend the Management Competency and Learning Framework
- (d) Review and report on corporate succession planning
- (e) Carry out a review of the HR/Payroll function and agree an action plan.
- (f) Carry out the Job Evaluation scheme with a view to the implementation of a revised pay and grading structure by 1st April 2010

Managing Performance

(Managing and improving services; focusing on wider community outcomes; and ensuring capacity to deliver)

In 2009/10 we will –

- (a) Appoint a new Executive Director and a new Corporate Manager whose remit will depend on the outcome of the tenants' ballot on housing stock transfer
- (b) Continue to develop the staff appraisal scheme.
- (c) Launch the new performance management portal for Members and officers to provide a range of performance management reports
- (d) Put key actions and targets from service plans onto the new performance management system and arrange for effective monitoring
- (e) Establish a group to promote performance management within the Council.
- (f) Adopt a new Performance Management Strategy
- (g) Establish performance management notice boards in services across the Council