

# Corporate Plan 2010 - 2011

April 2010

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# FOREWORD

Welcome to our Corporate Plan, which sets out South Cambridgeshire District Council's Vision, and Strategic Aims for April 2010 – March 2011, the principal actions which underpin our programme to achieve them and the social, economic and political context in which we operate.

Our Vision was agreed 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, details of which are set out in the plan, along with the approaches providing 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, we have decided to retain the same Vision, Aims and Approaches for 2010-11.

During the past year, we've been working hard to carry out 32 key actions to deliver our strategic aims, and our plan sets out how we've performed against these indicators, as well as the successes we've achieved for the community in terms of services provided and an enhanced quality of life. For 2010/11, we've reduced the number of actions to 12, which we consider is a more realistic and achievable number given the severe resource constraints we are working under, constraints which themselves are explored in more detail in the sections of the plan providing the financial context.

We continue to operate in an extremely challenging financial environment, and have agreed a budget for 2010-11 and Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period to 2015 with substantial ongoing savings built in and limited new expenditure. It is to the great credit of staff that they have continued to provide excellent services in the light of reduced resources; we're sure that they'll continue to demonstrate our Values of trust, mutual respect, customer services and a commitment to service improvement in helping us to meet future challenges. With substantial and sustained public spending cuts anticipated nationally and local pressures created by an increasing population, the challenges will keep on coming. We're confident that, using the expertise of our staff and key partners, we can continue to meet these challenges, seeking to introduce different ways of working which maintain and enhance our service delivery.

We hope that staff, Councillors, residents, business and all other stakeholders will continue to provide the support and feedback we need to continue our development as a Council which is confident enough to celebrate its successes yet self-aware enough to acknowledge where further improvements are required.





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# 1. Executive Summary

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Corporate Plan for 2010-11 sets out our achievements during the past year and key objectives for the year to come. The opening sections set out the local, regional and national context within which we operate, identifying us one of the largest districts in England in terms of population, yet one of the least urbanised, as we strive to continue to provide quality services in spite of current and anticipated cuts in public sector spending and the challenges brought about by recession, growing demand for key services and internal restructuring.

The Plan goes on to set out our Vision and Corporate Aims, in each case identifying why we consider the aim to be important, what our approaches are, how far we have gone towards meeting the aim during 2009-10, and how much further we'll be going in 2010-11.



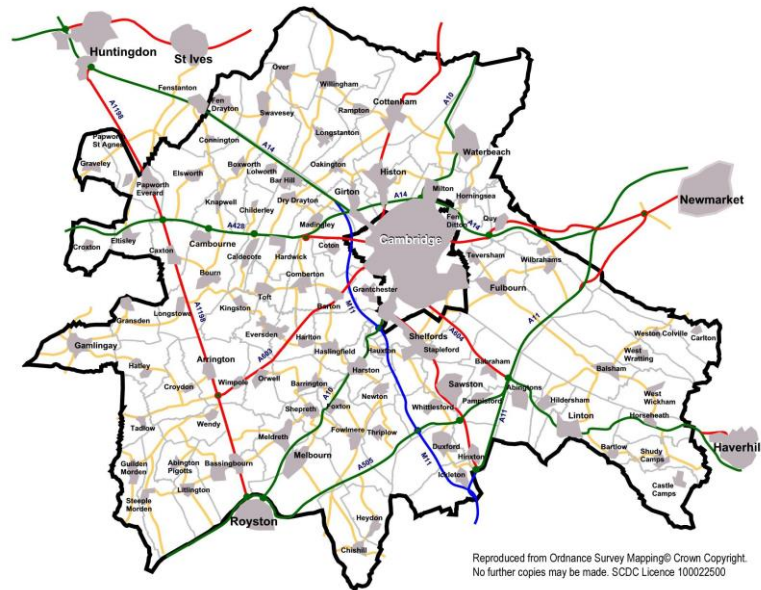


## 2. Who we are and what we do

### About the district

South Cambridgeshire District Council is large by district council standards with around 52,000 households and 139,300 citizens, living in a large, mainly rural area of 90,168 hectares. We are one of the largest district councils in England in terms of population, and the second largest in Cambridgeshire in terms of district and area. This is good because it means the Council has the capacity to identify changes and make them happen. Economies of scale also mean that services can be better over a wider range than for smaller Councils.

Our district contains over 100 villages but no towns (although the development of the new town of Northstowe will change this) and completely surrounds the City of Cambridge.



### Did you know?

- We cut grass in 96 villages during the growing season each year.
- We provide XXX litter bins throughout the district
- We sweep XXX streets – that's more than XXXkm
- We collect about XXX tonnes of rubbish from district streets every year. That's XXX sacks of litter every day.
- We empty the equivalent of XX million bins every year and collect XX million bins/bags of recycling
- Last year we removed XXX abandoned vehicles from local streets and we collected XXX old fridges for safe disposal
- We deal with XXX fly tipping incidents each year
- We grant aid repairs to 25 historic buildings a year giving particular support to community groups and charities
- We work with volunteer Tree Wardens in 70 parishes and fund 2,300 metres of hedgerows as part of local planting schemes
- Tourism generates XX million each year for our area and supports XXX local jobs
- Almost 6,900 district households receive some form of financial Benefit from the council
- The Council processes over 24,000 benefit applications and amendments each year
- We receive over 2,000 planning applications every year
- We manage 5,570 Council homes
- We carry out XXX inspections of food premises each year
- We deal with XXX pest control cases each year



## Organisational structure and governance

The district council is known as a 'second tier' council, which means that it provides some services directly, whilst Cambridgeshire County Council provides others, including highway maintenance, education and social care.

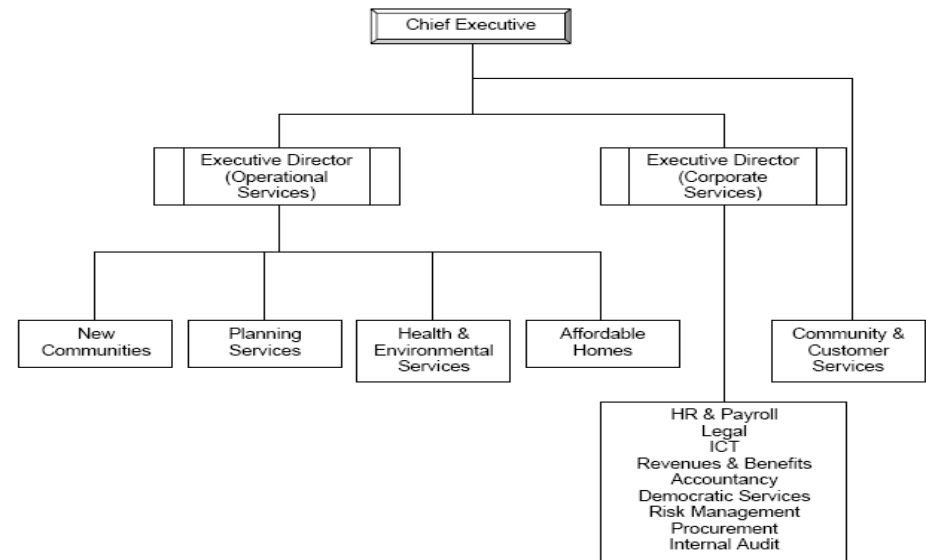
Our strategic direction is set by 57 elected Councillors, each elected to serve four-year terms of office. We have an executive Cabinet comprising the Leader of the Council and seven Portfolio Holders, to which responsibilities for our key direct and support services are allocated. As of April 2010 these are as follows;

- **Leader** - Partnerships Working (including: Local Strategic Partnership, Local Area Agreement, Community Safety)
- **Finance & Staffing** - Finance, Support Services (including Elections), Staffing
- **Environmental Services** - Environmental Health, Environmental Operations, Street Cleaning, Recycling, Licensing, Public Health, Private Sector Housing and Home Improvement Agency, Land Drainage
- **Housing** - Housing Strategy, Housing Advice and Options, Housing Landlord services
- **New Communities** - Development of New Communities, Planning Policy, Arts and Sports, Sustainability, Climate Change
- **Planning** - Development Control, Design and Conservation, Building Control, Economic Development, Transport initiatives (including Concessionary Fares), Procurement and Efficiency
- **Policy & Performance** - Policy Development, ICT
- **Northstowe** – Northstowe, Communications, Risk Management

The Council's officer structure is led by the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team of two directors, supported by an Executive Management Team consisting of five corporate

managers and the Heads of Human Resources and Legal and Democratic Services. The senior officer team helps to develop councillors' priorities; once they are agreed, resources are allocated accordingly to ensure that these priorities are delivered.

The Council's senior management structure is shown on the following diagram:

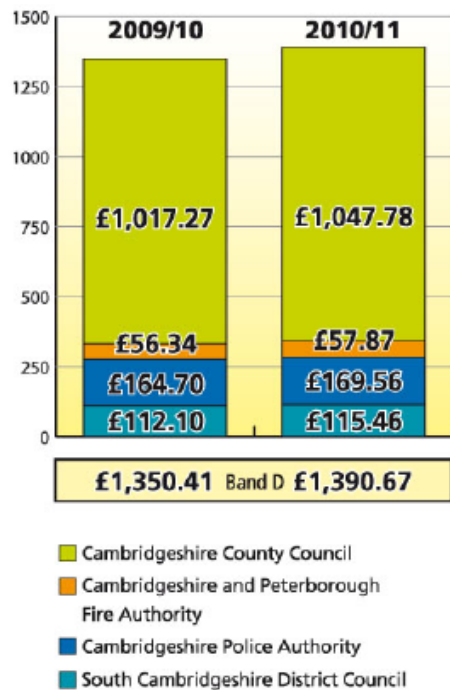


The Council has a Constitution, which sets out how we operate, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Developing and regularly reviewing our Constitution, to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, is a key aspect of our corporate governance. Of high significance also are our arrangements to identify, eliminate, manage and control risk effectively. We have a strategy in place, which seeks to do this in a proactive way in which risk management is integrated

into the Council's performance culture, and where we deal with risks in ways that maintain and enhance rather than damage our reputation. We have a corporate risk register in place which identifies the key strategic risks affecting the whole organisation, setting out the severity of the risk in terms of its likelihood of occurring and impact should it occur and including action plans to mitigate against particular risks where appropriate.

### Budget and Council Tax

Our services are paid for through a combination of government grant, income from fees and charges, use of our reserves and Council Tax. For 2010-11, the Council has set a Council Tax of £115.46 for a Band D property, which represents 8.3% of the total Band D Council Tax bill of £1,390.6.



Parish councils, which have set their own Council Tax, will increase this figure for residents for those parishes.

Our net General Fund (excluding the Housing Revenue Account – see below for details) budget for 2010-11 is £15.3 million, comprising gross spending of £52.3 million less income of £37 million. Of this £15.3 million, we will receive £7.8 million in government grant, use £0.7 million of reserves, leaving £6.8 million to be collected in Council Tax. Our expenditure will be distributed between services as follows:

Service	Gross expenditure £m	%
Corporate Services: Council Tax and Housing Benefit	29.05	52.5
Health and Environmental Services	8.06	15.4
Planning and New Communities	7.44	14.2
Corporate Services: Other	4.53	8.8
Housing General Fund	1.95	4.5
Community and Customer Services	1.28	2.5

The Council sets one of the lowest Council Tax levels for any district council in England; providing all our services costs the average tax payer just £2.22 per week.

We have had to make significant reductions in our budget for next year due to inadequate central government grant, reduced interest on balances and increased employer pension contributions. The financial context information in section 3 provides further background on the financial challenges facing us; however for 2010-11 we have made the following savings:

- £500,000 from restructuring legal, democratic and accountancy services, a new structure in IT and reduced spending on training and professional subscriptions.

- Combining Planning and New Communities in a single service to achieve management savings;
- Restructuring the New Communities Service to save £421,000, including cuts in staffing and in project budgets for arts, economic development and tourism;
- £425,000 savings in planning and building control in light of reduced levels of house-building, efficiencies through new systems and producing fewer planning policy development plans.
- £170,000 reduction in housing expenditure;
- £340,000 savings in Health and Environmental Services, including increasing income and fees for a range of services and revising the refuse budget in light of the building slowdown;
- £142,000 savings in Community and Customer Services from deleting vacant posts and reductions in project budgets e.g. equalities and diversity, partnership initiatives.

#### *Housing Revenue Account (HRA)*

The Housing Revenue Account is predominantly resourced by housing rents and charges for associated services such as garages. We receive around £20 million in income per year, which we use to repair and maintain our housing stock, support sheltered housing schemes and carry out grounds maintenance; however, most of this income, around £12 million, is paid to central government as 'negative subsidy' towards repayment of the national post-war council-house building debt. The HRA is under similar pressure to the General Fund budget in terms of its long-term viability, and the Council has agreed a substantial package of capital and revenue reductions, which are considered necessary to achieve balance, alongside strategic reviews of key services such as sheltered housing and repairs to ensure that we can continue to

provide high-quality services, but with much-reduced resources.

#### *Capital Programme*

The Council's capital programme covers expenditure on maintaining or acquiring new assets such as affordable housing, community facilities and equipment. The major portion of the programme is allocated towards the improvement of the housing stock; however, there are other significant items during 2010-11, for example £1.5 million for the new wheeled bin scheme. Total capital expenditure during 2010-11 is anticipated to be £7.6 million, a reduction from £10.5 million in 2009-10 due largely to a drop in right-to-buy housing receipts, compounded by a requirement for 75% of such receipts to be paid into a national pool. We will be reducing our capital programme significantly, to an estimate of £4.8 million in 2014/15, and will face more tough decisions on service continuity in light of this reduction as we move forward.

#### *Value For Money and Benchmarking*

The Council provides a wide range of services to a high standard which, given that our income and spending are lower than most councils (as recognised by the Audit Commission, and confirmed by an independent financial diagnostic report in 2007), demonstrates a value for money inherent in our services. Public perception of value for money can be lower than expected in this context, however, so we will be looking to carry out more in-depth analyses of the value for money provided by our services which will assess not only cost per head of population (actual and year-on-year), but also service levels, user satisfaction rates, the extent of external grant support and service performance.



A key aspect of our corporate value for money assessments will be benchmarking against comparable rural district local authorities and, where appropriate, other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. We already collect benchmarking information on a number of our key services, so we have a firm basis upon which to build a fuller picture. Some examples are as follows:

- In Affordable Homes, the national Housemark organisation assesses key areas of housing performance. Results for the first six months of 2009-10 saw us achieve the highest scores in the Eastern Region for the percentages of emergency repairs completed on time (100%), and the average time taken to relet properties (17 days). We finished second lowest in the region for the % of tenants with more than 7 weeks' rent in arrears against an extremely challenging target (3.89%), and for the target time in which we completed urgent repairs (5 days). The Tenant Services Authority sets national standards which all social landlords need to comply with by 2011. Benchmarking information will contribute to this assessment.
- The Accountancy Service within Corporate Services achieved a return of 5.61% on the Council's combined investments for the 2008-09 full year, above the average for the benchmarking club for Accountancy, Creditors and Treasury Management average of 5.36%.
- The SPARSE benchmarking group's value for money analysis of the Health and Environmental Services's waste and recycling performance (including recycling rate of 53.64% and an average of 451.77 kilos of residual waste produced per household) and the cost per head of the service (£26.71) identified the service as high-performing in relation to its costs.

## ***Staff/customers***

### *Workforce overview*

The Council employs 490 staff at its Cambourne headquarters, Waterbeach depot (Health and Environmental Services and housing operations) and at sheltered housing schemes throughout the district, though this number will reduce once major restructurings in key services have been completed in 2010. The Council has a strategic Workforce Plan which, when last refreshed in September 2009, recognised that, in order to ensure we continue to have the right staff to meet our aims, we need to achieve the following objectives:

- Enhancing leadership and management.
- Enhancing the skills and motivation of staff to meet the changing work environment and maximise performance.
- Flexibility and the ability to achieve organisational and cultural change to reflect changing needs.
- Working towards a workforce and structure that reflects the Council's objectives and future needs.

These objectives will be achieved through the completion of actions set out in the plan accompanying the Workforce Plan.

### *Customers, consultation and engagement*

Each of our services recognise that they serve a wide variety of internal and external customers, from legal services and HR providing advice and support for colleagues within the Council to the refuse and recycling service for whom all householders and many businesses in the district are direct customers. The definition of 'customers' can be extended to include visitors to, or those passing through, the district, our key partners, with

whom we work to provide services (for details see Section 3(b) below), regional and central government.

Improving customer service and customer satisfaction are key elements of our strategic Aims, Approaches and Actions (see Section 4 below), and we have an established Service First programme committed to monitoring performance and driving continuous improvement in our performance. We have made significant progress in improving customer service, examples of which can be found in the service plans; however, we are now looking to assess ourselves against the national Customer Services Excellence (CSE) standard, and have a corporate action to achieve accreditation by March 2011. The standard will provide an independent validation of achievement but, more importantly, will drive and enable continuous improvement, provide a tool for skills development and embed a customer-focused culture in which there is consistency of good practice across services.

Understanding our customers' needs and expectations in order to manage and meet them will be a key component on which CSE accreditation will be judged, and we already do lots of work to engage with the community on a variety of levels, from providing timely, clear and accurate information about what we do and don't do, to consultation on key matters such as the annual budget, surveys to measure customer satisfaction, procedures to learn from complaints and ways for the public to participate in our decision-making processes. Some examples of this are as follows:

- Agents' Forums for Building Control and Development Control, which are well-attended and have generated positive feedback;
- Excellent business satisfaction rates with regulatory services provided by Health and Environmental Services;

- A consultation exercise, carried out via the residents' magazine, on priorities for the 2010-11 budget, generated XX responses and was taken into account by the Cabinet when recommending agreement of the final budget to Council.
- The biennial tenants' survey, carried out in 2008, found that 82% of tenants were satisfied with the overall service they received, 83% with the way their landlord dealt with repairs and maintenance and 92% with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

#### *Place Survey*

All authorities are required to carry out biennial Place Surveys to find out the views of local people on quality of life in their areas. Our last survey was carried out in 2008, and the results showed:

- A very high proportion of residents (90.4%) satisfied with their local area as a place to live;
- High levels of people who participate in volunteering (33%), felt that they belonged to their local area (64%) and that their area was a place where people of different backgrounds got on well together (82.5%);
- Low levels of concern about anti-social behaviour, but only 26.7% feeling that the police and other local services are doing enough to address anti-social behaviour and crime;
- 33.6% of people feeling 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 showed some real positives about the quality of life in South Cambridgeshire. We were disappointed that only 43.5% of people were satisfied with the way the Council runs things (a lower figure than in previous surveys), and that only 33.1% felt that we provided value for money. This re-emphasises the need for us to pursue objectives to understand our customers to improve customer service, and to explore the value for money provided by our services in greater depth.

### *Equalities overview*

As an authority, we are committed to delivering excellent services to all segments of our community and to developing a culture which values diversity as an employer and service provider. We achieved the “Developing” standard of the Equality Framework for Local Government in 2008-09, and are committed to reach the next level in 2010-11, which will demonstrate that we are achieving positive differences for all our staff and customers. We have detailed action plans in place to pursue specific initiatives led by a programme of Impact Assessments of all our policies and services to identify positive and negative impacts in relation to the main equality strands of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability and (specific to the district given its demography) rurality. At the same time, we will ensure that these and other relevant initiatives are mainstreamed within our core service planning processes; addressing equality issues will be key if we are to demonstrate successfully that we have a full understanding of our customers’ diverse needs as a basis for addressing them effectively.

### **Self Awareness**

We are gaining in self-awareness as a council and, as part of this, we have an increasing understanding of our strengths and areas for improvement in the context of the many and varied external drivers impacting on the authority. Each service area

identifies, as part of their Service Plan, what they feel are the key strengths and areas for improvement relevant to their service. Corporately we are also much more aware of where we perform well and where there is scope to improve. Below are a few of the key areas:

#### (i) Strengths

- The Council has a clear Vision for what it wants to achieve and a set of robust objectives, plans and strategies in place to ensure that it does so;
- A highly-skilled and customer-focussed workforce, working effectively within and between teams and partners to deliver excellent services (evidenced by Investors in People accreditation, the latest Staff Survey, customer compliments and staff with nationally-recognised specialism)
- Excellent performance in service delivery e.g. refuse and recycling rate, planning policy framework, Council Tax collection rates, reduced housing void times.
- Pioneering work nationally to develop a strategic planning document committed to meeting the long-term accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller Community.
- Work effectively and successfully with key partners e.g. RECAP waste partnership awarded national Beacon Status recognition, joint planning arrangements to deliver major developments at Northstowe and around the Cambridge city fringes.

#### (ii) Areas for Improvement

- More effective information systems and inter-service communication.



- Greater and more visible use of performance data and community intelligence to review current service levels and plan future services.
- Greater understanding of service value-for-money beyond unit cost and low tax base.
- Corporate action plans to focus more clearly on measurable outcomes i.e. how did the action contribute to improving local quality of life for customers/employees?
- Improved performance in key areas e.g. determining planning applications within agreed timescales.

To ensure continuous improvement throughout the authority actions have been included in either the Corporate Plan or relevant Service Plans to address these areas.

### **Our services**

Key services for which each Council is legally responsible are set out in the following table, although there are many cross-overs and we're always looking to provide more services with our partners:

<b>South Cambridgeshire District Council</b>	<b>Cambridgeshire County Council</b>
<b>Environmental Health</b>	Children's Services including Education
<b>Housing Services</b>	Libraries and Heritage
<b>Planning – Development Control and Strategic Policy</b>	Adult Social Care
<b>Community Development and Community Safety</b>	Roads and Traffic
<b>Waste Collection</b>	Waste Disposal
<b>Building Control</b>	Strategic Planning
<b>Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates</b>	Trading Standards
<b>Council Tax and Housing benefit</b>	
<b>Elections</b>	

We have established five service areas, within which all our operational and support functions are carried out. Examples of the services they provide include;

### **Affordable Homes**

- Improves the supply of affordable homes
- Manages 5,570 Council homes.
- Provides housing advice and support for homeless people.

### **Health and Environmental Services**

- Collects waste and recycling from 59,000 households;
- Cleans streets, deals with abandoned cars, clears and investigates fly-tipping;
- Makes sure food premises are clean and safe and makes this information readily available to customers;
- Advises on enforcing health and safety at work;
- Deals with pollution and offers pest control services;
- Licenses taxis, public entertainment and the sale of alcohol.

### **Planning and New Communities**

- Considers planning applications, deals with developments without planning permission and building control.
- Conserves our environment and buildings;
- Develops planning policy to shape the future of the district;
- Develops the local economy
- Plans for major developments;
- Supports local tourism, arts and sports development;
- Works towards a sustainable South Cambridgeshire;
- Building Control

## ***Community and Customer Services***

- Works with local people and partners to co-produce strong, safe and sustainable communities.
- Works to ensure the Council is held in high repute by the community and is valued for the services it delivers. Ensuring Members and staff are well informed of the key information they want and need to carry out their roles effectively.
- Supports the democratic process by administering elections efficiently and measures to make voting and voting registration easier and accessible to all.
- Provides a central policy resource providing annual service planning and helping to improve performance.
- Equality and Diversity.

## ***Corporate Services***

- Increases customer access and develops smarter ways of working through technology and partnerships;
- Provides support for people needing help with Housing and Council Tax benefits;
- Collects Council Tax and Business Rates;
- Provides support services for the Council: Human Resources, Accountancy, ICT, Legal and Democratic Services, Procurement support and risk management



# 3. The Context for Our Plan

## Opportunities and challenges facing South Cambridgeshire

In order to carry out our functions and provide services to meet the current and developing needs of the community, we need to be constantly aware of the environment in which we're operating. The key influences and challenges on service delivery across the organisation can be categorised under the following interlinked headings:

### (i) Political and legislative

- Following the General Election in 2010, there are likely to be significant implications for this Council, and indeed the whole of local government, in terms of central funding (see over Economic factors in section (ii) below), assessment and inspection regimes e.g. the potential abolition or replacement of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and policy frameworks e.g. the regional planning strategy.
- We envisage substantial changes to service delivery arising both from known and current government policy, and from changes in direction and priority that any new government may pursue. Examples include a new regulatory framework for inspecting services for our housing tenants, ongoing changes to employment legislation, a review of the 2003 Licensing Act in terms of powers to review licences at premises causing concern and changes to planning law regarding the need for planning permission.

- South Cambridgeshire District Council elects its Councillors by thirds. This means that 19 of our 57 seats will be up for election in May 2010. There may be changes to the political make-up of the Council resulting from this election, which may lead to changes in political priorities and direction within the organisation.
- The Council relies on its key partners to progress major infrastructure projects, for example the A14 improvement programme and Cambridge-Huntingdon Guided Busway. Failure to complete these projects within agreed timescales will be likely to have negative consequences for our ability to secure sustainable and successful growth.

### (ii) Economic / Financial resources

The effects of the recent recession have, and will continue to have, a considerable effect upon the organisation and community in terms not only of the recessionary effect on the economic and social well-being of residents and the sustainability of local businesses and organisations, but also a significant impact on the Council's financial position arising from current and future public spending cuts and the consequent need to provide services more efficiently. The recession has led, for example, to rising unemployment and therefore demand on key Council services such as housing and benefits, whilst the reduced number of housing completions is having to be managed through the Council's planning policy framework.



The Council has agreed a package of ongoing annual General Fund savings totalling £2.2 million, which have been built in to its Medium Term Financial Strategy. The strategy also reflects the Council's status as a low taxing authority, which will be unable to substantially increase income through this means due to current government policy. The government's financial settlement for 2010-11 provided the Council with a cash increase of 0.5%, which has been incorporated into a balanced annual budget. In future years, however, the national public sector spending deficit amounting, at 18 March 2010, to £94.7 billion (Office of National Statistics), has led to assumptions that future levels of government grant will reduce, in cash terms, by 1.2% in 2011/12, 1.1% in 2012/13, 0.6% in 2013/14 and 0.5% in 2014/15. The Council continues to make representations seeking a fairer distribution of central government funding; however, the search for new and innovative ways of service design and delivery to maintain quality and satisfaction whilst reducing cost must be explored in this national financial context.

(iii) *Social and demographic*

In spite of the recent economic downturn and its effects on house-building and progress in bringing forward the major growth sites within the district, South Cambridgeshire remains designated as one of the government's growth areas. It is estimated that the population will grow to 169,800 by 2021, led by the new town of Northstowe, whose population is expected to rise to 24,000. The creation of the district's first town in a rural area of over 100 villages will bring specific longer-term social and demographic challenges arising from an urban environment; in the shorter term, population growth will cause demand to increase for many of our services, including refuse collection, Council Tax administration

and community facilities. As referred to in section (2) above, a key objective of the Planning and New Communities Service will be to ensure that the needs of this growing population are met through appropriately-planned and delivered developments.

The district has an ageing population, as the percentage of people aged 65 or above is expected to rise from 14.8% in 2001 to 23.5% in 2021, whilst the percentage of children and young people is forecast to decrease from 25% to 22.6% over the same period. There are areas within the district which are not likely to follow this trend, notably Cambourne, which has a younger population (74.3% of residents of Bourn ward are aged 0 – 44, compared to 56.1% for the district as a whole) and birth rate (to March 2009 of 24.1 per 1,000 population) which is double the national average and comparable to several countries in the developing world.



There is little deprivation within the district, with the area ranked 5<sup>th</sup> least deprived in England using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. However this relative affluence brings with it specific challenges, especially around the affordability of housing and the fear of crime in relation to actual levels. Further work in being carried out to investigate the spatial distribution of deprivation and inequality across the district.

The Gypsy and Traveller population is the largest ethnic minority population in the district, estimated at 1,330 people and 1% of the population (Source: Sub-Regional Travellers Need Assessment survey, 2006) and is also



anticipated to increase. Migration is becoming a major factor in South Cambridgeshire, with a net in-migration from the rest of the UK with a younger age profile. Both these hard-to-reach groups have specific needs in terms of general access to services and the availability of specific support to meet these needs in key areas such as affordable housing, site allocation and building positive community relations.

Many South Cambridgeshire District Council services have a crucial role to play in protecting children and young people, and in shaping their lives. Child Protection legislation places an obligation on all local authorities to safeguard from harm all children and young people under the age of eighteen irrespective of ability, family background, sexuality, lifestyle, religion, belief or culture. To meet this obligation South Cambridgeshire District Council must ensure that adequate policies and procedures are in place to guide elected members, staff and volunteers who come into contact with children and young people during their work with the Council.

Whether elected members, staff or volunteers are directly working with children or have minimal contact as a result of other duties, the individual concerned will be in a position of trust. This requires individuals to place the welfare of children and young people first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them.

Compliance with policy and guidelines will also help elected members, staff and volunteers to avoid or manage situations where they may be subject to unfounded allegations whether mistaken or malicious. With the above in mind, South Cambridgeshire District Council reviewed its Safeguarding Children Policy in 2009. A copy is available on request or on [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk).

(iv) *Technological*

The district is home to the Cambridge Science Park, upon which a number of organisations at the forefront of technical development are based. Many of our residents are highly IT-literate and demand for Internet services continues to grow. At the same time, we must not exclude those residents who for a variety of reasons cannot access the Internet or communicate by e-mail. We will need to take account of the increasing use of social networking mediums in our communications, and, in the context of high-profile national scandals, adapt our systems to ensure the safety and reliability of the information we hold.

(v) *Environmental*

The urgent requirement to mitigate the effects of climate change through the introduction of robust measures to reduce carbon emissions, and to enable communities



to adapt to the impacts which are already being, or will shortly be, felt are particularly prevalent in South Cambridgeshire, which is predominantly a low-lying area particularly susceptible to rising sea levels and consequent in-land flooding. The Council has established a Councillor Working Group, and has dedicated resources within the New Communities Service, to keep abreast of emerging international and national policy and thinking, and is working to

implement a wide-ranging action plan containing key mitigation and adaptation measures.

As above, key elements of these mitigation measures will be achieved through sustainable development overseen by the Planning and New Communities service.

### **Our Key Partners and Partnerships**

The Council works with a number of other organisations to achieve positive outcomes for its residents and service users; given the current and anticipated constraints brought about by public spending cuts, it is even more imperative that we work closely with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver services in more streamlined and joined-up ways. To this end, a number of our local partners have embarked upon the 'Making Cambridgeshire Count' programme which is conducting a strategic audit of public service expenditure across the county with a view to identifying projects which will achieve closer and more efficient working. South Cambridgeshire DC has committed to supporting specific projects for which sound business cases can be made demonstrating tangible improvements in the way we provide services for our residents and other key stakeholders.

The Council has in place many strategic and operational partnerships, which are recorded in a central register that categorises the most significant in terms of their contribution to our strategic aims, financial or income-generating commitments and extent of functions being carried out. The register also allows for us to assess the effectiveness of each partnership to ensure that each continues to be fit-for-purpose in terms of their aims, objectives and governance arrangements. The most significant partnerships have been identified as follows:

- **Cambridgeshire Together** – This county-wide partnership, led by the Cambridgeshire County Council, oversees the three-year Local Area Agreement (2008-2011), negotiated with the Government, to deliver stretching quality of life targets. These targets contribute to the achievements of our strategic aims (for further details see Section 4 below)
- **Cambridgeshire Public Service Board** – Public sector chief executive officers provide a county-wide overview of public services to identify improvements through shared working and resources and blockages to excellent performance to enable targeted intervention where necessary.
- **Managing Growth Partnership (Cambridgeshire Horizons Board)** – Ensures that growth projects are delivered on time, on budget and to the highest possible standard and makes key decisions relating to Cambridgeshire Horizons, the Local Delivery Vehicle for the county.
- **South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)** – Works with a number of key partners within the district, including the county council, police, NHS and Fire and Rescue service to achieve improvements in quality of life for those living, working and visiting the district through the implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The LSP will be merging with the Cambridge City Council's LSP in April 2010 in order to ensure a joined-up approach based on shared resources and outcomes.



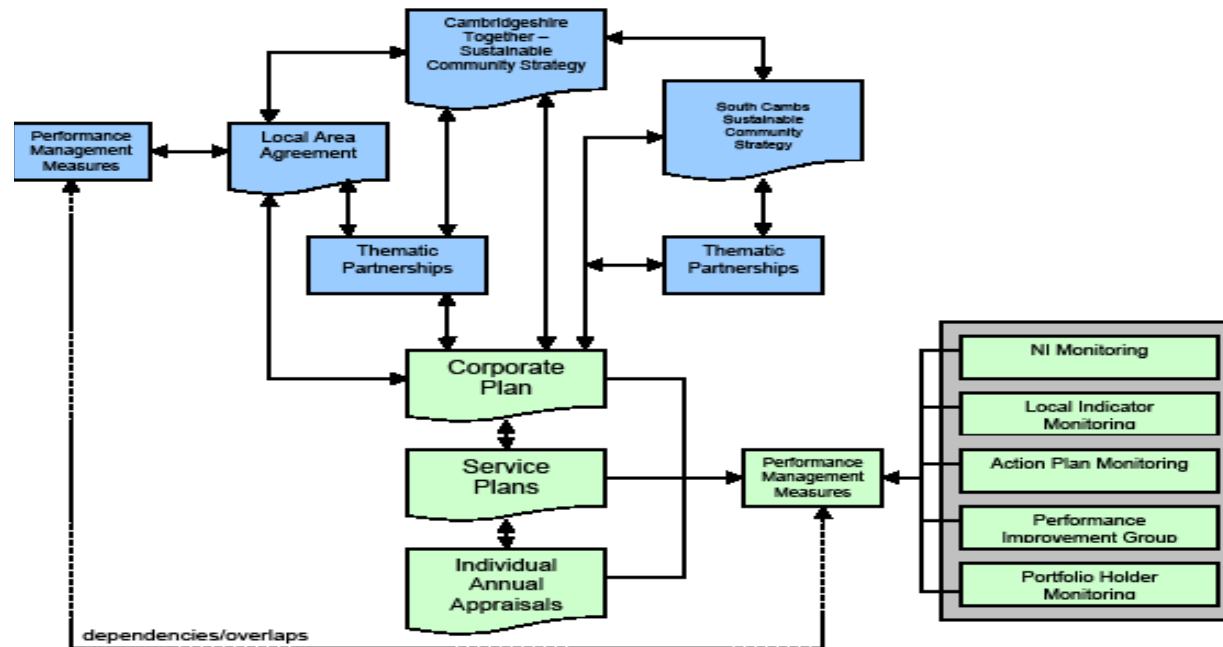


- ***Community and Wellbeing Partnership (incorporating Supporting People)*** - Government programme covering supported housing schemes and housing support services to vulnerable people in their own homes.
- ***Cambridge Sub-Regional Housing Board*** – Works to ensure that regional housing growth targets are met.
- ***Childrens Trust*** – County Council led partnership which works to improve outcomes for children and young people in Cambridgeshire so that every child achieves their potential.
- ***South Cambridgeshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP)*** – Works with local agencies to reduce crime and the fear of crime through the agreement, implementation and monitoring of a three-year Rolling Plan.
- ***Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)*** - The GCP brings together the public, business and community sectors in and around; its Vision is to realise the potential of Greater Cambridge as a world-class economic area.
- ***Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee (JSGIC)*** - provides a strategic forum for the district, city and county councils, with Cambridgeshire Horizons, an agency set up in 2004 to oversee growth in the whole of Cambridgeshire, to explore issues to ensure that the growth agenda is driven forward in an integrated, coherent and consistent manner.
- ***Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Waste Partnership (RECAP)*** – Works to achieve sustainable waste management through a long-term strategy to 2022.
- ***Safer and Stronger Communities Board*** – Agrees priority themes for the Safer and Stronger Communities element of the Cambridgeshire Together partnership (see above).

## 4. Council Objectives – Vision, Aims, Approaches and Actions (‘Three As’)

The introduction in Section (1) above 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.

The framework set out below sets out how these and other key elements of the Council fit together, whilst this section sets out in detail our five strategic aims, together with approaches and actions we are pursuing in order to meet them.



The Council has a hierarchy of documents and plans that are the building blocks of our service delivery chain. At each level within the chain linkages exist to the Council's overall budget process, its risk management process, its performance management framework and the overall policies and objectives of the Council.

Critical within this delivery chain process is a **golden thread**, which binds the following key plans and policies;

- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Corporate Plan
- Local Development Strategy (LDF)
- Asset Management Plan
- Capital Strategy
- Data Quality Strategy
- Risk Management Policy & Strategy
- Procurement Strategy
- Service Plans
- Performance Management Framework
- Workforce Plan
- Training and Development Strategy

The following aims set out how we will deliver the vision.

**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**

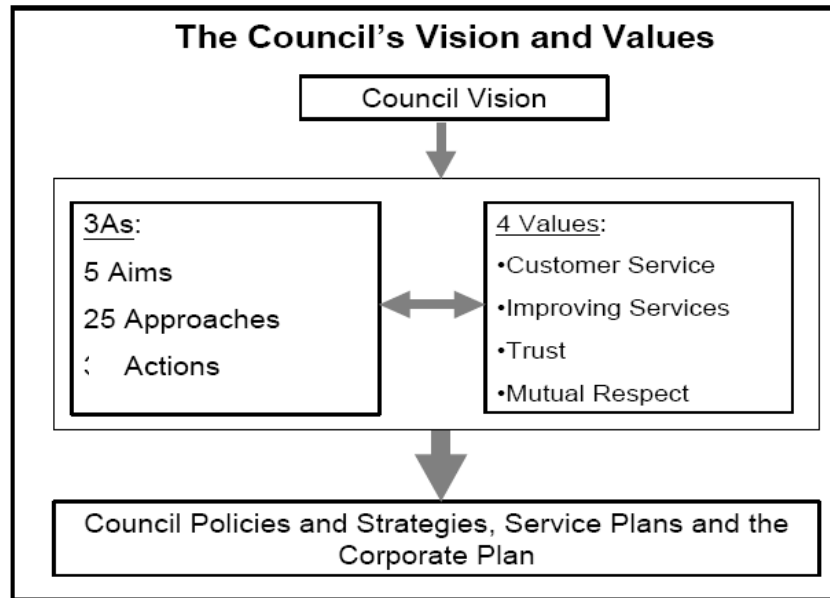
For each aim we have agreed –

**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.

The aims and approaches were initially agreed in November 2008, before being reviewed and reconfirmed in September 2009, informed initially by public consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). We have ensured, in conjunction with our partners that the Three A's complement the objectives of the SCS and Local Area Agreement, and vice versa.

The Council has also adopted Values to guide the way that we work and provide services to the public. They govern every aspect of our working relationships within the Council, with the public and our colleagues in other organisations. The Values and how they complement our vision are shown in the diagram below.



- Commitment to partnership working
- A listening council with a commitment to consultation
- Community focus and responsiveness
- Commitment to equality
- Effective communications
- Good employment practices
- Commitment to sustainability in medium and long term plans
- Demonstrable capability to improve
- Demonstrable ability to meet ambitions

The council is working to achieve excellence in local service delivery based on the following characteristics:

- Sound corporate governance arrangements
- Prudent financial management and controls
- Quality council services for a low council tax
- Quality service provision particularly where these tie in with priority areas
- Effective resource allocation
- Improved performance management systems
- A developing risk management culture

In 2009/10 we had 32 key actions to deliver these aims. Performance against these specific actions and further achievements is detailed in the following pages however in summary we are pleased to report that **ALL** actions were achieved in 2009/10.

## **AIM A – We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all**

### ***Why is this important?***

If we're to meet the needs and manage the expectations of all sections of the community, we need to listen to their views, taking particular care that the voices of the minority, and of hard-to-reach groups, particularly those of young people and the Gypsy and Traveller community, are taken into account in our policy and service planning.

### ***How does it complement the objectives of our Sustainable Community Strategy?***

Creating and maintaining a listening Council which works effectively with its partners is a crucial prerequisite, without which, we will be unable to fulfil our role as a lead community partner and would not be able to deliver positive outcomes based on the needs of the community.

### ***What are our approaches to achieving this aim?***

- Listening to, and engaging with, our local community;
- Working with voluntary organisations, Parish Councils and the Cambridgeshire County Council to improve services through partnership;
- Making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible;
- Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services;
- Ensuring the Council achieves value for money in the way it works.

### ***What Key Actions did we complete to achieve this aim during 2009-2010?***

- Set up user groups of residents looking at *XXXX check which* areas of service delivery....*feedback from user groups?*
- Prepared and consulted on a Statement of Community Involvement as part of the Council's Local Development (planning policy) Framework (LDF).
- Provided funding to the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services to fund research, in conjunction with other voluntary sector organisations to identify 'seldom heard voices' e.g. migrant workers, Gypsies and Travellers, carers, as a basis for meaningful engagement with these groups.
- Worked with voluntary groups to provide information and advice at events in 20 villages
- Reviewed our current grants scheme to reintroduce grants for talented performers and promising competitors.

### ***What were our other significant achievements against this aim during 2009-10?***

- Successfully ran district, parish and European elections, meeting or exceeding all Electoral Commission performance measures;
- Worked with the Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau to pilot an advice kiosk in Sawston.
- Won a prestigious award for our work in scrutiny on the Orchard Park community and shortlisted for a national award for improving standards of conduct by Councillors.
- Put in place a system for collecting data on customer contacts with us which could be avoided e.g. progress-

chasing, duplicate calls, and achieved performance ahead of government target.

- Carried out a survey of our Housing Tenants, which received a 40% response rate.

***What Key Action(s) will we take to achieve this aim during 2010-11?***

- We will achieve Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation by 31 March 2011;
- We will sign up to the Member Development Charter to enable Members to develop the skills to meet new challenges for local government.
- We will review and restructure the Housing 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.



## **AIM B – We are committed to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family**

### ***Why is this important?***

South Cambridgeshire has comparatively low levels of crime, and the last Place Survey (2008) revealed low percentages of people who perceived anti-social behaviour-related issues such as drunken rowdiness and drug abuse to be problems in their localities. Nevertheless, when consulted as part of the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy, many listed crime and anti-social behaviour as top priorities for action.

The Council continues to focus on its fundamental role in improving public health through participation in a wide variety of initiatives to achieve a fit and healthy community which eats well, participates in regular exercise and is in good physical and mental health.

### ***How does it complement the objectives of our Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)?***

This aim is directly complementary to the following key SCS objectives:

- Active, healthy and inclusive communities where residents can play a full part in community life, with a structure of thriving voluntary and community organisations
- Safe and clean communities where residents do not feel vulnerable or isolated and do not fear crime or anti-social behaviour.

### ***What are our approaches to achieving this aim?***

- Working closely through our Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to reduce crime and the fear of crime;
- Working with partners to combat anti-social behaviour.
- Promoting active lifestyles and increasing opportunities for sport and recreation to improve the health of all age groups;
- Understanding where health inequalities exist and focussing on areas of need.

### ***What did we do to achieve this Aim during 2009-2010?***

- Carried out a Fear of Crime and Public Reassurance Survey;
- Set up an Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group reporting on key areas of concern, and identifying areas for resources to be targeted accordingly.
- Review the provision and effectiveness of CCTV in the district.
- Increased the number of residents taking up sport or formal exercise by 1.5% in 2009;
- Identified and targeted key groups to provide increased opportunities for sport and recreation for the most vulnerable groups (*details required!*)

### ***What were our other significant achievements against this aim during 2009-10?***

- Oversaw the handover of the community centre and play facilities to the newly-established Orchard Park Community Council;
- Held Street Football sessions attended by over 1,000 people;

- Established 26 new 'no cold calling' zones in the district
- Staged Olympics Countdown event at Milton Country Park in August 2009.

***What Key Action(s) will we take to achieve this aim during 2010-11?***

- We will increase the number of teenagers taking part in positive activities by 500 on the 2009/10 total during 2010/11

## **AIM C – We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live**

### ***Why is this important?***

Pride in the area is a key indicator that the area is providing decent housing for all, meeting the needs of vulnerable people, has clean villages and verges, provides an environment in which people from different backgrounds get on well together and contributes to tackling climate change, therefore it is something to which we must aspire as a Council.

### ***How does it complement the objectives of our Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)?***

This aim complements the following key SCS objectives:

- Building successful new communities, where developments include affordable homes to meet local needs and form attractive places where people want to live, and which are supported by a full range of quality services and social networks.
- A sustainable infrastructure and environment with good transport links and access to the countryside of the district, which is itself protected and improved, and with sustainable measures, which minimise waste and tackle climate change.

### ***What are our approaches to achieving this aim?***

- Making affordable housing more available to local people;
- Ensuring that affordable housing is in balance with the community;

- Achieving a sustainable future for the Council's housing stock;
- Working with local residents to promote community cohesion and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable of the community;
- Extending and encouraging the use of recycling opportunities;
- Working to improve the cleanliness of our villages;
- Taking account of climate change in all the services that we deliver;
- Promoting low carbon living and delivering low carbon growth through the planning system.

### ***What did we do to achieve this aim during 2009-10?***

- Set 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;
- Included an appropriate proportion of retirement homes and accommodation designed for the elderly in the affordable housing allocation of each new major development e.g. 37 affordable homes were completed at Cambourne – these are built to Lifetime Homes standard which means they meet a set of design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes.
- Worked with partners to adopt a Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy which demonstrates our commitment to improving our approach to Gypsy and traveller communities in terms of understanding, community cohesion and control of unauthorised developments.
- Extended our plastic bottle recycling scheme to serve all villages and schools.

- We introduced a trade cardboard collection service to compliment the paper service. Over 100 customers now receive this service, which is still expanding. We offer free advice and guidance to all businesses within the district and have included an information booklet with this year's NNDR bills. We are anticipating being able to offer more recycling opportunities following the revised domestic service being implemented in October 2010.
- SCDC has supported a number of clean up events in 2009/10 (numbers and locations to be confirmed) in the form of pre-event visual audits, provision of equipment, collection of collected waste etc.
- Community Clean Up Workshop held at South Cambridgeshire Hall on 8 March, supported by DEFRA and Keep Britain Tidy. 23 delegates attended, representing eight PC's, five Housing Associations and two Community Groups. Six other PC's were unable to attend but wanted further contact. There were 12 expressions of interest in joining a SCDC programme of events for 2010/11, which we are following up.
- Carried out Spring and Autumn in-depth litter picks of verges alongside the A14 and A11 highways.
- Installed litter bins at ten of our dirtiest lay-bys on the major roads into and out of the district.
- Improved the appearance of 10 of our larger villages by increasing the amount of street cleaning undertaken. The 'high street' areas of these villages receive an intense cleanse on a fortnightly basis in addition to the core scheduled service. This is funded by SCDC revenue and LPSA reward grant and we are mid way through the two year programme.
- Made progress towards the adoption of a Climate Change Action.
- Worked with parish councils on schemes for renewable energy and low carbon living (*parish energy partnership? See RH*)

***What were our other significant achievements against this aim during 2009-10?***

- Taken steps to reduce exhaust emissions from our bin lorries;
- Worked with housing association partners to deliver 175 new affordable homes throughout the district.
- Achieved higher Housing and Planning Delivery Grant, thanks to our plan-making and processing applications to make sure homes are delivered against those plans;
- Secured 40% affordable housing plus a primary school, community facilities and a country park through a planning legal agreement for the development at Trumpington Meadows.

***What key actions will we undertake to achieve this aim during 2010-11?***

- We will work towards meeting or surpassing a 65% recycling and composting rate by 2012;
- We will improve & maintain the appearance of our villages in 2010/11 by:
  - Continuing our programme of installing litterbins at a further 10 lay-bys on the major routes in the District.
  - Continuing enhanced street cleaning within 10 of our larger villages past 2010/11
  - Undertaking a further 10 community clean-up events
  - Maintaining our street cleansing & envirocrime operations including the litter picking of the A11 and A14 verges

- We will achieve 10% reduction in the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> from the Council's operations and publicise the outcome in order to set an example to other organisations.
- We will work 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 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions



## **AIM D – We are committed to assisting provision of local jobs for you and your family**

### ***Why is this important?***

South Cambridgeshire has historically enjoyed successful economic growth; however, in the recent recession, the Council has worked to support businesses through the allocation of £150k in 2009-10 towards a number of initiatives such as Hardship Relief from business rates and training events which will help local businesses win public sector contracts. We need to retain a focus on assistance to business in order to maintain and increase local wealth generation, protect local jobs to reduce unsustainable long-distance commuting and maintain positive work-life balances and ensure, through our planning policies and other key strategies, an appropriate mix between residential, commercial and business uses.

### ***How does it complement the objectives of our Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)?***

This aim complements the SCS's Vision for the district to be a place where communities are thriving and well-served, as well as the objective to build successful and attractive new communities where people want to live, which are supported by a full range of quality services and social networks. The need to support the start-up and development of new businesses and social enterprises has been identified as a priority area for action within the SCS.

### ***What are our approaches to achieving this aim?***

- Working closely with local businesses
- Promoting economic development

- Using cultural activities effectively to promote tourism

### ***What did we do to achieve this aim during 2009-10?***

- We have set up a Business Forum and introduced a series of regular Business Breakfast meetings in the District;
- Supported businesses to comply with the law while targeting those who flout it (*examples*)
- Promoted the development and uptake of business space already allocated in the District e.g. the development of a commercial property database and provision of marketing in association with East of England International
- Explored possible spin-offs from the London 2012 Olympics (*and?*)

### ***What were our other significant achievements against this aim during 2009-10?***

- Launched a business support fund as part of a dedicated package of £150,000 to help businesses in the economic downturn.
- Targeted specific small businesses to advise them of potential benefit from Rural Rate Relief.

### ***What key actions will we undertake to achieve this aim during 2010-11?***

- We will promote the relocation of Marshalls within Cambridgeshire in order to meet the district's requirements for new homes and retain job opportunities.
- We will carry 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.

## **AIM E – We are committed to providing a voice for rural life**

### ***Why is this important?***

The district is a largely rural community so we must work to support village life and other features which give the area its character.

### ***How does it complement the objectives of our Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)?***

This aim complements the SCS objective to provide a sustainable infrastructure and environment, with good transport links and access to the countryside of the district. Consultation on the strategy identified the following relevant priorities for action under this heading:

- Preserving and enhancing the countryside for the benefit of people and wildlife;
- Increasing the amount of accessible green space around the settlements of South Cambridgeshire;
- Improving provision for walking and cycling between villages.
- Supporting schemes to improve rural transport, travel planning and access to services;.

### ***What are our approaches to achieving this aim?***

- Protecting existing communities, villages and the countryside
- Working more closely with Parish Councils and local Groups
- Implementing planning policies to achieve successful new communities

- Maximising planning gain for neighbouring communities
- Playing our part in improving rural services including transport links

### ***What did we do to achieve this aim during 2009-10?***

- assisted three Parish Councils to produce Parish Plans;
- introduced a new system of meetings to which all parish councils were invited to send up to 2 representatives;
- ensured that each Cabinet Member attend at least three Parish Council meetings a year from outside their ward, adding a standing feedback item to each Cabinet meeting agenda.
- Assessed the need for provision of new premises for small businesses
- Worked with other organisations to develop and adopt a Community Transport Plan for the District.

### ***What were our other significant achievements against this aim during 2009-10?***

- Awarded grants for 13 restoration projects and 3,000 metres of new trees and hedgerows to protect the distinctive character of the district.
- Secured planning permission to restore river habitats along 1.5km of the River Cam at Trumpington Meadows.

### ***What key actions will we undertake to achieve this aim during 2010-11?***

- We will support local people to establish community orchards
- We will implement key actions from the Community Transport Plan action plan

## 5. Service, Team and Individual Objectives

Section 4 sets out the Council's Vision and strategic aims and the twelve principal actions to be carried out during 2010-11 in order to achieve them. Alongside and beneath these actions lie many supporting objectives that each service will be working towards in 2010-11.

The services have each produced comprehensive service plans, which consist of service overviews which built upon the brief descriptions given in section 2 of this plan, together with improvement plans which show what new things each service will be doing to improve and innovate in specific and measurable ways.

Improvement actions, and operational targets which 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. All service and team actions make explicit links to the strategic aims, and are translated into targets for individual employees through annual Personal Development Reviews with line managers. By these means, all staff are aware of how their work, at all levels of the organisation, contributes to the achievement of the Council's Vision. This structure is illustrated in the diagram in Section 4 (page X).

## 6. Audit and Inspection

### *Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)*

As a public body the Council is subject to rigorous external inspection to ensure that it is delivered positive changes for its customers. South Cambs, along with all other councils in England, receives an annual Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) from the Audit Commission. The CAA looks at how well public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve through area and organisational assessments. The area assessment focuses on how effectively local public services work in partnership to improve outcomes, whilst the organisational assessment is concentrated on the Council and comprises two key elements, Use of Resources and Managing Performance.

The assessment ranks authorities on a scale from 1-4, a ranking of 1 indicating that an authority is performing poorly, up to a 4, indicating that it is performing excellently.

For its last full year assessment in 2008-09, the Council achieved an overall score of 2 out of 4, indicating that it is performing adequately. The full report which accompanied the assessment findings drew attention to some key strengths and areas for improvement indicating, for example, that the Council worked well with partners, possessed leaders who were clear about what they needed to achieve and increasingly able to deliver and performed well in key areas that matters to local people including waste and recycling, payment of housing benefits, low levels of crime and the new completion of new affordable homes.

In terms of areas for improvement, the assessment identified issues with key vacancies which had affected performance, gaps in our understanding of the staff and skills we need for the

future, customer satisfaction levels in need of improvement and uncertainty over future service provision, especially in Affordable Homes, arising from increasing gaps between spending and income.

The Council has responded to this assessment by putting in place a comprehensive action plan to address key areas of concern identified by the Audit Commission. This improvement plan will form part of a revised CAA Framework, which, together with future self-assessments and case studies demonstrating positive outcomes for service users, will help us prepare thoroughly for future inspections and better evidence the good work that is being carried out. We're aware that a change of national government following the 2010 General Election could potentially result in the CAA being altered or abandoned in its present form; however, even in this event we are fully committed as an authority to continuous improvement, therefore we cannot let-up in our objective of a robust inspection framework.

Following significant new legislation, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) will assume the role of regulator of the Affordable Homes services from April 2010.