



# South Cambridgeshire District Council

## Community & Customer Services

### SERVICE PLAN

2011/12 to 2012/13



## Approved by:

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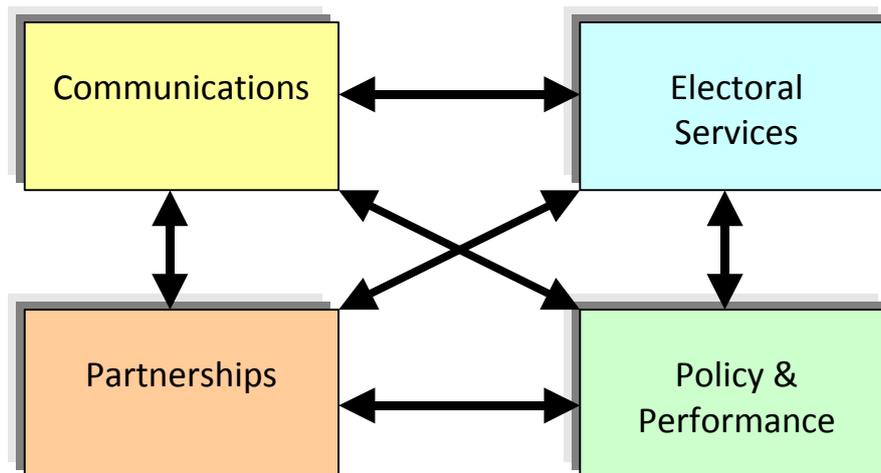
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## 1. About our service

Community and Customer Services lies at the centre of the authority as a key component in its operation. It has an important co-ordination role to play, ensuring that the authority is best placed to react and adapt to changes in national policy, provide effective and efficient services and ensuring the reputation and profile of the authority is maximised.

Community and Customer Services comprises of four teams - Communications, Electoral Services, Partnerships, and Policy & Performance.



It should be recognised that there are synergies between functions and a number of shared responsibilities that necessitate close working between the teams and with other service areas across the Council.

The key functions of the Community and Customer Service area are:

- ❑ To communicate the Council's vision, priorities, objectives and processes effectively both to staff, through an effective internal communication and consultation process, and externally to partners, agencies and the public.
- ❑ To develop and actively contribute to the delivery of the Council's corporate communications strategy by maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders including the media and protecting and improving the reputation of the Council.
- ❑ To actively foster and develop positive relationships with local organisations and partners, including the voluntary sector and local business as well as other statutory bodies at county, regional and national levels.
- ❑ To ensure that the Council meets all statutory requirements regarding electoral registration and the conduct of elections.
- ❑ To support the Council's policy-making and service planning processes ensuring their links with the Corporate Plan and the needs of customers and local communities.
- ❑ To support the monitoring and benchmarking of service delivery against national and local indicators and to empower managers across the Council to take action to improve performance where necessary.
- ❑ To champion the examination of policy and services from the perspective of customers, partners and communities across all services.

- To make an active and positive contribution to the Council's process of implementing cultural change and organisational development and help to embed a shared vision and values across the organisation.

## **Communications**

The Communications Team is responsible for the following activities:

- Supporting the Council in meeting its statutory duty to inform, consult and engage residents and communities
- Ensuring that Council communications comply with legislation
- Supporting services in their duty to “warn and inform” under the Civil Contingencies Act
- media relations – press office, media releases, media briefings / conferences, coordinating broadcast and print interviews, working with reporters / editors, promoting and pursuing positive opportunities
- publications – including residents’ quarterly *South Cambs magazine*
- corporate branding – reviewing and monitoring use of the corporate brand and guidelines for its use
- promotional work – posters, displays, leaflets to support services and corporate initiatives
- internal communication – including staff magazine, Corporate Brief and intranet ‘Pinks’ and ‘Hot Topics’
- reputation management – including strategic communications planning for management or corporate initiatives such as service changes, budget savings and growth areas

## **Electoral Services**

The Electoral and Support Services Team is responsible for the following activities:

- compilation and maintenance of the electoral register
- management of elections
- promoting democratic engagement

## **Partnerships**

The Partnerships Team is responsible for the following activities:

- Taking the lead role in preparation and delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy for the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- Taking the lead role in the preparation and delivery of the Community Safety Rolling Plan for the CDRP
- Managing projects to enable the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Community Safety Rolling Plan
- Supporting Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector to influence Council and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) decision-making and promoting an environment for a thriving third sector
- Coordinating the delivery of the Council's Community Engagement Strategy, including neighbourhood panels, parish planning, parish charter and information events

- Community transport
- Grants to the voluntary sector to promote a thriving third sector
- Mobile warden scheme grants

## **Policy & Performance**

The Policy and Performance Team is responsible for the following activities:

- Promoting equality and diversity and ensuring that the Council complies with all related statutory requirements
- Supporting the Scrutiny and Overview function and ensuring that it meets relevant statutory requirements such as annual Crime and Disorder scrutiny
- Collating and publishing performance information
- Supporting the development of corporate priorities and policies
- Developing and supporting corporate consultation
- Providing a central hub for community intelligence, comprising consultation, value for money, benchmarking and demographic information.
- Co-ordinating the Council's response to, and helping the Council to perform as well as possible in relation to, audit and inspection regimes and other assessment processes
- Promoting and supporting performance improvement throughout the organisation
- Supporting the Service First Steering Group to improve customer service and leading the project to achieve Customer Service Excellence accreditation by 2011
- Managing the Council reception service at Cambourne
- Managing customer service processes such as complaints, comments and compliments management.
- Monitoring Council performance against key customer service indicators.
- The monitoring & review of the Council's contract, financial payments and performance of the Contact Centre.

## **2. Our Performance and Plans to Improve**

The major change to the service plan this year is a real shift away from simply saying how we provide our service to a more complex analysis of how we have performed in the previous year, identifying good practice, identifying where we need to improve and identifying how this improvement will be delivered (including shifting resources and, potentially, redefining service levels).

### **Achievements in 2010/11**

The past year (2010/11) has been a year of consolidation and refocus for all services falling under Community & Customer Services, re-establishing their central position within the authority as a whole. The vision for Community & Customer Services is to become a central 'hub' for data and information within the authority in areas such as community intelligence, consultations, service planning and project management. This vision was supported by the improvement plan in last years service plan, which set out a comprehensive, ambitious and far reaching set of actions for 2010/11. There have been many successes against these actions, which are set out below.

Improvements in all aspects of customer service are already being made as a result of working towards the Customer Service Excellence Standard, specifically regarding customer insight and consultation. To enable the Council to put the customer at the heart of its service delivery, the Policy and Performance Team, as outlined above, has started to establish itself as the central point for consultation responses to be used as a corporate resource.

Led by the Equality and Diversity Officer the authority received the 'Achieving' level of the Equalities Standard, following a comprehensive peer review in October 2010. This award confirms how far the Council has come in a relatively short period of time towards achieving positive outcomes for staff and customers in terms of equal opportunity and tackling all forms of discrimination.

As a member of Stonewall we have continued to use access to a national benchmarking framework on equalities.

We have continued to support the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to clearly identify its priorities, make even better use of its resources and publicise the effectiveness of the partnership working that is occurring across the district.

Scrutiny undertook a very successful challenge of CDRP performance and SCDC performance in terms of crime and disorder issues.

The appointment of a new policy and performance manager and senior policy officer has increased capacity to provide a 'horizon-scanning' policy service and to assume responsibility for establishing a consistent approach to project management across the Council.

Positive engagement with local media and news agencies continues, with improving relationships on all side. This has been supported by informal feedback.

All Electoral Commission performance standards were met or exceeded.

South Cambridgeshire had the highest turnout in the county for the combined local and Parliamentary elections in May 2010. The elections were conducted smoothly; the count was completed and results announced well within target times.

We have taken time to refocus the way in which we use our Performance Management system (CorVu). We have put in place a post implementation action plan concentrating on monitoring only performance indicators, corporate actions and strategic risks. This refocusing will ensure that the system provides easy access to all staff and Members to timely, clear and accurate performance information.

Two successful, value adding Scrutiny Task and Finish groups have been used to make recommendations in the areas of Performance Management and Value for Money in the Housing service area.

Good progress has been made in reviewing the performance of the contact centre. Through a detailed analysis of the current trends in call volumes and costs it has been possible to make an annual saving of £54,000 on the cost of the contract.

A review of Customer Contact has been carried out (due to report in June 2011) to identify and evaluate the options for an integrated customer contact framework for the authority for the next 5/10 years.

Significant improvements have been made to the performance and policy framework of the authority specifically in terms of;

- Compilation of a Policy database highlighting what policies/plans/strategies the authority has, when they are due for renewal and who is responsible for them
- Compilation of a Projects database identifying what projects are currently being carried out across the authority and enabling EMT to monitor progress and performance against them and identify cross authority learning
- A complete refresh of the Project Management Toolkit to enable a more corporate and consistent approach across the authority
- Development of a comprehensive Performance Management Manual to ensure a consistency of approach to the Performance Management Framework
- Complete revision of service planning guidance to focus service plans more on performance issues and where improvements can be made
- Developed a database for all national indicators and key local indicators setting out responsible officers for audit purposes

The Policy and Performance Team have taken an active part in developing the role and operation of the Performance Improvement Group and monitoring, and in many cases carrying out, the actions in the Performance Improvement Strategy.

A Corporate Plan for 2010/11 was successfully delivered and widespread consultation has been carried out on the draft corporate actions for 2011/12.

Pioneering use has started to be made of the 'YouChoose' participatory budgeting tool to engage with our communities and allow them to indicate where council budget cuts should fall, where efficiencies might be made and where income might be generated/maximised.

A much clearer and more integrated template has been developed for reporting performance corporately, linking performance and financial information together. This has been used by EMT to make decisions about resource allocation across the authority to address adverse performance issues and increase effectiveness and efficiency, although further development of this, into a comprehensive corporate 'Healthcard', will be prioritised in 2011/12.

A new Value for Money (VfM) template has been developed and rolled out across the authority, enabling service areas to demonstrate where their services are providing good value for money and where improvements need to be made. This has been linked to the service planning process to enable service areas to compare themselves to other authorities and undertake a more comprehensive assessment of performance.

A new Community Engagement strategy has been developed, incorporating a revised Consultations Policy and Communications Policy. This is the first step to developing an integrated engagement framework to ensure that our engagement with our communities is as effective, efficient and co-ordinated as possible.

An options appraisal review has been undertaken into the introduction of a citizens panel, with implementation scheduled for 2011/12.

Huge strides have been made in the area of community intelligence specifically in terms of;

- A review of existing community intelligence arrangements across the authority
- The production of a South Cambridgeshire Area Profile and encouraging the use of existing ACRE ward profiles for all wards in South Cambridgeshire
- Setting up a dedicated e-mail address for community intelligence enquiries

Visited over 25 villages and village events to promote council services.

We have strengthening links with our Parish Councils, facilitated by regular liaison meetings, dedicated support to resolve issues and the developing Parish Charter.

We have successfully merged our Local Strategic Partnership with Cambridge City and have developed a joint Sustainable Community Strategy.

We have worked to map existing Community Transport provision, working closely with all relevant agencies and started to fill the gaps identified and better advertise existing schemes.

We have continued monitoring of all 3 year grants and carried out spot checks of 1 year grants to ensure appropriate use of grant funding and value for money.

A very well received media monitoring report has been developed. This is widely distributed and enables to the authority to effectively monitor external reputation.

Surveys were carried out on the operation of both Scene and Corporate Brief, with very positive results indicating that both are seen as effective means of communication, with Corporate Brief especially seen as a good 2 way communications tool. Following suggestions made in this survey, improvements have been made including the introduction of a staff feedback session at the beginning of Corporate Brief.

South Cambs magazine continues to be well received by the community. A change in designer through a contract negotiated in partnership with the County Council has seen increased advertising revenues further subsidising the cost of the magazine. It also led to a refreshed, updated look for the magazine.

We have been instrumental in developing a new Employee Engagement Strategy for the authority, building on the views collected through the last staff survey.

We have continued to meet our targets in respect of corporate complaints, with an increase in the number of learning from complaints forms received.

## Where we plan to improve

Community and Customer Services have, as outlined previously, made huge strides in 2010/11 and achieved in a number of key areas. However we need to recognise that we are operating in a radically different external environment from this time last year. This presents a number of opportunities and challenges for the team in the coming year in terms of how it operates and supports the authority. We need to become more proactive and become a driving force in the authority.

Value for money and efficiency, and demonstrating it to our communities, needs to be a key role of the service, and indeed the authority, in 2011/12.

Based on performance and improvements achieved in the last year and the changes in external environment outlined above, the key priorities for Community and Customer Services in the next year will be;

### 1. Use of Performance Information

An improvement in the way performance information is managed and reported across the authority including the development of a new, comprehensive corporate performance 'scorecard', containing an agreed 'basket' of key indicators. This should include how we communicate performance information externally to our communities as well.

### 2. Corporate Planning Cycle

The development of the corporate planning cycle to ensure that consultation on the 3 A's throughout the process is a key element, leading to the development of an overarching 3 year Corporate Plan setting both the strategic direction of the authority and high level priorities.

### 3. Customer Contact and Customer Service

Complete the customer contact review, ensuring that it comprehensively assesses all available options and leads to the implementation of a sustainable, holistic and integrated customer contact framework for the authority, linking into the corporate actions for 2011/12 around channel shift and improvement to the website. Also to further embed the work undertaken towards Customer Service Excellence to maximise the benefit of the accreditation to the authority and its customers, ensuring that a focus is maintained.

### 4. Development of Community and Customer Services

Further develop and promote the idea of CCS as a corporate 'hub' to service areas to ensure that the authority is aware of the services that the unit can (and can't) provide. Following the abolition of elements of the national performance management framework and of the government inspection regime, to move CCS from an inspection/control function to a role of 'support and challenge'.

### 5. Consistent branding of the Council and seek to improve public perception

There is a need to raise the authority's profile, regenerate its reputation and strengthen its public identity as a vibrant and modern authority. We will work to improve public perception about the value for money provided by SCDC. In the 2008 Place Survey, only 33% of

residents agreed that SCDC provides value for money - on a par with the national average but 3% lower than the Cambridgeshire average. A sizeable 39% neither agreed nor disagreed which suggests low awareness of the value for money they are receiving, given that SCDC has the 12<sup>th</sup> lowest council tax of all district councils.

Aligned to this is a need to reinforce how we use consultation as an authority including the increased use of social media as a means of communication and engagement.

**6. Develop an authority wide approach to the Localism and the 'Big Society' agenda**

To enable the authority to gain an understanding of the above agenda and put in place a framework to promote an integrated, district wide approach and strengthen how the authority works with parishes.

**7. Reposition partnership working**

We will refresh partnership working across the district and with Cambridge City to add value to existing work, deliver real outcomes that matter that we cannot deliver on our own and support the localism agenda.

These areas will be our main areas of focus however there are a number of additional areas that will require further development and improvement in 2011/12. Some of these will feed into the above priorities, others will be more stand alone in nature. All of these are detailed in the attached service improvement plan, which will be monitored on a quarterly basis throughout 2011/12. As mentioned before, given the current changing nature of local government and 'fluidity' in terms of government policy these may be subject to change in light of future policy announcements.

### 3. The Context for Our Plan

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. An understanding of the issues South Cambridgeshire faces and the district council's potential role in addressing these has helped to shape our services and aims.

The key influences and challenges on service delivery across the organisation are currently dominated by:

- **Economic factors** - 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 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.
- **Population Growth** - South Cambridgeshire remains a growth area. 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.

Although these two areas are the dominant factors, there are many others which need to be tackled including;

**Political and legislative** - We envisage substantial changes to service delivery arising from known and current government policy, and from changes in direction and priority that the new government may pursue.

**Partnerships** - 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.

**Demographics** - 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.

**Deprivation** - 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.

**Sustainability** - 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.

## a) External Drivers

The following external drivers influence the service Community and Customer Services provides.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Political</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of Members in partnerships</li> <li>• Involvement of Members in the improvement agenda, including values and scrutiny</li> <li>• Local and general elections</li> <li>• Continued impact of change in government policy</li> <li>• Recognition of the role of the Communications team in reputation management</li> <li>• Expectation of partners in joint communication projects</li> <li>• Political appetite for shared services between authorities and other public sector providers</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Economic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council budgets and financial position</li> <li>• Recession resulting in               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more demand on voluntary advice and support organisations</li> <li>• potential increase in crime levels</li> <li>• potential loss of advertising revenue for <i>South Cambs magazine</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic changes</li> <li>• Housing costs and availability</li> <li>• Transport issues</li> <li>• Growth areas e.g. social housing, age, cultures, religion – differing communication needs and implications for equality, diversity and community cohesion</li> <li>• ‘Them’ and ‘Us’ danger – need to manage communications with new and existing communities</li> <li>• Increasing customer expectations</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Technological</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further developing performance management ICT and sharing data with partners</li> <li>• Potential for new technology to open communication channels, especially for new home areas</li> <li>• Need for provision of basics such as broadband across the district, including new communities.</li> <li>• Increasing impact of ‘social’ networking sites</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Legislation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further legislation aimed at strengthening local democracy and decentralisation</li> <li>• Increased scrutiny powers and duties through Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2008 and Police &amp; Justice Act 2007</li> <li>• Single Equality Bill’s new duty to reduce socio-economic inequality</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Environmental</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural areas with differing communication needs</li> <li>• Increasing necessity to look at environmentally-friendly, yet effective methods of communication</li> <li>• Need to reduce mileage as well as provide a supportive service to our rural communities</li> </ul>

**b) Key Partners**

- Members of South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Local Strategic Partnership and its theme groups, such as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- Cambridgeshire consultation partnership
- Cambridgeshire Direct
- Cambridgeshire scrutiny network
- Contact Centre
- East of England scrutiny network
- Equalities Consultative Forum
- Local and industry media
- Parish councils
- Performance management partnership with the County Council and other district councils using CorVu
- Stonewall (The UK’s leading charity campaigning to promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the workplace and wider community)
- Voluntary and community sector organisations

**c) Strengths and Weaknesses**

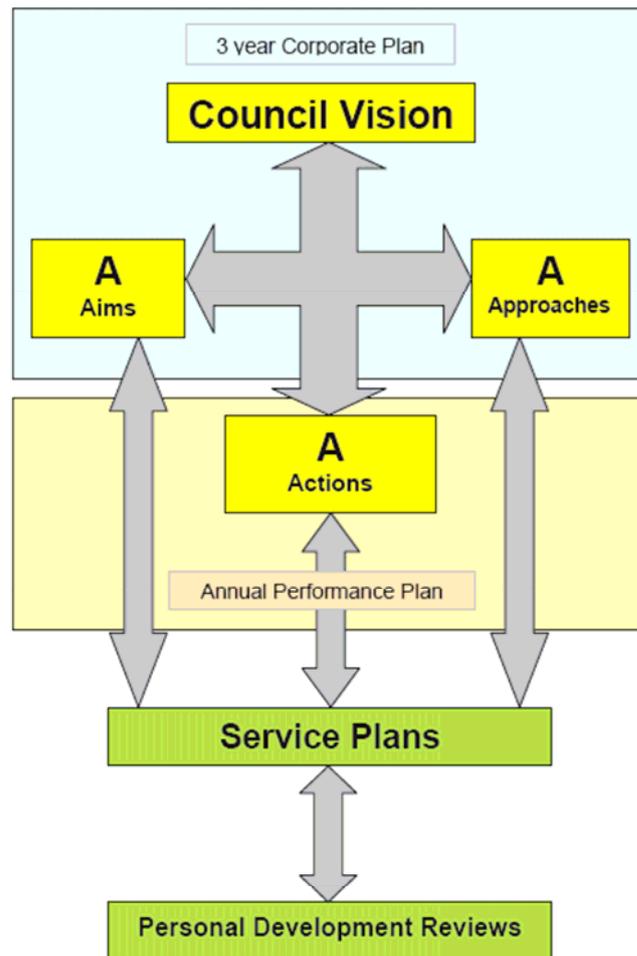
A full Swot analysis has been completed for Community and Customer Services with a number of points identified in each area. The full analysis is available, however those that are felt to be the key points are presented below in order to give context to the service plan.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionalism, skills and experience</li> <li>• Multi-disciplinary teams</li> <li>• Enthusiasm and commitment</li> <li>• Working directly with communities to find out their needs</li> <li>• Excellent officer relations with partners from all sectors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service is stretched over a range of complex corporate projects with limited resources: for example             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation</li> <li>- communications projects beyond South Cambs magazine</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Small teams reliant on individuals’ knowledge and skills</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope for greater co-operation and joint work between our teams</li> <li>• Need to promote the Council’s achievements and value for money</li> <li>• Establish the Policy and Performance Team as the central hub for community intelligence</li> <li>• Coordination of Big Society projects and localism agenda</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding coming to an end – Equalities secondment, SSCF and parish plans</li> <li>• Increased social media v traditional channels</li> <li>• Lack of capacity and corporate buy-in elsewhere in organisation to support key corporate projects e.g. Customer Service Excellence.</li> </ul>

## 4. Council Objectives

The Council has set Aims, Approaches and Actions for 2011/12, which helps the authority to achieve the South Cambridgeshire/Cambridge City Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan including its vision.

The framework set out below shows how these and other key elements of the Council, including service plans, fit together.



Community and Customer Services plays a crucial role in the centre of this framework and the organisation, helping all services work towards achieving the Council's strategic aims.

Five aims have been set for 201/12, namely;

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

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

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

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

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

The communications, elections, policy and performance and partnerships teams support the delivery of all five Aims.

**COUNCIL ACTIONS FOR 2011/12**

Community and Customer Services provides corporate support for the delivery of all of the 17 Council Actions agreed by the Cabinet on 10 February 2011 and Council on 24 February 2011.

We have direct responsibility for carrying out specific actions related to the following:

<p><b>A1</b> We will provide <b>excellent customer service</b> through specific actions aimed at getting it right first time, led by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) Enabling customers to use our website to access more information and services;</li><li>ii) Putting in place 'tell us once' arrangements across services by identifying and eliminating unnecessary repeat contacts</li><li>iii) Making it easier to access Council information and services by reviewing how customers contact us, and introducing new methods</li></ul>
<p><b>B1</b> We will take an inclusive approach to enhancing the quality of life for older people in our community through actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) within our Community Transport Strategy to identify need and access to Community Transport;</li></ul>
<p><b>C2</b> We will carry out a 'Pride in South Cambs' campaign to build community cohesion and increase the attractiveness of the environment for everyone, through the following specific actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) Reward residents for positive work to maintain the attractiveness of their homes and local communities via a public competition for the best kept village, streets and individual gardens.</li><li>ii) Help the district celebrate a traditional Christmas.</li></ul>

**VALUES**

The Council has also adopted a set of Values, which will be embedded in the service in 2011/12 through behaviours agreed across the Council:

- Customer service;
- Mutual Respect;
- Trust;
- Commitment to Improving Services

## 5. Service Objectives

Service objectives have been developed to take account of the Council's aims, approaches and actions, which assist the Councils vision and the joint South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Sustainable Community Strategy.

1. To work towards the following communications objectives - that
  - the council is held in high repute by all stakeholders for its services and the leadership it gives to all South Cambridgeshire communities
  - members and staff feel well informed and act as advocates for the council with all stakeholder groups
  - the council is valued by residents and all stakeholders for the quality of the services it delivers and its successes in championing the needs of South Cambridgeshire at the local, regional and national level.
2. To support the democratic process by striving to make voting and voter registration easier, secure and more accessible to all, using the most up to date methods.
3. To build strong and sustainable communities through the continuing development and delivery of activities, resources and support to strengthen the skills and confidence of people and community groups to enable them to take effective action and leading roles:
  - Support partnership action aimed at creating sustainable communities, through ensuring robust governance, council engagement and appropriate leadership
  - Co-ordinate the delivery of the district council's Community Engagement Strategy
  - Empower and engage the third sector
  - Empower and engage Parish Councils
4. To work with local people and partners to co-produce strong, safe and sustainable communities
  - Promote and support effective partnership action through ensuring robust governance, council engagement and appropriate leadership
  - Promote and support effective community engagement, providing opportunities for individuals and organisations to influence decision-making
  - Support, engage and empower the third sector
  - Support, engage and empower parish councils
  - Work together with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and the impact it has on local communities
  - Work together with partners to reduce crime and the fear of crime
5. To promote equality and diversity, targeting resources to those in greatest need.
6. To work with the Service First Group to promote a culture and commitment to excellent customer service across the Council, with the whole Council achieving the national Customer Service Excellence award by in 2011.
7. To provide a reception service which is an outstanding first point of contact at which customers can easily access services and information.

8. To keep under review the Council's contract with the Contact Centre and the resulting level of service provided, resolving issues with the Contact Centre management or through other agreed mechanisms, as appropriate.
9. To support the development and achievement of the Council's strategic objectives through policy planning, community intelligence, corporate consultation, Councillor scrutiny and performance improvement.

## 6. Our Customers

We have a range of customers including;

- **Internal** customers –
  - staff and Members – who receive support regarding communications; partnership advice; customer service (for example through Reception and the complaints system); performance management (CorVu); policy advice, service planning; equality and diversity; and scrutiny.
  
- **External** customers –
  - Residents of the district, as service users, Council Tax-payers and electors
  - members of the local community,
  - partner organisations,
  - grant recipients,
  - parish councils,
  - businesses,
  - the voluntary sector and community groups,
  - visitors to reception,

and including;

- Internal and external audit.

### What do customers think of our services?

Following the abolition of the Place Survey, the latest figures available for overall satisfaction across the district relate to the 2008/09 survey. As outlined earlier in the service plan, work will be undertaken in 2011/12 to identify a suitable replacement for this important method of measuring satisfaction and engaging with our communities.

In the latest survey, the vast majority of residents (90%) were satisfied with their local area as a place to live (NI5) with a third (35%) stating they were very satisfied. Just 3% said they were dissatisfied. This is a 6% increase in satisfaction compared with 2006/07 BVPI results (84%)

South Cambridgeshire scored exceptionally highly for most National Indicators, performing amongst the top 50 district councils nationally (1st quartile) for twelve out of the eighteen National Indicators. More notably, South Cambridgeshire District Council occupied a position amongst the top 10 highest performing district councils on 5 indicators as described below (N.B. All comparisons are made among other district councils and not all local authorities).

South Cambridgeshire occupied the 1st position out of all 201 district councils, nationally, for NI41 - People being drunk/rowdy being perceived as a problem (9%). Furthermore, the percentage of people who consider drunk and rowdy behaviour to be a problem in their area has dropped by 3% from the 2006/07 BVPI survey (12%).

South Cambridgeshire also occupied the 3rd position out of all 201 district councils for NI42 (perception of using/dealing drugs being a problem), nationally, and 2nd place amongst its 13 CDRP (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) statistical

neighbours, scoring exceptionally well. Most importantly, the percentage of people who consider people dealing or using drugs to be a problem in their area decreased significantly by 12% from the 2006/07 BVPI survey (25%).

Findings for the remaining 3 NIs where South Cambridgeshire occupied one of the top 10 positions include:

- Overall, very few people thought anti-social behaviour to be a problem in South Cambridgeshire, putting the District Council in the 5th highest position among other district councils (7.5%).
- An exceptionally high percentage of one in five (20%) South Cambridgeshire residents had been involved in Civic Participation in the last 12 months, placing the District in the 7th position nationally.
- Finally, a third of all residents (33%) had participated in regular volunteering in the past 12 months, placing South Cambridgeshire in the 8th position nationally.

The general picture that forms from this analysis is that South Cambridgeshire is performing exceptionally well in regards to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, although this is not reflected in residents' perceptions of the work public providers are doing, with South Cambridgeshire occupying the 100th position nationally among district councils in regards to NI21 - the percentage of people who agree the police and other local services are successfully dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues. This gap between perceptions of incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour, and perceptions of the public service providers' role in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, is an issue for further research.

Fewer than one in two residents (44%) were satisfied with the way South Cambridgeshire District Council runs things. This was lower than the average satisfaction for all district councils in Cambridgeshire at 48% and the national average (all authorities) of 46%. In 2006/07 BVPI 57% of residents were satisfied with the way the Council runs things, signifying a 13% decrease in satisfaction. This equates to a significant drop, even in the light of satisfaction decreasing nationally, albeit to a lesser degree of 7% (from 53% in the 2006/07 BVPI survey to 46% in 2009).

A third of all residents (33%) agreed that South Cambridgeshire District Council provides value for money while 28% disagreed. This was lower than the County average of 36% but on par with the national average of 33% (all authorities). This is a major decrease of 16%, compared with 2006/07 BVPI results when 49% of residents thought the Council provides value for money. National trends show a similar drop in value for money across all authorities, although to a lesser degree of 12% (from 45% in the 2006/07 BVPI survey to 33% in 2009).

In terms of communication, 46% of residents feel well informed about the Council, more than all other residents in the county (2008 Place Survey). The readership survey of Spring 2009 shows a high satisfaction rate with *South Cambs magazine*. Around three quarters found the magazine easy to read, well designed and informative. A new survey will be undertaken in 2011.

As part of the internet registration process, electors have provided feedback on the registration service. All the feedback has been positive and demonstrates the growing demand of the electorate to use electronic methods of communicating with the Council.

A refreshed reception satisfaction survey was launched in November 2010. 40 respondents completed the survey since its launch. A summary highlighting satisfaction ratings of the report is as follows. A full report is available upon request from the Customer Service Co-ordinator.

- 80% of respondents rated accessibility to these offices as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- The majority of customers visit our offices because they need to see a member of staff (39%); or to deliver or collect a form (20%).
- 97.5% rated the cleanliness of the reception area as 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 89% rated our facilities provided as 'excellent' or 'good'.
- The Council commits to 'welcoming visitors promptly' and the results were positive in that 97% did not have to wait more than 5 minutes to be seen by a member of the reception staff and/or a case officer.
- All respondents considered their waiting time to be acceptable.
- 95% rated overall satisfaction with reception service as 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 74% of respondents rated their overall satisfaction with the office staff as 'excellent' or 'good'

Overall, feedback from the survey was very positive, demonstrating that the Council is meeting its targets for greeting customers promptly and seeing all customers within 10 minutes of their appointments. Key development areas related to the increasing the provision of private rooms for customers discussing sensitive personal matters and increased access to ICT in Reception, will be taken up by the CSC and will inform the on-going Customer Contact review.

Detailed Customer Insight surveys have also been conducted on reception and concluded that 91% of customers had their enquiry resolved during their visit. The surveys also provided important community intelligence on how customers wish to contact the council, which will be fed into the on-going Customer Contact review.

## **7. Are we meeting the needs of all our community?**

South Cambridgeshire is predominantly rural in nature, with 101 villages, no urban centres and an area of approximately 90,000 hectares. The population is approximately 140,000 and population density is low at 1.6 persons per hectare.

There is little deprivation in South Cambridgeshire with the area ranked 5<sup>th</sup> least deprived in England using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

The population of South Cambridgeshire is predominantly white British (89.5%). The largest individual ethnic minority population in the district is the fluctuating Traveller population, estimated at 1,330 people (1 per cent of the population of the district) in the sub-regional Travellers Need Assessment survey published in 2006.

The Council's offices are located in Cambourne, which is towards the geographical centre of the District, and are fully accessible to persons with a disability. Cambourne is easily accessible by road and is well served by public transport by bus from Cambridge. However, unless residents live on the Cambridge – Cambourne – St Neots bus route they will need to take two bus journeys to reach the offices. Perhaps as a consequence, the majority of residents prefer to contact the council by telephone. The Contact Centre is open for calls 72 hours per week from 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday providing a high level of accessibility. Callers may use type-talk, language line or text-phone to contact the Centre. However initial channel analysis as part of the Customer Contact review has identified that numbers of calls received have shown a downward trend over the past few years, whilst the number of hits on the website have increased. A full analysis of these trends and consultation on how customers wish to contact the authority will form part of the Customer Contact review to ensure that a framework is implemented that gives a holistic, comprehensive service moving forward.

The Policy and Performance team is supporting all services within the Council to understand customers' changing needs and is providing a corporate project lead to achieve Customer Service Excellence accreditation in 2011. Customers' equalities data is starting to be effectively mapped in some service areas and this is being further developed alongside the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process. These assessments identify and analyse the positive and negative equality impacts of the Council's key policies and functions.

We have supported managers in completing a total of 55 High and Medium risk Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) by 31 March 2011. In 2011/12 we will continue to focus on EqIAs and help managers to improve monitoring of customers' equalities data. We have strengthened the reporting process to ensure that all reports to Cabinet or Council now include consideration of whether an EqIA is necessary.

A key message is that the percentage of residents aged 65 or above is forecast to rise from 14.8% in 2001 to 23.5% by 2021. Conversely, the percentage of under 20-year olds is forecast to decrease from 25% in 2001 to 22.6% by 2021. The Gypsy and Traveller population is also growing and the District is reported to have one of the highest populations of migrant workers in the country.

In 2009 we enrolled the Council as a Stonewall Diversity Champion, demonstrating the Council's commitment to promoting lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the workplace, which has continued into 2010/11. We will continue to support national and international equality and diversity events during 2011/12, within the resources available.

## **8. Our Financial Resources**

**To be added into final service plan in March with info supplied by Finance.**

## **9. Value for Money**

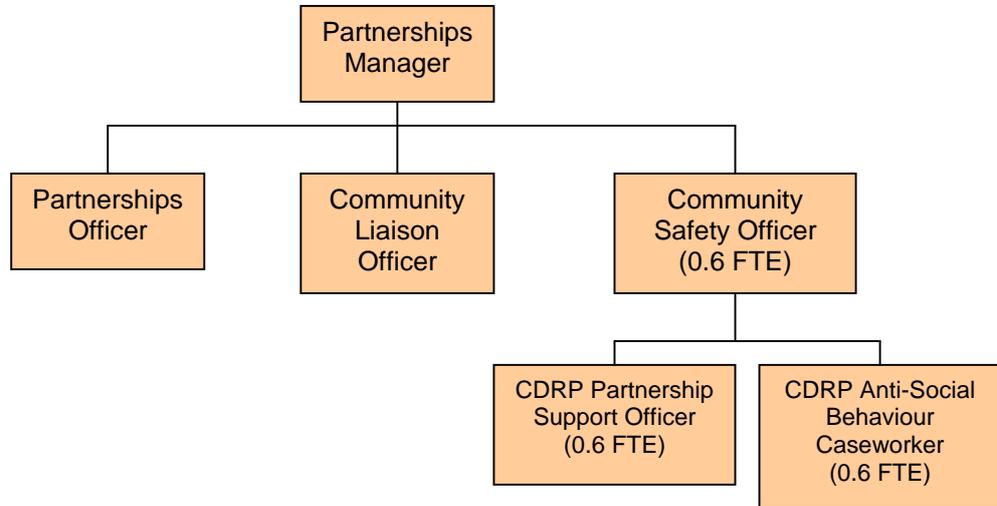
The Communications, Electoral Services, Partnerships, and Policy & Performance teams are all small, lean teams. Value for money comparison with other councils is difficult because all have different structures and ways of providing these services. However, there are some benchmarking figures.

**VfM self assessment template to be inserted.**

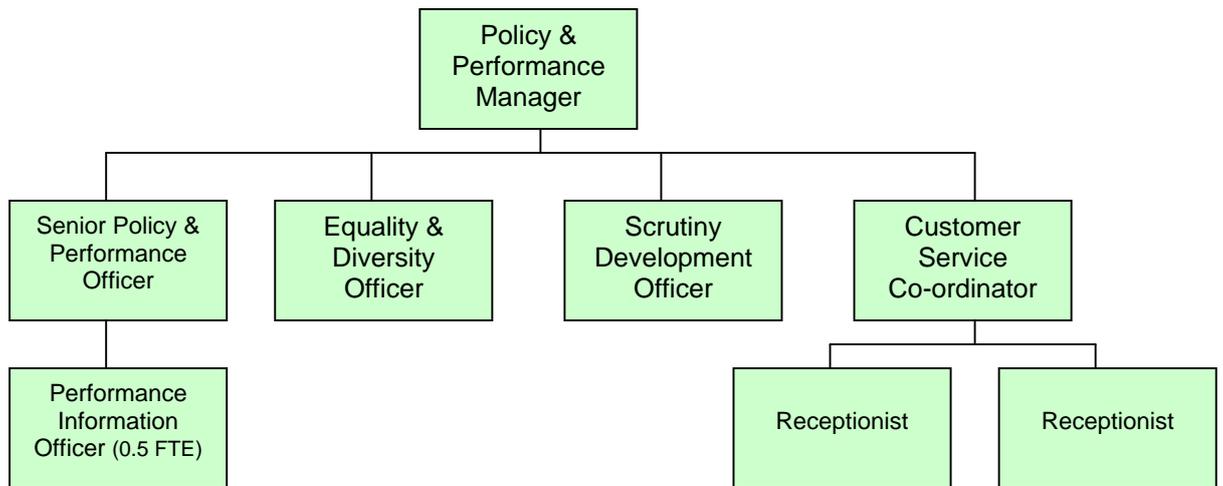
The Centre for Public Scrutiny's 2008 annual survey shows that in district councils the average number of scrutiny officers was 1.4. SCDC has 1. The average scrutiny budget for district councils in 2008 was £3,735 (down £1,588 on 2007). The figure at SCDC is £5,000 but this also covers venue hire and scrutiny training.

## 10. Workforce Overview 2011/12

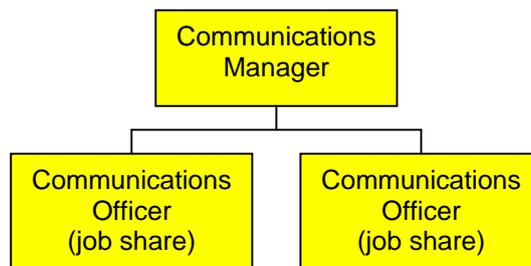
### Partnerships Team – 4.8 FTE



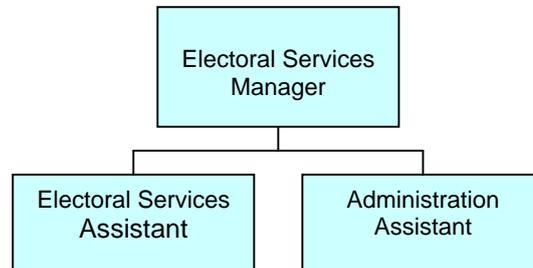
### Policy and Performance Team – 8.5 FTE



### Communications Team – 2 FTE



## Electoral and Support Services Team – 3 FTE



Both the Partnerships and Policy and Performance teams are of a multi-disciplinary nature and address issues where there is a great deal of ongoing change. Staff development and keeping up with current issues will continue to be an important workforce consideration.

Another major issue for these teams is that there is very little cover when posts are vacant through turnover or sickness. This was particularly evident last year with vacancies in the Customer Service Co-ordinator and Anti-Social Behaviour Caseworker posts. Members of the relevant team managed the problem through the development of generic policy skills and covering of posts by other officers, but the situation highlights issues of capacity and resilience.

Capacity within the Policy and Performance team grew in response to issues raised in the Corporate Governance Inspection (CGI) of 2007. Nevertheless, there were still under resourced areas such as policy development, research and benchmarking. Following a review of the team structure in June 2009, it was agreed to create a new Senior Policy & Performance Officer position to fill these gaps, funded by creating a 0.5FTE performance information officer post in place of the FT performance improvement officer post, and not filling the vacant Policy and Projects Officer post. This post has been filled in 2010/11 and has enabled an increased workload to be undertaken by the Policy and Performance Team.

In the restructure of the policy and performance team, its members have expanded the generic element of their roles so that each provides a link with an individual service area.

The Communications team lost a fixed term post in March 2009, which has reduced capacity for corporate and cross-council projects. They have experienced a number of changes in personnel in 2010/11 following staff leaving and maternity leave, however workloads, achievements and outcomes have been maintained.

The main workforce issue for the Electoral Services team is that the service pressures fall unevenly throughout the year.

CDRP posts are externally funded and often the budget for the coming year is not known until after the start of the financial year making budgeting difficult.

The Partnerships team has developed more awareness of each others posts during the past 12 months to increase resilience although this is still an issue due to the small size of the team and number of part time officers.

## 11. Risk Overview

Key risks to the successful delivery of our service are set out in the Community and Customer Services Risk Register. This is kept under regular review through the Council's normal risk management procedures. A full copy of the register is available on request however those that are felt to be the key risks are presented below.

- a) Failure to meet duty of community engagement leading to disengaged communities resulting in frustration by partner agencies and loss of reputation
- b) Delayed progress in the implementation of Corvu leading to possible delays in achieving the Council's performance management objectives, resulting in Corvu becoming discredited in the eyes of users and serious gaps in performance management which will hinder effective performance improvement now and in the future.
- c) Poor perception of local services/ Council, leading to low satisfaction ratings, resulting in poor reputation.
- d) Limited capacity within small teams to deliver on increasing range of projects and responsibilities leading to ill-informed residents and partners resulting in poor reputation and lowered performance



## SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN: Community and Customer Services

### Key for Improvement Plan

Implementation Status  
(to be updated quarterly)

<b>R</b>	Little or no progress has been made to date. Target date likely to be missed. <b>Intervention needed</b>
<b>A</b>	Some progress has been achieved but concerns about ability to meet completion date. <b>Monitor</b>
<b>G</b>	The improvement action has been completed or on track to meet completion date.

### Relevant Council Aim/s:

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

### Relevant Council Approaches:

- (1) Listening to and engaging with our local community
- (2) Working with voluntary organisations, Parish Councils and Cambridgeshire County Council to improve services through partnership
- (3) Making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible
- (4) Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services
- (5) Ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works

Ref.	Improvement or Change Objective	Status	Actions	Completion Date	Link to relevant PI / Outcome	Lead Officers	Other Services directly affected in terms of input?	Additional Resources?	Progress Update – Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4
<b>Over-arching across whole of Community and Customer Services</b>									
1.1.1	<b>Promotion of Community &amp; Customer Services</b> within the authority - to ensure that all services are aware of how we can help them improve services to customers.		<p>Develop presentation covering all CCS responsibilities including the 3 A's and corporate planning cycle for corporate induction course <b>(April 2011)</b></p> <p>Deliver induction presentation <b>(all induction courses held in 2011/12)</b></p> <p>Production of CCS promotional 'leaflet' <b>(May 2011)</b></p>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	<p>Induction presentation written and delivered to 100% of available induction courses with high satisfaction levels (measured through feedback forms)</p> <p>Leaflet produced and made available to all officers/members</p> <p>Demonstrable project outcomes aided by C&amp;CS's input, linking</p>	Corporate Manager – Community & Customer Services	N/A	Within existing resources.	

					to achievement of corporate aims				
1.1.2	Maximise the use of the <b>intranet/internet</b> - Ensure that the intranet and internet are used as effectively as possible to maximise the effectiveness of the information and data provided and promote self help, reducing resource pressures on the unit		Dedicated pages provided on the intranet/internet for each of the constituent parts of Community and Customer Services, linked with ensuring corporate information re: community intelligence is kept up to date ( <b>May 2011</b> )  Regular updating of pages to ensure most up to date information is displayed ( <b>monthly updates 2011-12 – as required</b> )	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Dedicated pages provided – number of page 'hits' monitored  Satisfaction with information provided measured through on site survey and wider customer satisfaction initiatives (as part of A1 below).	Partnerships Manager  Policy & Performance Manager  Comms Manager  Electoral Services Manager	ICT – minimal, in terms of intranet/internet management	Within existing resources.	
1.1.3	<b>Team building</b> - Promote close team working and maximise synergies within the service to develop different ways of working		Regular full team meetings held ( <b>one meeting held per month</b> )  Skills inventory developed ( <b>June 2011</b> )	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Staff feedback on satisfaction with communication, team working and relationships  Skills inventory developed and used to increase effectiveness and efficiency of CCS – measured through staff satisfaction and identification of demonstrable initiatives in which C&CS contributed to service improvement	Corporate Manager – Community & Customer Services	N/A	Within existing resources.	
1.1.4	Authority wide <b>training</b> - Ensure that both officers and members are aware of their responsibilities and duties in the areas covered by Community & Customer Services		Develop training programme for both officers and members ( <b>May 2011</b> )  Deliver agreed training programme ( <b>on-going</b> )	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Training programme developed and delivered with high satisfaction levels (measured through feedback forms)	Corporate Manager – Community & Customer Services	N/A	Within existing resources.	
1.1.5	<b>Service Planning</b> - Ensure a comprehensive and consistent approach to service planning across the authority		Develop updated service plan template ( <b>May 2011</b> )  Updated template rolled out to whole authority and used by all service areas for completion of 2012/13 service plans ( <b>March 2012</b> )	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Service plans provide a consistent and clear means of identifying service priorities and how they link to organisational objectives.  Leading to – positive improvements in	Partnerships Manager  Policy & Performance Manager  Comms Manager	N/A	Within existing resources.	

					corporate and service performance.	Electoral & Support Services Manager			
1.1.6	Capture <b>service improvement and learning</b> and raise the profile of the authority - ensure that all information submitted in relation to CCS areas including consultations, community intelligence, complaints, is used to inform and improve service delivery and raise the profile of the authority		<p>Develop 'You said, we did' web pages on InSite (linked with developments under CSE) <b>(July 2011)</b></p> <p>Develop dedicated community intelligence web pages on InSite (linked with point 1.1.2.) <b>(July 2011)</b></p> <p>Corporate rollout of ESD toolkit (benchmarking and community intelligence tool provided by the LGG). CCS to take the lead in developing the toolkit as a resource for community intelligence, VfM and benchmarking within the authority <b>(Mar 2012)</b></p> <p>CCS to enter relevant national awards to showcase authority best practice and achievements in order to raise profile of authority <b>(on-going as appropriate)</b></p>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	<p>Web pages developed, use measured through 'web hits'</p> <p>Authority basing services and priorities on improved, robust and comprehensive information/data</p> <p>Promotion of service improvements and improved outcomes arising from learning</p> <p>Recognition achieved and associated rise in public profile through award success</p>	<p>Partnerships Manager</p> <p>Policy &amp; Performance Manager</p> <p>Comms Manager</p> <p>Electoral &amp; Support Services Manager</p>	All service areas – in relation to contributing to webpages	Within existing resources.	
1.1.7	<b>Value for Money information</b> – ensure that CCS has sufficient information to be able to make an accurate assessment of VfM in its component service areas		<p>Develop a robust VfM framework for the authority to ensure that VfM is central to everything we do and every decision we make <b>(Sept 2011)</b></p> <p>Develop the amount and quality of information that is gathered from other authorities relating to cost and performance to enable a sound VfM assessment can be made (linked to rollout of ESD toolkit in 1.1.6. above) <b>(Sept 2011)</b></p>	31 <sup>st</sup> September 2011	<p>Data collection surveys/methods developed</p> <p>Robust VfM assessment produced that highlights good practice and leads to demonstrable service improvements</p>	<p>Partnerships Manager</p> <p>Policy &amp; Performance Manager</p> <p>Comms Manager</p> <p>Electoral &amp; Support Services Manager</p>	N/A	Within existing resources.	

## Corporate Actions 2011/12

<p><b>A1</b></p>	<p>We will provide <b>excellent customer service</b> through specific actions aimed at getting it right first time, led by:</p> <p>i) Enabling customers to use our website to access more information and services;</p> <p>ii) Putting in place 'tell us once' arrangements across services by identifying and eliminating unnecessary repeat contacts</p> <p>iii) Making it easier to access Council information and services by reviewing how customers contact us, and introducing new methods</p>		<p>(i) Work with ICT to assist with review of SCDC website</p> <p>(ii) Take forward Customer Review Project through and beyond the agreement and development of a Customer Access Channel Strategy for SCDC (<b>Dec 2011</b>)</p> <p>(iii) Agree and carry out work programme of customer service improvement initiatives led by the CSE PAG/Service First group (<b>Mar2012</b>)</p> <p>(iv) Oversee the successful accreditation of the Council against the CSE standard (<b>June 2011</b>)</p> <p>(v) Develop, agree and implement actions arising from the CSE Post-Accreditation plan (<b>Mar 2012</b>)</p> <p>(vi) Through the PIG, develop a process for identifying areas with high levels of avoidable contact (<b>May 2011</b>)</p> <p>(vii) Carry out a programme of reviews, using the Performance Improvement Group, to minimise avoidable contact (<b>Mar 2012</b>)</p>	<p>31<sup>st</sup> March 2012</p>	<p>Increased web usage – measured through local ICT PIs</p> <p>Higher customer satisfaction with web services – measured through local ICT PIs</p> <p>Customer Services Performance Indicators – see appendix B</p> <p>Feedback and compliments</p> <p>Demonstrable service improvements arising from completion of action plans targets</p> <p>Enhanced reputation and performance</p>	<p>Corporate Manager – Community &amp; Customer Services</p>	<p>ICT</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	
<p><b>C2</b></p>	<p>We will carry out a '<b>Pride in South Cambs</b>' campaign to build community cohesion and increase the attractiveness of the environment for everyone, through the following specific actions:</p>		<p>(i) Reward residents for positive work to maintain the attractiveness of their homes and local communities via a public competition for the best kept village, streets and individual gardens.</p>	<p>31<sup>st</sup> March 2012</p>	<p>Competition entries result in an enhanced local environment.</p> <p>Successful initiatives build community cohesion.</p> <p>Measured through customer satisfaction,</p>	<p>Corporate Manager – Community &amp; Customer Services</p>	<p>(i) Affordable Homes</p> <p>(ii) Potentially all (subject to specific initiatives being identified)</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	

			(ii) Help the district celebrate a traditional Christmas through an inclusive programme of actions.	31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2011	compliments and feedback measures.				
<b>Policy and Performance</b>									
1.2.1	<b>Corporate Performance</b> - Ensure that the authority is able to quickly determine how it is currently performing through the use of a simple, easy to understand process		<p>Develop a corporate performance 'scorecard' containing an agreed 'basket' of key indicators, including a review of service indicators to support the corporate 'scorecard' (<b>May 2011</b>)</p> <p>In light of the above and changes in policy, refresh the Performance Management Manual including the publication of a summary version (<b>June 2011</b>)</p> <p>Undertake a programme of associated training on the above (<b>Dec 2011</b>)</p>	31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2011	<p>Positive improvements in corporate and service performance, including achievement of all 2011/12 corporate actions.</p> <p>Refreshed manual delivered and embedded within authority (measured through feedback survey, demonstrable improvements in performance and feedback received from audits).</p> <p>Training programme developed and delivered with high satisfaction levels (measured through feedback forms)</p>	Corporate Manager – Community & Customer Services	N/A	Within existing resources.	
1.2.2	<b>CorVu Development</b> - Facilitate the further development of CorVu into a fit for purpose, comprehensive performance monitoring/improvement tool		<p>Review the CorVu post implementation action plan undertaken in 2010/11 to assess progress made (<b>July 2011</b>)</p> <p>Develop a new CorVu action plan to move the system onto the next stage of development (<b>Dec 2011</b>)</p>	31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2011	<p>Positive improvements in corporate and service performance, including achievement of all 2011/12 corporate actions.</p> <p>High satisfaction levels with CorVu (measured through feedback forms)</p>	<p>Senior Policy and Performance Officer</p> <p>Performance Information Officer</p>	N/A	Within existing resources.	
1.2.3	<b>Benchmarking</b> - Ensure that all service areas are comparing their performance with comparable authorities to determine both relative performance and VfM		<p>Review existing benchmarking groups used by service areas to ensure that they are relevant and fit for purpose (<b>Dec 2011</b>)</p> <p>Investigate possible new benchmarking groups relating to specific service</p>	31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2011	SCDC maintains an overview of how it is performing against local, regional and national benchmarking standards through a central resource overseen by the policy and performance	<p>Policy &amp; Performance Manager</p> <p>Performance Information Officer</p>	All service areas – in relation to reviewing groups	Within existing resources.	

			areas to increase quality and validity of comparisons <b>(Dec 2011)</b>		team.  Identifiable improvements in direction of travel arising from benchmarking analyses.				
1.2.4	<b>Corporate Plan</b> - Ensure that the authority has a fit for purpose Corporate Plan outlining its priorities for the next 3 years		Further develop the corporate planning cycle to ensure that the timing and quality of consultation is a key element <b>(April 2011)</b> , leading to;  Develop a high level, overarching 3 year Corporate Plan setting both the strategic direction of the authority and high level priorities and providing closer integration with the MTFS <b>(June 2011)</b>  Monitor performance against Corporate Plan priorities on an on-going basis <b>(quarterly updates 2011-12)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	SCDC is clear about what it is trying to achieve, setting out SMART objectives and putting in place a framework to robustly monitor outcomes, leading to;  Positive improvements in corporate and service performance, including achievement of all 2011/12 corporate actions.	Policy & Performance Manager  Senior Policy and Performance Officer  Performance Information Officer	All service areas – in relation to contributing to corporate plan	Within existing resources.	
1.2.5	<b>Efficiency/service review programme</b> - Improve services through the completion of a programme of service reviews and a strengthening of the Performance Improvement Group terms of reference		Refresh the terms of reference of the Performance Improvement Group to ensure they play a central role in performance improvement in the authority <b>(April 2011)</b>  Develop a programme of future service reviews – identified through the VfM process and driven by the Performance Improvement Group <b>(July 2011)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2011	Refreshed terms of reference agreed by EMT.  Demonstrable positive interventions by the PIG to increase performance both corporately and in service areas  Improved performance in all PIs	Policy & Performance Manager  Senior Policy and Performance Officer	N/A	Within existing resources.	

1.2.6	<b>Inspection/Self regulation</b> - Respond to changes in the national performance agenda and ensure that the authority is prepared for and responding to announcements arising from central government and the emerging LGA Self Regulation regime		Specific actions to be identified and carried out as government or other guidance emerges	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Updated self-regulation framework provides a valuable tool for the Council to measure and improve its performance and customer service.	Policy & Performance Manager  Senior Policy and Performance Officer	N/A	Within existing resources.	
1.2.7	<b>Scrutiny Development</b> – Develop the scrutiny function to ensure the Scrutiny and Overview Committee builds its role as a critical friend to the Cabinet and management team through constructive challenge and proactive task-based project work.		The Scrutiny and Overview Committee agrees and carries out a robust work programme based on a task-and-finish model encompassing key elements of stakeholder engagement.	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Relevant Scrutiny engagement Pis – see Appendix B  Final recommendations lead to tangible improvements in performance and improved customer satisfaction.	Policy & Performance Manager  Scrutiny Development Officer	Potentially all, depending on work programme which will be agreed following consultation with service areas affected.	Within existing resources.	
1.2.8	<b>Capture service improvements and learning</b> - Ensure that information submitted in relation to customer complaints is used to improve service delivery		Implement 2011/12 CSE action plan/work programme of service improvements and customer service initiatives (linked to CSE work programme)	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Improved performance and service delivery leading to improved customer satisfaction	Policy & Performance Manager  Customer Services Co-ordinator	Potentially all service areas	Within existing resources	
1.2.9	<b>Customer Contact</b> - Ensure that the Customer Contact review comprehensively assesses all available options and leads to the implementation of a sustainable, holistic and appropriate customer contact framework for the authority		Complete the Customer Contact review, assessing all possible options for the future and putting forward appropriate recommendations ( <b>June 2011</b> )  Following the decision making process, lead the implementation phase of the project, meeting all appropriate deadlines to ensure continuity of the customer contact service in December 2012 ( <b>Mar 2012</b> )	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Preferred option accepted by PFH and Cabinet for implementation  Effective implementation plan put in place to minimise disruption to existing arrangements and maximise value to authority (measured through customer satisfaction surveys and appropriate local PI's)	Policy & Performance Manager  Senior Policy and Performance Officer	Potentially all service areas	Within existing resources.	
1.2.10	<b>Equality and Diversity</b> - Ensure that the authority continues to meet its Equality and Diversity obligations and builds upon the good work carried out in recent years		Agree a Single Equality Scheme ( <b>July 2012</b> )  Put in place a programme of work to ensure the authority complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Mar 2012</b> )  Implement 2011/12 Steering Group action plan	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Demonstrable positive outcomes for equality in terms of the Council's role as employer and service provider.  Improved customer satisfaction, feedback and compliments	Equality and Diversity Officer	N/A	Within existing resources.	

			(linked to E&D Steering Group work programme) <b>(Mar 2012)</b>						
1.2.11	<b>Project Management</b> – ensure that SCDC has a robust framework to manage projects to ensure added value and demonstrable outcomes, coupled with sufficiently trained officers to manage and carry out projects across the authority		Carry out a first year review of the refreshed project management framework/toolkit to ensure robustness and measure compliance <b>(Sept 2011)</b>  Carry out a comprehensive programme of project management training <b>(Mar 2012)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Demonstrable positive interventions by project groups to increase performance both corporately and in service areas	Corporate Manager – Community & Customer Services	Potentially all service areas	Within existing resources.	

## Communications

1.3.1	<b>South Cambs Magazine</b> – to further develop the magazine to identify potential efficiencies around distribution methods and ensure that effective use is made of the magazine as an informing and consulting tool.		Review the current distribution arrangements for the South Cambs Magazine <b>(July 2011)</b>  Explore potential for income generation through providing pages in the magazine to other agencies <b>(Sept 2011)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Cashable savings made in magazine distribution costs with no reduction in service provided or reader satisfaction levels  Readers survey	Comms Manager	N/A	Within existing resources.	
1.3.2	<b>Social Media</b> – continue to develop SCDC's social media presence into an effective informing/consultation tool		Agree a Social Media Policy and associated action plan <b>(July 2011)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Satisfaction levels with effectiveness and use of social media (both internal and external) measured through survey	Comms Manager	Potentially all service areas	Within existing resources.	
1.3.3	<b>Consistent branding of the Council and seek to improve public perception</b> - to raise the authority's profile, regenerate its reputation and strengthen its public identity as a vibrant and modern authority. We will work to improve public perception about the value for money provided by SCDC.		Agree a new Communications Policy (as part of the refreshed Community Engagement Strategy) and associated action plan <b>(July 2011)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Increased satisfaction levels with the authority  Positive publicity of authority measured through media monitoring reports	Comms Manager	Potentially all service areas	Within existing resources.	

Partnerships									
1.4.1	<b>Develop an authority wide approach to the Localism and the 'Big Society' agenda</b> - to enable the authority to gain an understanding of the above agenda and put in place a framework to promote an integrated, district wide approach and strengthen how the authority works with parishes.		<p>Map existing work and activity occurring across the authority and with partners that is already addressing the localism agenda (<b>July 2011</b>)</p> <p>Publicise existing localism work to raise the authority profile and demonstrate innovation and best practice (<b>Sept 2011</b>)</p> <p>Develop a corporate framework to maximise the authority response to the localism agenda (<b>July 2011</b>)</p>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	<p>Satisfaction levels of local communities</p> <p>Sign up rate of Parish Councils to Parish Charter</p> <p>Positive publicity of authority in relation to localism measured through media monitoring reports</p>	Corporate Manager – Community & Customer Services	Potentially all service areas	Within existing resources.	
1.4.2	<b>Reposition partnership working</b> - to refresh partnership working across the district and with Cambridge City to add value to existing work, deliver real outcomes that matter that we cannot deliver on our own and support the localism agenda.		<p>Review the structure and effectiveness of the current LSP arrangements with Cambridge City to ensure added value and demonstrable outcomes (<b>July 2011</b>)</p> <p>Review how SCDC interacts with other partnerships, including the CDRP, emerging health partnership etc, to ensure added value and demonstrable outcomes (<b>Mar 2012</b>)</p>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Effective, value adding structure in place that addresses the needs of both SCDC and the wider community	Corporate Manager – Community & Customer Services	Potentially all service areas	Within existing resources.	
Electoral Services									
1.5.1	<b>Capacity review</b> – to ensure that the authority is best placed to deal with the uneven demands of the electoral cycle in terms of sufficient officer capacity		Investigate alternative ways of providing support to the elections team through capacity building in other parts of Community and Customer Services and across the wider authority ( <b>June 2011</b> )	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2011	Existing high satisfaction levels and performance at election and canvass times maintained	Corporate Manager – Community & Customer Services	N/A	Within existing resources.	

# Policy and Performance

## Value for Money Scorecard Self Assessment Proforma



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

### Summary

Direction of Travel Risk Indicator	Cost Comparison	Cost Trend	Performance Comparison	Performance Trend	Current Assessment
Concerns re-availability of comparison data in order to demonstrate VfM	N/A		N/A		

This assessment is based upon Audit Commission data for the Nearest Neighbour Comparison Group for 2009 (where applicable).

This group comprises sixteen non-Metropolitan Districts Councils

How well do the Council's Policy and Performance costs compare with others?		
Current level of service costs	The Policy and Performance team is a small, lean team, covering a wide range of services including scrutiny, customer services and equality and diversity, as well as performance and policy issues. Value for money comparison with other councils is difficult because all have different structures and ways of providing these services. This is particularly true in cost terms as both the Audit Commission VfM profile tool and CIPFA VfM tool do not have categories the correspond with these service areas. For this reason cost comparisons cannot be made and are not included in this proforma. However this issue has been highlighted in the attached service plan and work will be undertaken in 2011/12 to develop meaningful comparison data. There are, however, some benchmarking figures available relating to some of the composite parts of Policy and Performance. A full copy of the CIPFA benchmarking survey of Performance Management is attached however in summary it shows that	Cost Comparison

	<p>SCDC has a below average number of FTE's allocated to the performance management function. This, coupled with the good performance outlined in the next section, would seem to indicate good value for money (with all the caveats outlined previously).</p> <p>The Centre for Public Scrutiny's 2009 annual survey shows that the average number of scrutiny officers is 2.29 across all authority types. In district councils the average number of scrutiny officers was 1.5. SCDC has 1. The average scrutiny budget for authorities in 2009/10 was £8,687 (down £1,230 on 2008/09). The figure at SCDC is £5,000 but this also covers venue hire and scrutiny training.</p> <p>In terms of trend information, there has been a downward trend in cost across Policy and Performance. In recent years the service has lost both posts (the deletion of a business analyst post and reduction in hours to part time of the Performance Information Officer) and service budgets (e.g. in Equality and Diversity, performance management and CorVu). Notwithstanding these cost reductions, performance (in terms of both output and outcomes) has been maintained (as outlined in the next section).</p>	<p>Cost Trend</p>
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<b>To what extent are costs commensurate with service delivery, performance and the outcomes achieved?</b>		
<p>Quality and standards achieved, including targeted investment to improve poorer services and quality of life.</p>	<p>The achievements made by the Policy and Performance team in 2010/11 are outlined in the main body of the 2011/12 Service Plan and are not replicated here, except to say that 2010/11 has been a year of achievement, consolidation and refocus for all services falling under Community &amp; Customer Services. This has been supported by the improvement plan in last years service plan, which set out a comprehensive, ambitious and far reaching set of actions for 2010/11 and against which there have been many successes and achievements made. It should be noted that all actions points have been completed within agreed timescales in 2010/11.</p> <p>As with cost comparisons above, it is difficult to make performance comparisons with other authorities due to different services being provided by different authorities in different ways and the lack of comparable indicators, made more difficult by the removal of the CAA regime and National Indicators. However as outlined above and below (within the service inspection section) SCDC does provide a comprehensive range of services within Policy and Performance, which have received excellent recognition and continue to meet internal targets. This is further evidenced by information provided through CorVu which shows consistent improvement in aspects such as complaint handling, customer satisfaction rates, number of EqIA's completed and contact centre performance.</p>	<p>Performance Comparison</p> <p>Performance Trend</p>
<p>Results of service inspections</p>	<p>Four main assessments/inspections have been undertaken in 2011/11;</p>	

Awards /Accreditations	<p>Firstly a Scrutiny task and finish group looked at Performance Management across the authority and concluded that many aspects of SCDC's performance management systems are working extremely well. This is evidenced by top quartile performance in many services, a comparatively lean workforce and low rate of council tax. A number of recommendations were also made and these are currently being implemented, which should make the service even better.</p> <p>Secondly, in terms of Equality and Diversity the council has been judged to be an <b>'Achieving' authority under the Equality Framework for Local Government</b>. It has been formally recognised, through an LGID Peer Review, for its commitment to equal opportunities in its employment of staff, how it delivers its services and for being a community leader. The improvement journey the authority has travelled on is remarkable and shows a real achievement from its low baseline only a few years ago. The Peer Review team reflected this stating;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"South Cambridgeshire District Council has demonstrated excellent engagement with residents and customers and shown that it can and will respond to needs. It has a good combination of leadership, effective policies and processes and robust engagement with some parts of the voluntary sector. This has resulted in many good examples of responsive services to meet the needs of its diverse communities."</p> <p>Thirdly, the authority is currently undertaking a comprehensive programme of work in order to attain the Customer Service Excellence accreditation. Pre assessment work has highlighted a number of strengths in current practice and led to a number of improvements in service delivery already. The Policy and Performance team are leading this process.</p> <p>Finally, SCDC are one of only 27 local authorities signed up to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. Our score in 2010 has increased by 51%% to 71.</p>
Range of discretionary services provided.	A large proportion of the work undertaken by Policy and Performance is discretionary, designed to support the development and delivery of the 3 A's, manage a comprehensive and robust performance and policy framework and provide support and challenge to service areas in increasing service performance.

<b>Do procurement and other spending decisions take account of full long term costs?</b>	
Identifiable savings achieved through procurement	The current Customer Contact review has been allocated a savings target by EMT, which will be achieved through the identification, approval (by Cabinet) and implementation of a sustainable, holistic customer contact framework. This will take into account full long-term costs and value for money as part of the option appraisal process.
Use of external funding to deliver Council priorities	Policy and Performance have been instrumental in securing £50,000 funding from Improvement East (as part of a total funding award of £307,000) to fund a business analyst to help with both the Customer Contact review and Customer Service Excellence accreditation (both council actions).

# Guidance Notes

## Value for Money Scorecard Self Assessment Proforma



### Direction of Travel Risk Indicator

	Extremely unlikely that VfM will be demonstrated in the future
	Unlikely that VfM will be demonstrated in the future
	Some concerns
	Likely that VfM will be demonstrated in the future
	Extremely likely that VfM will be demonstrated/best practice in the future

### Cost Trend

	Costs rising faster than inflation by more than 2%
	Costs rising more than inflation by between 1% and 2%
	Costs +/- 1% of inflation
	Costs lower than inflation by between 1% and 2%
	Costs lower than inflation by more than 2%

(For inflation rate – assume rate of 2.5%)

### Cost Comparison

	Top Quartile
	2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile
	Bottom Quartile

### Performance Comparison

	Top Quartile
	2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile
	Bottom Quartile

### Performance Trend

	Performance Strongly Improving
	Performance Improving
	Performance Worsening
	Performance Strongly Worsening