

Report to: **Audit, Best Value & Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **1 September 2011**

By: **Chief Executive**

Title of report: **Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPP&R)**

Purpose of report: **To enable the Committee to consider and comment on the detailed planning for 2012/13 and beyond as outlined in the State of the County report.**

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS: The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**

- (1) Inform Cabinet of any comments or changes it wishes to propose to the policy steers and Council Promise and their contribution to the objectives of the Council;**
  - (2) Establish a scrutiny board to act on behalf of the Committee to provide ongoing input into the RPP&R process until March 2012, and in particular to consider the detailed departmental portfolio plans when available; and**
  - (3) Identify any issues to include in the Committee's future work programme.**
- 

**1. Background**

1.1 The State of the County 2011 report was presented to Cabinet on 26 July 2011. That report outlined the national and local context providing an overview of the main issues which will affect the County Council in the coming year. Cabinet has approved some changes to the Reconciling Policy and Resources (RP&R) process and has agreed:

- That the Council should plan on the basis of a three year budget based on the proposed cash limits;
- To review the capital programme to ensure that the best use is being made of resources to support the Council's priorities;
- To set cash limits on the basis of *service areas* identified for the creation of stronger links between financial and performance information at lower service levels;
- That the process is renamed *Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources* (RPP&R) to mark the more holistic approach the Council will be taking to its planning processes
- Provisional cash limits for 2012/13 to 2014/15 for the purpose of modelling savings and has asked Chief Officers to report progress in October 2011; and
- That Lead Members would review with chief officers, scrutiny committees and other relevant partners, the Council's Promise and policy steers in the light of the changing local and national circumstances.

1.2 The County Council's *Promise* and supporting *Policy Steers* for each portfolio area act as a guide to business and financial planning. The current *Policy Steers* have been allocated to new portfolios which the Leader of the Council announced at the County Council meeting in May 2011. Appendix 1 summarises the current policy steers arranged against the new Cabinet portfolios.

1.3 Appendices 2a-c detail the policy steers falling within the remit of this scrutiny committee indicating for each: a) what we set out to achieve; b) where we are now, and c) our key areas for

improvement. The Committee may find this helpful when considering any revisions to the policy steers.

1.4 The draft policy steers for 2012/13, on which the views of the committee are specifically invited, will be available the meeting.

## **2. Scrutiny's role in Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources**

2.1 Scrutiny's engagement in the RPP&R process is important as scrutiny Members bring to bear the experience that they have gained through their work during previous years. It is also an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to highlight any issues to include in its future work programme.

2.2 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to review and comment on the current policy steers and the *Council Promise* which lie within the Committee's remit. Policy steers should:

- Describe what we can expect to achieve over the medium term (2 – 3 years);
- Incorporate sufficient clarity to be able to determine whether they will have been, or are being, delivered by, for example, ensuring that appropriate measures and targets can be set against them;
- Have resources attached to them;
- Help to build a picture, either explicitly or implicitly, of non priority services or functions.

2.3 The Committee might also wish to bear in mind the following pointers during the later stages of the process as well as when reflecting on departmental activities linked to the policy steers:

- Policy steers need to reflect the severity of the economic outlook and emerging local priorities.
- Scrutiny commentary is particularly valuable where there is a particular tension between 'universal' services and 'targeted' services – either within a service or between departments.
- Scrutiny is invited to make judgements about value for money for areas of above average costs, and to provide challenge to ensure return on investment by increased performance.
- Scrutiny is invited to question the extent to which the key 'areas for improvement' identified in the portfolio report (appendix 2) are still valid and relevant.

## **3. Next steps**

3.1 Cabinet will meet on 11 October 2011 to consider scrutiny's comments and agree the policy steers for 2012/13.

3.2 The Committee's RPP&R Board will meet in December 2011 to consider the detailed portfolio and budget plans and the emerging savings strategy. It will comment in detail upon whether the amended policy steers are reflected satisfactorily within the proposed key areas of budget spending for 2012/13 and beyond. It will seek to ensure that all possible efficiencies are identified and will comment on the likely impact of those savings on services provided by the County Council and its partners.

BECKY SHAW  
Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Paul Dean, Scrutiny Manager (01273 481751)  
Local Member: All

### Background Documents

None

## PROMISE AND POLICY STEERS 2011/12

### The Promise

We will, in partnership, make the best use of resources to:

- help make East Sussex prosperous and safe
- support the most vulnerable people
- improve and develop roads and infrastructure
- encourage personal and community responsibility
- deliver the lowest possible Council Tax
- be a voice for East Sussex, listening and answering to local people.

Below are the 2011/12 policy steers arranged against the new Cabinet portfolios in place from May 2011 and the relevant scrutiny committee (in brackets).

### Strategic Management and Economic Development (SMED) Portfolio

**(Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee (ABV) and Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee (ETE))**

1. Raise the prosperity of East Sussex through a sharp focus on employment, skills and infrastructure. **(ETE)**
2. Create sustainable communities by providing strategic leadership, empowering people, recognising the different needs of communities across the county, delivering locally and helping to ensure that public services in East Sussex, especially across the three tiers of local government, are commissioned and delivered effectively. **(ABV)**
3. Lead the delivery of the Council's policy steers and improvement of services through effective policy development and performance management. **(ABV)**
4. Support Members to fulfil their role as community leaders, in scrutiny and as the democratic voice of local people. **(ABV)**
5. Continue to improve equity and equality of opportunity for all through our service delivery and as an employer. **(ABV)**
6. Ensure that residents, staff and key stakeholders are engaged in and informed about the key changes impacting on them. **(ABV)**

### Community and Resources Portfolio

**(Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee)**

1. Ensure the Council matches available resources to its key priorities and delivers the lowest level of council tax consistent with those priorities.
2. Ensure efficient and effective strategic and operational financial management across the Council.
3. Maintain and improve high standards of governance, internal control and risk management.
4. Deliver top class procurement practice to support top class commissioning across the Council.
5. Ensure the Council has the right property resources to support effective service delivery.
6. Make best use of available capital resources and ensure effective delivery of capital projects.
7. Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change.
8. Ensure that we have the right staff, with the right skills, supported by fit for purpose personnel policies and procedures.

9. Improve access to services for residents and maximise how ICT can help the whole Council operate more efficiently for the benefit of our council tax payers.
10. Provide front line staff with the best tools possible so they can be as effective as possible in meeting the needs of service users.
11. Continuously ensure maximum security and resilience of data and networks.
12. Public health:
  - a) arrangements for integration of services **(ABV)**.
  - b) Public health targets **(Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee)** in due course.

### **Community Services Portfolio**

#### **(Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee)**

1. Work with the voluntary and community sector to build capacity.
2. Embed the Library Service in its communities to: reflect the expressed needs of the customer; encourage people to get the skills they need for employment; promote learning/literacy and improve access to services.
3. Ensure that the promotion of culture within East Sussex is embedded in the work of the County Council to maximise the attraction of investment and visitors to the area.
4. To seek out and preserve the original documents which record the history of East Sussex, its people, communities and organisations; and to make them available to present and future generations for inspiration, research and lifelong learning.
5. To modernise delivery of the Registration Service.

### **Economy, Transport and Environment Portfolio**

#### **(Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee)**

1. Improve the condition of our road and rights of way network.
2. Plan and prioritise the infrastructure needed to support the county's prosperity.
3. Achieve a fair balance between economic growth and the protection of our urban, rural and coastal environment.
4. Minimise the amount of the county's waste sent to landfill or landraise.
5. Make our roads safer.
6. Improve transport access to services.
7. Reduce the risk and impact of local flooding in East Sussex.
8. Promote informed, successful businesses in a fair and safe trading environment; encourage informed, confident consumers, protect vulnerable consumers.
9. Work with partners to strike a balance between the needs of the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities with the reduced level of funding available.

### **Children's and Adults' Services Portfolio**

#### **(Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee)**

1. Provide the strategic leadership required across the county to ensure that continued improvements in the full range of the community safety agenda are maintained through the spending reductions and organisational changes over the next 3 years.

### **Children and Families Portfolio**

#### **(Children's Services Scrutiny Committee)**

1. Promote good health for children and young people and reduce health inequalities.

2. Protect children and young people from harm and neglect.
3. Develop resilience in families to help reduce dependency on public services by enhancing their capacity to resolve their own problems.
4. Improve outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, as well as improving support to children and young people on the edge of care.
5. Promote the benefits of young people making a positive contribution to their community and decisions affecting their own lives.

## **Learning and School Effectiveness Portfolio**

### **(Children's Services Scrutiny Committee)**

1. Support and challenge schools to raise educational achievement and aspirations at all key stages and target interventions at those most vulnerable to under achievement.
2. Work with partners to minimise the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training.

## **Adult Social Care Portfolio**

### **(Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee)**

1. Make a strategic shift in Adult Social Care resources towards Older Peoples Services over the next five years, to reflect our demography and to ensure our resources are fairly and equitably distributed.
2. Improve information and advice to enable people to make the right choices about the support they need, at the right time, irrespective of their ability to pay.
3. Improve people's choice and control about how their needs are met by making best use of family and community support networks, and by developing the range of support and services available.
4. Ensure Adult Social Care support is accessible, proportionate, and that in partnership, we will protect vulnerable adults from harm.
5. Continue to invest in prevention and early intervention to keep people healthy and to maximise opportunities for rehabilitation and recovery.

# Strategic Management and Economic Development

## 1. Introduction by Lead Member

We are committed to improving the prosperity of East Sussex and are actively working in close partnership with all interested parties including the District and Borough Councils, partners, private and voluntary sectors and the public to strengthen the local economy and tackle deprivation throughout the county. We have already made great progress in revitalising and re-shaping Hastings, our most deprived area by encouraging investment and innovation and creating a healthier economy with higher quality employment opportunities for local people. Through our work with partners in Sea Space, we have seen the creation of up to 800 jobs through the location of the Saga Group in the Hastings Business District this year. We will continue to work with partners to achieve the planned improvements in education, skills, business and employment opportunities, together with a better broadband and transport infrastructure. We are part of a new Local Enterprise Partnership with Greater Essex and Kent. The Partnership will provide opportunities which we are keen to seize.

Effective strategic management is vital to ensure the Council can carry out its functions and manage its business in the difficult financial climate that Local Government will face in the next few years. We have been working to refine our successful RP&R process to ensure that it continues to support our efforts to direct the finance available most effectively to meet customer needs. We are continuing work to improve our customer focus, commissioning services in the most effective way to meet customer needs, using a greater diversity of providers where this improves value for money; and ensuring internal processes are as effective as possible. We will also seek to get best value for local tax payers by looking at new and innovative ways of working and achieving economies by working with others. The council will continue its partnership with the "SE7" group of Councils (Kent, Medway, East Sussex, West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, Surrey and Hampshire) to drive through efficiency and best value in the way we work.

**Councillor Peter Jones, Leader of the Council**

## **2. Policy Steer relating to Economic Development**

- ❖ Raise the prosperity of East Sussex through a sharp focus on employment, skills and infrastructure.
- ❖ This policy steer is being considered by ETESC.

## **3. Policy Steer relating to Strategic Activities**

- ❖ Create sustainable communities by providing strategic leadership, empowering people, recognising the different needs of communities across the county, delivering locally and helping to ensure that public services in East Sussex, especially across the three tiers of local government, are commissioned and delivered effectively.

### **3.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

This policy steer drives all of the Council's strategic activities. The Council is determined to achieve the best value in its services for local people, working with partners locally and regionally where appropriate to achieve that end. Key to that is our approach to commissioning, ensuring that we get the right service at the right price. The Council, as one of the democratic voices of local people, is accountable to them and has a vital role in representing their interests locally, regionally and nationally.

### **3.2 Where are we now?**

For 2011/12 both our "Promise" and policy steers have undergone more major revisions than in the past to reflect the changed local and national policy and financial context.

Key to the County Council's approach to its business planning is the desire to ensure that the best use is being made of public sector resources for the benefit of the people of East Sussex. This approach is being pursued at all levels. At the sub-regional level the Council is working with South East Seven (SE7) councils to achieve efficiencies, to deliver service improvements and to engage with, and influence central Government. The partnership is focusing on key priorities for the councils and their residents including waste, highways maintenance, special educational needs (SEN), procurement and Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

The Government's transparency agenda encourages local authorities to make public data openly available so that citizens can hold them to account. The aims are to allow taxpayers to see how their money is being spent, to increase efficiency, and to open up new markets and improve access for small and local businesses. This year our Reconciling Policy and Resources (RPR) guidance has been updated to help provide better information for Councillors to make decisions. The proposal is to use smaller 'service units' as the basis for integrating financial and performance information to allow for finer choices to be made about how resources are allocated and how services are commissioned. We are also reviewing our publications (both what we publish and in what format) to assess to what extent we already meet the requirements of the transparency agenda.

During the lifetime of this Government there will be changes to the arrangements for delivery of health services. The County Council will become responsible for public health, and GPs, other clinicians and stakeholder groups through clinical commissioning groups will commission some health services. The Government is undertaking a Pause, Listen, Reflect, Improve activity. While this will lead to amendments to planned legislation it is

unlikely to change the general direction of travel. It will lead to changes in the published timeline for changes that we have been working towards. The County Council already has integrated service delivery plans in place with health, which should form a firm basis for the transition to the new arrangements. Key groups of Primary Health Care (PCT) staff have collocated to Council offices and joint planning and working is underway. The County Council has been accepted as an early implementer for public health by the Department of Health. We will be part of a national working group sharing good practice and maximising our effectiveness, supported by the Department of Health. The PCT Public Health team have also moved to County Hall. A service review of Public Health is being undertaken to ensure there is an effective delivery system in place when the Council takes over the responsibilities in 2013.

### **3.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

We will develop a proportionate and effective approach to local accountability and the transparency agenda, focusing on providing opportunities for local people to find the information they need and want.

The Council will put in place shadow public health arrangements at the beginning of 2011/12, prior to full integration in 2013. The Council has integrated plans with health services and it will need to ensure that arrangements for the changes to clinical commissioning groups support these. The Council will work closely with the clinical commissioning groups during the 2011/12 shadow year to help ensure that arrangements are developed and implemented successfully.

As a Department of Health early implementer and because of the many interdependencies associated with health provision, partners in East Sussex wished to move forward on this agenda. A shadow Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is expected to be in place in East Sussex by September 2011 but it would continue to evolve and develop beyond this date especially in the light of the Pause, Listen, Reflect, Improve activity.

We envisage that the HWB will be the 'Guardian of the whole health and care system' for East Sussex –setting the direction for change clearly linked to improvement in patient and service user outcomes and promoting joint working across commissioners. It will also try to take a wider view of things that impact on health such as housing. As a part of its role it will develop the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.



## **4. Policy Steer relating to Performance Management**

- ❖ Lead the delivery of the Council's policy steers and improvement of services through effective policy development and performance management.

### **4.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

The Reconciling Policy and Resources (RPR) initiative was developed to ensure that the Council's policy steers were delivered. This requires the effective development, implementation and evaluation of corporate initiatives and policies, coupled with sound business planning and performance management processes that ensure that service improvements are achieved. We are accountable to the residents of East Sussex and they are the principal judges of our performance. Our aim is to be seen by the public as performing well in all the areas they consider to be priorities for the county.

The Council needs to identify £63 million of savings over the three years 2012/13 to 2014/15. The scale of this financial challenge means that we need to do things differently, become a leaner organisation making the best possible use of all our resources, and be more tightly focused on our priorities. In 2010/11 the Cabinet began preparations for the anticipated financial challenge and agreed some core principles and financial parameters to inform these preparations. At the core of the task is ensuring we:

- have rigorously reviewed all our activities at both service and organisational levels; and
- understand the value residents place on our services and the options for effective delivery to enable the Members to make informed choices about future activities and budgets.

The central requirement of the service review process is the need to take a robust commissioning approach. Commissioning is the cycle of assessing the needs of local people, specifying services, securing and delivering appropriate services and reviewing outcomes. It is essentially good business planning – a structured way of deciding how money should be spent.

### **4.2 Where are we now?**

In line with its commitment to reduce central control the Coalition Government has:

- abolished the National Indicator Set (NIS) for data reference;
- replaced the NIS with a single list of all data that central Government asks of local government;
- abolished national targets for local government (although there will be some national standards);
- abolished the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and is abolishing the Audit Commission, which was responsible for regulating local authority performance (we will still be subject to external audit of financial arrangements).
- stated that councils are no longer required to produce a local area agreement (LAA) as of 1 April 2011;
- introduced a focus on transparency, open data and local accountability.

Achievement of Council Plan targets is a measure of the overall delivery of the Council's Policy Steers. The targets in the Council Plan are designed to be challenging, so not all targets will be achieved each year. Of the 171 Council Plan 2010/11 measures with year end results to date: 133 (77.8%) targets were achieved and 38 (22.2%) were not achieved.

106 measures can be compared to the previous year. Of these 67 (63.2%) have improved, 19 (17.9%) showed no change and 20 (18.9%) deteriorated.

The generally good outturns are all the more positive as they were achieved in the face of in-year budget reductions and significant additional work undertaken for service reviews and managing the transfer of public health service staff to the Council. Efforts have been focused on minimising any negative impact on service users as evidenced by the targets achieved.

The RPR process is reviewed annually. A number of changes are recommended to help us cope with the scale of challenge over the next three years:

- RPR to become Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR). This makes it explicit that we need to balance three elements where choices can be made – Policy (what to do), Performance (how well to do it) and Resources (at what cost). The intention is not to focus on identifying cuts but, more positively, to decide how to spend well the budget that is available and challenge ourselves across the three elements of RPPR to deliver the best possible value for money; and
- to link policy, performance and resources to an overall commissioning approach for each set of services (a fourth choice – how to do it).

The changes to the RP&R architecture are part of a wider change programme consisting of four strands of connected activity that will position the Council to respond to current challenges and exploit opportunities:

- Developing an ESCC commissioning approach to service delivery;
- Transforming the experience of ESCC residents through a redefined Customer Access Strategy;
- Challenging ourselves to be an efficient organisation (using Lean principles) that provides value for more and added value to the residents of East Sussex; and
- Exploring opportunities to work collaboratively with partners to deliver service improvements and efficiency savings for East Sussex taxpayers.

### **4.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

The Council is now free from heavily prescribed national performance frameworks but lighter national standards are being developed and there is an increased focus on transparency and local accountability. The Council Plan will, therefore, continue to provide robust measures and targets against local priorities and we will have regard to relevant national standards. As ever, we will use the single data list, if it fits local priorities. And we will make sure that we maintain a sustained focus on the things that local people want us to provide, particularly in the financially challenging times ahead.

We have set performance measures against our policy steers to ensure that the supporting activity undertaken is the most effective use of resources. Associated targets have been considered carefully and in some cases we have set minimum standards that local people expect rather than seek to deliver very high performance that makes only a marginal difference and at high cost. This should allow the Council to maintain services at a lower cost or redirect resources to support improvement where performance is below an acceptable standard or where need is greater. Freedom from nationally set targets has provided us with the opportunity to set more realistic targets in some services that have been subject to national control.

Good management information is necessary to understand how services perform and particularly relevant where it can inform how to deliver services more efficiently and

effectively. Audit reports have shown that the Council's data quality is good but we need to continue to improve and ensure that decisions to change and develop services are based on sound intelligence.

RPR this year contains a review programme for all services that the Council provides. This will need to be supported by good performance and financial benchmarking information. The Government has announced that it wants data to be published to allow local "armchair auditors" to make their own judgements about local performance. The Government has set up the data.gov.uk website where they will publish links to all central Government data, and the Local Government Group are developing the LG Inform online service where they envisage key local Government data will be published and benchmarking tools will be provided. However the current lack of single online data repository is causing some difficulty in making comparisons. We will need to work with others to influence the Government to ensure that the single data list provides the information needed to make meaningful judgements about the cost and quality of our services.

We are well placed to develop our approach to commissioning: there is a strong strategic lead; service reviews provide a focus to consider future delivery of services; our RPR and business planning processes are well developed; and we have well established partnerships with a wide range of other bodies and we are developing opportunities to expand this further.

A more robust approach to commissioning across all departments presents a number of challenges; there needs to be a clear and common understanding of commissioning and ownership of the service review process; managers need to have the time, skills and competencies to review services; business and service plans need to be clear about the task ahead; and we need to strengthen our approach to needs assessments, evidence gathering and options appraisal. It will take time to develop a fully effective commissioning approach but it will strengthen as it becomes embedded in our systems and culture.

Our next steps include co-designing a workshop for Chief Officers and Assistant Directors to help us develop a common understanding of commissioning, common ownership and awareness, and skills and competencies. We are also developing the Reconciling Policy and Resources (RPR) process to explicitly adopt a commissioning approach, clarify expectations of the service review programme and links to portfolio and business plans.

## **5. Policy Steer relating to Scrutiny and Democratic Services**

- ❖ Support Members to fulfil their role as community leaders, in scrutiny and as the democratic voice of local people.

### **5.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

Councillors involvement in the democratic process is enhanced by effective support and training. Support to Councillors will be continuously developed to meet the needs of their evolving roles. In particular, priority will be given to the following activities:

- Raising awareness of and increasing opportunities for active involvement of the public in the decision-making process. This includes promotion of the Petition Scheme and e-petition facility and increased use of the website (including the webcast) as a resource to improve public engagement in decision making and a source of information to make suggestions, compliments and complaints about what the Council does.

- Support to Councillors including provision of a comprehensive development programme to provide more effective and relevant training, increased electronic information to ensure Councillors have the skills and knowledge to undertake their community leadership role and guidance on the interpretation of the Code of Conduct. Making sure all decisions are made within the legal framework and on sound legal advice.
- Developing Scrutiny programmes that are Councillor-led and aligned as closely as practicable with the Council's commitment to affordable, quality core services, prosperity and security. We will also better ensure Scrutiny's influence in making efficiency savings, developing and improving Council policies and improving services. Raising awareness of Scrutiny by developing creative engagement methods and ensuring effective publicity for Scrutiny outcomes.

## **5.2 Where are we now?**

With the introduction of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act, emphasis will be placed on the need to encourage further public participation in the democratic processes including the introduction of e-petitions which went live in December 2010. The number of webcast viewers of Council meetings is increasing with significant peaks when controversial issues are being discussed. Councillor webpages have been enhanced and now include surgery dates and times.

The Leader is responsible for the strategic leadership of the County Council. Key to this leadership function is ensuring Councillors are well supported. Achieving renewed accreditation against the South East Employers' Charter for Member Development has emphasised the Council's commitment to ensuring that Councillors have the right tools to do their job. The development programme for all Councillors is continuing with the completion of personal development plans and a further programme of events. Feedback from Councillor Training Sessions is used to establish satisfaction levels and areas for improvement/development.

Councillors are actively involved in a number of projects looking at improved services provided for them by the County Council. Projects groups leading key development areas currently under review include:

- Members' Training, Development and Communication Group; and
- Members' ICT Group.

The support for Councillors has been improved by officers' understanding of the political environment and a continuing priority this year will be raising staff awareness of the decision-making processes across all departments through departmental induction and training programmes.

Overview and Scrutiny has undertaken a range of public and stakeholder consultations as part of the work of Scrutiny review boards. In particular a public consultation during the scrutiny review of winter highways maintenance was specifically geared to provide key evidence that led to changes in council policy. This scrutiny review received a commendation under the value for money category at the Centre for Public Scrutiny annual conference in June 2011.

## **5.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

The focus this year will be on maintaining the efficiency of the decision-making processes across the Council. We will

- continue to provide Members a comprehensive development programme, using feedback from Councillors, to provide more effective and relevant training;
- increase use of the website (including the webcast) as a resource to improve public engagement in decision making and overview and scrutiny;
- continue to develop Scrutiny programmes that are Councillor led and aligned with the Council's commitment to affordable, quality core services, prosperity and security; and
- involve the public and partners in Scrutiny by increasing awareness of the existence of Scrutiny, by developing new and creative engagement methods, and ensuring effective publicity for Scrutiny's outcomes

## **6. Policy Steer relating to Equalities**

- ❖ Continue to improve equity and equality of opportunity for all through our service delivery and as an employer.

### **6.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

The County Council has a range of activities across departments designed to make sure all our customers are able to get access to the services that the County Council offers. As an employer we want to adopt approaches which encourage diversity and maximise the contribution and potential of everyone employed by the Council to make sure that our workforce is effective in meeting the needs of local people.

### **6.2 Where are we now?**

Under the Chairmanship of the Chief Executive the cross-departmental group of Assistant Directors who lead on performance has introduced measures to integrate equalities issues into the County Council's Reconciling Policy and Resources business planning process, to ensure that Equalities Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are carried out consistently and systematically for all services and policies and that actions arising can be resourced and included in Business Plan targets. Where budget reductions occur we will use our EqIA methodology to identify any adverse impact and put plans in place to ensure that the most vulnerable in our communities are not disproportionately affected.

The Council has been externally assessed as reaching level 2 'achieving' under the Equality Framework for Local Government and is operating at level 3 'excellent' in many areas. An action plan has been developed for those areas where improvements need to be made.

We have designed and implemented a new equality and diversity e-learning induction package and a class-based EqIA training course. This will continue to improve staff skills across the council to identify equalities issues and develop actions to address any negative impacts identified.

We have a strong commitment to equalities as an employer. An EqIA was conducted on our Managing Change policies, these are followed systematically throughout all restructure or reorganisation processes. EqIAs have also been used to ensure that staff are not disproportionately affected during reorganisation or staff restructures. We also carry out a high level equality monitoring profile of the affected team or service area both pre and post restructure and we will use this data to identify any trends across the Council.

We ensure a good level of engagement with minority groups of staff through a series of forums for disabled, BME and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) employees.

A process is in place to record workplace adjustments for all staff, to ensure we are fulfilling our duty to make reasonable adjustments as specified under the Equality Act 2010. The database enables us to monitor the cost of adjustments and the funding received from 'Access to Work'. An online training system is available to all staff. This includes enhancements to the workstation self-assessment process and guidance which builds on the previous development of our workstation adjustments toolkit.

We use equalities data to monitor our workforce. During 2010/11, 82 disabled employees left the County Council (nine due to redundancy) and 43 disabled employees were recruited. This resulted in a small net decrease in the total number of employees with a disability across the workforce from 3.01% in 2009/10 to 2.84% in 2010/11. This is still within the expected range of 2.75% - 3.5%.

The results of our recent Equalities Questionnaire helped to reduce the proportion of employees whose status is unknown, by 1% and actually increased the number of employees recorded as disabled by 10. Benchmarking in 2009/10 for all County Councils showed that East Sussex still remains within the higher performing Councils for this indicator. The percentage of our workforce from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups has increased from 2.3% in 2009/2010 to 2.8% in 2010/2011.

Performance success over the last year includes:

- Continued work on the sexuality strand has resulted in the County Council moving up from number 17 to number 7 in the national Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, which ranks the top 100 public and private sector employers for LGB staff. East Sussex is now the highest ranked local authority in the Index.
- The County Council has committed to a Local Employment Partnership, a programme between central government and employers, and is keen to work with partners to facilitate future employment opportunities, offering opportunities to local people currently disadvantaged in the labour market. This follows on from our successful 'return to work' programmes, run in partnership with Job Centre Plus for unemployed disabled people to develop their workplace skills. Ten were employed at the end of the pilot.
- Renewal of the 'Positive about Disabled People' two ticks symbol has been successfully achieved for 2011, demonstrating the County Council's ongoing commitment to equality in employment for disabled people.
- A new Equality and Diversity E-Learning training package has been developed to replace the previous version and successfully launched to staff. The package, which is available via the staff intranet, provides an overview of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Through the use of practical scenarios the training also examines best practice and requires staff to focus on and think about their attitudes and behaviours in relation to Equality and Diversity and to understand their personal responsibilities as an employee of the County Council.

### **6.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

The key areas for improvement are contained in every departmental business plan. The Council is also ensuring its compliance with the Equality Act 2010 general duty and will implement the public sector specific duties when they have been published.

Although we are within an expected range, we aim to increase the percentage of disabled and BME staff. Ensuring the County Council is an attractive employer to all sections of the community provides the widest pool from which to select new staff.

Action planning work has commenced to increase the number of disabled staff employed, including engaging disabled staff via the Disability Staff Forum.

We routinely survey the workforce every two years to ensure the data we record in relation to the equalities profile of the Council is as accurate as possible. This survey includes sexual orientation and for the first time over 50% of the workforce responded to this question and based on the data collected, 1.2% of respondents declared that they are LGB. Data continues to improve and we will continue to encourage and support all employees to respond in future surveys.

## **7. Policy Steer relating to Communications**

- ❖ Ensure that residents, staff and key stakeholders are engaged in and informed about the key changes impacting on them.

### **7.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

We aim to raise public awareness and understanding of the Council's role, its services, policies and priorities, through improved information and access to services. In particular, improve information for residents and staff about the Council's financial situation and how this affects services.

We will also increase understanding within the Council of customers' needs and preferences by engaging and listening to the views of residents and ensuring feedback is considered in the policy making process.

### **7.2 Where are we now?**

Our external communications (for residents and service users) is more joined up within the corporate communications team and there is recognition that our media relations in particular work well, e.g. the handling of difficult issues such as child protection, major incident handling, and a more proactive and co-ordinated approach to RP&R/budget communications

The Council's website continues to retain its status as one of the top local authority websites in the country over a number of years (assessed by the Society of IT Managers (SOCITM) and our residents magazine ('Your County') continues to maintain good recognition and satisfaction ratings with residents.

Staff communications have improved with better systems in place. Some changes to COMT Brief have been made following feedback from staff and improvements to the intranet, a key business tool for staff and Members, are underway. Further improvements need to be made to 'join up' our corporate and departmental internal communications. Consistent branding for Council publications, in line with our 'one council' approach to communications, has been achieved across the Council. This helps residents to recognise and understand that information comes from a trusted source.

More accessible Council information through Plain English Campaign accreditation across a range of communications channels including 'Your County' and the Council's website;

The Council's website is being 'refreshed' and brought up to date ensuring that it can have an increasing emphasis on enabling customers to find their way quickly to the information they need and enabling them to do business on line.

The Council now uses social media as one way of getting information out and engaging residents and currently has nearly 1000 Twitter followers. An audit of social media use across East Sussex is currently underway which will help inform how we use this channel in the future.

A two year pilot to test the market for sponsorship and advertising opportunities will not be continued. While some income has been generated (and continues to be in some areas, e.g Your County) income is not significant enough overall to allow for a specific post to continue. Any future plans for sponsorship and advertising will be picked up as part of a council review on income generation.

### **7.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

Better targeted information to specific audiences, but ensuring that the Council continues to have ways of communicating key messages to all audiences as and when required. This will be achieved through effective use of all communications methods, including a mix of web technology, phone/apps, video/audio streaming, social media (blogs/sites) as well as traditional methods such as print/broadcast media and 'Your County', but with rationalised use of printed materials.

Making the Council's website much more 'transactional' so that residents are able to use a range of electronic forms and payment arrangements online. This will be cheaper and quicker for our customers (compared to phone, email or personal visits) and better value for money for the Council. Promoting the Council's website to increase awareness of online services will be key to achieving this.

Build on 'one council' approach (presenting the Council as one organisation) with strengthened external communications that offer 'access to all'.

Providing improved information about the public sector spending squeeze, the Council's savings target and the impact on services for residents, both in terms of cuts and new ways of delivering services. Consultation and engagement activities are expected to focus increasingly on new ways of delivering services more economically in the current financial climate. Greater use of the web for consultation.

Evidence based information that demonstrates to residents that the Council is listening to their views and taking them on board when decisions are made about services and how the Council spends its budget.

A more joined up approach to our internal communications for staff, through a staff engagement plan. This will include improving the intranet as a business tool, sharing good practice on internal communications across departments and ensuring managers' have improved communications skills. Internal communications for Members also needs to be kept under review.

A review of the communications service across the whole Council is currently underway, with a number of proposals being progressed. This will affect all areas of communication – web services, graphic design, media, campaigns and promotion, as well as internal communications. The corporate communications team will be smaller and more streamlined in future and its work linked to the Council's customer focus priority.



# Community & Resources

## **1. Introduction by Lead Member**

The Portfolio has two overarching aims, firstly, to support departments in delivering effective and efficient frontline services and secondly, to ensure overall co-ordination and effective management of resources across the Council as a whole. The Portfolio provides strategic leadership for the Council's finances, people, property, procurement and information technology resources and also ensures good governance across the Council.

We have a key role to play in ensuring the Council can meet the significant challenges it faces over the coming years, not least in helping to deliver our savings target of £63m. We have committed to reducing the cost of support services across the Council by 20% in cash terms over the 4 years of the Government's current spending settlement. This will be a difficult but essential task but we will build on our existing strong record and work closely with our customers in departments and partners both in the public sector and the private sector to review the way we deliver all our services to ensure they are as efficient and effective as they can be. In doing this we will seek to strike the most appropriate balance between the provision of services to all residents, especially the most vulnerable, and the ability of council tax payers to pay.

## **2. Finance & Control**

- ❖ Ensure the Council matches available resources to its key priorities and delivers the lowest level of council tax consistent with those priorities.
- ❖ Ensure efficient and effective strategic and operational financial management across the Council.
- ❖ Maintain and improve high standards of governance, internal control and risk management.

### **2.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

Through the Reconciling Policy and Resources (RP&R) process, provide leadership coordination and support across the organisation to deliver efficiency and budget savings whilst delivering on our highest priorities.

Effective financial management of capital resources, giving leadership, support and advice to departments on implementing controls that ensure adequate funding to meet political priorities.

Contribute to the savings targets by reviewing financial service delivery across ESCC and reshaping this to meet the needs of future years.

Maintain quality financial accounting whilst meeting the demands of the new International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Maintain highly competitive Treasury and Pension Fund management functions.

Continue to reduce transactional processing costs and maximise the benefits of an integrated back office system.

Maintain a strong assurance function, through internal audit and risk management that can support the Council in meeting future challenges and managing a changing risk profile.

Explore the potential of working more closely with other councils, for example through the SE7, to ensure our services can remain resilient and continue to meet professional standards.

## **2.2 Where are we now?**

Although much of our work does not fit into comparative measurement through quantitative performance indicators (PIs), such as providing financial advice and risk management, many areas of the portfolio are subject to internal and/or external assessment and review (e.g. external audit, internal audit, VAT inspections) and we also participate in benchmarking exercises to compare our performance and costs with other County Councils.

Comparative results shows:

- Strong external assessments of our financial management and control and our final accounts processes;
- Comparatively strong management of the pension investment (shown in the table below, with figures exceeding most comparators);

|              | 1 year (%) | 3 years (%) | 5 years (%) | 10 years (%) |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| ESCC Fund    | 7.1        | 5.5         | 4.0         | 5.7          |
| L.A. Average | 8.2        | 5.4         | 4.0         | 5.3          |
| Benchmark    | 6.2        | 5.4         | 3.9         | 5.5          |

- A survey by the Society of County Treasurers showed that East Sussex were best placed out of all County Councils, meaning that the employer's contribution rate needs to go up by only 1% over the next three years for the majority fund's employers;
- Secure treasury management and insurance management operations; and
- Improved monitoring and forecasting of revenue and capital.

Our external auditors continue to place reliance on the work of internal audit and this is reflected in a relatively low external audit fee in comparison with other councils.

Both Cabinet, Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee and COMT have confirmed that internal audit arrangements are effective.

Benchmarking indicates that internal audit costs have been reduced from £985 per £m revenue spend in 2005/06 to £608 (projected) in 2010/11 (a reduction of nearly 40%). This is above the county council average, but below the average of other south east councils (not just counties). The current structure reflects an investment in a greater proportion of qualified and senior staff to reflect the authority's changing risk profile, but with greater productivity and a reduction in overall fte (full time equivalent) numbers.

During 2010/11 we made 88% of payments to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises within 10 days (target 84%).

### **Our Customers' Views**

We have a financial communications strategy linked to RP&R that seeks to integrate regular consultation with business planning and performance management.

Our consultation processes allow for information obtained in one forum to be used in all appropriate contexts, both strategic and operational.

User and professional officer groups for each of our main activities provide useful forums for sharing ideas and obtaining feedback. Similar opportunities are delivered through our regular discussions with main contractors (SERCO) and customers such as the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

Customer feedback for internal audit has exceeded our target of 80% for the last four years and annual satisfaction surveys with Chief Officers are positive with feedback from both of these feeding into forward planning (such as revised reporting arrangements).

Member, external auditors, client departments feed into the development of the Internal Audit Strategy and there is an ongoing dialogue with these groups.

### **2.3 What are our key areas for improvement?**

We aim to be a model of best practice, working to the highest professional standards, providing leadership to the finance function and the procurement community across the Council and promoting high standards of governance, risk management and internal control.

In terms of how the service will look in 2014/15 compared to now, we have to respond to the '20% challenge', the way that we work and the tools that we adapt.

Transaction costs (such as costs of paying invoices) are above average and developments such as payments on-line will address this.

Develop a more systematic approach to obtaining and assessing customer feedback to improve their confidence and perception through benchmarking and target setting.

Continuing to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal audit function through a service review, and the exploration of the opportunities offered by collaboration / shared services models and greater use of external specialist resources.

## **3. Procurement**

- ❖ Deliver top class procurement practice to support top class commissioning across the Council.

### **3.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

Purchased goods and services reflect the requirement of the residents of East Sussex at a price that is affordable.

Commissioners and procurement professionals have an improved understanding of the market and relationship with suppliers to deliver requirements.

The market and the procurement process is responsive to requirements of commissioners.

Reduced cost of supply across the economy.

Compliance with EU / UK law.

Efficient and effective procurement systems that reduce transaction costs.

### **3.2 Where are we now?**

East Sussex County Council spends £318m annually providing a wide range of vital services to meet the needs of local residents and businesses. Procurement has played a key role in delivering savings across the Council but further work is needed to support the delivery of the £100m target by 2014/15. A project team has been commissioned by COMT to conduct a review into current procurement practice across the Council.

Corporate IT have developed a category management approach to spend on IT services and commodities, where Corporate IT are the single point of contact with the market and procure all goods and services on behalf of departments. Further collaboration opportunities with the 'SE7' is in progress.

In Adult Social Care the procurement and sourcing of social care placements is undertaken through a central team. The team are responsible for a diverse range of contracts across all service areas and management of the independent sector market. Negotiation skills have been developed, which has improved quality and enabled substantial savings (£460k saved in 2010/11 through placing only at the published rates). The department are also sourcing for the NHS.

The Children Services department has developed an award winning approach to catering. CSD manages cross-Council catering services on behalf of ASC, runs in-house operational catering units, manages contracts for catering services to schools, and provides advice to departments, schools, public sector bodies and other organisations. Recent initiatives such as the introduction of a cashless system for secondary school meals has led to an increase in pupil uptake of 15% – 20%, movement to self-monitoring for services delivered to schools and will deliver £426k saving over the next two academic years.

We are actively engaged in work, for example with SE7 and the East Sussex Hub to provide a focus on collaborative and shared services and procurement activities:

- Following a successful pilot procurement cards are being rolled out across the Council to provide a more flexible and efficient process for low value purchases;
- More staff are undertaking formal procurement training giving the Council higher levels of expertise and capacity; and
- We continue to be well regarded in our work with and support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the voluntary sector.

### **Customer Views**

The review of procurement has engaged extensively with commissioners and procurement professionals in shaping its vision for the future.

### **3.3 What are our key areas for improvement?**

Procurement resources across the organisation will be organised according to the markets they buy from, with category managers as the procurement interface between markets and the organisation, especially commissioners.

Procurement resources will be better structured into a small number of centres of excellence.

Procurement for common functions can be managed by one centre of excellence. Procurement staff responsible for service led functions may not necessarily sit within departments, however they will have strong links to commissioners in service areas and to collaborative initiatives e.g. South East 7.

There will be a more visible and influential team of procurement staff who provide strategic advice and support colleagues across the Council (including schools and external customers).

Evidence based decision making will be strengthened by better use of spend information and market intelligence.

Those involved in procurement will have enhanced their skills to deliver their responsibilities more effectively – commercial skills and awareness will be a particular focus.

#### **4. Property**

- ❖ Ensure the Council has the right property resources to support effective service delivery.
- ❖ Make best use of available capital resources and ensure effective delivery of capital projects.
- ❖ Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change.

#### **4.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

We are working to achieve at least a 20% reduction (i.e. £4 million) in property accommodation costs over the next 3 years including:

- Review of outsourced facilities management services, (re-tender in April 2012);
- Invest to save measures to reduce energy consumption; and
- Application of corporate standards and a presumption of flexible working across the estate, which will enable vacation of various buildings and further consolidation in our hub offices.

Maintain a focus on the delivery of major construction projects to time, budget and quality targets.

Wider usage of our construction framework agreements by other public bodies across Sussex to increase the savings on each project by early engagement of contractors and collaborative working.

Well maintained buildings to minimise urgent repairs facilitated by a review of processes to optimise funding and exploitation of economies of scale through framework agreements.

Reduce energy consumption within our buildings by 3% per annum through targeted investment and better management, this will, in turn, lead to a reduction in CO2 emissions – enabling us to meet our duty to the CRC (Carbon Reduction Commitment) Energy Efficiency Scheme.

Support and promote the local construction sector to enhance the local economy through “Build East Sussex”.

Alignment of asset management plans with borough and district councils.

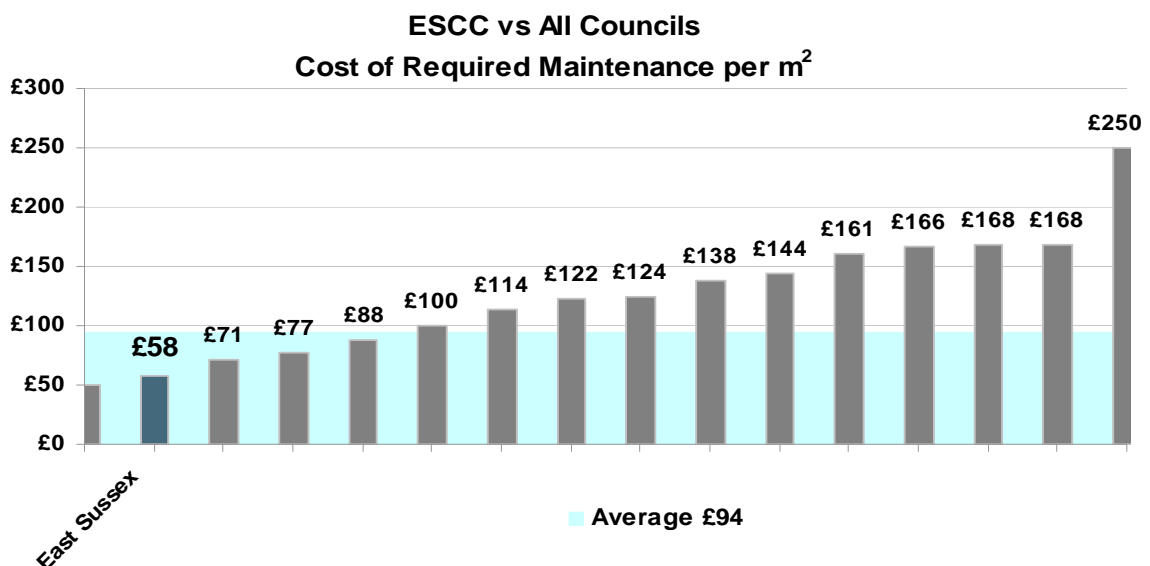
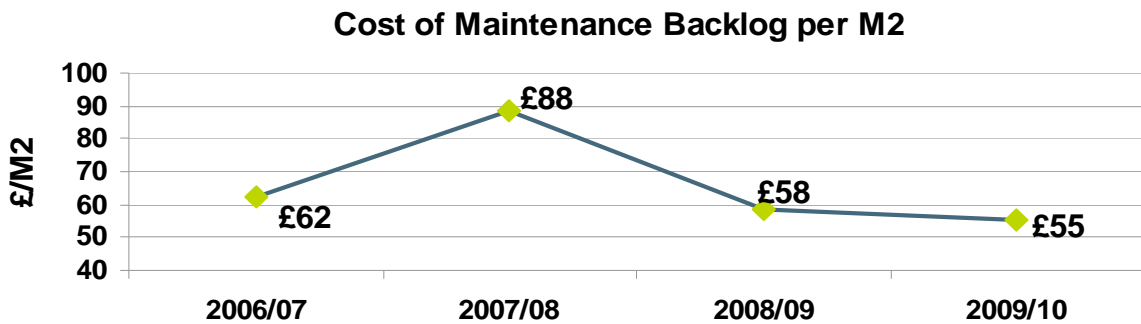
Increase the generation of capital receipts through the disposal of surplus property.

**4.2 Where are we now?**

Benchmarking of office allocation shows that our average floor space per person, average floor space per workstation and cost per workstation is better than the IPF average when compared with other county councils. However, excluding schools, the whole property estate consumes about £20 million a year in premises related costs.

Maintenance spend per m<sup>2</sup> is lower than most of our benchmark colleagues.

Improved prioritisation of maintenance and capital spend has lowered the cost of maintenance backlogs per m<sup>2</sup> since 2007/08 and our maintenance backlog costs compare well when benchmarked.



Benefits of the contractor framework agreements enable early contractor engagement and have already started to show efficiencies in both cost and project management. To date approx £6m savings and benefits have been signed off by clients (including some non ESCC clients) representing an average >9% per completed project on both Tiers 2&3. In excess of £70m work has been or is currently being procured through the framework.

Framework agreements have also led to better cost predictability and shared goals with contractors resulting in better working practices and these are in use at many public sector bodies across East and West Sussex.

Our Build East Sussex initiative with Brighton and Hove City Council has attracted 500 firms with over 430 business opportunities logged.

We have exceeded our capital receipt targets for disposals each year since 2002/03 (figures for 2010/11 show sales of £3.0m against a target of £1.5m).

85% of maintenance spend is planned (as opposed to reactive), exceeding national recommendations of 70% being planned.

A self-sustaining energy Efficiency fund has been developed and this is being used to invest in energy saving schemes across our estate.

### **Customer Views**

Post project surveys are issued to clients and satisfaction remains high within Estates, Capital Projects and Building Maintenance. All areas of the service are above the average of all authorities within COPROP (The Association of Corporate Property Officers).

Where any learning opportunities from customer feedback have arisen, practices have been reviewed and corrective action taken as appropriate.

### **4.3 What are our key areas for improvement?**

Better Cross-team working and efficiencies within Property is an anticipated outcome of service reviews this year.

A review of workloads, recharges and processes within the Estates team is planned to seek efficiencies.

To meet the increasing focus on reducing CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and need to find revenue savings we have reviewed how we manage energy consumption within ESCC. We need to accelerate investment in energy saving measures and roll-out good housekeeping across the estate.

Reduce energy consumption within our buildings by 3% per annum. Firstly through targeted investment to improve the efficiency of our buildings. And secondly through better management of sites by utilizing the Automated Meter Reading (AMR) data that is available at over 80% of ESCC sites to help identified site energy champions reduce consumption through better energy house keeping. The use of AMR data is already proving successful in schools via the schools carbon hub project and reporting to non school sites is to be implemented September / October 2011. This will lead to a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – enabling us to meet our duty to the CRC (Carbon Reduction Commitment) Energy Efficiency Scheme.

Application of Lean Systems Thinking to our processes for appointment and management of contractors.

Implementation of a risk-based approach to final account audits to protect the Council's interests whilst delivering efficiencies.

Development of a category management approach to the procurement of Facilities Management services, where possible in collaboration with other public sector agencies.

Development of a business case for a review of property utilisation and roll-out of flexible working.

## **5. ICT Services**

- ❖ Improve access to services for residents and maximise how ICT can help the whole Council operate more efficiently for the benefit of our council tax payers.
- ❖ Provide front line staff with the best tools possible so they can be as effective as possible in meeting the needs of service users.
- ❖ Continuously ensure maximum security and resilience of data and networks.

### **5.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

The policy steers for 2011/12 set the strategic direction for key areas of ICT development to benefit the following:

- Residents of East Sussex;
- Our staff; and
- Security and resilience of our data and systems.

#### **Residents**

Exploit the innovative use of technology to support how we deliver services and improve customer care quality.

Continue to develop, where appropriate, self service through the web and increase accessibility to service and information, supporting enhanced customer experience and integration of cross organisation services.

Maximise the use of technology in our libraries and schools.

#### **Staff and Councillors**

Continue to be a key strategic asset in supporting the information and communication technology that underpins the Councils activities.

Closer working with business teams and external partners drive innovation and business transformation across the Council in line with strategic priorities.

Enhanced service provision through developments to increase service user's access to information and tools when required and in a convenient format.

#### **Security and Resilience**

Adhere to, or exceed national standards for security of information through a programme of continuous improvement.

Continued resilience in all areas of technology for the public and staff.



## **Efficiency and Value for Money**

Review all aspects of service delivery against benchmarks with the private and public sectors to identify any potential efficiencies in service relevance and cost effective delivery.

Contribute fully to the SE7 consortium to consolidate and merge technologies for mutual benefits and collaborative working.

## **ICT Strategy 2010 – 2015**

The policy steers set for 201/12 remain relevant to the ICT Strategy which is used as a working document for direction and implementation within ICT Services. The full strategy document provides more detailed information on how all aspects of ICT work is being undertaken.

Outlined below are some of the work programmes to meet the policy steers:

- Working to a planned programme for public access and web developments throughout the year; and
- Seeking all opportunities for efficiency gains through developments in shared working.

### **5.2 Where are we now?**

Developments in public access to services have extended into other business areas.

The CRM system is now used to record customer complaints/compliments and Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests. General enquiries are being piloted within ETE and the consolidated reporting of customer contacts will enable managers to improve customer engagement.

In line with the SE7 shared services work stream for linking networks, East Sussex will be retendering the NGN contract at end of term (2012) as part of a Sussex wide secure public sector network to become a shared regionalised network infrastructure. Technically, East Sussex is well placed with the NGN for the transition into the wider arena and have to date been leading on this work.

East Sussex seeks to transform the technology infrastructure, improving service levels and agility while at the same time reducing the total cost of ownership. This will be achieved by:

- Optimising the desktop;
- Making more use of virtualisation technologies;
- Taking advantage of opportunities around Cloud computing; and
- Making use of thin client technology where appropriate.

The virtual private network allows staff to have secure access to the Council network from authorised devices at anytime, enabling home/flexible working and supporting the 10% accommodation challenge.

New innovations include:

- E-recruitment, Buying with Confidence and electronic document management for staff;

## Appendix 2b

- Remotely managed services and real time PC and whiteboard management for schools (pupils and teachers);
- The schools learning platform is in all schools, while pupils excluded from classrooms can access systems to keep up with their peers whilst absent; and
- The new Bexhill High School is a major ICT service delivery for the county, with state of the art ICT in the building and the technologies the pupils use everyday.

ESCC achieved full assurance on penetration testing by internal audit. These systems provide blocking against attack or malicious spam and virus.

The Government Connects programme audited ESCC security in relation to the GSIX (government secure gateway) with full credit given.

Many of our larger business systems have undergone upgrades and improvements in performance and resilience.

ESCC ICT is a member of The Corporate IT Forum (TiF) for benchmarking our performance against 59 other organisations that provide similar ICT operations. TiF facilitates the sharing of best practice enabling shared learning to be gained and improvements to be identified and implemented.

Benchmarking results show that; our costs of delivery for overall services are amongst the lowest; we achieve a comparable standard of performance in respect to quality and standard of delivery; but there are further improvements that can still be made. We have instigated improvement plans to focus on SLA and first line delivery and expect to see results showing through in our next benchmarking exercise.

We have recently completed a restructure to align our operations and activities to international best practice standards for delivery; ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library). We are employing CMM (Capability Maturity Model) principles to measure and develop our process maturity and are planning to re-audit our process maturity in the coming year.

Within the SE7, East Sussex play the lead sponsor role for a procurement work stream that has amongst it's key objectives the ability to better manage the ICT supply market, contract as a single consortium, reduce costs through bulk purchase and to create commercial opportunities with products and services as commodities.

### **Our Customers' Views**

Customer feedback is highly regarded and contributes to how our services are shaped. During the past year we have received on average 272 responses per month.

We continue to perform well against our overall SLA targets. A major upgrade of our service management system was undertaken in the last year, which changed the way SLA targets were measured. This did have a short term impact upon our achievement of some SLA targets.

| <b>Year</b> | <b>% Good</b> | <b>% Very Good</b> | <b>% Excellent</b> | <b>% Total Good or Better</b> |
|-------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2009/10     | 6             | 17                 | 73                 | 96                            |
| 2010/11     | 6             | 12                 | 80                 | 98                            |

## Climate Change

A number of resulting carbon improving initiatives are detailed in the draft sustainable ICT strategy. This includes a focus on the use of ICT within our schools and in further developing ICT as an enabler for the public with online self services, removing the need for travel.

## Service Level Agreement (SLA)

Capacity delivered by ICT Services under the SLA continued to be 40,000 hours per annum. This represents a 5% increase in committed hours available for no increase in charges, over previous years. SLA reviews are underway and advanced in light of the 20% financial challenge.

We continue to perform well against our SLA targets, however the 2010 figures below show degradation from 2009 as a result of disruption to recording for one month in June when a new call logging system was introduced and still in training. By July this was overcome and the recording returned to a normal state.

| Year | L1 Response | L1 Resolve | L2 Response | L2 Resolve |
|------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 2009 | 95%         | 96%        | 96%         | 96%        |
| 2010 | 98%         | 89%        | 98%         | 92%        |

NB: L1 = Level 1 = system down or multiple users affected  
L2 = Level 2 = single user affected or minor incident

Response = Time between notifying ICT and technician making initial contact/questions

Resolve = Time between notification and full fix resolution

Substantial changes to our services delivered under SLA are essential to provide departmental transparency which enables informed decision as to services required in the future.

As a consequence of ongoing improvement initiatives in all of our teams, we anticipate that further improvement in our delivery and quality related performance should be seen in future benchmarking exercises.

### **5.3 What are our key areas for improvement?**

#### **20% Challenge Target**

ICT Service reviews are taking place over a 12–24 month period, tying into the natural conclusion of existing 3rd party contracts and technical development paths. They will have a threefold approach of reviewing:

- Service Provision (how we deliver);
- Service Offer (what we deliver); and
- Service Quality (how we benchmarking).

During this period ICT must ensure:

- Services remain stable, resilient and secure;
- The service 'pipeline' remains intact no matter where elements of it are sourced from;

- That planned changes to the service offer undertake an equalities impact assessment;
- That full collaborative working is undertaken with both the SE7 and district and borough collectives, alongside any other potential cross-organisational opportunities; and
- That ICT keeps abreast of, and advises on, any national developments that could impact the way in which the Council conducts its future business. Current examples are the Total Place and Tell Us Once initiatives.

## **Service Quality Targets**

The areas of development in terms of benchmarked performance in ICT services are the duration of time for problem resolution, in some instances. The development of software tools that go alongside the ITIL restructure are already showing rewards of improved performance in this area. The development of a central ICT knowledge database in particular facilitates faster resolution of a repeat problem and gives a greater understanding of the root cause or trends.

A further key area from 2011 onwards is the beginning of the following ITIL processes:

- Change Management – a change board approves all major developments before release;
- Configuration Management – a set ‘check list’ process for testing and installing new applications and equipment;
- Event Management – a formalised process for managing large ICT events for business continuity purposes; and
- Continuous Cycle of Improvement – a loop that ensure that all deliverables remain fit for the business purpose and that ITIL process continue to be used and developed. This service function works directly with the E-Business functions of the Council.

## **6. Personnel and Training**

- ❖ Ensure that we have the right staff, with the right skills, supported by fit for purpose personnel policies and procedures.

### **6.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

The County Council’s promise is to be a customer focused organisation. This will be supported by having the right numbers of people in the right places with the right skills to deliver improved services, better productivity and efficiency. This is delivered by providing:

- An on-line e-recruitment system and first rate processes to attract top quality candidates, enhancing the image of the Council as a modern employer;
- Appropriate training and development opportunities for staff at all stages of their careers;
- Workforce planning information to Departments to enable them to plan staffing requirements for the short, medium and long term; and
- Pay and workforce strategies to aid retention of staff and support the overall performance of the Council.

Close working with Departments, assisting them to maximise the potential, productivity and capacity of the workforce through workforce planning and good people management initiatives.

## **6.2 Where are we now?**

### **Impact of Comprehensive Spending Review**

PAT's activity and resources requirements have increased to support the Council to achieve its budgetary savings targets, notably in the area of supporting restructurings, redundancies, redeployment and managing the temporary agency staff contract. Currently there 19 corporate restructurings being undertaken, plus 33 restructures in schools and 76 employees on the redeployment register. PAT have also managed a voluntary redundancy scheme which 67 employees accessed.

The Comensura contract to procure temporary agency staff has resulted in savings to the value of £608,000 since April 2009 via reduced rates being negotiated with suppliers. The majority of temporary staff are procured to provide cover during periods of restructuring when a vacant post has yet to be filled within the restructuring process.

### **Best Value**

When compared to national county benchmarking groups, PAT's performance shows continuous improvement, providing a lower than average cost for the HR function per council employee than the comparator groups.

There is a low proportion of managers compared to transactional employees.

The Occupational Health and Safety Team's running costs are well below average as are the absence rates for PAT overall.

Trend analysis since 2007 shows sustained improvements in all areas, providing a service which demonstrates excellent value for money compared to other County Councils.

### **Our Customers' Views**

PAT's internal quality standards are based on a customer perceptions survey that established the extent to which PAT met the five qualities that customers expected from personnel services:

- Reliability;
- Consistency;
- Efficiency;
- Pro-activity; and
- Excellence.

The results of the repeat survey were highly favourable with overall satisfaction levels at 89%. It is acknowledged that there is still work to be done to demonstrate excellence and pro-activity, although we are moving in the right direction and action plans will continue to support this.

In response to comments and complaints from customers, service improvements made include:

- Increased visits to schools to support bursars and business managers;
- Standardised e-mail templates to improve consistency; and
- Improved communications between the Personnel Services Teams.

## **Top Quality Service**

The quality of PAT services was confirmed in 2009 when the Personnel Support Unit were awarded an internal Excellence Award for 'Customer Service / Productivity and Efficiency', acknowledging the improvements which have been made in accuracy and consistency.

In February 2010 PAT achieved Customer Service Excellence accreditation.

PAT won the Recruiters Award for Employee Branding in April 2010, highlighting the work undertaken to attract the highest quality of staff to work for East Sussex County Council and for the organisation to be seen as an "Employer of Choice".

In 2010 PAT also won the Public Sector People Management Association (PPMA) Innovation Award for the introduction of the Internal Mediation network. This service was also recognised by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, featuring as a finalist at their annual international conference.

PAT has been shortlisted with its absence management partner, FirstCare for the Employee Benefits 2011 Awards in the category of "Most Effective Sickness Absence Strategy".

PAT has been successful in winning business for the delivery of personnel and training services to the Hastings and Eastbourne Academies and has signed a four year contract with the first academy in Brighton and Hove City Council.

## **Sickness Absence**

Significant measures have been put into place to reduce the volume of sickness absence across the Council including:

- A focus on the management of short term absence cases, having previously focused on long term sickness with a reduction in cases from 300 to approx 70 per month; and
- Over the last five years sickness absence levels have fallen 20%, reducing costs by £1.75 million and saving 13,000 working days.

The end of year outturn for 2010/11 of 7.12 days was a reduction in the absence rate of 2.1% and places the Council in a strong position when compared to the CIPFA Benchmarking Group of County Councils which has an average of 7.5 days per FTE. The target of 6.91 days (representing a 5% reduction) was not met due to an unexpected high level of increase in absences in Q4. Infections accounted for 19.6% of all absence in Q4 2009/10 and this has risen to 24% in 2010/11. The FirstCare absence management system records an increase of 107% in cases due to influenza in January 2011 compared to January 2010 which had a significant impact on the overall out-turn figure.

The FirstCare system has proved very successful in improving management information, particularly on trends and causes of sickness absence which has meant that we can target proactive interventions such as the physiotherapy, staff counselling and stress training and coaching. With the whole of the Council using this system from August 2011 it is acknowledged that further reductions could be made.

The Council continues to be used as an exemplar of best practice in managing health at work by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development; Health and Safety Executive; Public Sector People Managers' Association and the Improvement and

Development Agency and regularly contributes at national conferences to share the best practice experiences.

### **Workforce Planning and Best Practice People Management Initiatives**

Workforce planning has been developed as an integrated approach to business planning, helping to ensure the delivery of quality, best value services for our communities. Our Workforce Plan, which has been used as a model by other Counties, outlines corporate and departmental progress and outcomes, for workforce initiatives designed to help achieve service objectives.

A Mediation Service has been established since 2008 and there are currently 13 accredited in-house mediators, including line managers, HR staff and trade union representatives. This project has transformed the way conflict is tackled in the workplace, reducing the financial and emotional cost of workplace disputes by providing a safe environment in which to resolve them. As a result of the service:

- A high proportion of cases referred to mediation have been successfully resolved without further intervention being required;
- The number of formal workplace disputes has fallen;
- The service recouped initial investment within one month;
- The average time taken to resolve a dispute via a formal grievance process is 60 days (HR, legal and management time) compared to 3 days for mediation, which has significantly increased the number of productive days;
- Staff cost to resolve an average mediation case is £2400 – compared to £8000 for the traditional method;
- Productivity savings in excess of £500,000 have been achieved;
- Employees often return from long term sickness immediately after mediation; and
- Since its launch the Mediation Service has been used by a number of local public sector organisations, therefore also providing an income stream for PAT.

Neutral Vendor arrangements were introduced in 2009 for procuring of agency staff reducing the cost by £200,000 in the first year and streamlining procurement arrangements.

In addition to monitoring groups within the workforce, corporate monitoring of strategic local workforce performance indicators is undertaken to ensure that legislation and service objectives can be met. The table below shows the outcomes for 2010/11.

### **Performance Measures, Targets and Benchmarking for 2010/11**

| <b>Performance Measure</b>  | <b>2010/11<br/>OUTTURN</b> | <b>2011/12<br/>TARGETS</b> | <b>CIPFA Benchmarking<br/>2009/10 (averages over<br/>11 County Councils)</b> |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| The percentage of new employees completing the online induction package | 95%                        | 100%                       | N/A  |
| The number of working days lost due to sickness absence                 | 7.12 days                  | 7.0 days                   | 7.5 days lost  |
| The percentage of the workforce with a disability                       | 2.8%                       | 2.75-<br>3.25%             | 2.05%  |
| The percentage of the   | 2.8%                       | 2.5-3.0%                   | 3.16%  |

|                           |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| workforce from BME groups |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|

### **6.3 What are our key areas for improvement?**

Embedding FirstCare now that there will be 100% usage of the Service across the Council Departments we can make better use of the management information on trends and hot spots areas for stress and musculoskeletal disorders; focus on improving return to work interview compliance and addressing short term absence more proactively.

Provide greater consistency and quality assurance within the Advisory Team. Whilst it is very difficult to achieve consistency in an area where every case is different, we are putting in place a process which will help us to strive towards it. This will include an improved framework for continuing professional development, where all staff within the Advisory team will be expected to take personal responsibility to keep their learning up to date in an area which is becoming increasingly complex. Underpinning this will be a system of quality assurance across the team that will ensure high standards, together with identifying areas for staff development.

Great pro-activity in marketing services to potential 'academy' schools using the knowledge and learning from obtaining the Brighton Aldridge Community Academy.



# Community Services

## **1. Introduction by Lead Member**

Community Services enable our community to learn, grow and flourish and to treasure the heritage and beauty of our County.

Our libraries are highly valued and play an important role in improving skills for both adults and children. We are continuing to improve our online e-library service and this is an area that is set to grow. We haven't forgotten that residents appreciate the world of books and buildings and we are partway through a building improvement programme in response to your customer feedback. We also believe that libraries can offer far more than books – they can be hubs for our community.

The Voluntary and Community sector has gained a much greater profile over the last year - it already plays an important role in the delivery of services to local communities but we are working together to see what (more) can be offered.

We are in the very early stages of modernising our Registration Service. We already pride ourselves on our standards of customer service but we think there are options for improving the way that we deliver the service. Our immediate goal is to conduct a fundamental service review with the long-term aim that we will deliver the best service in the country.

This year should see the start of building work on our new, purpose-built Historical Resource Centre 'The Keep'. The centre will act as a one-stop shop for access to local historical archive material in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove and should be completed by autumn 2013.

These universal services are available to all East Sussex residents but the pressure is on to ensure that each service delivers the best that it can for the lowest possible cost. We're taking a long hard look at: how we respond to our customers; the way we work; where we are placed across the county; the technology we use; and reviewing the options that are open to us. The pressure on our budgets requires hard choices about the services we deliver and it is vital those we do choose to provide are well used and accessible. Improving access to services is a common theme that runs throughout this Portfolio. Rural East Sussex may be beautiful but it can be difficult to make sure that everyone who needs to, can access our services.

**Councillor Tony Freebody**

## **2. Policy Steer relating to Voluntary and Community Services**

- ❖ Work with the voluntary and community sector to build capacity.

### **2.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

Our long term goal is to work with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in developing and maintaining a range of sustainable infrastructure support services that meet the needs of frontline Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) in East Sussex, regardless of location.

This goal will be achieved by working towards a number of milestones. These include:

- ensuring the continued involvement of the VCS in any delivery or commissioning partnerships, strategies and/or action plans;
- ensuring the continued delivery and development of the countywide SpeakUp Forum in co-ordinating VCS representation information sharing and communication within and between sectors;
- a Compact that is fully embedded and implemented in all aspects of our work;
- The continued delivery and development of VCS infrastructure support services for frontline voluntary and community organisations;
- the continued willingness and ability of the Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) to work together through the emerging CVS Partnership;
- the continued delivery and development of the countywide volunteering support services for volunteer involving organisations;
- ensuring that there is a robust VCS infrastructure with multiple income sources, i.e. not over reliant on the County Council; and
- the continued work to contribute to delivery of activities that will improve the environment for a thriving third voluntary and community sector.

These milestones rely upon a significant amount of partnership working (both within and between sectors) and although substantial progress has been made, continued support is still required. The milestones fit well with the Government's thinking on Social Action.

*"The Government believes that the innovation and enthusiasm of civil society is essential in tackling the social, economic and political challenges that the UK faces today. We will take action to support and encourage social responsibility, volunteering and philanthropy, and make it easier for people to come together to improve their communities and help one another."*

***The Coalition: Our programme for Government, May 2010***

### **2.2 Where are we now?**

The VCS has contributed to the development and ongoing monitoring of Pride of Place and played an active role in achieving Local Area Agreement stretch targets for Domestic Violence and Volunteering. It has also contributed to discussions and developments in commissioning with Children's Services, Adult Social Care, and Transport & Environment; and played an active role in the Commissioning with the Public Sector training programme.

The SpeakUp Forum, funded by the County Council (2010-2012) has brought together representatives each representing a significant section of the VCS in East Sussex. Representatives are grouped into three categories; Communities of Place (e.g. Lewes District), Communities of Interest (e.g. older people), Communities of Identity (e.g. disability). SpeakUp aims to:

- Support groups to have a voice in the county and be a strong partner for statutory agencies;

- Provide representation and influence partnerships, planning and decision-making across East Sussex;
- Strengthen networking between groups; and
- Develop good practice and training in the field of community representation.

The East Sussex Compact is an agreement between the Public Sector and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The East Sussex Compact has for the third year running been awarded a national Compact Excellence Award from the Commission for the Compact and a 2010 Green Flag for Compact working from Compact Voice. To further embed and implement the Compact in all aspects of our work, we have:

- held training sessions for Compact Champions to help them explore and understand their role in promoting Compact working;
- developed a Compact kitemark for teams and departments to receive when their activities are compliant with the Compact; and
- developed guidance on consulting and engaging with people from 'under represented groups' that will assist offers in implementing the Councils consultation management system (CMS).

We have led on co-ordinating the public sector dialogue with VCS infrastructure support service providers (Action in rural Sussex (AirS); Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA); Rother Voluntary Action (RVA); Voluntary Action Lewes District (3VA) to ensure that the services they deliver to front line voluntary and community organisations are based on the identifiable needs of communities and are mindful of public sector policy developments.

The Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) Partnership are now working towards adopting a shared governance structure that will ensure a continued willingness and ability to work together and develop services that are available across the county, structured for maximum efficiency, offering provision that is accessible to all while reflecting and promoting diversity.

The delivery and development of the countywide volunteering support services now takes place via East Sussex Volunteer Centre, which is a partnership between the CVS, the VCS and ESCC. East Sussex Volunteer Centre (hosted by 3VA) delivers the six core functions of a volunteer centre across the county that are structured for maximum efficiency, offering provision that is accessible to all while reflecting and promoting diversity. The VCS has diversified their income profile to include public sector contracts, strategic lottery programmes, and the development of a social enterprise model of operation. There is an expectation that we will see a rise in mergers and collaborative working amongst the VCS, resulting in the potential to increase access to contracting opportunities.

### **2.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

We aim to ensure that the present period of austerity does not disproportionately impact on the VCS and that the sector is able to adapt and develop services that benefit communities and add value to the delivery of our priorities.

Volunteering is one specific area that will likely grow in importance, as it has a lot to offer to help combat the effects of a prolonged period of austerity whether as a stepping stone into employment, as a means of helping individuals overcome depression, or assisting VCOs in delivering services that are in demand more than ever before (e.g. debt advice). With so many potential benefits, it will be important to ensure the effective support of volunteering infrastructure in East Sussex.

### **3. Policy Steer relating to Library Services**

- ❖ Embed the Library Service in its communities to: reflect the expressed needs of the customer; encourage people to get the skills they need for employment; promote learning/literacy and improve access to services.

#### **3.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

Our 'Vision for Libraries and Information Services 2009/12' focuses on the following themes:

**Serving individuals:** We will increase consultation and improve our customer focus. We will define our library offer to users. We will improve customer access and provide opportunities for reader development.

**Supporting communities:** We will review our rural strategy. We will provide new buildings and improve existing buildings. We will work in partnership and increase volunteering opportunities. We will provide access to skills. We will increase access to council services and to work with key groups of users e.g. families, teenagers.

**Empowering staff:** We will provide opportunities for career progression and promotion, training and development opportunities and define our staff offer. We will ensure that clear policies and procedures are in place and investigate new ways of working more efficiently and effectively.

#### **3.2 Where are we now?**

We have started to consider how we might refresh our 'Vision for Libraries and Information Services' ready for publication in April 2012 with the following information in mind.

We have relatively few libraries in East Sussex. Only two other County Councils have fewer libraries per head of population (Cipfa Actuals 2009/10). Our buildings are, on the whole, fairly small and do not hold high levels of stock. Historically, issues and visits are lower than average - in 2009/10 we were in the bottom third of all authorities for issues per 1000 population, CIPFA Actuals 2009/10).

These statistics are no surprise given the rural nature of our county. Over recent years we have worked hard to improve access to our library services and used technology to enable us to have a positive influence on our performance. We have also used our Public Library User Survey (PLUS) results to inform where improvements are needed.

Top level results from the latest PLUS survey (2009) show a slight deterioration down to 88% from 88.7% recorded in 2006 (the survey is conducted every three years). Other Councils suffered a greater decline in satisfaction and despite the drop in our results we now rank twelfth rather than last of 25 county councils.

More detailed results showed a very low satisfaction rating with library buildings at Hastings, Seaford, Newhaven, Rye and Wadhurst Libraries, that is, 41% felt the attractiveness of the library outside was adequate or worse and 20% thought the inside attractiveness of libraries was adequate or worse. In response to those low satisfaction results we started a programme of refurbishment and new buildings. Wadhurst library opened in July 2010 - visitor numbers have already increased by over 50% and issues have increased by 30%. Similarly, issues have doubled since the new Rye Library opened

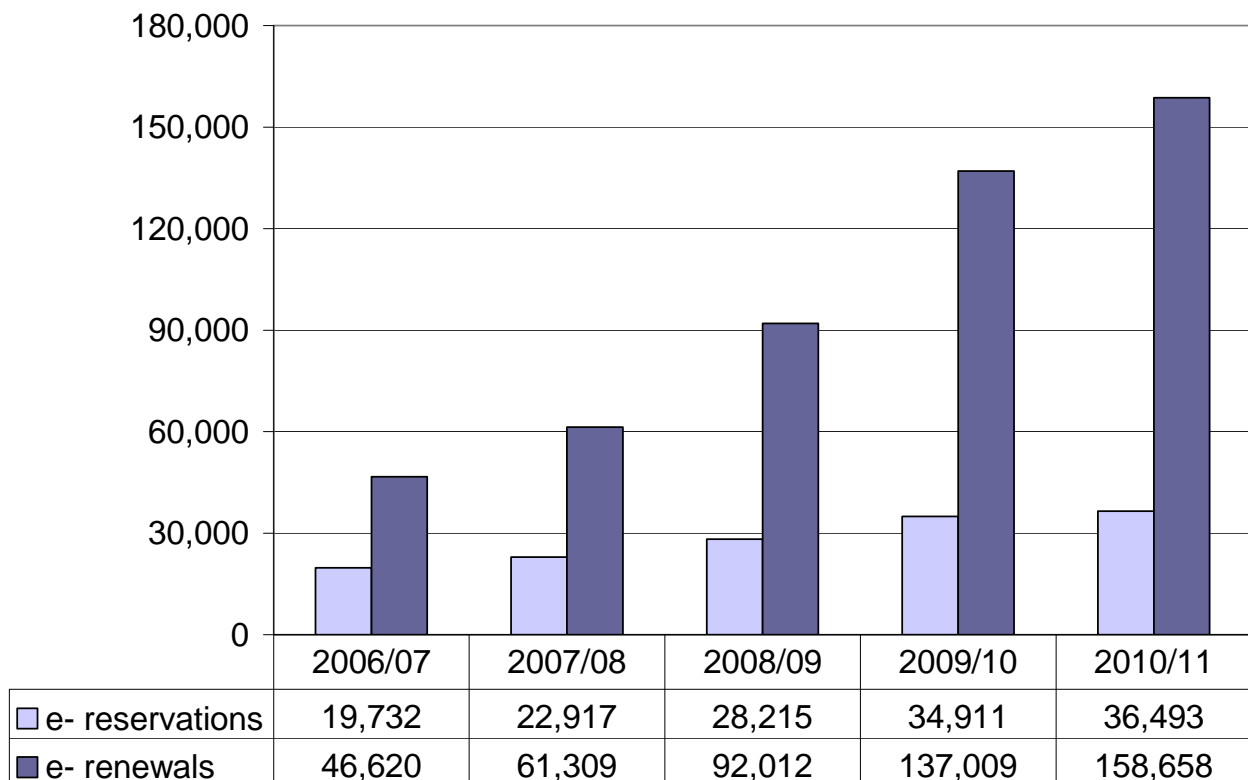
in January 2011. New buildings/developments are planned for Newhaven, Seaford and Hastings.

Over 7,000 residents took part in the PLUS survey. We supplemented this with a Library Survey in autumn 2009 which involved 1,400 residents and focused on satisfaction with the services we provide. Initial headlines indicate that we need to give consideration to opening hours, reader development and stock.

We have moved most libraries on to the new corporate telephone network and introduced two new central telephone numbers – one for enquiries and one for renewals. This project allowed us to increase telephone access for customers significantly. Rather than being restricted to local library opening hours customers can now ring the central numbers from 9am to 7pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to 4pm on Saturdays. A county-wide programme of staff training in customer focus has underpinned this change in our working practices.

Given the limitations we face in provision of physical buildings we have worked particularly hard over the years to improve virtual access to our services:

- Hits on East Sussex Community Information Service (ESCIS) are increasing significantly each year from 860,767 in 9/10 to 1,012,319 in 10/11
- The number of hits to our wide range of online resources including Newsbank (a newspaper archive), Ancestry (family history) and encyclopaedia continues to increase from 22917 in 07/08 to 32702 in 10/11
- Of those seeking information via our online resources, 77% reported that they found exactly what they needed and a further 19% were at least partly successful.
- The chart below sets out the increase in online reservations and renewals. In 2010/11 over 36,000 reservations were made online, an increase of almost 5% from last year. Almost 160,000 renewals were made online, clearly a popular option as this represents an increase of nearly 20% from last year.



We play an important role in improving skills for both adults and children. We extended provision of LearnDirect courses and now offer tutor support at Eastbourne Library as well as Uckfield, Hastings, Bexhill and Peacehaven Libraries and Egerton Park Children’s Centre. LearnDirect learners completed 201 Level 1 / 2 courses in literacy and numeracy between August 2009 and July 2010. The number of children taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge increased by 10% in 2010 from 8531 in 2009 to 9,354 in 2010.

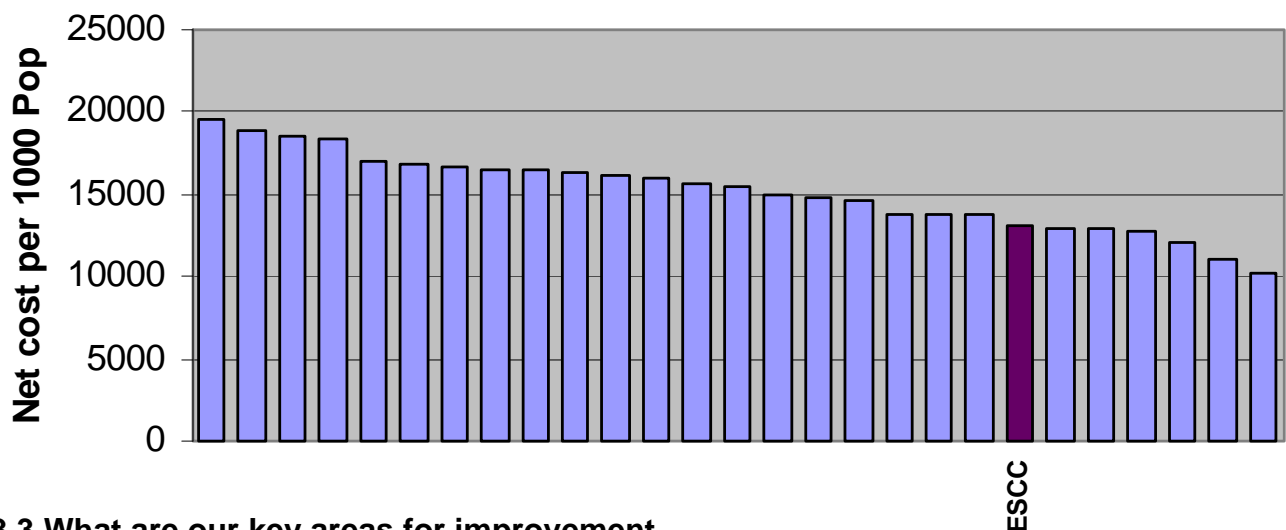
We will continue to react to customer feedback to improve our services as and when issues arise. For example:

- we’ve worked with English language schools in Eastbourne to give their students better information on how to use the library so that both students and residents can enjoy the facilities over the busy summer period; and
- following a complaint about our overdue letters, we redesigned them to include more information and so saved almost £6,000 each year on printing and postage.

Cost

The cost of Library Services per 1000 population is £13,022 which is the seventh lowest English County Council (from 2009/10 Cipfa Actuals).

**Net expenditure (per 1000 population) excluding capital charges 2009/10**



**3.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

Improving access to library services is a key theme, specifically we aim to:

- Focus on reader development – engaging new audiences and helping existing readers to extend their reading
- Manage stock better through the use of management software
- Increase the use of self-service facilities available to customers
- Develop digital services such as the People’s Network, to help older people to use computers and the internet
- Increase access to council services through the mobile office and community help points and being an outlet for other council services e.g. bus passes; and
- Increase access to library services through the development of our virtual library resources, including our online community information (ESCIS) and E-Library.

We will continue to provide opportunities for adult learning via Learndirect or other funding streams.

## **4. Policy Steer relating to Culture**

- ❖ Ensure that the promotion of culture within East Sussex is embedded in the work of the County Council to maximise the attraction of investment and visitors to the area.

### **4.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

We wish to provide opportunities for all sections of the community to enjoy and take part in arts and cultural activities. We will endeavour to maintain and develop the quality and spread of activities county-wide, bringing in external funding to this end.

We will work across County Council and with arts providers to deliver the new Cultural Strategy. We will work, through partnership, to find new ways of supporting arts programmes as the possibilities for external funding diminish.

### **4.2 Where are we now?**

With partners, we are developing a county-wide strategy to deliver arts and cultural opportunities. Through the East Sussex Arts Partnership we have developed a bid for external funding to support an ambitious county-wide programme linking professional writers with community groups. We have re-scoped the work of the Partnership to include professional development opportunities for creative practitioners including specialist IT training. We have continued to gather data to help measure the various impacts of arts and culture in the county.

We have established a new group of education and outreach officers in the major cultural organisations towards the development of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid. We have invested £9,500 in education and outreach in key cultural organisations which has helped them to bring in substantial external funding from the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund. We have invested £7,500 in projects enabling more people particularly those living in rural areas to have access to live professional performances, an increase of 38% from a baseline established from the work of six organisations in 2009/10 and £20,000 into the East Sussex Arts Partnership for county-wide programmes for young people including the Access All Areas festival; training for Open House and Open studios groups and the successful Word County programme.

### **4.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

We will need to develop further partnerships to build strong bids to external funding bodies. It's vital that we gather data to demonstrate the impact that arts and culture can have on regeneration, the local economy, education and well-being.

This will help us to highlight the range and depth of cultural resources in East Sussex and help to maximise their potential.

## **5. Policy Steer relating to Archives and Records**

- ❖ To seek out and preserve the original documents which record the history of East Sussex, its people, communities and organisations; and to make them available to present and future generations for inspiration, research and lifelong learning.

### **5.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

We will develop the service that we offer to personal visitors, remote users, schools and community groups, taking advantage of partnerships and external funding to give added value. We aim to improve accommodation through the development of The Keep, a new historical resource centre, in partnership with Brighton and Hove City Council and the University of Sussex.

### **5.2 Where are we now?**

Following inspection of our Records Office in 2006, The National Archives (TNA):

- withdrew the licence to hold public records from the Maltings but granted a licence to the archive store, Unit Y, at Newhaven; and
- required transfer of the archives of the Battle Abbey estate and public records to Unit Y.

Subsequently, TNA have agreed to a limited number being retained at the Maltings for ease of access. TNA advised the minister to allocate the Battle Abbey archives to East Sussex Record Office for a period of five years on the assumption that work towards a new record office would progress, and allocation would be reviewed after that time. This allocation is now under review and an extension is being requested.

The Keep Project aims to achieve a new, purpose-built Historical Resource Centre, to reflect pride in the county whose history it safeguards. The project's vision is to bring other historical resources belonging to the project's partners into the building, making the centre a one-stop shop for local history in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. The building, at Woollard's Field, Moulsecoomb, will conform to national standards, which are not being met by the present accommodation, and will include adequate space for future growth. It will provide improved facilities for accommodation for processing archives, for access to the records, both on-site and remotely, and for their use for learning, business and enjoyment by a wider range of users. It will also accommodate partnership services, to create a building and service greater than the sum of its parts. Indeed, partnership is at the core of the project.

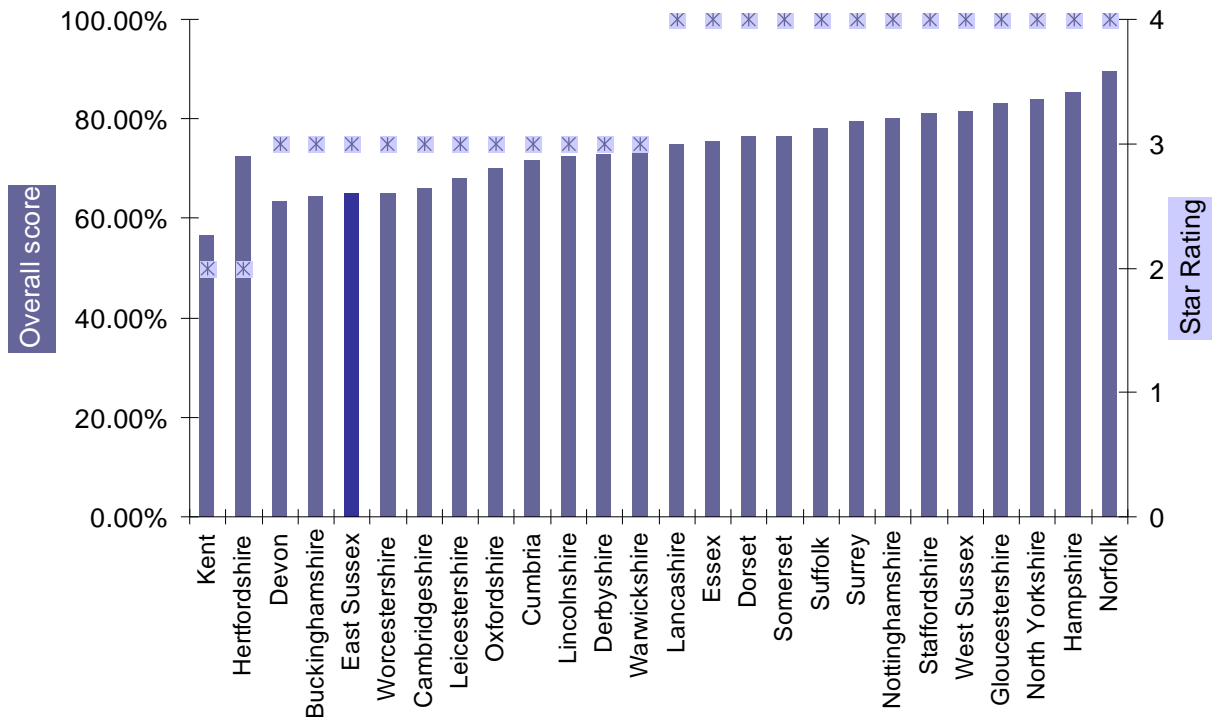
The Sussex Family History Group intends to rent accommodation in the building. The three main partners have all earmarked funding for the new building. An application to the Heritage Lottery Fund HLF was submitted in September 2008 but was unsuccessful. An options appraisal was carried out in 2009 to agree a way forward within the existing funding limits and the project is now going forward with a revised design. A fundraising action plan has been drawn up, and a Foundation Trust to facilitate fundraising is being set up.

Following planning approval in December 2010, site works are due to begin in summer of this year. Completion of the building works is due in spring 2013 ready for occupation in summer/autumn 2013.

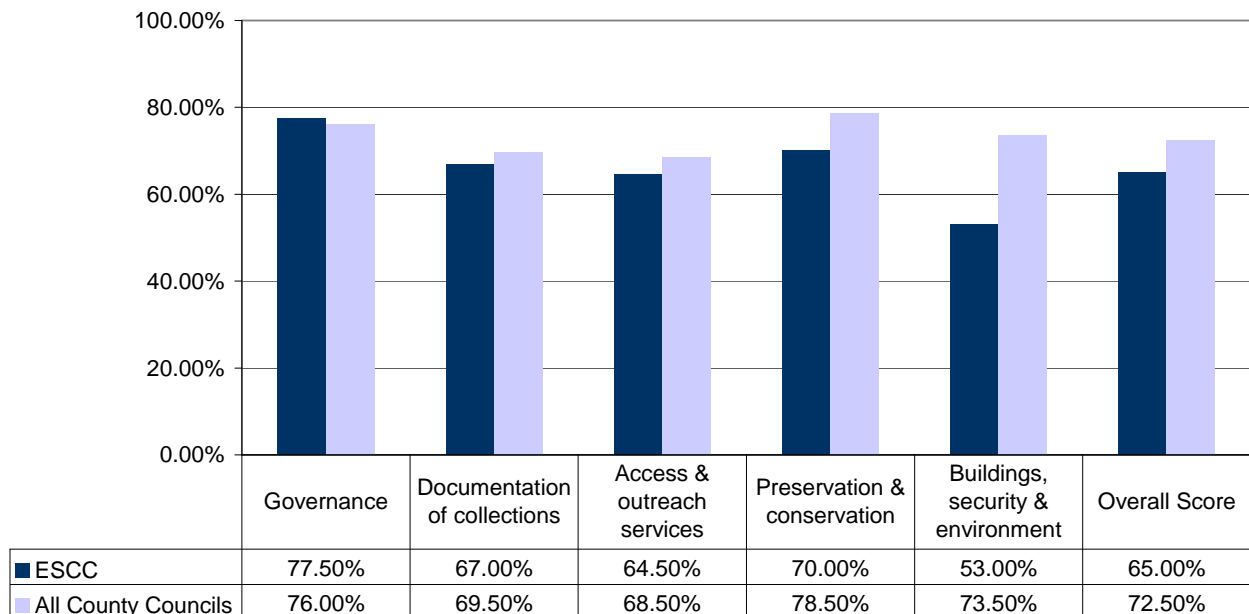


### National Archives Self Assessment

As part of the National Archives Self Assessment we maintained a 3 star (out of 4) rating for our services and improved our score to 65% from 62.5% last year. The chart below shows results for all County Councils in 2009/10.



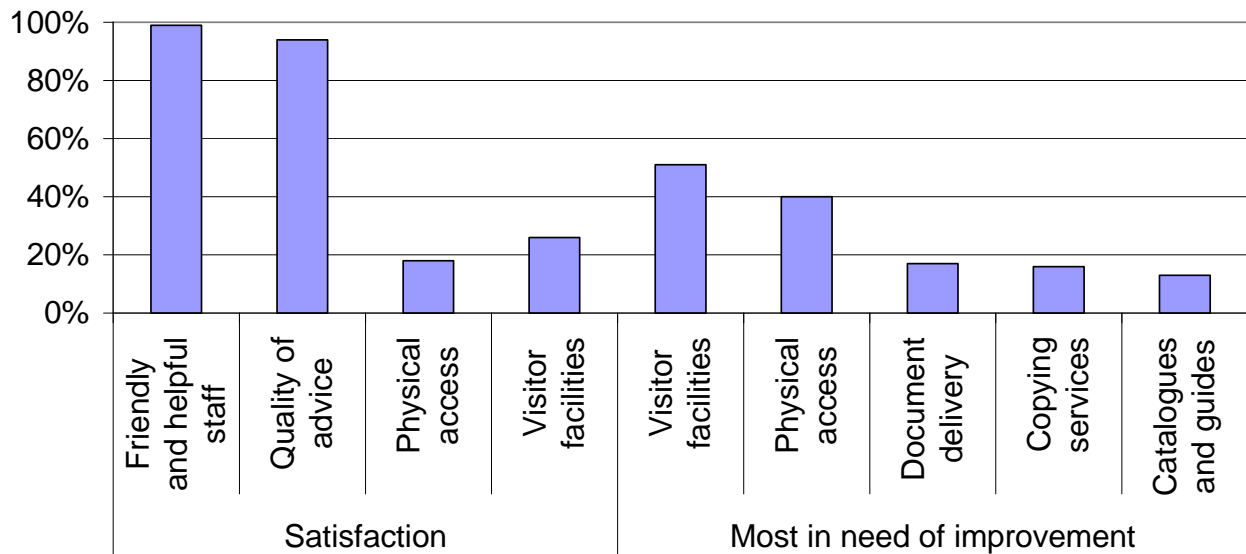
The overall score is made up of five categories as shown in the chart below. The Keep Project will address the two areas of Buildings security & environment and Preservation & conservation where our scores are significantly poorer than the average and will also improve scores in the other categories. We remain fairly close to the average in the remaining categories and so a boost to the poorer scores will improve our overall performance significantly.



Although the Self Assessment process was discontinued in 2010 a new accreditation scheme is in development.

## Our Customers' Views

Latest satisfaction results of visitors to our record offices are as follows:



*(Public Services Quality Group for Archives and Local Studies - May 2009)*

Actions in response to comments and complaints from our customers include:

- adding and improving notices in the Search Room ;
- acknowledging receipt of reprographic and paid research orders and providing a much clearer breakdown of the reprographic costs;
- improving access to original parish registers; and
- providing regular Freedom of Information and Data Protection update training for staff. Sometimes we are obliged to restrict access to records leading to possible misunderstanding and complaints.

## Cost

The Archives Service achieved an average performance of £1,457 per 1000 population (CIPFA 2009/10 Actuals), slightly lower than the average expenditure of £1,476 for those County Councils that provide both an Archives and a Modern Records service. Figures are indicative only - some counties, such as East Sussex, run records management services, while in others there is either no records management service or it is managed under a separate budget elsewhere in the council.

### **5.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

The problems in the area of buildings, security and environment will be addressed in the longer-term by 'The Keep' Project. In the shorter term measures have been taken to improve the security and environment of existing premises and to increase storage space, including the racking-out of an additional room at one of our outstores and repackaging to improve the use of existing space. Site work will begin on The Keep shortly ready for occupation in summer/autumn 2013. We aim to deliver The Keep within the funding limits.

We will increase and extend the programme of outreach and learning work to schools and local communities, working in partnership and enhanced through external funding where possible.

## **6. Policy Steer relating to Registration Services**

- ❖ To modernise delivery of the Registration Service.

### **6.1 What are we trying to achieve?**

The primary role of the Registration Service is to carry out the statutory registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships. We also provide and develop non-statutory registration functions, including ceremonies, a document checking service and a change of name service. Our goal is to ensure that we deliver a first class service in the most effective manner possible and in a way that improves public access to services and maximises income generation opportunities. We aim to provide a high quality, personal, caring and professional service by polite, well-informed and highly trained staff.

### **6.2 Where are we now?**

We are at the very early stages of a complete review to explore how we might best achieve our goal. We aim to complete this review and to have started to implement some of the recommended changes by March 2012. The Service works under the direction of the General Register Office and in collaboration with other county and unitary registration services. We work within a structured framework of legal requirements and statutory obligations but there is still a good amount of scope for us to provide a service that is unique to East Sussex.

We are assessing how we might improve customer access. Currently, we rely upon traditional telephone and face to face customer contact with our customers which can be time consuming and inefficient. One option might be to introduce an on line booking system to speed up our service and offer greater flexibility for customers.

Two of our four offices are reaching the end of the lease agreement. This provides an excellent point for us to explore options for accommodation that might offer improved services to our customers. We are considering the benefits of further outstations and superior ceremony rooms to improve customer choice and satisfaction. In addition it may also prove more financially viable in the longer term.

Each Register office stores Registers (Birth, Death and Marriage) and Indexes (a listing of those certificates). These offices do not offer the best conditions in which to store these historical documents and it's possible that there are cheaper and more effective storage solutions available. The lack of central listing makes it time consuming for customers or staff to search out any historical document.

### **6.3 What are our key areas for improvement**

We will:

- fully assess the requirements of the Service in terms of customer relationship management to increase efficiency;
- review accommodation requirements
- develop and implement an effective IT strategy to improve connectivity increasing efficiency and customer service;
- centralise the County's Registers and Indexes in one suitable location and develop a Family History Research facility and certificate issue centre;
- increase income from our statutory and non-statutory services/ceremonies; and

## Appendix 2c

- develop and implement a training programme to ensure staff are trained to deal with all key events to make better use of resources and increase job satisfaction