

PERFORMANCE MATTERS - ANNUAL REPORT LOOKING BACK AT 2009/10

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Annual Report – Looking Back at 2009/10 summarises the Council's performance for the previous year and allows readers to review and reflect upon what the Council has done to improve the outcomes for New Forest Communities. This document is attached in hard copy for Cabinet members only. It is available on the Council's Intranet and Website.
- 1.2 It summarises how well the Council is achieving each of its stated aims, reflects key achievements for the year and highlights areas for improvement. The Annual Report also contains a summary of the full Statement of Accounts providing a brief overview of the Council's finances for the year ended 31st March 2010.
- 1.3 This covering report provides an opportunity for the Cabinet to review and consider the Council's performance for 2009/10, summarised within the Annual Report, and asks Members to approve the Annual Report for publication.

2. ANNUAL REPORT

- 2.1 The annual review of performance is a key element within the annual performance cycle. It provides an opportunity to consider performance in line with the Council's stated aims, reinforcing the commitment to the delivery of the Corporate Plan, and provides a focus for informing future improvements in performance outcomes given the challenges of the local government landscape.
- 2.2 The Annual Report 2009/10 is a summary document of the eight separate Portfolio Plans which bring together financial and employee resource information with performance against the corporate aims as set out in the Corporate Plan. This enables the Council to establish where it is delivering value for money and where greater opportunities for improvement may be available. All relevant Heads of Service and Portfolio Holders have been instrumental in the production of the Portfolio Plans which will be used by Review Panels in September 2010 to identify any performance issues in need of review.
- 2.3 Whereas Portfolio Plans are primarily intended for internal use in the management, scrutiny and decision making of each portfolio, the Annual Report is intended to be an external, public facing document providing transparent summary information to all of the Council's stakeholders, enabling them to better understand and scrutinise performance against our commitments. It sets out how each portfolio is performing towards its aims, including an indication of how well budgets have been managed. It also provides the direction of travel in terms of performance.

2.4 It is proposed to produce about 70 copies of the Annual Report in booklet style for distribution to specific Members (portfolio holders, review panel chairs and opposition leads) and senior Officers. The Council's partners, including town and parish councils will be provided with a link to view the Annual Report on the Council's website.

3. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

3.1 Highlights include:

- Restructured the health & leisure centres management arrangements saving £600,000.
- During the year free swimming for under 17's and over 60's was made available and made a significant difference to the lives of those taking part.
- Achieved real improvement across Hampshire over a three year period in such areas as tackling obesity in the under 11's, road safety and housing that have not only helped New Forest residents but generated £459,000 of reward grant.
- Provided high quality new public conveniences at Keyhaven.
- Renewed 413 kitchens and 205 bathrooms in our local housing . In addition we improved our energy efficiency by replacing 253 boilers and upgrading loft insulation in 406 homes.
- Commenced an ambitious programme of office optimisation with projected savings of £400,000 per annum.
- Established a streamlined Property Services Team incorporating Housing Maintenance
- Amalgamated two reception areas at Appletree Court saving £50,000.
- Provided alternative catering arrangements at Appletree Court saving £36,000 per annum.
- Established a process for challenging every aspect of every service valued at £20,000 or over against value for money criteria to identify a programme of service reviews.

4. CRIME & DISORDER, ENVIRONMENTAL AND EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct Crime & Disorder or Equalities & Diversity implications arising from this report although issues around the performance in each of these areas and the environment are outlined in the published document.

4.2 The Annual Report will be published on environmentally friendly paper according to PEFC guidelines, and efforts have been made to minimise the number of hard copies printed to avoid wastage.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The estimated cost of printing and publishing the Annual Report is £326. This is a significant reduction on last year mainly due to fewer printed copies being produced.

6. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

6.1 The Annual Report provides an open and honest assessment of the Council's performance and should help us all identify not only where we can improve but also where we are performing particularly well.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 That Cabinet consider and approve the content and format of the Performance Matters - Annual Report: Looking Back 2009/10 for publication.

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Background Papers:

Published Documents



New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE MATTERS

Annual Report

Looking Back at 2009/10



Policy and Resources

Finance and Efficiency

Crime and Disorder

Employment Health and Wellbeing

Environment

Housing

Leisure Culture and Youth Matters

Planning and Transportation

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How well has New Forest District Council performed overall in 2009/10?

Last year was a particularly challenging time for the Council. We responded well to the need to make savings and efficiencies brought about by the global and national economic conditions whilst continuing to meet our agenda for continuous improvement.

More than ever we have been required to deliver Value for Money to our residents and taxpayers. We have engaged with our community to develop an understanding of what services our residents want and what level of service they are willing to pay for. In providing high performing services and Council tax levels below the national average we believe we have provided good Value for Money. This is not just our opinion but one which is supported by the independent Audit Commission who have recognised our achievements and prudent financial management.

Our highlights of the year include:

- Restructured the health & leisure centres management arrangements saving £600,000.
- During the year free swimming for under 17's and over 60's was made available and made a significant difference to the lives of those taking part.
- Achieved real improvement across Hampshire over a three year period in such areas as tackling obesity in the under 11's, road safety and housing that have not only helped New Forest residents but generated £459,000 of reward grant.
- Provided high quality new public conveniences at Keyhaven.
- Renewed 413 kitchens and 205 bathrooms in our local housing . In addition we improved our energy efficiency by replacing 253 boilers and upgrading loft insulation in 406 homes.
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These are a sample of our initiatives that have not only enabled us to save resources but also to invest in new ways of working and open up our services to a wider audience. We would wish to thank all portfolio holders, members and officers for contributing to all the Council has achieved.

As we now turn to look to the future we recognise that the challenges on our community and ourselves will be significant and that we need to play our part in addressing the national financial deficit. Although the future is uncertain our approach to quality services and prudent financial management will continue. We remain as well placed as any comparable local authority to face the challenge and will continue to work closely with our community and partners to do what is right for the NEW FOREST.






**Dave Yates,
Chief Executive**






**Cllr Barry Rickman,
Leader of the Council**

Key to our performance





How well are we doing?

-  Best practice example or amongst the best authorities and tackling outstanding issues
Actual net spend was more than £200k under budget
-  Achieving desired outcomes but still some issues to address
Actual net spend was within £200k of budget
-  Does not meet either the best councils' performance or the authority's aim
Actual net spend was more than £200k over budget

Have we improved?

-  Desired improvement outcomes have been achieved
-  Performance has stayed the same
-  Performance has got worse

Achieving our targets

-  The target has been significantly exceeded
-  The target has been achieved
-  The target was close to being achieved
-  The target was not achieved

Portfolio Overview

Policy and Resources

	How well are we doing?	Have we improved?
1.1 Delivering through people	★★	→
1.2 Improving our performance	★★★	↑
1.3 Engaging the public	★★	→
1.4 Improving partnership work	★★★	→

Finance and Efficiency

	How well are we doing?	Have we improved?
2.1 Managing our finances	★★★	→
2.2 Managing our physical assets	★★	→
2.3 Providing easy access for all	★★	→

How well did we manage our budget?

Finance and Efficiency revenue budget overall assessment

★★

General Purposes and Licensing revenue budget overall assessment

★★★

Crime and Disorder

	How well are we doing?	Have we improved?
3.1 PRIORITY - Tackling crime and disorder	★★★	↑
3.2 Dealing with emergencies	★★	→

How well did we manage our budget?

★★

Employment Health and Wellbeing		How well are we doing?	Have we improved?
4.1	Helping local businesses to succeed	★ ★ ★	➔
4.2	Improving people's health	★ ★ ★	⬆
4.3	PRIORITY - Valuing and supporting older people	★ ★	⬆
4.4	Providing equal opportunities	★ ★ ★	⬆
How well did we manage our budget?		★ ★	

Environment		How well are we doing?	Have we improved?
5.1	PRIORITY Ensuring streets and public spaces are clean	★ ★ ★	⬆
5.2	Protecting the environment and promoting the wise use of natural resources	★ ★	➔
5.3	Minimising and managing waste	★ ★	➔
5.4	Managing our coastline	★ ★ ★	⬆
How well did we manage our budget?		★ ★	

Housing		How well are we doing?	Have we improved?
6.1	PRIORITY Providing affordable housing	★	⬇
6.2	Improving housing standards in the district	★ ★	➔
6.3	Reducing the number of families in temporary or inadequate housing	★ ★	⬆
How well did we manage our budget?		★ ★	

Leisure, Culture and Youth Matters		How well are we doing?	Have we improved?
7.1	PRIORITY - Empowering young lives	★ ★ ★	➔
7.2	Encouraging active communities through leisure and culture	★ ★	➔
How well did we manage our budget?		★ ★ ★	

Planning and Transportation		How well are we doing?	Have we improved?
8.1	Securing sites for employment in town and country	★ ★	➔
8.2	Using planning to protect the environment	★ ★ ★	⬆
8.3	Improving transport and traffic management	★ ★	➔
8.4	Increasing local distinctiveness	★ ★	➔
How well did we manage our budget?			
Planning and transportation revenue budget overall assessment		★ ★ ★	
Development control revenue budget overall assessment		★ ★	

Looking back at 2009/10

1 Policy and Resources Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Barry Rickman



Introduction to the portfolio, Cllr Barry Rickman

“A difficult year which we have come through very well. We have maintained and improved our performance through our approach to efficiency savings. Great credit has to be given to our members and employees who have worked well together in these challenging times.

Employees remain motivated and are supported by a progressive workforce strategy with revised workforce priorities.

It is encouraging to continue to receive external recognition that the Council provides good value for money and delivers consistently good services.

Our partnership work with specific communities has continued and I know that our events that attracted older and younger people and those from diversity groups were well received by those who attended.

Members’ use of the community engagement grants scheme is just one example of how we make a difference on the ground by supporting projects that make a difference to people’s lives. “



1.1 Delivering through people

People are vital to our success. Workforce challenges in delivering the local government agenda are immense. We will review our people strategy and implement an action plan which will ensure that we have the right organisational structures in place to deliver services in the most efficient and effective way. We will continue to work in partnership to monitor and review our employment strategies including recruitment and retention, well being, learning and development and pay and reward. This will ensure we are able to recruit and retain a healthy, skilled, highly motivated workforce that delivers excellent services to the citizens of the New Forest.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have agreed a progressive Workforce strategy that details the councils medium term workforce priorities. ▪ Our performance appraisal system is now well embedded and we continue to see an improvement in performance management. ▪ We have implemented the pay and reward review, which has benefited our lowest paid employees and reduced our equal pay risk and moved all employees to monthly pay. ▪ We have increased our staff satisfaction levels at a time of uncertainty and substantial organisational change. ▪ Sickness absence continues to be a priority and we are pleased to see that sickness levels having peaked mid-year have continued to reduce on a downward trend. This trend continues into 2010/11. 	How well are we doing?
	★ ★
	Have we improved?
	➔

1.2 Improving our performance

External inspections have repeatedly rated us as excellent. We believe there is more we can do to improve our performance, and increase our effectiveness and efficiency. In particular we will focus on improving our performance against the Council's key priorities and other issues where the community express a strong desire for us to do so. Where this requires moving resources from one area to another, we will do so.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achieved an overall score of 3 out of 4 in the Audit Commission's Organisational Assessment – the highest score achieved in Hampshire. ▪ Audit Commission assessed the Council as an organisation that provides good value for money and performs well, delivers consistently good services, shown in the high level of performance achieved in national and local indicators. ▪ Performance management framework and systems support further developed. ▪ Looking back portfolio plans assessed the Council's performance against the aims of the Corporate Plan. ▪ Forward looking portfolio plans produced linking performance information and expenditure planning. ▪ Council's Annual Report produced summarising the Council's performance showing how well it is performing and whether it is improving. ▪ Streamlined service action plans produced for the majority of services showing main areas of operational delivery against the direction given in the corporate and portfolio plans. ▪ Process developed to challenge every aspect of every service, valued at £20,000 or over, against value for money criteria to identify a programme of service reviews. ▪ Risk management used in a wide range of significant projects. 	How well are we doing?
	
	Have we improved?
	

1.3 Engaging the public

We will enable people to engage with us in a variety of ways and will use their views to help shape the services they receive and the way we deliver our role as a community leader. Our approach will be to better inform, consult, involve, collaborate with, and empower communities to bring about greater participation and interest in not only what we do but also in local democracy. Our councillors will play a key role in this.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication with and involvement of residents is good with opportunities for residents to be involved in decision-making in regular residents surveys throughout the year, including on line surveys and discussions stimulated by video clips. ▪ Survey numbers have been reduced in the last year and a review of the mechanisms used for consultations has started. ▪ Community Engagement Framework developed, supported by a good practice guide to encourage more efficient and effective engagement across a wide range of partners. ▪ Specific networks for young people, disabled and ethnic minorities continue to be developed and consulted. ▪ Our aims, activities and services are clearly communicated to residents in a number of ways through quarterly magazines, daily news releases reported in local papers and on the Council's website. ▪ Hosted various events to engage with specific groups such as diversity groups at the Mela, older people at the Armed Forces Garden Party and young people at a Halloween event. ▪ The Council is building on the strong links locally, especially with town and parish councils. This has led to good engagement and effective community planning in many areas. The community engagement grants scheme, extended the previous year to cover all areas, has been well used. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★ ★</p>
	<p>Have we improved?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">➔</p>

1.4 Improving partnership work

We will build on our excellent track record of working in partnership in many areas of work that directly affect the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of communities. But we can do better and we will challenge ourselves and others to ensure such work always adds value. We will continue to take a lead role in the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which will deliver, monitor and review the 2008 – 2012 Sustainable Community Strategy. As part of its work, the LSP will help link working with Hampshire County Council with the needs of our communities and the actions of our town and parish councils. We will seek to work in harmony with the New Forest National Park Authority as the needs of the communities for whom we share responsibilities are inextricably linked with the rest of our area.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is in place for the district following extensive consultation and partnership involvement with clear and communicated outcomes and actions for residents and partners. ▪ The Council provides strong community leadership through the local strategic partnership and is effective in securing actions, commitment and support to developing the shared priorities of the district at a local level. ▪ A clear understanding of the desired outcomes of the community strategy has been achieved with measures of success to be developed. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★ ★ ★</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council achieved a high level of success in the SCS actions where it led on the delivery. ▪ An assessment of the effectiveness of existing partnerships has resulted in an increased understanding of how the Council works in partnership and what resources are invested in them. ▪ Participated more than any other district council in Hampshire against the three year Local Public Service Agreement targets, bringing £459k into the district. ▪ The Council is committed to supporting the Hampshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) and is working well with partners to deliver shared priorities. ▪ Improved working with the New Forest National Park Authority is producing real outcomes. 	<p>Have we improved?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">➔</p>

Looking back at 2009/10

2 Finance and Efficiency Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Colin Wise



Introduction to the portfolio, Cllr Colin Wise

“The economic climate made the year a challenging one. It is therefore pleasing to report that we out performed our budget estimates and in line with our medium term strategy delivered financial savings in the year of over £2.5 million. This has helped support our decision to keep Council Tax levels below national averages.

The role of the Asset Management Group has developed during the year. This more strategic role provides a clear direction that we aim to achieve the most from our assets. Specific projects that are anticipated to demonstrate this further include the development at Lymington Town Hall. Here we hope to share our existing accommodation with the National Park and save costs.

At Ringwood we hope to provide improved public services and financial savings with a gateway building supported by three partnering authorities. We are not standing still with developments to our on line services reflecting the changing needs of many of our customers. Our commitment to a local presence remains and it is good to report improved satisfaction from those who use this form of contact.

As we look ahead the financial challenge is considerable but I believe the Council through its prudent approach to financial management and stewardship is as well placed as any local authority to look forward with optimism.”

2.1 Managing our finances

We are concerned that excellence is not achieved at undue cost to the taxpayer. An excellent authority will manage its finances efficiently and we will strive to continue our record of success in consistently achieving amongst the lowest annual increases in council tax within Hampshire. We will match our corporate priorities to a medium term financial plan, which clearly recognises what resources will be available and what we believe people are willing to pay.



How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finances are well planned enabling the Council to deliver on many of its aims and priorities. The latest external assessment on how effectively the organisation manages its finances has scored the Council as a 3 out of a maximum score of 4. • The Council provides good value for money, as evidenced by comparing well against others for total expenditure and tax collection costs. • Externally assessed as governing the business well which contributes significantly to providing value for money and delivering better local outcomes. • Taxes are kept low and rises minimised with Band D council tax increase 2010/11 below the national average. • Collection rates for all income strands (council tax, non-domestic rates, and housing rents) are within the top quarter benchmark whilst expenditure per head of population is below average. • The proportion of invoices for goods and service to the paid on time have improved and are amongst the best quarter of all England districts. • The economic downturn has had a significant impact on the Council's income which has been addressed by the medium term financial plans, including the delivery of a savings and efficiency plan. • Portfolio plans have been developed to deliver the Council's aims and priorities. These have also better aligned performance against the expenditure planning process. This has been commented on externally as a very positive step forward. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p> <p>★ ★ ★</p>
	<p>Have we improved?</p> <p>➔</p>

2.2 Managing our physical assets

We will ensure that assets owned by the council are optimised in their use in providing services to the wider community. Property or land will not be held unnecessarily. To accomplish this, we will continue to review and rationalise our property base to enable reinvestment of resources into new assets which will support and enhance the community it serves. We will develop a number of new initiatives including examining the scope to consolidate our two main public offices into one location and exploring depot facilities in partnership with neighbouring authorities. Recognising the impact of climate change, a prime focus in the management of our assets will be the implementation of appropriate energy efficiency initiatives.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has improved how it manages its property and assets. It has brought together services to form a property services team and asset management group. 	How well are we doing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Asset Management Strategy 2008–2012 sets out a framework for overall management of assets and aims to deliver service improvements and enhanced community well being through optimising the use of the Council's assets. An agreed set of performance indicators has yet to be established to measure how well our assets are being managed. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Asset Management Group is now taking a more strategic role in overseeing future investment, disposal and usage decisions for all council-owned assets. 	Have we improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the options to maximise our office accommodation is progressing well. Proposals for sharing the Lymington Town Hall with the New Forest National Park are at an advanced stage. Agreement has also been reached in principle for a new shared facility in Ringwood town centre with Hampshire County Council and Ringwood Town Council. This will release the existing council offices for alternative use. Good progress has been made in the implementation of the environmental management system. An agreed energy management action plan for the Council's assets aims to realise reduced CO₂ emissions in the future. 	

2.3 Providing easy access for all

We will meet the challenge of rising expectations for better quality and more joined-up customer service. We will do this partly by embracing new technologies. We will continue to provide local offices, where it is economical to do so. We will further develop our contact centre approach and our interactive website, so that customers can access our services at times that suit them.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New web site assessed as improved and identified by external assessment as best practice with no site errors. This should enable a more user friendly interaction and supported by a 22% growth in visits to our home page since 2007. • Our local presences are highly valued by users. Mystery shoppers score of 89% achieved overall (7 excellent scores and 2 good scores), compared to 86% score for all councils that use Mystery shoppers. • Our local presences were reviewed last year and some opening hours were changed to match current demands. The Hythe local presence was refurbished, working in partnership with Hythe Parish Council. • The Contact centre has consolidated its position during the past year. Mystery shoppers score of 93% overall achieved, compared to 89% score for all councils that use Mystery Shoppers. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online payments generally are increasing in volume and value each year. Automated telephone payments for parking fines were implemented last year and this self-service facility will be extended to housing rents this year. • 88% of residents pay council tax electronically and less than 10% pay by cash or cheque. • Just under 7% of our customer contacts could have been avoided; although this compares well in Hampshire we are taking steps to reduce this further. • Working with partners, NFDC has recently joined Hampshire's Customer Insight programme. Eight projects identified for further collaborative development. • The Council is working in closer partnership with the New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau. A new management structure and single governance body for the district was implemented on 1 April 2010. 	<p>Have we improved?</p>



Looking back at 2009/10

3 Crime and Disorder Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Goff Beck



Introduction to the portfolio, Cllr Goff Beck

“This year has been once again exceptionally busy for me as portfolio holder. I am delighted to see the expansions of the CCTV system to cover Hythe and New Milton town centres. We are undertaking a review of emergency planning to ensure that we get the best value for money for residents of the district. Community safety in this area has moved forward to a new era where, more so than ever, we are influencing the provision of better services through commissioning by Hampshire County Council and other key partners.

We are very conscious of the fact that Neighbourhood Watch is a well respected and established network of community members who want to make their communities feel safer and be safer. Working with the police and partners we are looking at improving the profile of Neighbourhood Watch and its place in the community. We will continue to work closely with our partners in health to promote sensible drinking and reduce the harm that alcohol can cause in the community.



I remain committed to supporting and facilitating the work of our vibrant Community Safety Partnership. This is a very safe area to live – I will ensure it remains so.”

PRIORITY

3.1 Tackling crime and disorder

We have created a Crime and Disorder Portfolio for an individual cabinet member and regard our duties in this area as extremely important. Along with our partners we will assist to deliver a Partnership Plan whilst meeting the requirements of recent legislation but we will emphasize just how safe the forest is. We will seek stronger community involvement and the use of CCTV will remain a priority. We will emphasize the need to reduce and minimise road casualties in the area.



How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over the last three years crime rates have been reducing steadily.• The Council and its partners are successfully addressing anti-social behaviour and working well towards reducing the fear of crime.• Theft from vehicles increased at the beginning of the year but is now down to low levels following the commencement of Operation Celsius. We have also seen significant success in reducing prolific and priority offending.• Significant inroads into criminal damage have been made achieving a reduction of 10% over the last year.• The partnership intervention panel and anti-social behaviour officers work towards early referral and intervention to reduce the number of young people entering the offending system.• Worry indices are reducing and the confidence of the community that the Police and the Council are taking appropriate action to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour are increasing. Positive campaigns, communicating what the Safer New Forest partnership is doing, and funding for two new CCTV installations aim to help this.• Although reducing in number, theft from vehicles and	How well are we doing?
	
	Have we improved?
	

3.2 Dealing with emergencies

We will continue to review emergency planning to meet our changing local needs and to implement any new requirements brought about by legislation.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service level agreement in place with Hampshire County Council since October 2006 was renewed for one year from 1st April 2009 to assess the requirements and associated costs now that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 is established. 	How well are we doing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a strong tradition of performing well in emergency planning activity and is involved in many county and area-wide initiatives. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic plans now in place for pandemic flu and the NFDC Response Plan. 	Have we improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised flood contingency plan has been adopted as a best practice template across Hampshire. We have developed our own Business Continuity Plans and a Leadership Group to push forward with their implementation. We have reviewed our responses to the adverse weather in January and technology issues which resulted in disruption to the organisation. 	

Looking back at 2009/10

4 Employment, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Maureen Holding



Introduction to the portfolio, Cllr Maureen Holding

“The impact of the difficult trading conditions in the last year, reaches across the portfolio. Starting with our support for business, it is heartening that elements of our local economy are holding up well. Tourism is notable among these, as it continues to draw on the strength of the destination’s public/private partnership and the continuing investment in quality by individual businesses.

Across all sectors, the focus of our efforts are through the campaign “Brand New Forest”. I would like to thank all the organisations, agencies and businesses that are supporting the six local programmes – each starting to make a difference locally.



We continue to set the pace in the quality of our partnership work in public health. Practical initiatives are progressing well including ‘Cook and Eat’ programmes in schools, the securing of funding of health programmes in health and leisure centres and a joint Alcohol Action Plan. In spite of some early difficulties the Older Person’s Community Action Network is now working well with all partners focused on how they can work together to bring improvements to services for older people.

Finally, our continued efforts to provide equal opportunities were rewarded when we were externally assessed as ‘achieving’ in terms of the Equalities Framework - the first district in Hampshire to reach this level”.

4.1 *Helping local businesses to succeed*

In support of a vibrant business sector, we will facilitate business investment, support the development of new businesses and improvement in the skills and employment prospects of the workforce. In doing so, we will support the development of local identity and distinctiveness and place all of this activity within the context of seeking sustainable development. Partners are key to our delivery, in particular, the New Forest Business Partnership.

In an area that includes England's newest National Park, we will continue to recognise our responsibility to play a part in tourism and visitor management. Our purpose will be to ensure the wise development of tourism, balancing the needs of visitor, the tourism industry, local communities and most especially our unique environment.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Brand New Forest” campaign is providing the main focal point for bringing programmes of activity together: Doing Better Business; Shop and Buy Local; Enjoy Local; Eat and Grow Local; Exercise Local and Save Energy Local. • The New Forest Business Partnership continues to thrive and has made a very effective change to subscription-based membership. • The tourism sector continues to perform well and the strong working relationships between key partners and agencies are a factor in that success. • Regional Development “Leader” funding successfully started its first year of operation, benefitting from the experience of the Local Action Group. • The rate of increase in unemployment has slowed and remains one of the lowest in Hampshire. • All new food businesses and those changing ownership receive inspection. Food businesses are supported with practical advice about legal compliance in all stages of development. Support is also provided with provision of certificated training courses, online information, printed materials and links to council services and other organisations. • All inspections are initially carried out with an educational approach. • Routine food hygiene inspections in established low risk food businesses are substituted for questionnaires in the first instance. An inspection is only subsequently carried out where a risk is identified. • Reduction of inspection burden upon food businesses with a good history of legal compliance through the use of alternative interventions such as sampling. 	How well are we doing?
	
	Have we improved?
	

4.2 Improving people's health

We will work with partners to develop a Health and Wellbeing Board. It will oversee the approach we take to the health improvement and well being of those who work and live in the New Forest. It will seek to improve access to and information on, services whilst targeting those most in need, with a focus on adult and older people's health. It will be the strategic planning mechanism to further develop our approach to health improvement within the locality and will oversee the development and implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Actions Plan for this area.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Commission assessment recognised that the Council plays a strong and effective role with partners in improving the health of residents. • Public Health Development Manager is supported by a pooled budget with the Primary Care Trust and is one of four in Hampshire. Identified as best practice in enabling a more focussed approach to the health agenda. • The New Forest Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board continues a long history of partnership activity. Action plan developed, with a shared set of long-term priorities. • Wide range of initiatives aimed at increasing physical activity rates for all ages. A funding agreement with NHS Hampshire enabled a range of health related programmes at the health and leisure centres. • A total of £7,000 has been provided for a smoking prevention initiative working with the Handy Trust. Joint health and wellbeing partnership funding of £5,000 was given along with £2,000 from the Smoke Free Hampshire and Isle of Wight Tobacco Control Alliance. The project is to deliver smoking prevention sessions to year 6 pupils from across the district. • A steering group consisting of representatives from NFDC, NHS Hampshire, National Park Authority, Natural England, Hampshire County Council have developed a health walks action plan for the New Forest. One of the main actions was to appoint a fixed term, part-time Health Walks Co-ordinator with the aim of promoting and increasing physical activity levels through health walks targeting individuals and communities identified as areas of high deprivation. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p> <p>★ ★ ★</p>
	<p>Have we improved?</p> <p>↑</p>



- Joint Alcohol Action Plan will ensure that the health effects, and the crime linked with alcohol, are considered together.
- The New Forest Health & Wellbeing Partnership Board has contributed towards an alcohol brief interventions one day course. The course has been designed to train frontline staff in alcohol brief interventions.
- Providing the 'Last Orders' production by Solomon Theatre it is aimed at year 9 children and involves a 55 minute production delivered to a whole school year, followed by 55 minute workshop sessions. This is to promote awareness of the dangers of alcohol consumption.
- The Big Lottery Funded NHS Hampshire Cook & Eat programme that is currently running in schools has been given permission to use some of the funding to run Cook & Eat in Children's Centres in Hampshire. Three New Forest Children's Centres will provide Cook & Eat courses.
- Health needs of gypsies and travellers assessed and action now being taken through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Inequalities identified in smoking rates amongst young people with initiatives aimed at helping to reduce this.
- Businesses supported through key stages of start up and operating to develop healthy and safe business. Supportive intervention role maintained - training courses, online information, advice and links to relevant partners.
- Achieving good standards supported by a high level of satisfaction with regulatory services from businesses, amongst the best in Hampshire.
- Improved focus on air quality issues through the creation of Air Quality Action Plans for Lyndhurst, Totton and Fawley. Officers are working closely with Hampshire County Council on the feasibility of traffic management options for Lyndhurst and Totton and with the Environment Agency and Esso on the Fawley AQ Action Plan. Funding has been obtained from DEFRA to carry out a public survey on transport within the Totton area with particular focus on means of access to the town centre.
- Continuing to pursue the Council's Contaminated Land Strategy and address any contamination issues identified. Particular focus during 2009/10 has been on the identification of contamination land at the Eling Wharf site, including the foreshore. Defra funding has also been obtained for a site investigation on land in Ringwood to assess any potential contamination issues.
- The number of planning consultations on sites with potential contamination issues has doubled in this financial year with the introduction of the planning 1App system.
- Pest control continues to carry out a chargeable service for the treatment of rats and mice with an overall customer satisfaction rating of 96%.

PRIORITY

4.3 Valuing and supporting older people

We already have a higher proportion of older people in the New Forest than many areas and the number of the elderly will continue to grow. Most have invaluable skills and expertise to contribute to community life. Some elderly people are vulnerable however and we will work closely with partners to help meet these needs.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The district has an ageing population, which is forecast to continue to increase, with already more than 30% of its residents over 60. The New Forest has the highest proportion of older people in Hampshire.• The Council is seeking to improve partnership working with Hampshire County Council and through the Older People Community Action Network (CAN) to deliver services that older people need.• An approved Older People's Action Plan is now in place and being implemented. Outcomes are being monitored through the Older People's CAN and the Employment, Health and Well Being Panel.• Lifeline services, sheltered housing and meals on wheels continue to enable older people to maintain their independence and ensure they remain safe and secure in their own home.• Partnership activity aims to demonstrate clear improvements to the quality of life of its older residents and enhanced their contribution to the community in the next few years.• Future measures of success will be assessed by improved satisfaction of elderly residents.	How well are we doing?
	
	Have we improved?
	

4.4 Providing equal opportunities

We seek to ensure that all residents in the New Forest have equal access to fair employment and the services provided by the Council. We wish to make a positive difference to the lives of residents. To demonstrate this commitment, the Council aims to achieve the highest level of the Equality Framework for Local Government. We will measure our success not only by the delivery of our ambitious 3 year action plans (set in partnership with our residents and partner organisations) within our Corporate Equality Scheme but also by the satisfaction of our diverse communities.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress made on equality and diversity issues within district practices and embedding these issues into strategic planning. • Applemore Health & Leisure Centre provided special one off session with a local Transgender support group to enable them to use facilities in a safe environment where sole use was given to the swimming pool, gym, sauna and badminton courts. Expected to break down barriers and enable the transgender community an opportunity to improve their health, wellbeing and social integration. • Equality impact assessments undertaken for all services and reviewed on a three year programme, any adverse or negative impacts identified and actions in place. Outcomes from this activity have made positive differences to people's lives. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall assessment of the satisfaction within the Place Survey of various diversity groups has been made and no particular issues were identified. Overall, residents feel they are treated fairly by the Council's services, compared us to the best quarter of all England districts. • Employment rates for a number of diversity groups are not currently aligned to the district's profile and fall in the bottom quarter of England districts. Plans are in place to improve this over the next few years. • Training held to raise awareness about disability and diverse cultures; equalities is also included in human resources training modules including induction, and specific training is provided for individual teams. 	<p>Have we improved?</p>
	<p>★ ★ ★</p>
	<p>↑</p>

Looking back at 2009/10

5 Environment Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Edward Heron



Introduction to the portfolio, Cllr Edward Heron

“It is pleasing to see the results of the actions implemented following the street cleansing review are starting to improve performance on the ground. A review has resulted in the Council’s cemetery regulations being revised once again following representation from the travelling community. The adoption of the power within the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys is already showing signs of reducing the number of trolleys left abandoned. The second public convenience to be built incorporating the new design aimed at combating anti-social behaviour and vandalism was built in Keyhaven on time and below budget.

The sustainable markets for recyclable materials procured by Project Integra held up well in the current climate and returned over £290,000 of income to the Council. The changes to the way we collect glass will allow smaller recycling centres in the future and allow us to create sites where we have previously been unable to do so. Work on the revision of the collection rounds has progressed well and this task which should be implemented in October 2010 will see a reduction in costs for the collection service.

Emergency sea wall repairs have been completed at Milford-on-Sea as well as works recycling the sea defences at Hurst Spit and works to the groynes at Calshot. Considerable time and effort including public meetings has been undertaken by the coastal team in the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan and the Poole and Christchurch Shoreline Management Plan which will be in operation in 2010.

Finally, implementation of the improvement plans arising from the Council’s Green Audit have been delivered including involvement in the Climate Change Engagement Flagship Project.”

PRIORITY

5.1 Ensuring streets and public spaces are clean

We will champion the provision of well kept facilities and a clean environment throughout the district. Working in partnership with local communities we will strive to target resources to maintain and enhance the quality of the district's street scene, including street cleansing, grounds maintenance, public conveniences and environmental enhancements.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents satisfaction with street cleansing is amongst the best of England districts and the best in Hampshire. Following the Street Cleansing Review, the levels of detritus have reduced in kerb lines and back edges of footpaths due to changes in working practices. This has resulted in a considerable improvement in our NI195 score. • Work with the Police and other agencies has continued with initiatives to target fly tipping hot spots and owners of motor vehicles who are using commercial vehicles to transfer waste with the appropriate permissions. • The introduction of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys has seen a reduction in the number of trolleys left on the streets. This has been achieved by working with the relevant supermarkets rather than using the powers which we now have in place. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p> <p>★ ★ ★</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A working group of Officers and Members was set up to look at how the Council enforces relevant sections of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act. The findings of this group will be reported back to Environment Review Panel in September. • Works to refurbish the public conveniences at Keyhaven have been completed on time and within budget with excellent feedback now being received from those visitors and residents of Keyhaven harbour. • A review of the Cemeteries Regulations has been completed and a good working relationship with the travelling community has been developed and amendments made to the regulations to ensure that their cultural issues have been taken into consideration. • The first phase of the cemeteries extension has been completed within budget and on time with the second phase planned for 2010-11, with the intended opening of this section scheduled for 2011. 	<p>Have we improved?</p> <p>↑</p>

5.2 Protecting the environment and promoting the wise use of natural resources

We will seek to reduce our own carbon footprint and will encourage others to contribute towards an overall reduction in the carbon footprint of the district. We will work with others in both proactive and reactive ways to reduce levels of air, land, water, light and noise pollution and the waste of non renewable energy and natural resources.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented actions arising from the Green Audit. The Council is using its roles as service provider, estate owner and community leader to reduce both its own impact and the impact of the public. 	How well are we doing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully engaged with the Hampshire Local Area Agreement Climate Change Strategy and action planning process, representing all districts on the Climate Change Strategy Focus Group and leading the Behavioural Change Task Group. 	★ ★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged with members, partners, interest groups and the community on the importance of tackling and adapting to climate change as part of the Climate Change Community Engagement Flagship Project. 	Have we improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with the private sector to achieve the thermal imaging of over 20,000 properties in New Milton to help residents make informed decisions about whether to insulate their homes. Continued employee communication and increased awareness of reducing the council's impact on the environment through the promotion of Green Matters on the Council's internal website. 	➔

5.3 Minimising and managing waste

We will continue to work in partnership with councils in Hampshire to maintain and develop the integrated waste and resource management programme, Project Integra. We are committed to providing a comprehensive and sustainable waste management service for the district and will strive to meet both national and locally agreed targets for waste recycling, through utilising existing sack collection methods whilst making sure our high customer satisfaction levels are not affected. Working with local communities and the business sector we will seek to reduce the volume of waste collected by the promotion of recycling initiatives, public engagement and waste minimisation programmes.



How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents were very satisfied with weekly waste collection and recycling services. The place survey results put us above average for these amongst all England districts. 	How well are we doing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A recycling rate of almost 33% was achieved in 2009/10 and there was a reduction in the amount of household waste produced. However these high recycling levels are still below average quarter of England districts. Working in partnership with Project Integra to review collection and processing options for recyclables is continuing into 2010/11. With Portsmouth taking the lead role, work is progressing on a new contractual arrangement for processing of glass. Following a feasibility study the change to collecting mixed glass from bring sites has been implemented which has resulted in a saving of £20k per annum in collection costs. 	★★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to review the refuse collection rounds to ensure that travelling is minimised and that all of the rounds have an even workload. It is planned to implement these changes in October 2010. 	Have we improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional activities to improve the quality and capture of collected dry recyclables has continued with visits to schools, community groups and events. These initiatives and publicity campaigns aim to increase the recycling rate to 35%. Recycling collections introduced to street markets in New Milton and Hythe saw a reduction in the waste generated. The introduction of recycling at Lymington Market has seen 25 tonnes of cardboard diverted from landfill or incineration over the last 12 months. The cost of waste collection remained below average when compared to other councils nationally. Following the fluctuation in 2008/09 the income received for the sale of recyclable materials through Project Integra exceeded expectations with an overall income to the council of £296,124. 	➔

5.4 Managing our coastline

The coastline is at an increasing risk of erosion. As a result we will carry out an annual maintenance programme for the existing defences, using powers under the Coast Protection Act. We will also aim to secure capital funding through this act to protect the coastline from further erosion where it is economically and environmentally justified. Additionally, Coast Protection Strategy Studies, Shoreline Management Plans and a Coastal Management Plan will be conducted where government funding is available. We will continue to play a lead role in the Southeast Strategic Regional Monitoring Programme and in the development of a national monitoring framework.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protection of the 64kms of coastline relies heavily on government funding and partnership work with a number of agencies along the south east coast. 	How well are we doing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coastal team are active leaders in securing funding and ensuring that the coastline and sea defences in this area are well protected. • Additional funding of £310,000 was secured through the Coast Protection Act to undertake further beach recharge works at Milford on Sea. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful consultation exercises completed for both the North Solent SMP2 Review and the Poole and Christchurch Bays SMP Review with exhibitions taking place at Barton-on-Sea and Lymington Town Hall. 	Have we improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works will continue with the maintenance works programmed to commence during 2010. • The National Coastal Monitoring Framework report was completed and submitted with funding applications to the Environment Agency's National Review Group. • Provision of technical knowledge to Bournemouth Borough Council and Royal Haskoning in the development of the Poole & Christchurch Bays Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) Review. • Provision on technical knowledge to Halcrow Ltd in the development of the Coastal Access Project. 	

Looking back at 2009/10

6 Housing Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jill Cleary



Introduction to the portfolio, Cllr Jill Cleary

“Housing is a key priority for New Forest District Council and I am very pleased to be leading this portfolio and helping to ensure that we focus on all our district housing aims and improve performance wherever possible.

The difficult economic situation continues to impact on the housing service. Nevertheless I am working closely with senior officers to minimise the effect of this, and where possible, improve our performance in key areas.

Providing affordable housing in the district continues to be challenging and the numbers of new affordable homes being built is insufficient to meet our pressing needs. I am delighted that we have been successful in bidding for money to build our own new council homes in Pennington (the first for over 20 years that will be built by the Council) and despite the economic situation I hope these 9 will be completed early in 2011.

The existing housing stock, both privately owned and social housing, is generally in good condition and we will continue to invest to ensure we maintain and improve property where necessary. We are working closely with tenants on the North Milton Estate where we will be commencing a major refurbishment this year.

With a large waiting list for social housing we are always going to struggle to reduce the numbers of families in temporary or inadequate housing but I will continue to do all I can to minimise the impact that families living in such accommodation have to endure.



Finally, I am pleased to say that despite the difficult financial conditions our housing budgets are in a robust position although I know the future is less certain. A major review of the Housing Revenue Account is being considered by government and dependent upon the outcome of this review I am confident we can maintain our services to tenants and residents and hopefully improve in many areas.”

PRIORITY

6.1 Providing affordable housing

Affordable housing is essential to ensure the sustainability of the district and to ensure that families and their children can remain in the area and contribute to our continuing economic success. We will work with our partners and stakeholders to ensure the appropriate number of homes are provided to meet the needs of the district. It is important that the right type of housing is built to meet the local needs of our communities. All new homes will be energy efficient, provide affordable warmth and be built using sustainable construction technologies.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2009/10 along with our RSL partners we delivered 66 homes against a target of 100. This is in line with predictions as we have seen a significant slow down of starts on site. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is looking at new ways to deliver affordable housing in response to the slow down and has been successful in obtaining funding to build 9 new council owned affordable homes at Howards Mead in Pennington. This is currently subject to review under the government's spending restrictions until after the emergency budget on June 22. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness levels still remain high and are increasing which indicates that the level of affordable housing does not meet the needs of the district. Homelessness levels/1000 households was above average quarter. 	<p>Have we improved?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The place survey showed residents placed affordable housing as the 3rd most important thing that needs improving in the area. Work with the Hampshire Alliance for Rural Housing (HARAH) partnership has identified two rural schemes to develop in the area which are progressing well. The first HARAH scheme is now on site at Gilpin Close in Pilley. 	

6.2 Improving housing standards in the district

We will meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010, and will thereafter continue to repair, improve and modernise our housing stock to maintain this minimum standard. We will use our powers and provide support to residents in the private sector to ensure the district's private sector homes are kept in a good state of repair. By listening and consulting we will strive to ensure that our services meet both private residents and tenants aspirations and deliver high quality housing services.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standard of council-owned homes is amongst the best England districts with the Decent Homes Standard to be achieved in all areas of the district except North Milton by 2010. Structural concerns at North Milton estate have delayed achieving the standard. Funding arrangements are now in place to carry out improvements by 2014. The planned maintenance expenditure for 2009/10 was fully utilised with the completion of a large number of projects. The replacement of kitchens is progressing well and the bathroom contract is underway. The waiting list for private sector grants/loans is now reducing, and a fast track stair lift scheme has been introduced to speed up the grant process for these applicants. A number of clients are being assisted with funding from 'Push 4 Safer Homes'. The funding to achieve this has been granted through the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) project. It is unclear how far into the future this funding can be guaranteed. The maintenance work being carried out in council properties and private sector homes aims to achieve a positive impact on the energy efficiency rating of properties in the district in the future. The Housing Technical team has been restructured with planned maintenance moving to Property Services. The housing improvements team has moved across to be part of the wider Strategic Housing Team, which includes strategy and development, and will take the lead on all private sector housing matters in addition to the work on Disabled Facilities Grants. 	How well are we doing?
	★ ★
	Have we improved?
	➔

6.3 Reducing the number of families in temporary or inadequate housing

We will work to prevent homelessness from arising in as many cases as possible to ensure that people threatened with homelessness can remain in their homes or secure suitable alternative accommodation. We will further reduce the number of statutory homeless households living in temporary housing and carry out a review of our hostel accommodation for homeless families to ensure it is fit for purpose. We will increase the housing options available to people with housing problems by managing private sector leasing and rent deposit schemes. We will work with partner landlords to provide the Homesearch allocations scheme and ensure that we allocate vacancies as speedily as possible so that void periods are kept to a minimum. We will support the New Forest Night Stop service and work with Supporting People and supported housing providers to provide housing opportunities for people with support needs.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of households and time spent in temporary accommodation, although improved, still remains amongst the worst districts in England. This reflects the low level of affordable housing available and difficulties in improving this within the highly protected and valued environment of the New Forest. Much is underway to address this situation but progress and outcomes is a long term commitment and a challenging target. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Forest Supported Lodgings Service commenced operation in 2009 and offers six placements for young people in the homes of volunteer households. They will provide a home and support for young people for up to two years to prepare them for independent living. The scheme will provide suitable accommodation for homeless people in a safe and supported environment. It is expected that the scheme will be expanded in 2010 to provide further placements, including accommodation for pregnant teenagers who need additional support. 	<p>★★</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of hostel accommodation is ongoing with the aim of identifying alternative options for temporary housing and ensuring a decent standard of the hostels is maintained where there is no other alternative. As part of the review, one of the council's hostels, where there have been issues of disrepair, has been closed and planning permission has been obtained to extend and improve another hostel so that residents will not have to share facilities. • Last year saw 230 homelessness cases prevented, achieved mostly through the loan of damage deposits enabling residents to secure good quality private rented accommodation. • The Council's leasing scheme will be expanding to up to 100 properties to ensure a supply of high quality temporary accommodation. 	<p>Have we improved?</p> <p>↑</p>

Looking back at 2009/10

7 Leisure, Culture and Youth Matters Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Di Brooks



Introduction to the portfolio, Cllr Di Brooks

“Children and young people are a priority for the Council and many of its partners. It is pleasing to note that agreement was reached to have a single partnership for the New Forest, which will provide a real focus for all agencies to work together to the benefit of children and young people. Within the Council we have launched the web site for 13-19 year olds – www.inq.org.uk and an associated magazine. This is part of helping young people access information and feedback to services and how they are delivered.

In another year of difficult trading conditions a review of Health and Leisure Centres delivered strong net savings in their costs of operation. On top of this, income has once again exceeded target. This is an outstanding result, underscoring the talented teams that run the centres, the quality of the facilities and the loyalty of our customers. The introduction of the free swimming initiative for under 17s and over 60s has been a huge success with the numbers participating breaking all records.



In other aspects of the portfolio we have worked with partner agencies to complete the Big Lottery portfolio of schemes, to great effect. Of particular note has been the play area in Damerham which has attracted wide recognition for its innovative design.”

PRIORITY

7.1 Empowering young lives

Our intention is that every child and young person, including those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, has the best possible start in life and develops to their full potential. To achieve this, we will coordinate our actions with partners agencies to provide services based on the needs of children and young people in this district. In doing so we will engage with children and young people so they have a voice in shaping services which are delivered across all public, voluntary and private sectors.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress with performance indicators is largely positive and this was reflected with the award of funding within the Local Public Service Agreement framework.• Local agencies and organisations have worked together to help build arrangements for working together. This year has largely been about preparing the ground, so see the benefits after April. There has been a real desire to work collectively.• The response of young people to the offer of free swimming has been terrific. There have been spin offs into take up with other activities.• The Lottery portfolio of schemes continue successfully with the Damerham Play Park continuing to attract attention for its innovation, the new scheme in New Milton is open and the Challenger Way project in Dibden was substantially completed.• Lyndhurst Scouts capital project has been completed, which we have supported with funding.• It is pleasing to note that the Extended Services initiatives are connecting well with our key arts and heritage providers to deliver new projects aimed at our more vulnerable children and young people.• The youth web site www.inq.org.uk has now been launched which gives young people easier access to information and a chance to engage with the work of the Council. The site is still in development and we will be working with young people and our partner agencies to keep improving it.	How well are we doing?
	
	Have we improved?
	

7.2 Encouraging active communities through leisure and culture

We will improve the well being of individuals, enhance active and vibrant communities and improve the favourable condition of the environment in ways which make the best use of resources. This will be achieved through both direct provision and partnership working to secure a range of sustainable facilities and activities.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health and Leisure Centres responded vigorously to the difficult trading conditions and exceeded income targets. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review of the Health and Leisure Centres has been implemented and a new operational and management structure is now in place that has achieved major efficiencies. The team undertook the review and all the changes involved and still delivered an excellent service and outcomes. 	<p>★ ★</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response to the offer of free swimming for under 17's and over 60's has been terrific. There have been spin offs into take up with other activities. 	<p>Have we improved?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new partnership with Totton and Eling Town Council at Eling Tide Mill has seen the fortunes of the Mill turnaround under the banner of "The Eling Experience". • Our local activities at Keyhaven and Beach Huts are showing increased usage and income. • Two major Community Association schemes where seed-corn funding by the Council played a part in securing Lottery funding – one is completed and another is underway. • A signed Agreement has been reached with NHS Hampshire for health programmes in the Health and Leisure Centres and the beginning of outreach at Fenwick2 Community Hospital in Lyndhurst. 	<p>➔</p>

Looking back at 2009/10

8 Planning and Transportation Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Chris Treleaven



Introduction to the portfolio, Cllr Chris Treleaven

“After the severe initial effect of the recession at the end of the 2008/9 financial year, planning and building activities in the property market began to stabilise. In 2009/10, our income from these sources began to improve from the very low levels we had experienced, and with our reduced staffing levels, we were still able to achieve most of our portfolio targets.

Of particular note was the adoption of our Planning Core Strategy. This was made possible by the rigorous public examination early in the year, from which we emerged with flying colours as the Inspector supported all of our main objectives. This enabled us to become the first authority in Hampshire to adopt such a strategy and secure a sound legal base for future planning decisions.

Other major achievements included completing the Lymington parking study, the preparation of our first local distinctiveness study (for New Milton) and implementing a number of new procedures required by changes in development control legislation and practice. Work commenced on our Sites and Development Management proposed planning document.

We were also successful as part of the Hampshire Building Control Partnership in winning a County Council contract for the provision of Building Control services across our Area.

Our traffic management agency work brought to fruition a number of locally important small scale schemes, and our programmed deployment of traffic speed indicator and reminder devices aimed to assist the prevention of speeding in targeted locations. Work commenced on identifying suitable and deliverable cycling and walking route enhancements throughout our District, with the aim of providing healthy and environmentally friendly alternatives to the use of cars.”

8.1 Securing sites for employment in town and country

We will use the planning process to help maintain a sustainable local economy by contributing to:

- Safeguarding existing employment sites as well as work with partners to bring forward additional identified sites.
- Working with existing businesses to help them develop their premises to meet future needs.
- Helping to meet the challenges of the changing rural economy in farming generally and commoning specifically, with strong partnership working with the National Park Authority and external funding such as LEADER.
- Enhancing our town centres to improve their attractiveness and helping them to be viable as important local community and commercial centres.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Control offers advice to local businesses on how they fit in with current employment planning policies. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing planning policies have been applied to protect employment sites from detrimental forms of development. • Fostering a strong New Forest Business Partnership through developing and engagement in joint activities. 	<p>★ ★</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress has been achieved in the LEADER Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) project, with the funding being secured and the local access group now established to allocate funding. 	<p>Have we improved?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing the need for maintaining employment space, affordable housing and environmental enhancements is the key challenge that is guided by the planning core strategy. It gives clear policy on protecting sites for employment which the Council aims to maintain. • Worked as part of an overall Hampshire initiative which resulted in the opening of the MATISSE smarter working centre in Fordingbridge. 	<p>➔</p>

8.2 Using planning to protect the environment

We have secured policies in the Draft South East Plan which avoids the need to provide for wider regional needs in this area. This reflects the environmental importance of the New Forest and its surrounding area. However, we have substantial local needs and through the local Development Framework we will do what we can to meet these particularly in respect of affordable housing and increased local employment for our existing residents. Where new development is necessary we will use our planning powers to secure high standards and to ensure that it is sustainable. We will resist inappropriate development, large and small, which would damage the unique environment of this area.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's planning service did better than the government standards for the time it takes to decide on planning applications despite reduced resources. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements have been made to reduce the number of appeals which overturn planning decisions through a dedicated resource to deal with this issue. As a result our success rate is now better than the national average. 	<p>★ ★ ★</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Core Strategy, the Council's key document which sets out our approach to planning is the first one in Hampshire to go through examination and was adopted in October 2009. 	<p>Have we improved?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The challenge for the future provision of homes will be to ensure the number of houses and sites available for development are better aligned to the core strategy whilst enabling approval of a higher number of affordable homes. 	<p>↑</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is very little land that has been vacant or derelict for more than five years and this is not expected to change in the near future. 	

8.3 Improving transport and traffic management

We will work with Hampshire County and other partners to improve transport because safe access to schools, jobs and community facilities is vital for a healthy community and a successful local economy. With partners we will also develop traffic management measures that reduce the environmental impact on the district.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a survey public transport was cited as being the 4th most important thing that needs improving in the area. This is supported by very low satisfaction with local transport and bus information, which were in Hampshire's worst quarter. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of measures are in place to reduce congestion and the environmental impacts of transport, by encouraging the use of public transport, and increasing footpath routes and cycle-ways as alternatives to the car. • Traffic management measures implemented across many town and village centres. Speed indicator devices and speed limit reminder signs deployed to reduce local concerns about traffic speeds and to help reduce the number and severity of road casualties. 	<p>★ ★</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All day free travel on local bus services and off-peak travel on Hythe ferry support the travel needs of local elderly and disabled residents. Discretionary travel vouchers are issued to help young people, the elderly and disabled residents in receipt of benefits. 	<p>Have we improved?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is responsible for enforcing on-street loading and waiting restrictions across the district. • A local parking clock scheme and separate parking scheme for coastal car parks operate. The costs to residents are kept low to avoid unnecessary burden whilst ensuring safer parking throughout the district. Motorists can now also pay for parking by mobile phone. • The Council influences and works on traffic management schemes in partnership with the county. • The Lymington Parking study report recommends a number of ways to reduce congestion and improve parking provision during peak periods. The options recommended will be carefully considered during the current year. 	<p>➔</p>

8.4 Increasing local distinctiveness

We will support the creation of flourishing, safe and healthy places by raising the quality of existing public space, creating new open space and improving access to natural green space. The distinctive and valued character of our towns, villages and landscapes should be protected and enhanced. The engagement of local communities in appreciating and caring for the historic environment will be increased. We are working towards a future in which there is wide understanding and achievement of high quality environmental design throughout the public realm, bringing major health, quality of life, and other socio-economic benefits to our communities.

How well are we achieving this aim overall?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development control process provides a mechanism for assessing the impact of individual planning proposals on the valued character of our towns, villages and landscapes. 	<p>How well are we doing?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist advice on applications is provided by members of the environmental design team. • Further development of conservation character appraisals has not been achieved due to limited resources to progress this pending a review. 	<p>★ ★</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on the New Milton Local Distinctiveness project was substantially completed in 2009/10 and is likely to be adopted in June 2010. 	<p>Have we improved?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work was also started on the Lymington Local Distinctiveness project with an inaugural stakeholders workshop which was well attended and enthusiastic about the process. 	<p>➔</p>

Finance Matters

Summary Statement of Accounts 2009/10

The following pages are a summary of the full Statement of Accounts, providing a brief over-view of the District Council's finances for the year ended 31st March 2010, helping to demonstrate where the Council has spent the money made available to it by the Government, council taxpayers and the housing rents paid by Council tenants.

A full copy of the Statement of Accounts is available from the Council's Accountancy Section.

The Council recognises the importance of managing its resources properly and is concerned that excellence is not achieved at undue cost to the taxpayer.

In 2009/10 the Council's Band D Council Tax was £152.71, which was below the average of similar councils in England. This generated approximately £11 million of funds, which together with Government grant enabled the Council to spend just over £22 million on services in the year. This is detailed within the summary of revenue expenditure.

In addition to this the Council has spent almost £11 million on capital expenditure projects. The spend has principally been on enhancing assets through which many of its services are provided, including Council Housing and the Health and Leisure Centres, but also funds have been provided for Coastal Protection works and to enable new Social Housing within the District to be constructed.

Revenue expenditure 2009/10

This shows the cost of providing services in 2009/10, and how the net operating expenditure is financed.

Net Expenditure by Service		£000's
Street cleansing, waste collection and recycling		4,800
Recreation, tourism and open space management		3,943
Planning and development control		2,728
Environmental health		2,356
Corporate management		1,701
Democratic representation and management		1,350
Local tax collection		562
Highways, roads and transport		684
Community safety		490
Housing (including council housing)		627
Coast protection, flood defence and land drainage		1,070
Other services		728
	Net Cost of Services*	21,039
Depreciation		-3,077
Interest and investment income		-704
Surplus on trading operations		-358
Financing of 2009/10 capital expenditure		2,457
Financing of previous years' capital expenditure		1,764
Technical adjustments (net)		962
		22,083
Financed by:	Council tax	11,209
	Business rates re-distribution	9,313
	Revenue support grant	2,151
	Business growth initiative/area based grant	369
		23,042
		959

* In 2009/10 many of the Council's assets were revalued upwards following recovery in market conditions. This resulted in c £24m being credited to Net Cost of Services. As this is not a real income to the Council and does not impact on Council Tax it has been removed from the figures in this statement and therefore figures differ from those shown in the statutory format in the full Statement of Accounts.

The Council's net worth as at 31 March 2010

The balance sheet shows the assets and liabilities of the Council at the end of the year.

Assets and Liabilities	£000's
Land, buildings and infrastructure	419,333
Vehicles, plant and equipment	5,088
Long-term debtors	175
Total long-term assets	424,596
Cash in hand and bank	370
Debtors	5,148
Stocks	379
Investments	20,206
Total assets	450,699
Current liabilities (Creditors)	7,576
Other liabilities/provisions:	
Deferred/unapplied credits	11,706
Pension fund liability	88,290
Total liabilities	107,572
Total assets less liabilities	343,127
Financed by:	
Cash backed reserves	19,397
Non-cash backed reserves	323,730
	343,127
NET WORTH	343,127

The Pension Fund net liability represents the latest actuarial value of the Council's total liability to pay retirement pension in excess of the value of the Pension Fund assets. It is matched by an equivalent non-cash backed reserve and has no direct effect upon the level of council tax.

Capital expenditure 2009/10

The Council spent £10.845 million on capital projects in 2009/10, investing in the following areas:

	£000's
Repairs and improvements to council-owned housing	5,053
Recreation and leisure facilities	1,339
Vehicles, plant and equipment	887
Coast protection works	876
Improvement grants for private sector housing	777
IT equipment	546
CCTV	365
Environmental initiatives	331
Provision of new social housing with housing associations	290
Public conveniences	161
Offices, depots and energy management	121
Other	99
TOTAL SPEND	10,845

Financed by:

Housing major repairs reserve	3,443
Contribution from revenue account	2,921
Grants	1,824
Capital receipts and developers' contributions	1,746
Future borrowing commitment	911
	10,845

Workforce Matters

Employees 2009/10

These figures include employees in post as at 31 March 2010, this does not include vacant posts.

	Full time equivalents	Total employees
Audit and Accountancy Services	27.03	31
Coastal Services	20	20
Communications	6.54	7
Communities and Employment	27.44	42
Customer Services	113.97	155
Environment Services	191.12	218
Housing	82.5	94
Human Resources	12.43	16
Information, Communication and Technology	26.84	27
Legal and Democratic Services	20.38	26
Leisure	128.74	556
Planning and Transportation	67.08	78
Performance and Strategic Development	4.88	5
Property Services	98.54	100
Public Health and Community Safety	49.87	58
Total	877	1,433
2008/09 Comparison	888	1,565

Performance Matters has been developed following stakeholder consultation and feedback from previous performance plans. We aim to ensure our performance information is both useful and informative and therefore welcome comments on the presentation of this plan and your views on our performance.

To give your feedback, request further copies or to ask for more information on our performance please contact:

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For a copy of this in Braille, large print, on tape/CD, or if you wish to have it in a language other than English, please telephone 023 8028 5491 or email equalities@nfdc.gov.uk