

3 October 2006

Our Ref. PARC 10/06  
Your ref:  
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To: The Chairman and Members of the Performance, Audit and Review Committee:

Councillors: J. M. Cunningham (Chairman), D. Miller (Vice-Chairman), Monica Bloxham, A.F. Hunter, Marilyn Kirkland, David Levett, Bernard Lovewell, L. McNamara, L. Oliver, Diane Proudlove, Deepak Sangha, Derek Sheard, Mrs C.P.A. Strong and M.E. Weeks.

Substitutes: (Councillor Liz Beardwell)

You are invited to attend a meeting of the

## **PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE**

to be held in

**COMMITTEE ROOM 1,  
COUNCIL OFFICES, GERON ROAD,  
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY**

on

**12 OCTOBER 2006**

at

**7.30 p.m.**

Yours sincerely,



David Miley  
Democratic Services Manager

**DRAFT AGENDA**  
**PART 1**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	-
<b>2. MINUTES</b> To take as read and approve as a true record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2006.	-
<b>3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS</b> Members should notify the Chairman of other business which they wish to be discussed by the Committee at the end of the business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chairman will decide whether the item(s) raised will be considered.	-
<b>4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive from Members of the Committee any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda. Members should either declare a prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared. Members declaring a prejudicial interest should leave the room and not seek to influence the decision during that particular item of business. Also to receive advice from any Member of this Committee concerning a party whip direction.	-
<b>5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b> To receive petitions, comments and questions from members of the public. At the time of producing the agenda none had been received.  Any other public participation requests received within the agreed time will be notified to Members as soon as practicable.	-
<b>6. MONITORING REPORT FOR THE CORPORATE PLAN – HALF YEAR</b> REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE <i>To provide PARC with an update on the actions undertaken in the year to date which contribute directly to the delivery of the Corporate Plan.</i>	<b>1</b>
<b>7. NEW COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK</b> REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE This report is ‘to follow’.	<b>11</b>

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<p><b>8. DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT FOR HERTFORDSHIRE – PROGRESS UPDATE</b>  <b>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE</b>  <i>To provide PARC with an outline of the progress to date for the Local Area Agreement for Hertfordshire.</i></p>	<b>13</b>
<p><b>9. HIGH LEVEL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – JULY AND AUGUST 2006</b>  <b>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE</b>  <i>To update PARC on the current progress in meeting the targets for the High Level Performance Indicators in July and August 2006.</i></p>	<b>65</b>
<p><b>10. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 109 a,b and c – PLANNING APPLICATIONS - UPDATE</b>  <b>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL</b>  <i>To allow PARC receive an update on the current situation regarding targets for BVPI 109 a,b and c.</i></p>	<b>75</b>

Dates of future meetings of PARC in 2006/2007:

7 December 2006  
25 January 2007  
22 March 2007  
19 April 2007

**PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**12 October 2006**

**PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**6**

**TITLE OF REPORT: MONITORING REPORT FOR THE CORPORATE PLAN – HALF YEAR**  
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To present an update on the actions undertaken in the year to date which directly contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In March 2005 NHDC produced a Corporate Plan covering the period 2005-15. The purpose of this document was to present to the Council's stakeholders its revised strategic objectives, which were developed to allow the Council to focus on delivering the vision for North Hertfordshire.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan introduced each of the six strategic objectives developed from the Community Strategy for the district, and their respective short, medium and long term actions and measures of success.
- 3.3 The short term actions included within the appendix are primarily short term and cover the current financial year (2006/07). This is the 'transitional' year for the plan, and the revised service and financial planning cycle which scores, prioritises and resources actions is now in place for next and subsequent years.

**4. ISSUES**

- 4.1 The individual actions undertaken and listed in Appendix A are derived from the agreed service plan for a given service area, and effectively underpin the overall intention expressed in the Corporate Plan.

- 4.2 Whilst the Corporate Plan contains a number of short, medium and long term actions, it is also necessary on occasion to introduce new actions within the current year; this can be as a result of service reviews, legislative changes, etc which the Authority may choose to resource. For instance, under the Safer Communities section, the review of CCTV effectiveness has arisen from the recent Streetscene FSR.
- 4.3 This is the first monitoring report for the current financial year, but it is planned that henceforth quarterly monitoring by PARC will take place in order to map progress against agreed, resourced actions within the given year.
- 4.4 The development of longer term measures of success to judge the overall impact made by the short, medium and long term actions are currently under development, within the revision of the overall Corporate Plan.
- 4.5 The results of consultation and particularly our customers' perceptions of the Council are also important in measuring the long term impact of actions undertaken, so the results of the recent District Wide Survey, to be published shortly, will form an effective measure of satisfaction in the longer term.

## **5. CORPORATE PLAN SUB – GROUP UPDATE**

- 5.1 The sub group met to discuss the development and implementation of service plans for each area which underpin the overall actions for the Corporate Plan.
- 5.2 The revision of the plan itself was discussed. It was agreed that the terminology formerly used, such as 'actions' and 'objectives' was generally fine, but that the section on the vision and mission within the original document should be refreshed to reflect the sense of North Herts as a distinct place. It is important to link our needs as a district to the pressures we also face from external challenges, such as the requirement for additional housing, expansion of airports etc.
- 5.3 It was agreed that performance measurement of the plan has to be relevant and capture the overall impact of actions undertaken to date; new measures of success are currently undergoing development by the performance team and will be reported back to PARC alongside the revision of the overall plan.
- a. New priorities and actions for the plan up to 2015 are to be developed further following discussions currently underway with elected members. These will be included in the next Corporate Plan revision update in November.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Those actions contributing to the Authority's legislative requirements are identified within the plan.

## **7. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 All actions agreed in individual service plans and contributing to the Corporate Plan have been scored by an officer group in terms of priority and the resourcing required to deliver agreed through the Service and Financial Planning process.

7.2 Risk matrix scoring has been incorporated into the Corporate Plan, to ensure that this is considered alongside monitoring individual actions in the longer term.

## **8. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Individual services have already identified officer resources within their service plans so no additional resources are required at this stage.

8.2 The 'Equal' strand of the strategic objectives clearly identifies those actions which the Authority is undertaking to deliver its diversity agenda.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That PARC note the the progress made to date on the Corporate Plan actions for 2006/07.

## **10. APPENDICES**

10.1 Appendix A - Corporate Plan monitoring sheets April- September 2006.

## **11. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### 12.1 Corporate Plan 2005-15

## APPENDIX A – PROGRESS WITH OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### 1 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

***Promoting sustainable development of the district to ensure we deliver adequate affordable housing, protect the environment and conserve the heritage of our historic towns and rural settlements***

North Hertfordshire is an attractive place in which to live and work but is under some threat from regional development pressures which could reduce the quality of life for many, if not all, residents in the district if not rigorously challenged.

We need to ensure that good quality affordable housing is available for the next generation, and that local employment opportunities are available to avoid increasing the environmental impact of commuting. Our transport facilities have numerous problems and the A1M major north/south arterial route has been in need of upgrading and enhancement for many years. Whilst our recycling rates continue to improve, we need to do even more to engage our communities in minimising the amount of waste sent to landfill.

#### **In the first half of 2006/07 we have:**

- Worked in partnership to implement the district's Local Biodiversity Action Plan with Herts Biological Records Centre, and with Countryside Management Service (CMS) on conservation of our countryside sites and to establish a new base at Great Ashby District Park.
- Received confirmation from English Nature that Norton Common has been awarded the status of a Local Nature Reserve. An official opening ceremony was held in August 2006.
- Progressed the Local Development Framework (LDF) documents in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in July 2006, and the adoption of the s106 supplementary planning document is anticipated in November 2006.
- Completed delivery of brown composting bins and information literature to all households except flats without gardens, in May 2006. The impact of this will be measured by the review of the BV82b recycling targets through PARC.
- Countywide free bus travel scheme for all residents of 60 years and over commenced in April 2006. 100 per cent of renewal requests received by 31 March 2006 (approximately 7200) were issued by 4 April 2006, which was eight working days ahead of schedule. The new scheme has resulted in approximately 3000 new applications being received this year, a significant increase compared to previous years.
- The Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey went out to tender and in September 2006 a preferred provider was selected.

## 2 SAFER COMMUNITIES

### ***Encouraging responsible citizenship and creating safe communities with less crime and less fear of crime***

North Hertfordshire is one of the safest places in the country to live and work. However, there are still some pockets of crime or disorder which can effect the quality of life for some members of the community.

The Council recognises there are two sides to safer communities. Rooting out, punishing and eradicating criminality and antisocial behaviour must be balanced with the creation of a stable society and local communities that work with, and for each other, and play their part in local democracy and local governance. Emphasising rights and responsibilities with our young people in early education is as important as increasing elector turnout at local and national elections.

#### **In the first half of 2006/07 we have:**

- Seen the youth council in Hitchin complete a number of projects relating to specific areas. These included online job vacancies for young people, various young people events, and litter, graffiti and fly posting clean ups. The first annual general meeting will be held in September 2006.
- Supported Letchworth Garden City Council and North Hertfordshire Homes in commencing the development of a youth council in Letchworth.
- Contributed funding for CCTV control room improvements, which were completed in September 2006. The improvements included conversion to digital, an update of system software, improved ergonomics for operators and new visual displays.
- Planned to install one additional CCTV camera at the end of October 2006. The final positions of four further cameras are subject to discussions with the police, and the availability of adequate fibre optic communication links at each of the potential locations.
- Confirmed that in May 2007, we will conduct 'all out' elections following the recommendations of the Boundary Review.
- Continued with the ongoing enforcement of the Licensing Act 2003.
- Secured additional funds from April 2006, to retain a permanent post for the Community Safety team manager. The additional funds cover the shortfall created by the withdrawal of part funding by the Herts Constabulary.
- Scheduled a review the provision of security cameras in 'hot spot' areas identified with our partners, in the third quarter of 2006/07. The review will be completed as part of the Streetscene FSR improvement plan and aims to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in strategic areas of our communities and raise public confidence in those areas.

### 3 HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

***Promoting first class leisure and cultural facilities to contribute to healthy living for all of our citizens***

With the pressures of modern living, everyone wants to live happier, more relaxed lifestyles and we aim to make high quality and accessible leisure and cultural facilities available to all.

Everyone of any age should have the opportunity to enjoy the green spaces and cultural opportunities available within North Hertfordshire to aid and stimulate healthy living.

**In the first half of 2006/07 we have:**

- Commenced use of the Sport England Benchmarking Service, which will enable us to compare our leisure facilities to those in similar towns and districts. Survey results will be received in the third quarter of 2006/07.
- Continued with the capital programme for improvements to playgrounds and youth provision as detailed in the Council's 'Play Area and Outdoor Youth Provision Strategy 2004 - 2010' and worked in partnership with North Hertfordshire Homes for a new community garden and play area at Grange Central.
- Submitted an application for grant aid to the Football Foundation for a new sports pavilion at the Grange Recreation Ground, Letchworth.
- Hertfordshire County Council to produce the Letchworth and Baldock Urban Transport Plan by December 2006. Cycle route across Norton Common completed.
- Secured additional funding from the PCT to continue the Health Development post until March 2007, despite the PCT's current financial constraints.
- Invested in the renovation of Mrs Howard Community Hall, which is on schedule for completion in late October 2006.

## 4 EQUAL COMMUNITIES

***Targeting resources at areas of disadvantage in the district to reduce social exclusion and improve the quality of life for everyone***

We want to ensure that everyone in the district gets the opportunity to enjoy life to the full, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or ability. We want to reduce disadvantage, deprivation and discrimination where it exists. Equally, we want to ensure a good quality of life, regardless of where people live or work in North Herts.

### **In the first half of 2006/07 we have:**

- Completed the fieldwork for the District Wide Survey in late August 2006. A report will be presented to Corporate Management Team in September 2006, to develop an action plan based on the survey findings.
- Completed a survey of 100 groups and individuals with disabilities to inform the development of our Disability Equality Scheme, as required by Government, the deadline for publication of which is December 2006.
- Agreed structure, membership and reporting mechanisms for an access panel, a group of people with disabilities, which will ensure the authority engages more effectively with residents with specific needs when undertaking major planning considerations, town centre improvements etc.
- Ensured that all services identified for the initial Customer Service Centre development are prioritised for Equality Impact Assessments, to ensure all residents can have equal access to the new service, and to contribute to our achievement of Level 4 of the Equality Standard by March 2007.

## 5 PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

### ***Creating opportunity for all by promoting sustainable local economic development***

North Hertfordshire is well placed geographically to attract fledgling or growing businesses in all sectors. North/South transport and communication links, whilst in need of major improvement in some places, are still relatively good. East/west links could also be improved.

We want to ensure sustainable growth within North Hertfordshire, where skills, housing and economic development are properly balanced. We will do this in part through influencing and working with other partners, and through our own town centre enhancement plans in the district

#### **In the first half of 2006/07 we have:**

- Continued to work with Developers in their development of a scheme and implementation plan for Churchgate.
- Commenced delivery of the Baldock Town Centre action plan. Feasibility study for future use of the town hall to be reported to Baldock Committee in September 2006. Baseline studies for town centre enhancement started in June 2006 and are expected to be completed by November 2006.
- Agreed a formal partnership contract for the commencement of small business support for Royston, to be delivered on an outreach basis into the rural communities. This will be in partnership with JobCentre Plus (who have awarded £7,500 to the project), North Herts College and North Herts and Stevenage Business Initiative.
- Agreed a town centre strategy for Baldock and prepared a draft town centre strategy for Letchworth. Consultation will take place in October 2006, with adoption of the strategy expected in January 2007.

## 6 SATISFIED COMMUNITIES

***Ensuring that we listen to our citizens and deliver high quality, value for money, customer focused services***

Our citizens and customers matter to us and we are committed to ensuring high quality, value for money services. We aim to continue to reduce our costs and ensure value for money through working with partners and investment in new technology

**In the first half of 2006/07 we have:**

- As part of our service@north-herts programme, set up e-payments on the NHDC website, enabling customers to pay for more than one service at a time, and work is nearing completion on the Customer Service Centre.
- Approved capital funding, subject to the approval of a business case, to implement the Northgate e-services module. This will deliver added value around online payment facilities, including the ability to check Council Tax and Business Rate balances online or via touch tone telephone dialling, and registration for Council Tax and Business Rates e-billing for direct debit payers. This will be followed up during the second half of 2006/07, as there was insufficient capacity to take on the implementation in the first half of the year with so many other implementations taking place.
- Introduced the following modules, which are now 'live': On-line Reporting, Browser Payments, Suspense Clearing, CVC, Comms Excel Bureau Link and Council Tax and NNDR Direct Debits. The General Ledger Interface has been installed and is currently undergoing testing. We have applied for Chip and Pin Accreditation and expect this to go 'live' in November 2006.
- Commenced a project to implement a replacement HR payroll system. Five tenders have been evaluated and two have been short-listed for further consideration in September 2006. The preferred payroll system will 'go live' from April 2007.
- Produced an action plan to implement the requirements of the new Civil Contingencies Act.
- Applied for Chartermark Accreditation for our Revenues and Benefits section

**TITLE OF REPORT: NEW COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT  
FRAMEWORK**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update to PARC on the new CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) and make recommendations for the way forward.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

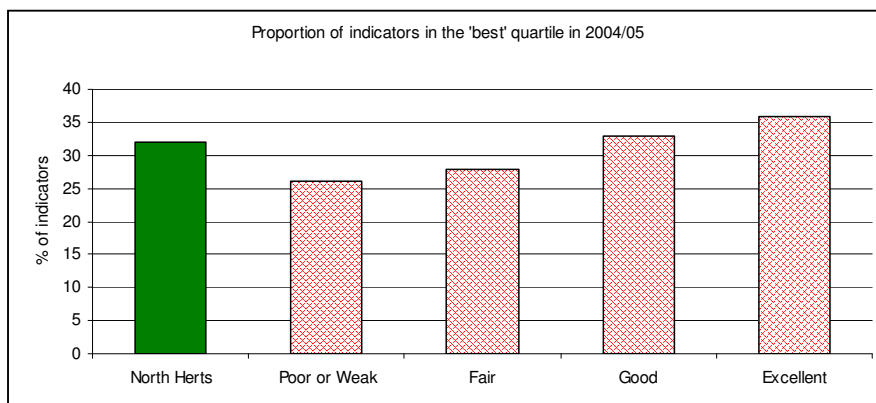
- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In late July and early August 2006, the Audit Commission published the new CPA framework relating to district councils. This new framework will be in place from 2006 until March 2009. After this time, the Audit Commission intends to replace it with a further set of CPA arrangements, as yet undetermined.
- 3.2 The original CPA framework was introduced in 2002. In 2005 CPA – The Harder Test was introduced for single tier and county councils. The changes published for district councils in the summer of 2006 make the framework for district councils different from that applicable to single tier and county councils.
- 3.3 The new CPA framework for district councils from 2006 is intended to;
- continue to encourage improvement
  - been seen from the perspective of service users
  - provide value for money for taxpayers
  - be targeted and risk based and,
  - be delivered in partnership with others
- 3.4 The new framework is also intended to
- build on the previous round of CPA of district councils but be less intensive, both in terms of inspection activity and the impact on the capacity of district councils
  - be more affordable, both in terms of the level of central government grant and fees paid by councils, and,
  - include appropriate involvement of other organisations supporting improvement, including the use of council peers in assessment activity. It is felt that this latter initiative should help to maintain a better perspective of what a district council represents to its community and residents' expectations of the decision making process, setting spending priorities etc.

#### 4. DISTRICT CPA – ANALYSIS OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE INFORMATION NHDC

- 4.1 The Audit Commission carried out an analysis of NHDC service performance information in August 2006. The report shows that the proportion of PIs where the council is performing in the best quartile is 32%. As the graph shows this is above the average range for councils with a CPA rating of fair.



- 4.2 The report shows that 50% of NHDC indicators have improved during the period 2002/03 (2001/02 for surveys) – 2004/05. As a guide using un-audited data for 2005/06, 67% of indicators will have improved since 2002/03. Top quartile and audited data for 2005/06 will be available in early December. Appendix B gives more detailed analysis of the BVPI data.

#### 5. CHANGES TO THE CPA FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 The new CPA will be risk-based, targeted where it can have the maximum impact, and user focused.
- 5.2 It was originally proposed to introduce an additional Value for Money (VFM) rule, which would have required a Council to achieve a score of 3 on VFM in order to score 3 overall on use of resources, but this met with a very mixed response from Councils in the consultation and has therefore been dropped.
- 5.3 The consultation in early 2006 found that there was broad support for the principle of analysing service performance information, 60% of councils supporting this idea. However, there were a number of comments regarding the appropriateness of the performance indicator set chosen (attached here as appendix 2) and whether it truly reflected the services that councils deliver.

In response to this, part of the wider evidence base to inform achievement of the corporate assessment will include a number of additional indicators, such as participation in sport and active recreation (from the Sport England active people survey) data in assessing councils' achievements.

- 5.4 From 2006 district councils will no longer be required to undergo the corporate assessment at regular intervals. Reassessments will take place in two situations:
- a) if a council's performance is deteriorating significantly, re-assessment will be compulsory, or

- b) if a council's performance has improved significantly, they can request re-categorisation. This will be by working with their relationship manager in order to evidence the improved direction of travel and be considered by a regional assessment panel in order to agree priority authorities and resourcing implications. Further guidance on how the panels will work is to follow.

5.5 The corporate assessment will be streamlined and will incorporate:

- five corporate assessment themes instead of ten;
- a council peer involved in assessment process;
- web-based stakeholder survey.

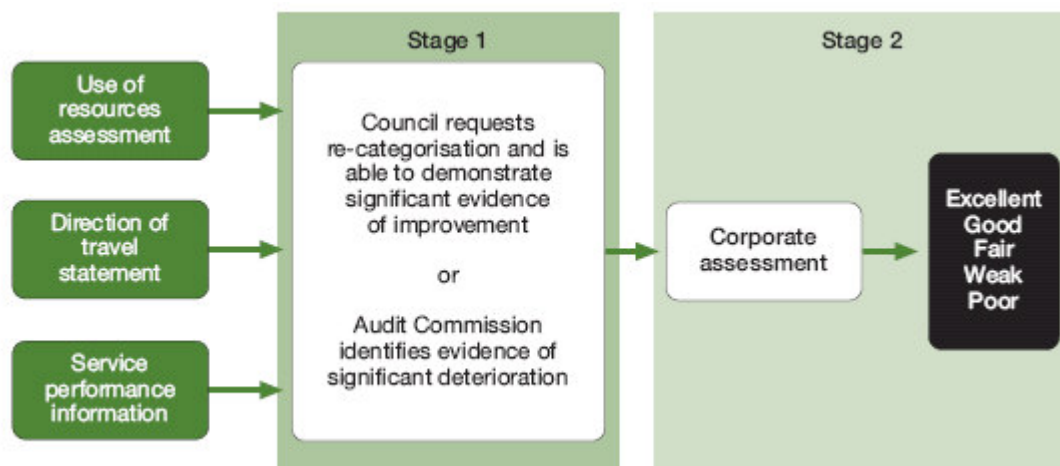
It will not include diagnostic assessment of service areas, since it is considered those are now best dealt with in terms of the overall corporate perspective and individual, Audit Commission service inspections.

The five corporate assessment themes and their weightings are as follows:

Ambition for the community	2
Prioritisation	2
Capacity	2
Performance management	2
Achievement	7

Councils will continue to be categorised as excellent, good, fair, weak and poor.

5.6 The diagram below shows the various elements of the new CPA framework.



Source: Audit Commission

5.7 Service improvement will feature more prominently in determining whether sufficient improvement or alternatively, a deterioration, has taken place if service service improvement was seen as an area of weakness in the last corporate assessment. However, this will still not be considered alone, but alongside the corporate assessment of the authority in order to achieve a more balanced picture.

## **6. ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS**

- 6.1 All districts will continue to receive a use of resources assessment and a direction of travel statement each year. Service performance information will also be analysed. This will include:
- performance indicators – a subset of the current BVPIs (see Appendix A)
  - inspection scores – inspections undertaken by the Audit Commission and other regulators such as BFI (Benefits Fraud Inspectorate)
- 6.2 Under the previous framework, all authorities submitted a self assessment for the value for money theme. From 2006 councils will only be required to submit a new self assessment if they scored a '1' for value for money in the previous year. Other councils will only be asked to submit an update to reflect any significant changes.
- 6.3 The value for money element of the assessment will complement the work councils are already required to undertake in producing their annual efficiency statements in order to avoid duplication of effort.
- 6.4 The use of resources assessment will be a key evidence source in the Commission's decision on whether or not to undertake a corporate assessment.

## **7. MAIN ISSUES ARISING FROM THE NEW FRAMEWORK**

- 7.1 There is no indication from the most recently available information that NHDC's performance is deteriorating significantly; indeed, the direction of travel in Appendix B could provide reasonable evidence to the contrary. Therefore, it will be the council's choice whether it requests re-assessment or not. Councils can request re-categorisation from October 2006, with the first re-assessments due to be carried out between January and March 2007. Re-categorisation of authorities will be prioritised at regional level, with failing, then poor and weak rated councils given first priority. It is not possible to determine at this time how quickly a re-assessment would take place if one were requested.
- 7.2 The costs of the re-assessment (financial and in terms of member and officer time) would need to be offset against any potential benefits of a successful re-assessment, for example, positive public relations, enhanced reputation of the council, extra freedoms arising from a good or excellent categorisation. There is also the caveat, of course, that the authority's assessment grade could potentially go down through this now being 'the harder test'.

## **8. PREPARATION FOR REASSESSMENT OR INSPECTION**

- 8.1 In readiness not only for any subsequent reassessment under CPA, but also in preparing for other inspections, Chartermark and quality awards, IIP etc, it is proposed that an internal 'Improvement' working group should be established, chaired by a senior manager. This approach was approved by CMT on 3<sup>rd</sup> October and the officers to be included will be identified shortly.
- 8.2 The aim of this group would be to promote a performance and continuous improvement culture within the organisation, establish a database of evidence - whether in the form of standard corporate documents or good practice, or service and process improvement - which can then be used to inform future inspections or accreditation schemes. The group members will also be able to create a

'reference group' with greater knowledge of areas where improvement has taken place for subsequent meetings with inspectors, rather than the more informal formation of an 'ad hoc' consultation panel which currently exists. This should increase our ability to report good practice and achievement more consistently in the future.

8.3 It is anticipated that this group should have nominees from each directorate, that the meeting schedule should not be onerous (some activities can be in a 'virtual' group capacity) and that it uses current communication networks internally to promote the overall improvement message for the authority and celebrate success.

8.3 As part of the consideration of evidence gathering for reassessment, it should be noted that under the Capacity East initiative, NHDC can request a corporate peer challenge at no cost to the authority. It is considered that this challenge would provide a useful information base for the authority, identifying its strengths and weaknesses well in advance of any submission for reassessment under CPA.

It is therefore proposed that the authority request such a peer challenge should take place from March 2007, subject to confirmation. There is no fee for this service, although the peer group will require to be on site in North Herts for around three days.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Under the 1999 Local Government Act the Audit Commission has a duty to assess from time to time how well authorities are fulfilling this general requirement for continuous improvement. The Commission also has a duty to categorise local authorities according to their relative performance. The new CPA framework for district councils published in the summer of 2006 means that councils will no longer be subject to an automatic re-assessment on a regular basis.

## **10. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The exact costs of re-assessment under the new CPA framework are not known at this time. However, as outlined in 6.2 above, there would be financial costs and the input of member and officer time which would need to be costed prior to any decision being taken to proceed.

## **11. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The resourcing of any reassessment application would need to be considered alongside the factor of cost and current workload of those areas involved in gathering the data and evidence. As described above, the creation of a group to commence that work ahead of any further inspections would alleviate part of the increased pressure experienced at assessment in the past.

11.2 The consideration of equalities and diversity are central to this process and our evidence for CPA must clearly support the corporate equalities policies.

11.3 The peer challenge described at 8.3 above will be free of charge but will potentially involve a time limited commitment by a number of officers and elected members.

## **12. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

12.1 Not applicable.

PARC (12.10.06)

### **13. RECOMMENDATION**

PARC is asked to:

- 13.1 Note the new CPA framework, including timings and requirements for reassessment.
- 13.2 Note the performance improvement achieved to date following the previous CPA assessment
- 13.3 Note the intention to establish an Improvement Group for the authority in order to prepare not only for CPA, but other inspection, accreditation and continuous improvement opportunities.

### **14. APPENDICES**

- 14.1 Appendix A – subset of BVPIs to be used for service performance information.
- 14.2 Appendix B – NHDC Performance results and quartile data.

### **15. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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### **16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Available in the Policy, Partnerships & Performance Library, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth

## Appendix A – Performance indicator set for use in assessing service improvement

Description of PI	Source and Reference	Comments and treatment notes
Time taken to determine planning applications – major applications	BVPI – BV 109a	Single tier and district council quartile analysis  Designation as a PSA for 2006/07 (announced in March 06 – based on performance in 2004/05) will also be indicated (*)
Time taken to determine planning applications – minor applications	BVPI – BV 109b	All England quartile analysis  Designation as a PSA for 2006/07 (announced in March 06 – based on performance in 2004/05) will also be indicated (*)
Time taken to determine planning applications – other applications	BVPI – BV 109c	All England quartile analysis  Designation as a PSA for 2006/07 (announced in March 06 – based on performance in 2004/05) will also be indicated (*)
Satisfaction of applicants with planning service	BVPI – BV 111	All England quartile analysis
Cleanliness of public places (litter and detritus)	BVPI – BV 199a	All England quartile analysis
Provision of kerbside recycling collection (one recyclable)	BVPI – BV 91a	All England quartile analysis
Satisfaction with waste collection	BVPI – BV 90a	All England quartile analysis
Satisfaction with recycling	BVPI – BV 90b	All England quartile analysis  Results adjusted for deprivation
Percentage of standard planning searches carried out within 10 working days	BVPI – BV 179	All England quartile analysis  No longer collected as a BVPI in 2006/07 – will be deleted from the PI set when updated with 2006/07 data
Environmental health checklist	BVPI – BV 166a	All England quartile analysis

(\*) This information will be updated when the new PSAs are announced (based on performance in 2005/06)

Description of PI	Source and Reference	Comments and treatment notes
Satisfaction with the cleanliness of public space	BVPI – BV 89	All England quartile analysis Results adjusted for deprivation
Recycling and composting performance	BVPI – BV 82a + 82b	Result for each PI added together – district council quartile analysis Failure to meet 2005/06 statutory target will also be indicated
Energy requirements of council housing	BVPI – BV 63	All England quartile analysis
Tonnage of waste per head of population	BVPI – BV 84	District council quartile analysis
The proportion of non-decent LA homes	BVPI – BV 184a	All England quartile analysis Applies to stock holding only (#)
Urgent repairs in time	HIP – BPSA section E5 (previously BV 72)	All England quartile analysis Applies to stock holding only (#)
Average time for non-urgent repairs	HIP – BPSA section E6 (previously BV 73)	All England quartile analysis Applies to stock holding only (#)
Percentage of responsive repairs for which local authority made and kept an appointment	BVPI – BV 185	All England quartile analysis No longer collected as a BVPI in 2005/06 - will be deleted from the PI set when updated with 2005/06 data Applies to stock holding only (#)
Rent collection and arrears	BVPI – BV 66a	All England quartile analysis Applies to stock holding only (#)
Average re-let times	HIP – BPSA section E3 (previously BV 68 – reintroduced as a BV 212 from 2005/06)	All England quartile analysis Applies to stock holding only (#)
Average weekly management cost	HIP – BPSA section E1	All England quartile analysis

(#) This PI will be excluded for councils that have transferred their housing stock by the end of the financial year in which performance is measured

Description of PI	Source and Reference	Comments and treatment notes
	(previously BV 65a)	Results adjusted for inflation since 2002/03 to permit time series comparison. Results adjusted for variations in cost to permit inter-authority comparisons  Applies to stock holding only (#)
CRE code for rented housing	BVPI – BV 164	This PI has a yes / no response. For the purposes of this analysis ‘yes’ will be classed as second quartile and ‘no’ will be classed as bottom quartile.  Applies to stock holding only (#)
Overall satisfaction with housing service	BVPI – BV 74a	All England quartile analysis (~)  Applies to stock holding only (#)  Results adjusted for deprivation
Satisfaction with opportunities to participate	BVPI – BV 75a	All England quartile analysis (~)  Applies to stock holding only (#)  Results adjusted for deprivation
Average time in temporary accommodation – time spent in B&B	BVPI – BV 183a	All England quartile analysis
Average time in temporary accommodation – time spent in hostels	BVPI – BV 183b	All England quartile analysis
Repeat homelessness acceptances	HIP – section E1b	All England quartile analysis
Private unfit made fit	HIP – HSSA (previously BVPI – BV 62)	All England quartile analysis
Percentage of total private sector homes vacant for more than 6 months	HIP – HSSA section A1 and A7	All England quartile analysis  Results adjusted for deprivation

| (#) This PI will be excluded for councils that have transferred their housing stock by the end of the financial year in which performance is measured

| (~) Councils are able to return data for this PI annually (unlike the other PIs generated from the user satisfaction surveys) – we will use the latest available data in this analysis, subject to the result and base number for the sample being provided

Description of PI	Source and Reference	Comments and treatment notes
		No longer collected as a BVPI in 2005/06 - will be deleted from the PI set when updated with 2005/06 data
Resident satisfaction parks / open spaces	BVPI – BV 119e	All England quartile analysis
Resident satisfaction sport / leisure facilities	BVPI – BV 119a	All England quartile analysis
Resident satisfaction museums / galleries	BVPI – BV 119c	All England quartile analysis
Resident satisfaction theatres / concert halls	BVPI – BV 119d	All England quartile analysis
Speed of processing – new housing benefit / council tax benefit claims	BVPI – BV 78a	All England quartile analysis

This table shows the results of all BVPI's required for analysis by CPA.

It also shows the top quartile position – as directed by CPA all are to be compared to 'All England' quartiles with the exception of BV109a, BV82a&b and BV84 which are to be compared to 'District' quartiles.

An indicator is classified as improving when either:

- . there is a change in the result between two time periods in a direction of the polarity of the indicator; or
- . the result is the same in both time periods and both results equal the best possible result for the indicator (e.g. 100%).

An indicator will be classified as deteriorating when either:

- . there is a change in the result between two time periods in the opposite direction of the polarity of the indicator; or
- . the result is the same in both time periods and both results equal the worst possible result for the indicator (e.g. 0%).

This is based first on quartiles achieved then by data return if within the same quartile.

NC = No Comparison. Incomplete series of data.

#### *Top quartile analysis*

8 of 25 results are in the top quartile = 32%

There is a slight discrepancy in the results compared with the Audit Commission Analysis Tool although the end result of 32% remains unchanged.

1. All analysis tool data has been rounded to whole figures i.e BV179 is top quartile if it is rounded from our year end return of 99.91% up to 100%.
2. All analysis tool quartiles have been based on district quartiles not as specified in the service performance information provided by the audit commission i.e. BV90a is quartile 1 based on 'All England' but quartile 2 based on 'District'

#### *Improvement analysis*

The analysis tool states that 50% have improved since 2002/03. It does not include 3 survey results that have shown improvement (BV111, BV90a & BV90b) as it says they are not comparable due to confidence interval changes.

11 of 22 comparable indicators have improved = 50%

NHDC includes all survey results that have shown % improvement 14/22 = 64%

BVPI	Description	Top Quartile Analysis	2001/02 Surveys			2002/03			2003/04			2004/05			Improvement 2002-2004 if same quartile then data improvement
			NHDC	Top Q	Q	NHDC	Top Q	Q	NHDC	Top Q	Q	NHDC	Top Q	Q	
BV 109a	Time taken to determine planning applications – major applications	District Council				30	56	4	52	63.58	2	58.97	71.25	2	↑
BV 109b	Time taken to determine planning applications – minor applications	All England				34.92	64	4	39.78	70.28	4	57.18	75.40	4	↑
BV 109c	Time taken to determine planning applications – other applications	All England				49.81	81	4	59.88	85	4	75.49	88	4	↑
BV 111	Satisfaction of applicants with planning service	All England	79	84	2	-	-	-	83	81	1	-	-	-	↑
BV 199a	Cleanliness of public places (litter and detritus)	All England				-	-	-	16	14	-	14	11	2	NC
BV 91a	Provision of kerbside recycling collection (one recyclable)	All England				100	99	1	100	100	1	100	100	1	↑
BV 90a	Satisfaction with waste collection	All England	89	90	2	-	-	-	89.20	89	1	-	-	-	↑
BV 90b	Satisfaction with recycling	All England	61	73	3	-	-	-	63.70	75	3	-	-	-	↑
BV 179	% of standard planning searches carried out within 10 working days	All England				53.12	100	4	100	100	1	99.91	100	2	↑
BV 166a	Environmental health checklist	All England				38.30	89	4	58.30	90	4	100	97	1	↑
BV 89	Satisfaction with the cleanliness of public space	All England	71	71	1	-	-	-	62.5	66	2	-	-	-	↓
BV 82a/b	Recycling and composting	District Council				11.53	16.1	3	17.99	20.4	2	19.89	26.4	3	↑
BV 84	Tonnage of waste per head of population	District Council				432.53	367	3	427.57	371.7	3	450	380.4	4	↓
BV 183a	accommodation – time spent in Bed & Breakfast	All England				3	1	2	3	1.21	2	0	1	1	↑
BV 183b	Average time in temp accomm. – time spent in hostels	All England				31	0	4	41	0	4	44.6	0	4	↓
BV 62	Private unfit made fit	All England				0.79	4.5	4	0.53	4.32	4	0.69	4.69	4	↓
BV 175	Racial incidents with further action	All England				100	100	1	100	100	1	100	100	1	↑
BV 176	Domestic refuge places	All England				0	0.66	4	0	0.77	4	0	0.82	4	↓

BV 119e	Resident satisfaction parks / Open spaces	All England	60	69	3	-	-	-	71.50	77	3	-	-	-	↑
BV 119a	Resident satisfaction sport / leisure facilities	All England	52	59	3	-	-	-	50.80	60	3	-	-	-	↓
BV 119c	Resident satisfaction museums / galleries	All England	49	56	2	-	-	-	48.80	50	2	-	-	-	↓
BV119d	Resident satisfaction theatres/concert halls	All England	-	60	-	-	-	-	46.00	56	3	-	-	-	NC
BV 78a	Speed of processing – new housing benefit / council tax	All England				22.01	33	1	26.68	32	1	26.88	29.4	1	↓
HIP – E1b	Repeat homelessness acceptances	All England				2	1	2	4	1	3	1	0	2	↑
HIP	% private homes vacant > 6 months	All England				-	-	-	0.6	0.0	3	0.0	0.0	1	NC

**DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT FOR HERTFORDSHIRE -  
PROGRESS UPDATE**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report outlines the process by which the Local Area Agreement for Hertfordshire has developed to date.
- 1.2 The report also contains information regarding the potential for resourcing agreed targets and how this Authority and its partners could benefit in financial terms from participating in this Agreement.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 This report does contain a recommendation on a key decision and has been referred to in the Forward Plan.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The development of Local Area Agreements forms a major part of the 'Ten Year Vision for Local Government' policy document. It is intended that there will be at minimum a draft Local Area Agreement in place for every part of England by the end of 2008.
- 3.2 The first pilot phase of 20 Local Area Agreements finished in early 2005 and building on that success the Government has now announced an additional 66 areas for the second round; Hertfordshire is one of these second round participants, the ten District Councils and County working in partnership.
- 3.3 Local Area Agreements are key to the Government's agenda to delegate responsibility and ensure partnership co-operation for service delivery locally, and it is understood will form a key part of the White Paper on local government reform due in late October 2006.
- 3.4 A Local Area Agreement is a partnership approach to develop, resource and deliver 40 targets which contribute to a marked improvement in the quality of life for residents. It does not, however, mean that each participant must agree to deliver improvement against every one of these targets; there is the ability to choose which can most contribute to their own organisational or local agenda, or be most effectively delivered from their existing resources.
- 3.5 The discussions for Hertfordshire include the consideration of 12 'stretch' targets which must be achieved within the agreed three year period in order to attract a reward grant award to the participating authorities. A stretch

target is one which is literally stretching, more difficult to achieve, for example because they are simply very difficult areas to address or because something fundamental needs to change before significantly more achievement can be made, eg changes in a statutory process or funding allocations. The latest proposals for these targets is attached as Appendix A to this report.

- 3.6 It should be noted that there is the ability to retain a small number of stretch targets for delivery in the second year, where it is understood that timing of an action or availability of resources could be a factor. These are identified in the appendix attached.
- 3.7 The 40 overall targets are to be developed evenly across four theme blocks, comprising:
- children and young people,
  - safer stronger, greener communities,
  - healthier communities and older people and, the most recently added,
  - economic development. The latter also encompasses issues around skills shortages, career development opportunities and key worker housing/facilities.

#### **4. ISSUES**

- 4.1 A second Local Area Agreement submission for Hertfordshire was made to Go-East (the Government Office for the East of England) in early December 2005. This paper outlines the background and consideration of areas to be covered by an Agreement, identifying local factors.
- 4.2 The final LAA Agreement, recommending targets to be delivered over the next three years was received and approved by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 23rd March 2006.
- 4.3 Upon acceptance of the final Agreement, pump priming money to a total of £1.8 Million was made available to Hertfordshire, representing both capital and revenue expenditure. It was proposed that £180,000 of this funding be allocated immediately to two key areas; Stevenage Borough Council to sustain current staffing resources assigned to the development of a whole block for 'safer, stronger, cleaner communities' and to the employment of a voluntary sector worker on a two year contract to establish baseline figures for volunteering and ensure capacity of the voluntary sector to participate. The remainder of the pump priming money (£1.62 Million approximately) has been allocated on a bidding process across the County.
- 4.4 The agreed stretch targets attract Reward Grant Funding provided the target is completed to standard within the three year timescale. The overall fund for this is in the region of £30 Million for Hertfordshire, and the manner in which this is divided between participants has now been established.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the Reward Grant should be split with 50% of total being used to sustain the four target 'blocks' which provide the central driver and performance management for the Agreement. The remaining 50% will then be allocated equally across the ten district LSPs, potentially £1.5 Million each.

This provides a much more equitable division of funding than first anticipated, since it would otherwise be difficult to measure individual input versus output and pro rata the reward accordingly, and has generally been well received by the districts.

- 4.6 Since the pump priming monies and reward grant will be payable to district LSPs, there will be a need to establish clear lines of accountability both in terms of applying for pump priming funding and ultimately the distribution of the Reward Grant allocated to North Herts. The decision making process needs to be visible and have a clear audit trail established from the original aspiration, through implementation, monitoring through the County LAA Performance Group (and parallel reporting via PARC here) to end target delivery and collection of the reward grant.

Applications for pump priming for specific actions undertaken by the Council will need to be endorsed by the LSP before progression through PARC/Cabinet and vice versa to ensure democratic accountability is retained. Similarly, the ultimate receipt and allocation of any reward grant to North Herts will be via the LSP, and clear governance of that partnership needs to be established as quickly as possible, in order to ensure that the role of elected members as participants is clear, and that subsequent recommendations regarding allocation are made via our committee reporting to ensure visibility of the decision making process. Herts County Council are currently developing partnership agreements which will be adopted for the local LSPs too.

- 4.7 If a stretch target is not achieved to a minimum of 60%, then the reward grant *for that target only* will not be secured. If achievement is 61% or more, then the grant is delivered but on a pro rata percentage basis.
- 4.8 It is not essential or obligatory for a District to commit to specific targets and work has been underway to identify those areas where the targets most closely align with our corporate and partnership objectives.
- 4.9 It should be noted that with the move for funding community safety initiatives from Go-East to Herts County Council in April 2006, it has recently been agreed that the allocation of funding to each local authority would be made dependent each bid delivering against one of the LAA community safety targets. Any bids submitted for consideration by the Responsible Authorities Group in North Herts must therefore have a direct impact on a Cleaner, Greener Safer target as attached at Appendix A.
- 4.10 The progress against the Herts Local Area Agreement was recently reviewed by the Audit Commission and the LAA lead self assessment is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. It is clear that whilst work on structure, rationalisation of partnerships to deliver targets etc has been carried out, there are a number of areas, such as ensuring democratic engagement in the process, performance monitoring and governance of the overall delivery of the LAA and reward grants are still to be addressed. The outline of how and when this will take place are included within Keith Shephard's paper attached.
- 4.11 In response to criticism regarding failure to keep a number of key partners informed of progress, the LAA group are now developing a regular bulletin to share with partners and ensure communications are improved across the county. The first issue of this bulletin was drafted in early September 2006 and a final copy attached as Appendix 3 herewith.

- 4.12 At the Scrutiny Committee Meeting September 2005, it was recommended that the monitoring of performance for the Hertfordshire LAA should be through PARC; it is recommended that since overall performance will be monitored through the 'block leads' at County level, a six monthly update report to PARC should be sufficient.
- 4.13 In terms of current resourcing, there are corporate representatives in each of the four blocks;

Cleaner, Greener, Safer	Vaughan Watson Michael Nadasdy
Economic Development	Senior Strategy Officer (LG)
Health and Older People	John Campbell (block lead) Lynn Saville
Children and Young People	Patrick Candler

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The existing LSP structure is not a legal partnership. As the introduction of LAAs is still at the policy stage, no legislation has been introduced to create LSPs as legally accountable bodies. Before committing to actions and accountability for expenditure, the authority needs to be satisfied that there are appropriate and robust governance arrangements in place and that potential liability is allocated, stated and approved.

## **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There will need to be careful consideration of commitment targets which will require funding to 'pump prime' their development, given that the allocation of such funding will be subject to approval through the formal bidding process countywide.
- 6.2 As outlined above at 4.5, there is potential for the Authority to obtain funding to deliver against its existing strategic objectives, thus reducing the risk of failure due to resourcing. However, there also needs to be careful consideration of any long term revenue or resourcing costs to ensure that any projects which commence do not have a negative impact on overall budget setting against priorities for this Authority.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Establishment of targets and delivery should be possible within existing staffing levels, since they essentially co-ordinate areas which the Authority already resources. If there are any new areas identified which require additional officer time, then this must be identified within the bids and proposals for funding allocation submitted to the county group for consideration. Revenue capacity makes the consideration of short term, temporary posts possible.

- 7.2 The process will also assist the authority in the delivery of its Social Inclusion and Diversity Strategies, since great emphasis is being placed on the identification and specific needs of those 'pockets' currently experiencing exclusion.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

- 8.1 Consultation with external organisations, the LSP and Responsible Authorities Group, Health Improvement Group etc is an intrinsic part of the process.
- 8.2 The engagement of elected representatives throughout both the process and delivery elements of the LAA is vital. Now that the LAA bulletin has commenced, it will be possible to circulate this to all members, parish councils and staff via MIS.

## **9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That PARC note the progress made to date, especially with the identification and development of targets which NHDC can contribute to.
- 9.2 That PARC note the outcome of the self assessment carried out by the county LAA group, outlining the areas for development in the future.
- 9.3 That updates on LAA progress and specifically performance against targets are scheduled into the PARC work programme at six monthly intervals.

## **10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To assure PARC and other elected members that the authority's representatives are tasked with developing only those targets which they are confident they can deliver against, to the benefit of the authority and not to its cost.

## **11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 There are no alternative options available.

## **12. APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: Stretch Targets with comments regarding NHDC participation
- Appendix B: Self Assessment of position for the Audit Commission Inspection
- Appendix C: LAA bulletin update

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## APPENDIX A

### BLOCK SUMMARY

#### SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES BLOCK

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Through tackling crime and disorder, and by addressing the underlying influences upon crime and anti-social behaviour, deprivation, and community well-being, we can create safer and stronger communities within Hertfordshire. And through creating quality spaces in which people want to live and can be proud of and managing our environment sustainably, we are ensuring our neighbourhoods and open spaces are cleaner, safer and greener.

The Safer and Stronger Block of our Local Area Agreement builds on Hertfordshire's Community Strategy. The strategy aims to:

- Create safer communities
- Maintain a sustainable environment
- Build a prosperous and inclusive society

All of the 10 district Community Strategies contain similar priorities, albeit with a focus that will reflect the unique make-up of each district, but there are commonalities that have been drawn out within the Safer and Stronger Communities Block of the LAA. Many of the public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations who have contributed to these community strategies also share the overarching goals of this block, and all are already in many ways working towards achieving these outcomes. The LAA is an opportunity to build on this partnership work.

A number of discussions have taken place between the county council, district and borough councils, Police and Fire services, and voluntary and community organisations to establish which of the priorities the Safer and Stronger Communities Block should focus on, seeking to establish areas that would offer the most potential to 'add value' and, where possible, incorporate innovative joined-up working.

Hertfordshire already has established partnerships within the Safer Communities strand, including Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and the County Chief Officer Group (COG) for Crime and Disorder. The Cleaner and Greener Communities strand includes the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership and Hertfordshire Association of Cultural Officers (HACO). Partnerships relating to Stronger Communities include Hertfordshire CVS Group, Hertfordshire Infrastructure Consortium, and Neighbourhood Watch. Engaging these partnerships, and seeking new relationships between organisations where an existing network is not in place, has been key to developing this block.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Block has been developed within both a national and local context. Nationally, this includes PSA (public service agreement)

and crime reduction targets, the government's 'Respect' agenda, initiatives to create cleaner, safer and greener communities, and COMPACT. The local backdrop includes district CDRP strategies, Hertfordshire's Policing Plan, recent survey data on fear of crime and antisocial behaviour, data from the British Crime Survey, statutory Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) data on cleanliness and recycling, Hertfordshire's Waste Strategy, Green Heart Partnership, and the Hertfordshire Environmental Forum/Quality of Life Report 2004.

Within this block there are a number of links between the three strands, which in part reflects the interconnection of many of the issues we are tackling, but is also a reflection on the way the block has been developed as a whole. For example, increasing community participation in the development and management of open spaces links with building stronger communities, initiatives around offenders performing unpaid work to benefit their local community links with the aim to increase volunteering in the county, and improving the cleanliness of our neighbourhoods and public spaces can contribute to increased feelings of public safety. Safer and Stronger Communities also links across to other blocks in the agreement, for example the connections between young people, diversionary activities, alcohol and anti-social behaviour link to the Children and Young People's Block, and there may well be links between people who volunteer in a sports capacity and the numbers of people taking part in physical activity, which connects to the Healthier Communities and Older People's Block.

## **SAFER COMMUNITIES -**

- **the stretch targets within this block will form part of the criteria for NH Responsible Authorities Group consideration of bids for Safer, Stronger Communities Fund from Go-East. This group meets bi-monthly and bids are considered throughout the year, with performance management of those projects also required to be reported back through the RAG.**
- **The consultation which provides a baseline for these targets was carried out across Hertfordshire in June 2006**

**OUTCOME A: Being safe, feeling safe - To reduce crime, the harm caused by illegal drugs, and to reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime, and to build respect in communities and reduce anti-social behaviour; and to increase domestic fire safety and reduce arson.**

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**Sub-outcome A1: To build respect in communities and a reduction in the levels of anti-social behaviour across the county, particularly where alcohol is a contributory factor, including a focus on hotspot areas, thereby improving feelings of safety and public reassurance.**

*Reward targets are shown in italics*

**Target S-A1.1a:**

*Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider teenagers hanging around on the streets to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.*

**Target S-A1.1b:**

*Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.*

**Target S-A1.1c:**

*Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.*

**Target S-A1.1d:**

*Increase the percentage of people surveyed who say that they feel very or fairly safe when outside in their local area after dark by 4% by 2009.*

**Target S-A1.2a and b**

*Reduce the recorded numbers of deliberate primary and secondary fires by 3% year on year.*

**Target S-A1.3**

*Reduce the percentage of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) that are breached by 10% over two years.*

**Target S-A1.4**

Increase the number of test purchasing operations (countywide) carried out by 15% in year 1, 15% in year 2 and 10% in year 3.

**Target S-A1.5**

Reduce the number of recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour in yet to be agreed hotspot locations (particularly where alcohol is a contributory factor) by 4.5% by 2009.

**Sub-outcome A2: Provide an early intervention/preventative minor repairs/Home Security Service to the elderly, vulnerable and victims of crime within our communities. This service will improve their wellbeing and confidence to enable them to enjoy living independently and in a safer environment in their own homes.**

**Target S-A2.1**

- ***The lead for these targets will be herts Fire and Rescue, but with participation of partners in terms of raising the profile of fire safety***
  - a. *Reduce the number of deaths arising from accidental fires in the home by 25% over 3 years.*
  - b. *Reduce the number of injuries arising from accidental fires in the home by 3% year on year.*
  - c. *Reduce the number of accidental fires in properties that have had a Home Fire Safety Check by 20% over 3 years.*
  - d. *Increase the number of homes secured by Hertfordshire Home Security Service (HHSS) by 15% in year 1, 15% in year 2 and 10% in year 3.*
  - e. *Increase the number of Home Fire Safety Checks undertaken by an additional 1,033 in total over three years.*
  - f. *Increase the number of minor repairs undertaken by 25% by 2009.*

**Target S-A2.2**

- a. *Reduce the number of recorded domestic burglaries (county-wide) by 20% by 2009.*
- b. *Maintain the percentage of repeat victimisation for domestic burglary (county-wide) at 6% or under.*

**Target S-A2.3:**

*Increase the percentage of recipients of the service surveyed who report improved feelings of wellbeing, increased confidence of feeling safe and increased ability to live independently by:*

- a. *Increasing the percentage of people who are quite/very unconcerned about being a victim of burglary by 5 % by 2009*
- b. *Increasing the percentage of people who are quite/very unconcerned about having an accident in their home by 5 % by 2009.*
- c. *Increasing the percentage of people who are quite/very unconcerned about having a fire in their home by 5 % by 2009.*
- d. *Increasing the percentage of people who are quite/very confident that they are able to live independently in their home by 5 % by 2009.*

**Sub-outcome A3: Offenders address the harm caused to communities through crime, by performing unpaid work that benefits their local community and young adults (18-25 years) are diverted away from crime and anti-social behaviour through apprentice schemes<sup>1</sup>.**

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the block 'apprentice schemes' refer to young adults (18-25 yrs) supervising/mentoring/supporting other young adults to positively influence changes in their behaviour and actions. Our client group could be those on the edge of offending behaviour or having committed minor offences deemed not suitable for custodial sentences.

- **None of the following are stretch or reward targets, so NHDC and partners do not have to action, but we are already promoting the community benefits of Compulsory Unpaid Work via our partnership co-ordination through the Probation Service.**

**Target S-A3.1**

Increase the number of hours of unpaid work that directly benefits community safety by 15% over 3 years.

**Target S-A3.2**

Increase the number of hours where the community have influenced the work undertaken by 10% by 2009.

**Target S-A3.3**

Increase the number of voluntary organisations/community groups (including minority and ethnic groups) who offer offenders unpaid work by 15% over 3 years.

**Target S-A3.4**

Increase the number of community based projects benefiting from unpaid work by 10% by 2009.

- **The next two targets can be delivered via the North Herts Learning Partnership of which NHDC is a member. We are also actively encouraging apprenticeship applications from youngsters wishing to follow a horticultural career in order to fill skills gaps with our own contractors, which would contribute to this target.**

**Target S-A3.5**

Increase the number of young adult apprentices/volunteers completing time specified activity by 10% by 2009.

**Target S-A3.6**

Increase the number of young adult apprentices/volunteers achieving a vocational/life-skills qualification by 20% by 2009.

**Sub-outcome A4: To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs, including substantially increasing the number of drug misusing offenders entering treatment through the criminal justice system.**

- **These targets are already aligned with those in the Hertfordshire Drug Implementation Programme, to which North Herts can contribute, but they are not stretch targets bringing any reward and are only areas we can influence, not control**

**Target S-A4.1**

Increase the number of drug users entering treatment/ the number of problematic drug users participating in drug treatment programmes to 2,547 by 2008.

**Target S-A4.2**

Increase the number of drug users successfully retained in treatment programmes for 12 weeks or more to 85% by 2008.

**Target S-A4.3**

Improve waiting times for the main structured modalities (treatment providers) to 3 weeks by 2008.

#### **Target S-A4.4**

Increase the proportion of all Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) clients assessed by the Drug Intervention Team (DIT) (targets will be set during year 1 of LAA<sup>2</sup>).

#### **Target S-A4.5**

Increase the proportion of all adults assessed by the Drug Intervention Team (DIT) who are taken on to the DIT caseload (targets will be set during year 1 of LAA<sup>3</sup>).

**Sub-outcome A5: To reduce the fear of crime and improve public reassurance and confidence, addressing the imbalance between the public's perception of levels of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour with actual levels.**

- **These targets are already aligned with the NH Community Safety Strategy target to reduce fear of crime.**

#### **Target S-A5.1**

Increase the percentage of people surveyed who feel more safe now compared to a year ago in their local area (target to be set during year 1 of LAA).

#### **Target S-A5.2**

Increase the number of:

- a. Police Community Support Officers deployed in Hertfordshire to 359 by 2008.
- b. Special Constables (*see Target S-C9.4*)

*NB. Targets S-A1.1a,b,c and d also contributes to this outcome.*

**Sub-outcome A6: Communities feel safer and public confidence in authorities responding to crime\*, with a particular focus on domestic violence, is increased** (\*volume/British Crime Survey (BCS) comparator crime).

- **This is a target to which we can contribute, but lead must be Herts Constabulary**

#### **Target S-A6.1**

Reduce levels of all British Crime Survey (BCS) comparator crime in the County area in line with PSA1 targets.

#### **Target S-A6.2**

Increase the percentage of reported incidents of domestic violence which result in sanction detections<sup>4</sup> by 58% by 2009.

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<sup>2</sup> 2005 is the first year that that data for this indicator has been collected. Realistic targets can only be set once end-of-year performance data has been reported, and this will be done during year 1 of LAA.

<sup>3</sup> 2005 is the first year that that data for this indicator has been collected. Realistic targets can only be set once end-of-year performance data has been reported, and this will be done during year 1 of LAA.

<sup>4</sup> Sanction detections are crimes for which someone is charged, summonsed, receives a caution or other formal sanction.

## CLEANER AND GREENER COMMUNITIES

### **Outcome B: Neighbourhoods are cleaner and greener, and communities take an active role in managing their own environment**

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*Reward targets are shown in italics.*

#### **Sub-outcome B7: Waste is sustainably managed.**

- Our own performance in NHDC regarding waste management and recycling contributes effectively to this target

##### **Target S-B7.1**

*Reduce the disposal of non-biodegradable household waste to landfill through increasing recycling of non-biodegradable household waste across the county from 6.66% to 9.16% by 2009.*

#### **Sub-outcome B8: Neighbourhoods and public spaces are cleaner and greener, and communities take an active role in managing their own environment.**

- We have already identified potential Green Flag sites in North Herts, including Oughtonhead Common and are working with the Groundwork Trust on increasing community involvement in the project. A submission for pump priming money for such a scheme can be made from October 2006.

##### **Target S-B8.1<sup>5</sup>**

- Increase the number of Green Flag (or equivalent) accredited sites which feature or fringe on a super output area (SOA) within areas of high multiple deprivation within the top 25% regionally from 0 to 5 by 2009.*
- Increase the number of Green Flag (or equivalent) accredited sites outside the identified areas of multiple deprivation from 5 to 10 by 2009.*

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES

### **Outcome C: Communities are empowered to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making and the delivery of services, and there is an increased sense of belonging and citizenship**

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*Reward targets are shown in italics.*

#### **Sub-outcome C9: More people in Hertfordshire are taking part in volunteering**

- North Herts generally has a good record of volunteering and recent promotions have resulted in more volunteers coming forward. The difficulty is often in finding suitable placements for them, a situation which the NHCVS is dealing with at present. The Council's own move to encourage volunteering by proposing two days paid leave whilst working as a volunteer will contribute to this target too.

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<sup>5</sup> Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales.

**Target S-C9.1**

*Increase the number of people (aged 16 and over) who affirm they have undertaken formal volunteering in groups, clubs or organisations for at least an average of two hours a week or more over a 12 month period by 3% by 2009.*

**Target S-C9.2**

*Increase the number of people (aged 16 and over) from 'hard to reach' groups<sup>6</sup> who undertake formal volunteering for at least an average of two hours a week or more over a 12 month period by 3% by 2009.*

**Target S-C9.3**

*Increase the number of people (aged 16 and over) volunteering in sport for at least an average of one hour each week by 1% by 2009.*

**Target S-C9.4**

*Increase the number of people from the following groups who undertake formal volunteering by 1 ½% by 2009: special constables; lay magistrates; victim support; prison visitors; trustees; school governors (including fund raising, helping in school, running pupils' clubs and mentoring); and mentoring.*

**Sub-outcome C10: Communities are empowered to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making, and there is an increased sense of community cohesion.****Target S-C10.1**

Increase the percentage of people surveyed who are satisfied with the opportunities for participation in local decision-making provided by their Council by 2% by 2009.

**Target S-C10.2**

Increase the percentage of people surveyed who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area by 2% by 2009.

**Target S-C10.3**

Increase the percentage of people surveyed who feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together by 2% by 2009.

(Baseline figures for the above targets will be established during the first 6 months of the LAA. Once the survey results are available we will work with partners to develop robust targets, in time for the annual re-refresh. Since these are not stretch targets, they are being developed behind those which bring reward and NH participation can then be considered in the light of baseline results)

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<sup>6</sup> Home Office defines 'hard to reach' as people with no qualifications (unemployed); people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities; and people with disabilities or limiting long-term illnesses.

## **TECHNICAL DETAIL OF AGREEMENT**

### **SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES BLOCK**

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Through tackling crime and disorder, and by addressing the underlying influences upon crime and anti-social behaviour, deprivation, and community well-being, we can create safer and stronger communities within Hertfordshire. And through creating quality spaces in which people want to live and can be proud of and managing our environment sustainably, we are ensuring our neighbourhoods and open spaces are cleaner, safer and greener.

The Safer and Stronger Block of our Local Area Agreement builds on Hertfordshire's Community Strategy. The strategy aims to:

- Create safer communities
- Maintain a sustainable environment
- Build a prosperous and inclusive society

All of the 10 district Community Strategies contain similar priorities, albeit with a focus that will reflect the unique make-up of each district, but there are commonalities that have been drawn out within the Safer and Stronger Communities Block of the LAA. Many of the public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations who have contributed to these community strategies also share the overarching goals of this block, and all are already in many ways working towards achieving these outcomes. The LAA is an opportunity to build on this partnership work.

A number of discussions have taken place between the county council, district and borough councils, Police and Fire services, and voluntary and community organisations to establish which of the priorities the Safer and Stronger Communities Block should focus on, seeking to establish areas that would offer the most potential to 'add value' and, where possible, incorporate innovative joined-up working.

Hertfordshire already has established partnerships within the Safer Communities strand, including Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and the County Chief Officer Group (COG) for Crime and Disorder. The Cleaner and Greener Communities strand includes the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership and Hertfordshire Association of Cultural Officers (HACO). Partnerships relating to Stronger Communities include Hertfordshire CVS Group, Hertfordshire Infrastructure Consortium, and Neighbourhood Watch. Engaging these partnerships, and seeking new relationships between organisations where an existing network is not in place, has been key to developing this block.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Block has been developed within both a national and local context. Nationally, this includes PSA (public service agreement) and crime reduction targets, the government's 'Respect' agenda, initiatives to create

cleaner, safer and greener communities, and COMPACT. The local backdrop includes district CDRP strategies, Hertfordshire's Policing Plan, recent survey data on fear of crime and antisocial behaviour, data from the British Crime Survey, statutory Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) data on cleanliness and recycling, Hertfordshire's Waste Strategy, Green Heart Partnership, and the Hertfordshire Environmental Forum/Quality of Life Report 2004.

Within this block there are a number of links between the three strands, which in part reflects the interconnection of many of the issues we are tackling, but is also a reflection on the way the block has been developed as a whole. For example, increasing community participation in the development and management of open spaces links with building stronger communities, initiatives around offenders performing unpaid work to benefit their local community links with the aim to increase volunteering in the county, and improving the cleanliness of our neighbourhoods and public spaces can contribute to increased feelings of public safety. Safer and Stronger Communities also links across to other blocks in the agreement, for example the connections between young people, diversionary activities, alcohol and anti-social behaviour link to the Children and Young People's Block, and there may well be links between people who volunteer in a sports capacity and the numbers of people taking part in physical activity, which connects to the Healthier Communities and Older People's Block.

## SAFER COMMUNITIES

**OUTCOME A: Being safe, feeling safe - To reduce crime, the harm caused by illegal drugs, and to reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime, and to build respect in communities and reduce anti-social behaviour; and to increase domestic fire safety and reduce arson.**

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**Sub-outcome A1: To build respect in communities and a reduction in the levels of anti-social behaviour across the county, particularly where alcohol is a contributory factor, including a focus on hotspot areas, thereby improving feelings of safety and public reassurance.**

**Developing Target Area (see also Section 9 'Areas for Future Development'):**

Alcohol related anti-social behaviour constitutes a significant issue across the county affecting a number of town centre areas, leisure parks, together with some specific neighbourhood and rural hotspots. We need to develop a clear and accurate methodology for recording and analysing anti-social behaviour figures including those where alcohol is a contributory factor to establish outcome targets and methods for tackling the problem. This will enable us to focus resources against hotspot areas whilst ensuring that there is no significant displacement that would adversely affect impact on countywide figures. (This may well have links through diversionary activities to volunteering, 2012 Olympics, and 'youth matters').

***Reward targets are shown in italics***

***Target S-A1.1a:***

*Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider teenagers hanging around on the streets to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.*

***Target S-A1.1b:***

*Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.*

***Target S-A1.1c:***

*Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.*

***Target S-A1.1d:***

*Increase the percentage of people surveyed who say that they feel very or fairly safe when outside in their local area after dark by 4% by 2009.*

***Target S-A1.2a and b***

*Reduce the recorded numbers of deliberate primary and secondary fires by 3% year on year.*

### **Target S-A1.3**

*Reduce the percentage of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) that are breached by 10% over two years.*

### **Target S-A1.4**

Increase the number of test purchasing operations (countywide) carried out by 15% in year 1, 15% in year 2 and 10% in year 3.

### **Target S-A1.5**

Reduce the number of recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour in yet to be agreed hotspot locations (particularly where alcohol is a contributory factor) by 4.5% by 2009.

### **Context/Evidence/Drivers**

Hertfordshire remains one of the safest counties in the country. However, public surveys confirm antisocial behaviour to be a major cause of disproportionate fear of crime in Hertfordshire. The MORI/Hertfordshire County Council citizen's panel survey in 2003 found that 'reducing the level of crime and antisocial behaviour' was the highest priority for residents to improve their quality of life.

In partnership we aim to tackle the various components of anti-social behaviour. All Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) have incorporated tackling antisocial behaviour within their Community Safety Strategies. Reducing anti-social behaviour is also a priority within the Hertfordshire Policing Plan, and the Fire and Rescue Service has a key role to play in reducing deliberate fires. Excluding vehicles, there were 3.28 deliberate fires per 10,000 population in Hertfordshire in 2004.

Alcohol related anti-social behaviour is a problem that affects a number of town and village centres, and this is an area where partnership working could really make a difference. We are looking to develop robust data collection methods that will enable us to target our resources in the areas that need it most, in order to help our communities to feel safer. Over the financial years 2003-2005, Hertfordshire police recorded 15,224 offences as having alcohol as an aggravating factor, and of these 5,099 were for malicious wounding, 2,604 for criminal damage, and 1,742 for common assault.

### **Baseline Data**

S-A1.1a,b,c,d: We have selected the wording for these indicators from the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) User Satisfaction Survey and British Crime Survey, but to ensure that we have a robust methodology for the purpose of the LAA we will collect the data using a newly commissioned survey at the start and the end of the LAA. We will therefore use the first 6 months of the LAA to establish the baseline figures for these indicators.

S-A1.2a and b: All Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service data is robust and in line with Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM's) requirements. 2004/05 data has been used as the baseline figures.

S-A1.3: The baseline figure for the percentage of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) that are breached will be established during the first year of the LAA from Police collated data. A new anti-social behaviour protocol will be in place from April 2006 to ensure that all ABCs are counted in the same way.

S-A1.4: Trading Standards have been conducting test-purchasing operations across the county for a number of years and they have reliable and robust data, with 2004/05 data being used as the baseline. During year 1 of LAA an indicator will be developed that will measure the number of positive test purchasing operations that are deemed 'successful'. This indicator will support the aim of reducing alcohol-related anti-social behaviour in hotspot areas of Hertfordshire.

S-A1.5: Police data will be used to measure this indicator. Anti-social behaviour incidents are recorded on the OASIS Command and Control System and are allocated codes. As from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 a qualifier will be attached to the anti-social behaviour codes to indicate whether alcohol is a feature/aggravating factor in the incident. A separate NMIS (National Management Information System) extract will pull out these "qualified" incidents thereby producing 2 lists, (1) all anti-social behaviour and (2) anti-social behaviour with alcohol as a feature (double counting can be avoided by subtracting 2 from 1). In addition to this, a countywide protocol for alcohol aggravated anti-social behaviour data is being developed by the Constabulary and will be agreed with partners by April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006. Hertfordshire's definition of anti-social behaviour and all sub-categories is attached at Appendix SSC-A.

### **Freedoms & Flexibilities**

None identified.

### **Lead Contacts** (Named person(s), job title and organisation)

Sub-outcome lead: Jim Nicolson, Crime Reduction Manager, Hertfordshire County Council.

In addition, responsibility for individual indicators is divided as follows:

S-A1.1a, b, c d: Jim Nicolson, Crime Reduction Manager - Hertfordshire County Council/Police Authority and the Hertfordshire Practitioners Community Safety Group (HPCSG).

S-A1.2a and b: Simon Brown - Community Safety Manager, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

S-A1.3: Chris Woodhead – Anti-social Behaviour Coordinator for Welwyn Hatfield Council and Chair of the County Anti-social Behaviour Coordinators Group

S-A1.4: Guy Pratt - Acting Head of Trading Standards

S-A1.5: Chris Woodhead, Anti-social Behaviour Coordinator for Welwyn Hatfield Council and Chair of the County Anti-social Behaviour Coordinators Group

### **Other Partners**

District and borough councils, Hertfordshire County Council, Police Authority, Hertfordshire Constabulary, private sector companies, Strategic Health Authority.

### **Governance/Delivery Responsibility**

The Hertfordshire Practitioners Community Safety Group (HPCSG) and the Hertfordshire Performance Management Group for Crime, Disorder and Drugs will be responsible for coordinating activity for this target area.

**Strategic Governance for all Safer Communities outcome areas will lie with the County Chief Officer Group (COG) for Crime and Disorder [See Appendix B].**

## BLOCK SUMMARY

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENTERPRISE BLOCK

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Hertfordshire is economically successful. It is well-located, well-qualified and enterprise flourishes. It has a dense network of small and medium sized towns, with populations below 43,000, enjoying easy access to each other's facilities and to attractive countryside. Even the four large towns of Watford, Hemel Hempstead, Stevenage and St Albans are only in the 50,000-100,000 bracket. Two thirds of the county's land area is Green Belt. So despite being the second most densely populated county in the country, it has, for the most part, managed to avoid many of the disadvantages of urban life.

Proximity to London has drawbacks. Congestion threatens to imperil the easy access which underpins its prosperity. Migration puts pressure both on house prices and on the countryside which is at the heart of the quality of life in the county. The inclusion of much of Hertfordshire in the London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough growth area emphasises the challenge to build 'sustainable communities'. Whatever the outcome of the current Examination in Public of the East of England Plan, the Regional Economic Strategy is right to point to the attention that the construction and health and social care sectors will require. The 2012 Olympics will undoubtedly put more pressure on the county's construction resources.

Our response to the challenge to build on Hertfordshire's locational advantages in a sustainable way is to make better use of its existing infrastructure and the potential of those existing residents who are at present least able to profit from the county's economic strength.

#### **OUTCOME A: To provide opportunities for every individual to participate in the success of Hertfordshire's economy, by enabling them to compete in the labour market**

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##### ***Reward targets shown in italics***

- NH and Stevenage Business Initiative are working with Job Centre Plus in order to increase the number of people able to return to work by encouraging consideration of self employment or reskilling for those out of the workforce for some time.

##### **Sub-outcome A1: Reduce number of people on an Incapacity Benefit (IB)**

###### ***Target E-A1***

*Increase the number of people claiming an incapacity benefit gaining work of at least 16 hours per week for 13 weeks or more from 20 to 135 by 2009*

###### ***Target E-A2***

*Increase the number of lone-parents gaining work of at least 16 hours per week for 13 weeks or more from 0 to 209 by 2009*

###### ***Target E-A3***

*Increase the numbers of people claiming an incapacity benefit gaining permitted work of less than 16 hours per week for 13 weeks or more from 20 to 135 by 2009*

##### **Sub Outcome A2: Increase the total entrepreneurial activity amongst the local population**

###### ***Target E-A4***

*Increase the total number of people seeking advice from Business Link (pre-starts) from 2908 to 3576 by 2009*

**Target E-A5**

*Increase the number of Pre-starts who establish a business from 373 to 453 by 2009*

**Sub Outcome A3: Increase vocational qualifications achieved by young people, particularly in 3 sectors of significant importance to the local and regional economy: Construction; Hospitality; and Health and Social Care**

- **These are primarily HCC education targets, but North Herts can contribute through their work on North Herts Learning Forum.**

**Target E-A6**

*Increase the number of vocational qualifications achieved by Young People aged 14-19 on school rolls from 2245 (in 2005) to 9000 by 2009*

**Target E-A7**

*Increase the number of young people completing/succeeding in training in Construction; Hospitality and Health & Social Care sectors from 4252 to 15057 by 2009*

- **the development of social enterprise for Herts is a priority area for HCC partnerships section. We may be asked to contribute if one of the social enterprises were to be in north herts, but otherwise no involvement is necessarily required.**

**Target E-A8**

Increase in key public services delivered by the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and social enterprise organisations (by 2009)

- A. 3% increase in VCS and social enterprises with more than 25% of funding provided by trading, i.e. in direct exchange of goods and services<sup>7</sup>
- B. 10% more VCS organisations and social enterprises affirming growth in terms of income from trading activity

**Target E-A9**

Reduce the variation rates between the proportion of young people resident in Welwyn Hatfield and Stevenage staying on in education or training Post 16 after completion of Year 11 in Hertfordshire schools and the Hertfordshire mean average.

- A. The variation for Welwyn Hatfield to be reduced from 2.9% (27) in 2005 to 1.4% (14) in 2009
- B. The variation for Stevenage to be reduced from 2.2% (27) in 2005 to 1.1% (12) in 2009

**Target E-A10**

Increase in HE progression rates (including gap year) for 18 and 19 year olds:

- A. In Stevenage from 21.9% (255) in 2005 to 25.9% (302) in 2009
- B. In Broxbourne from 24.6% (288) in 2005 to 28.6% (335) in 2009.

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<sup>7</sup> Definition from SBS Survey of Social Enterprises Across the UK, IFF Research Ltd, July 2005

### **Target E-A11**

Reduce the variation rate between the proportion of young people living in Welwyn Hatfield aged 16-18 (having completed compulsory education) who are not in employment, education or training with the Hertfordshire mean average. The variation to be reduced from 67% (213) at the end of November 2005 to 33% (170) at the end of November 2009.

**Sub outcome A4: Hertfordshire companies anticipating or making staff redundancies will be offered a co-ordinated programme of support services for their employees.**

- **Not a stretch target and not applicable for North Herts**

### **Target E-A12**

The numbers of companies supported will increase over time from 23 to 55 by 2009.

- A. The numbers of companies supported in manufacturing / distribution / construction sectors will increase from 33% to 37% by 2009.

### **Target E-A13**

The numbers of individuals accessing service provision who live or work in redundancy "hotspots" (defined as areas with higher than average rates of company closure), with skills required by priority sectors or at particular disadvantage within the local labour market will increase from 150 to 300 by 2009, including:

- A. The numbers of older workers aged 50 years or more supported will increased from 50 to 90 by 2009.**

### **Outcome B: Ability to travel more freely and safely**

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This outcome area will be developed during the first year of the LAA. See also Section 9 'Refresh/Areas for Future Development'.

#### **Developing Target Area**

- A. Percentage of all journeys within a given time period of a timetabled journey time for a given route e.g. 80% of all journeys to be within five minutes of the timetable journey time.

## BLOCK SUMMARY

### HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES AND OLDER PEOPLE BLOCK

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In this block we aim to improve the health and quality of life of people living in Hertfordshire and address inequalities in health with a focus on older people, socially excluded groups and other vulnerable people.

We aim to increase independence through enabling people to maintain good health and wellbeing, live in their own homes for as long as possible and by preventing the need for people to use the most intensive services.

We will use this agreement to develop integrated commissioning arrangements that build upon existing good practice and deliver the White Paper agenda in relation to 'out of hospital care'.

*Reward targets are in italics.*

**OUTCOME A: In people aged under 75: To reduce health inequalities in mortality from heart disease, stroke and related cardiovascular disease and to reduce premature mortality rates for heart disease, stroke and related cardiovascular disease**

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#### **Target H-A1**

To decrease premature mortality from all circulatory disease (heart disease, stroke and related disease) in 2009 by 12% (4% in 2006/7) in males and by 8% (2% 2006/7) in females exceeding the nationally agreed target.

#### **Target H-A2**

To increase recruitment to NHS smoking cessation services in the fifth quintile of wards with the highest smoking attributable mortality by 1% per year (2006-9).

#### **Target H-A3**

To increase the number of recorded obese individuals aged 45-75 completing a personalised weight management programme by 5% in 2009 (weight management programmes will use the Department of Health guidance on obesity care pathways).

**OUTCOME B: To increase older people's independence and wellbeing through active participation in sport and physical activity that enables them to lead a healthy lifestyle that will contribute to them keeping fit and well for as long as possible**

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- **NHDC already participate in the co-ordination of healthy walks which contribute to this target**

#### **Target H-B4**

*To increase the percentage of adults aged 45+ participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking and recreational cycling) on 3 or more days a week by 4% (2009).*

**OUTCOME C: To improve the quality of life and independence of all disabled people (including older people) and enable them to remain safely living at home for as long as possible.<sup>8</sup>**

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**Target H-C5**

Increase the number of older people helped to live at home from 8901 to 9812 by 2009. (PAF PI C32)

**Target H-C6**

Increase the number of clients receiving voluntary sector preventative services funded by the County Council from 6392 to 7,500 by 2009.  
(This is measured by the number of people funded by HCC provided voluntary and community sector organisations as receiving services)

• **This is a Herts County Council function**

**Target H-C7**

*Number of people aged over 18 who increase their independence, control and choice by arranging their own services via Direct Payments or an individualised budget<sup>9</sup> from 323 to 1070 by 2009.*

**Target H-C8**

Reduce wait times for major adaptations to reduce risk and increase independence, improve quality of life for disabled people (target to be set at Year 1 refresh).

**OUTCOME D: To prevent homelessness, where possible, and to support into independent living those vulnerable young people (aged 16-25 years) who are homeless. We aim to facilitate young people's personal well-being, ensure safety and enable young people to make a contribution to society. We will achieve this by integrating commissioning, funding, service provision and systems with all partners in Hertfordshire, developing new accommodation and ensuring a cross-agency approach on homeless prevention initiatives.<sup>10</sup>**

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• **NHDC are already participants in the Supporting people scheme**

**Target H-D9**

*To reduce the number of young people aged 16-25 who leave Supporting People (SP) funded accommodation schemes in an unplanned way from 92 to 62 by 2009.*

**Target H-D10**

To reduce the number of young people aged 16-17 who leave SP funded accommodation schemes in an unplanned way (target to be established in Year 1).

**Target H-D11**

To increase the number of young people aged 16-25 who sustain their own tenancy for over six months (target to be established in Year 1).

**Target H-D12**

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<sup>8</sup> This is closely linked to the outcome in the Safer and Stronger Communities Block that people feel safer in their homes and elderly and vulnerable people are able to lead a more independent life for longer

<sup>9</sup> All figures are total number of people receiving a DP or IB

<sup>10</sup> This links to the CYP Plan outcome EW3, that children and young people live in decent homes in a clean, safe and secure environment

To increase young people's levels of satisfaction with their transition into their own tenancy (target to be established in Year 1).

**Target H-D13**

To increase the number of care leavers in education, training or employment by 10% by 2009 (baseline to be established in April 2006).

**Target H-D14**

To increase the number of young people in education, training or employment of young people in SP funded accommodation (target to be established in Year 1).

**OUTCOME E: To increase the number of older people benefiting from an appropriate range of intermediate care services to enable them to maintain their independence and prevent inappropriate admissions to acute and residential services.**

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- **This is a HCC service**

**Target H-E15**

*To increase the number of older people who benefit from intermediate care from 9108 to 10083 by 2009.*

*(This is measured by the number of older people who receive intermediate care services from a number of defined services – see data collection model)*

**Target H-E16**

To reduce the number of older people aged 65+ who are admitted to hospital in an emergency and reduce their length of stay (measured as number of Occupied Bed Days) from 351196 to 340765 by 2009.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Data for numbers of admissions also available

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## BLOCK SUMMARY

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BLOCK

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Over a quarter of our residents are children, with approximately 260,000 of the county's population aged between 0 and 19 years.

As part of the Government's reform of children's services, all local authorities have a statutory duty to work with key partners to draw up an integrated Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) by April 2006.

We have drawn our proposals for children and young people to be included in the LAA from our Children and Young People's Plan. For that reason, the plan itself forms part of the supporting documentation for the LAA. An electronic copy of the latest version of the plan can be accessed at:

[www.hertsdirect.org/yrccouncil/hcc/csf/specialprojects/cypp/childrenandyoungpeoplesplan2006](http://www.hertsdirect.org/yrccouncil/hcc/csf/specialprojects/cypp/childrenandyoungpeoplesplan2006)

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Hertfordshire's CYP block has been developed through the Hertfordshire Children's Trust Partnership and is based on the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

For the purposes of our Local Area Agreement proposals, and for the first year of our Children and Young People's Plan, we have relied heavily on the existing plans of the County Council and its partners, and on the analysis of needs underpinning them.

#### **OUTCOME A: Children and young people have fewer preventable health problems by living healthy lifestyles in a healthy living environment (H1)**

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We propose a basket of stretch targets to promote and improve children's healthy lifestyles in Hertfordshire:

- **This is primarily HCC Education department, but with potential for NHDC to participate in encouraging take up locally.**

##### **Target C-A1**

*Increase the percentage of 5 to 16 year olds who spend a minimum of 2 hours each week on high quality Physical Education (PE) and school sport via PESSCL survey.*

##### **Target C-A2**

*Increase the percentage of Hertfordshire schools achieving Healthy School Status*

##### **Target C-A3**

Increase the percentage of 5 to 16 year olds who travel to school using sustainable modes of transport, including 'active transport' (cycling, walking etc.) from 56.5% to 59% by 2009

#### **OUTCOME B: Children and young people recognise the dangers of the misuse of drugs and alcohol and are protected from their effects (H5)**

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##### **Target C-B4**

Reduce the percentage of children who are regular smokers:

- 
- A. Primary Pupils from 1% to 0% by 2009
  - B. Year 8 Pupils from 5% to 2% by 2009
  - C. Year 10 Pupils from 19% to 16% by 2009

#### **Target C-B5**

Reduce average alcohol consumption<sup>11</sup>:

- A. Primary Pupils from 16% to 13% by 2009
- B. Year 8 Pupils from 27% to 24% by 2009
- C. Year 10 Pupils from 49% to 46% by 2009

**OUTCOME C: Children and young people are safe and do not suffer ill-treatment within their families, communities and schools (S2)**

And:

**OUTCOME D: Where children and young people are subject to maltreatment, neglect and sexual exploitation they are helped and protected (S3)**

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#### **Target C-CD6**

Reduce the percentage of children aged 11 to 15 who state they have been bullied in the last 12 months by 3% from an x% baseline by 2009 (Baseline to be set Autumn/Winter 2006)

#### **Target C-CD7**

Improve the proportion of core assessments carried out within statutory timescales, from 37.7% to 75% by 2009, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

**OUTCOME E: Children and young people have fun and enjoyable things to do and good places to go to that support their personal and emotional development (EA4)**

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#### **Target C-E8**

Increase the number of sports clubs achieving or working towards Clubmark and Club accreditation

- A. Achieving from 56 to 96
- B. Working towards from 53 to 93

- **This is primarily a HCC target, but partner authorities providing leisure could be expected to participate in increasing awareness of activities available**

#### **Target C-E9**

*Increase the number of 16 to 24 year olds participating in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport and physical activity at least 3 times per week as measured by Sport England's Active People's Survey.*

#### **Target C-E10**

Increase the numbers of children who complete the Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) from 7080 to 7750 by 2009

**OUTCOME F: Children and young people achieve their potential at all ages and are supported by their parents and carers to do so (EA2)**

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- **These are Herts CC targets**

#### **Target C-F11**

**Target H-E17**

Increase take up of intermediate care services by older people with mental health problems and BME groups (target to be established Year 1).

**Target H-E18**

To achieve a reduction in unscheduled acute hospital bed days occupied by people aged 75 and over from 280059 to 271742 by 2009.

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*Close the gap between BME children at KS4 and that of all children in Hertfordshire. Measured by the three year average percentage of BME students achieving 5 A\*-C GCSE, including Maths and English as reported in DfES performance tables*

*\* BME defined for this purpose as Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Pakistani*

**Target C-F12**

*Improve boy's performance in English at KS4. Measured by the three year average percentage of boys achieving A\*-C grades in English at GCSE as reported in DfES performance tables*

**Target C-F13**

*Close the gap between Looked After Children at KS4 and that of all children in Hertfordshire. Measured by:*

*A The three year average percentage of young people looked after for at least 12 months and in Year 11 who achieve 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent as reported in Sept 2007, 2008 and 2009 as part of the Annual Performance Assessment process*

*B The three year average percentage of young people looked after for at least 12 months who reach school leaving age with at least 1 A\*-G at GCSE or equivalent as reported in Sept 2007, 2008 and 2009 as part of the Annual Performance Assessment process*

## APPENDIX B

### LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

#### August 2006 – Taking Stock

This is a briefing note for partners on progress made with Hertfordshire's LAA, and a look at the challenges ahead, from a project lead perspective.

#### **1. Reminder of context**

Local Area Agreements are a Government idea (former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister – now Department for Communities and Local Government) designed to improve the delivery of public services through partnership working.

Hertfordshire partners agreed to pursue a Local Area Agreement back in May 2005 and the county was confirmed as a phase 2 area (there were 21 national pilots already running as phase 1) in June 2005. *Hertfordshire's Agreement commenced on 1 April 2006 and will run for three years. By 2007 all county and unitary areas in England will have an LAA.*

There is a financial prize -Performance Reward Grant (PRG ) - to be paid upon the successful delivery of 15 specific targets negotiated by partners on behalf of the county. In Hertfordshire it has been agreed via the County Council (as the accountable body) and the countywide Local Strategic Partnership, Hertfordshire Forward (HF) that this reward will be reinvested in partnership work. Potential reward for the county area, based on a national formula is £30m.

In September 2005 workshops were held with Hertfordshire partners to consider the local priorities identified in the Community Strategy and other existing strategies, plans and public opinion surveys, within the context of the LAA. The output from these workshops laid the foundation for the development of the LAA.

The short term focus of the LAA, the timescales imposed for sign-off and the nature of some local needs have forced us to take a pragmatic approach to many targets developed through the Agreement. A three year horizon for delivery on very specific outcomes is too short to address the big strategic challenges facing the county and some therefore have not been included. That said however the LAA has provided the opportunity to work in partnership and focus effort and resources on local needs that might not otherwise be addressed. Moreover, some of these 'big strategic challenges' have been picked up in the long term work programme of Hertfordshire Forward.

Government offices in the regions (in our case GO East) play a role linking areas to the DCLG and other departments of government. They are on a learning curve too, and have been very supportive during LAA development in Hertfordshire, and have an ongoing role throughout the life of the Agreement. More specifically they oversee six monthly reviews and annual refresh arrangements. Work on our first review (due in November/December) is starting now and will involve partners via the countywide groups/ blocks.

This will focus on

- Performance management framework
- Progress on LAA outcomes and targets
- Refresh of targets – including new mandatory additions
- Expenditure ( currently pooled funding streams and pump priming grant)

Hertfordshire is also receiving an Audit Commission visit during August and September to take a high level assessment of LAA arrangements and to make recommendations thereon in October. That learning will be important to us, and will inform LAA development to March 2007.

Differentiating the respective roles of the Region and the Audit Commission is important and is under discussion between these bodies.

## **2. Governance and structure**

Current HF/LAA structure (populated with names/contacts) is attached as an Appendix.

The countywide LSP (now Hertfordshire Forward) was reshaped in 2005 to establish a small Core Group within the wider partnership (conference). This was not without some difficulty but thanks to a considerable degree of goodwill across the county it has been established and has now met four times. The Core Group endorsed the LAA, prior to the official sign off ceremony in Westminster on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006, and is kept up to date on LAA progress at each meeting.

LAA represents the Hertfordshire Forward short term work programme, and the Core Group has identified a small number of long term issues (futures) it wishes to address on behalf of the county, with partner support. These will feature at the first Annual Conference of Hertfordshire Forward to be held on 20 October 2006. The LAA will be informally launched at that event

Beneath Hertfordshire Forward the five former countywide partnerships have been re-aligned so as to fit with the four LAA blocks. These partnerships oversee the action plans and performance of their respective block, and are currently recommending pump priming grant allocation (see section on financial management) to the so called stretch targets within the Agreement. There are 15 of these targets (often referred to as 'outcomes'). Most are

measured by more than one indicator, and all are set out in some detail in the Agreement.

How LAA impacts locally is part of the job of the recently formed Hertfordshire Forward/LAA Reference Group. That Group includes senior officer representation from each of the ten District Councils/local LSPs, the voluntary and community sector lead on LAA targets, the Executive Director of the Police Authority, and the Director of the Hertfordshire Sports Partnership which leads on two stretch targets and is involved in others. This group has responsibility for communicating LAA progress locally and for showing how targets impact locally, through the evolving performance management framework (see section on performance management).

Small sub groups are now working on 5 strands of work identified by the group itself :-

- Partnership Agreement for LAA- to set out shared objectives from LAA and expectation of what partners offer, and what is returned. This will be brief, and will be based on good practise and legal advice.
- Communications strategy – to pull together the work undertaken so far ( such as bulletins, web development ) – and outlining how information is cascaded ( vertical and horizontal), with attendant action planning. With the exception of the Safer and Stronger Communities block a lot of work is needed to inform partners of LAA activity and opportunities to engage in it.
- Performance Management Framework and local LSP fit - will be important to successful delivery. The Hertslink LAA goes live by November. This will be an open site where progress against targets can be seen. The Sub group is to see how this can best show local impact, not just countywide figures, and clarify how, by working with block leads, we can capture those local activities that contribute towards LAA delivery. .
- Partners will want to see a high level risk assessment to identify the strategic risks associated with LAA, linked to the partnership agreement referred to above. This will follow an agreed methodology used within HCC, and supported accordingly
- Relationship to the rest of the HF/LAA structure ( notably block and target leads) needs more clarity and will be shaped into explicit terms of reference for the group itself

These strands will be reported upwards.

Sorting appropriate Governance arrangements for LAA remains a challenge, and there is a case for a separate executive LAA body. This is the case in many areas, though some have similar structures to Hertfordshire. More specifically locally elected bodies, including the County Council (beyond the Cabinet/ Executive role) District Councils and the Hertfordshire Police Authority wish to see stronger representation within LAA governance arrangements. This needs to be addressed, consistent with a shared desire to keep the infrastructure smart and manageable, for governance and

performance management. It may be that a specific role for the regular meetings of District Leaders and Chief Executives, which have considered various LAA papers, should be more formalised for LAA. Equally that might not be the most satisfactory solution, and would not resolve all aspects.

A lot of work on LAA Governance models is proceeding nationally, and within the eastern Region, where I chair the LAA network involving the other 5 county areas and 4 Unitary areas.

Some counties, such as Kent, Oxfordshire and West Sussex have created Public Service Boards (PSBs) This has not been a preferred route in Hertfordshire given the apparent bureaucracy and process required to support this infrastructure. However that is not entirely ruled out as a future option should it become fit for purpose, and it would have a wider remit than LAA and likely to fit within the LSP. There is evidence that even those areas with PSBs do not consider governance and accountability for LAA to be sorted.

### **3. Resources**

#### **3.1 LAA money and systems**

a) Pooling of government funding streams within the LAA is a fundamental plank of the regime.

This may become more useful over time but in common with most areas there is currently little pooling of funds in the Hertfordshire LAA (with the exception of some in the SSC block). Some additional mandatory pooling from 2007/8, again, predominantly in the Safer and Stronger Communities block, will be required by government.

For the foreseeable future Hertfordshire is taking a cautious approach to pooling, but this issue will be debated as part of the six monthly review, via the countywide partnerships, advised by block leads. This approach is not exceptional, and securing an Agreement within the county would have been difficult with significant pooling proposals given the need to

- build clearer governance and accountability arrangements
- get a better strategic grip on what pooling means at highest level within partner organisations
- understand the implications for accounting systems

b) On signing the Agreement the government has provided Hertfordshire £1.6m, based on a national formula, to support the delivery of our 15 stretch targets. This Pump Priming Grant is currently subject to bidding within blocks under the auspices of block leads, and amounts allocated will accord with a formula agreed by HCC Cabinet and HF. In round terms the pro rata sum per target = £90k, to be spent over three years, though this will vary depending on business cases made in bidding.

This money may only be used for stretch targets and recommendations made from this block process will be made to the appropriate countywide partnership and then to HCC for decision as the accountable body. A process for that has been delegated by HCC Cabinet.

Systems are in place to account for that expenditure once the target allocations are finally agreed.

c) Hertfordshire Forward has endorsed a proposal from the County Council that the Performance Reward Grant (PRG) (potentially £30m) should be allocated between the four countywide partnerships and the ten District based Local Strategic Partnerships. That reward will come in 2009/10 and 2010/11, will directly relate to performance against stretch targets only, and will be split 50/50 between revenue and capital.

If all targets are met in full each District based LSP will receive £1.5m over the two years to re invest in partnership work. The capital/revenue split is not helpful, but is part of the Agreement nationally.

How the potential £15m PRG returned to the four countywide partnerships is allocated, between and within, has not yet been discussed, though early resolution of that has been requested by a number of partners and will therefore be raised at HCC Cabinet and HF in October/November as part of our review.

d) We have not yet established budget monitoring structures specific to LAA, other than showing alignment, pooling in the Safer and Stronger Communities block, and accounting for PPG spend.

### **3.2 Leading and managing the LAA**

This role rests with HCC and is hosted within the Environment department.

A small team has supported the process and key tasks falling to that team, within the Regeneration and Partnerships Unit, are set out:-

- Understanding, interpreting and guiding partners on the LAA prospectus from government
- Co-ordinating the development and submission of key documents ( the LAA and subsequent reviews/refresh)
- Reporting strategic matters to countywide groups including the accountable body (through HCC Cabinet), Hertfordshire Forward Core Group and Hertfordshire Council Leaders.
- Facilitating and chairing the Reference Group ( including sub groups) and block lead meetings
- Guiding block leads on generic processes ( such as PPG bidding, review process, making lateral links)
- Being the key point of contact with GO and DCLG
- Involvement in regional LAA network ,and national discussions
- Developing the Performance Management Framework for LAA

- Leading on website development and communications generally
- Co-ordinating the learning as LAA progresses
- Briefing HCC Leadership at member and officer level
- Securing support for financial systems, communications, performance monitoring
- Reviewing governance and accountability arrangements

LAA carries a considerable weight of process. In addition to this team there has been considerable effort from many organisations and individuals within the county, not least block leads, target leads, reference group members, and colleagues in Stevenage Council in driving the SSC block work.

Given the importance given of the voluntary and community sector within LAA there is a dedicated post, hosted within Stevenage CVS, to link the sector across the four blocks, to secure engagement of the sector, and to lead on delivery of a specific stretch target on volunteering within the Safer and Stronger Communities block.

#### **4. Performance management**

GO-East require six monthly reports on the progress of the LAA, the first of which is due on 10 November 2006. The 'annual refresh', now January 2007 (as opposed to March) is also an opportunity for partners and GO to review progress with a view to refocusing efforts and resources where they are needed. Our relationship with GO is positive and they have acted as a 'critical friend' throughout the development phase of the LAA. We hope this will be the case during the delivery phase also, although they are obliged to make appropriate interventions should LAA progress be in jeopardy, and have a 'ladder of intervention' (which did not feature in the LAA guidance). This does raise questions about the role of GOs, and the extent to which areas are held to account by government, given the plethora of other performance management tools. There is a danger that LAAs are moving away from the original aims of reduced bureaucracy and local priority setting.

The turn-round on performance data for six month review is very tight but we will be in a position to report progress by our review submission date (10 November).

As mentioned above the themed partnerships under Hertfordshire Forward have a structure in place to ensure delivery of targets within each block, and thus have responsibility for operational performance management of the LAA. This is supported by the Reference Group which, amongst other things, is responsible for capturing intelligence 'on the ground' concerning the LAA's impact. Each of the partnerships is responsible for tracking performance and alerting any major concerns and remedial action required to the following:

- 1) **Hertfordshire Forward.** Where disputes arise within the themed partnerships these will be escalated to the Core Group for resolution. In addition the Group will receive quarterly headlines on LAA

performance, with a view to managing performance at the uppermost strategic level. The Leader of HCC chairs HF

- 2) **HCC's Executive Member for Planning, Partnerships and waste.**  
As the accountable body for the LAA HCC's Cabinet is ultimately responsible for monitoring LAA progress and for resolving conflicts which cannot be mediated through the Hertfordshire Forward Core Group, and the Executive Member with responsibility for the LAA (the Partnerships, Planning and Waste portfolio) is the first contact.

If LAA is to deliver significant added value this will mostly involve capturing the learning from project work on the ground rather than from reduced process, which currently seems some way off. We need to establish mechanisms that capture the softer added value, and not simply judge added value by 'efficiency' gains. This requires exploration if we are to achieve the cultural shifts necessary to deliver LAA and the wider public service agenda.

Strategic performance management of the LAA is supported by two tools:

- 1) A web-based monitoring system which is under construction, and due to be complete towards the end of 2006. This is essentially a Hertfordshire Forward website, with an LAA section where target leads are able to publish performance data directly. This sits on HertsLink, a universally accessible website jointly resourced by the County Council and District Councils. The Hertfordshire Observatory is also located here, which is a data repository for a wealth of socio-economic and environmental information about Hertfordshire. A diagram of how this 'looks' is attached as an appendix. As well as a performance monitoring tool the website will act as a powerful communicative tool, by informing partners and the public of LAA progress and upcoming events.

- 2) A scorecard for the LAA, based on the model the County Council employs to performance manage its services. Performance information concerning all the LAA targets will be fed into the system to produce an overall 'traffic light' picture of progress. We are some way off developing this but this will in time be reported to HCC Cabinet and Hertfordshire Forward via the governance sub structure.

## **5. Communications:**

This is recognised as a significant challenge across the LAA, to ensure effective and efficient two-way communication to disseminate information and capture learning. The sub-group of the Reference Group is leading on this, supported by a countywide communications group represented by all ten district councils. This is complimented by the recently approved Hertfordshire Forward logo, which effectively brands the countywide LSP and its work programme, including the LAA.

A 'rough guide' to the LAA is currently being produced, which captures and summarises the key elements of the LAA and what it hopes to achieve over the next three years. This will be published in September.

In order to keep as wide an audience as possible in the picture during the development of the LAA, we produced regular news bulletins. We now have a database of around 600 people who are keen to be kept informed of progress with the LAA. The communications strategy will determine the best means of achieving this.

We are undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the LAA. The SA will highlight the social, economic and environmental impacts of the activities identified by the LAA and it will enable partners to understand the impacts associated with the implementation of the specified targets and agree on mitigation activities, which could be undertaken as part of the first annual refresh.

Block workshops to commence the information gathering exercise that will be required to complete the SA are being held in September. The SA is being carried out by the HCC Sustainability Team.

## **6. Summary**

There is every indication that LAA, or similar regime, will be here for some time to come, and conceptually looks robust politically at national level.

The timeframe of three years for LAA is critical for reward purposes. However the direction of travel signalled by the regime means that how LAA evolves will be important to Hertfordshire beyond 2009.

Our achievements to date can be summarised as:-

- Reshaped Countywide LSP and aligned countywide partnerships to 4 LAA blocks
- Block leadership and sub structure in place
- Agreement in place with 15 stretch targets
- Performance Management framework in place
- Website built and populated
- Models agreed for PPG and PRG in place and PPG process running
- A Reference group dealing with a range of partnership issues on behalf of HF

Our short term priorities are:-

- Review and refresh the Agreement ( performance management, mandatory targets, new refresh target ('Youth Matters' arena)
- Finalise PPG allocations
- More clarity on governance and accountability
- Improve communications
- Undertake strategic risk assessment
- Launch at HF conference 20 October
- Secure a partnership Agreement
- Undertake a sustainability appraisal

The attached timeline sketches out the short term agenda for LAA.

Our longer term aims are:-

- Continuous review of governance, accountability and democratic fit
- Capturing learning on softer issues to identify less tangible added value
- Stronger lateral links to drive added value and efficiencies
- Reduced bureaucracy
- Making the most of pooling opportunities where it suits partners

This work, together with a review of Community Leadership function within HCC and the Local Government White Paper (LGWP) expected in October, will inform how we can best adjust our arrangements during the coming months and take back to Hertfordshire Forward via HCC Cabinet.

Getting to this position has taken immense effort by many people across many agencies, many of which are experiencing structural change and all of which have significant medium term financial constraints, internal priorities /targets, performance management arrangements, and medium term financial constraints.

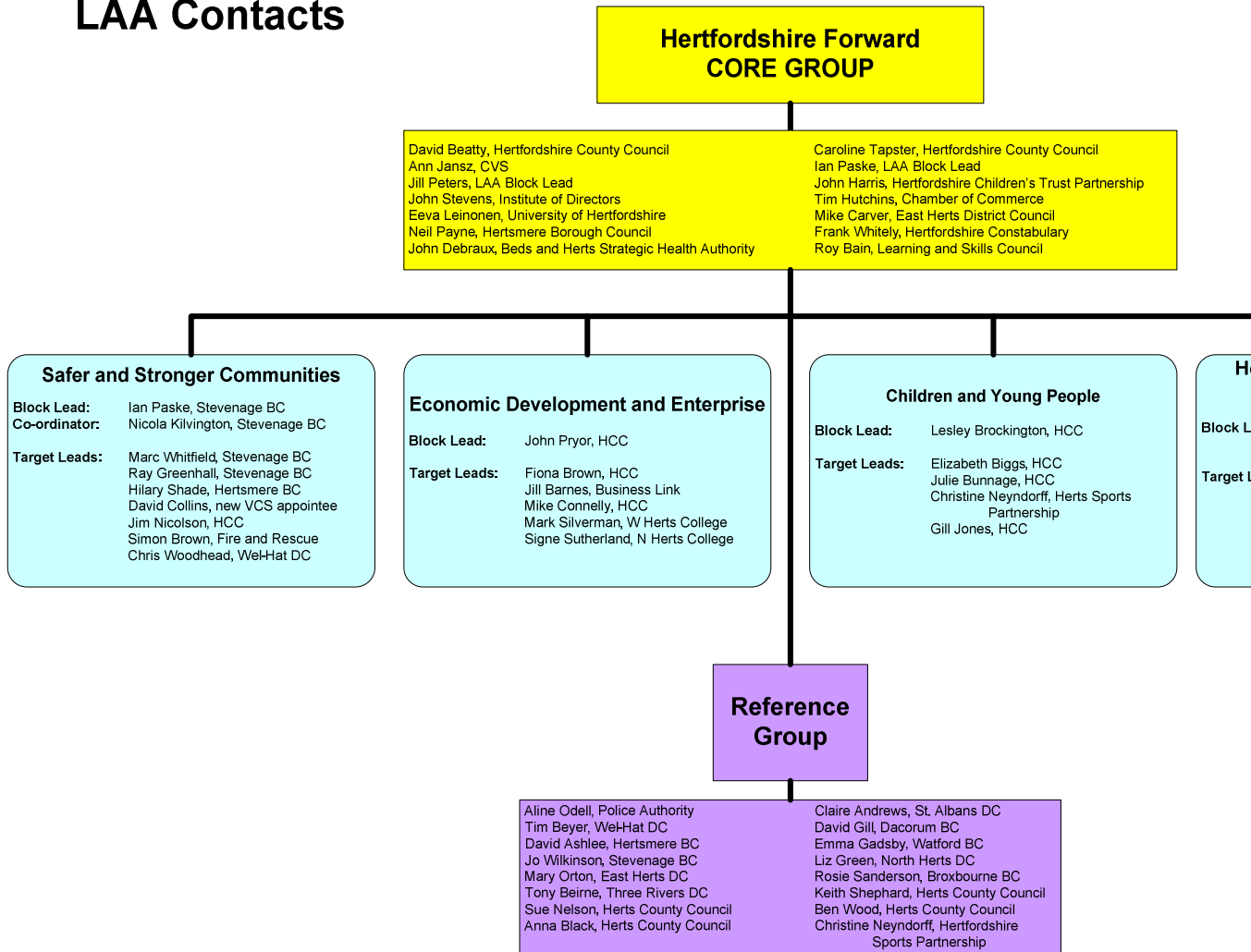
The intended merits of LAA in terms of reduced process and flexibilities /enablers are not yet apparent but trends are beginning to emerge ( eg through negotiation process for stretch targets ,and making business cases for PPG) which show innovation, make smart links across agencies, and bring people together to share ideas and resources to improve delivery. Many of these conversations seem obvious but would not necessarily have happened without the LAA impetus.

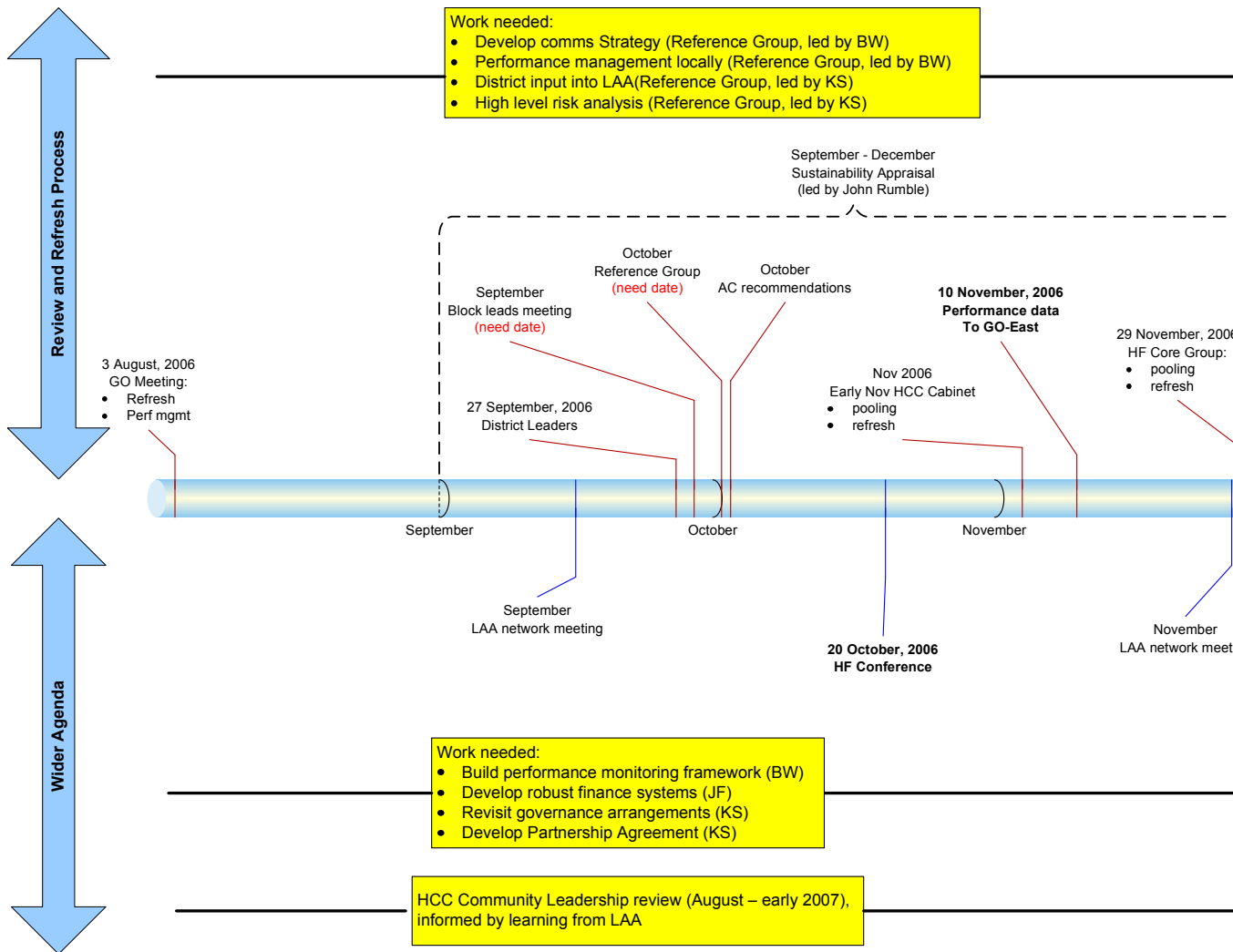
This remains as work in progress, the regime is seen as an opportunity, it has some innovation, and achieving progressive added value remains a Hertfordshire aspiration.

Keith Shephard  
September 2006



# LAA Contacts





**TITLE OF REPORT: HIGH LEVEL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – JULY AND AUGUST 2006**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS & PERFORMANCE

**1 SUMMARY**

1.1 To update PARC on the current progress in meeting the targets for the High Level Performance Indicators during July and August 2006 as attached in Appendix A.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

2.1 This report does not recommend a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 In March 2006 PARC agreed that nineteen (including sub-sets) High Level Performance Indicators should be monitored on a monthly basis throughout 2006/7. Indicators at red or amber status should be highlighted at Corporate Management Team where a Rescue Recovery Package would be agreed if considered appropriate. The performance indicator would then be reported to PARC with details of the progress towards meeting the performance target.

3.2 The July report was presented to CMT on 22 August and the August results presented on 19 September.

3.3 There are currently no 'rescue recovery plans'. The one plan that was in place, BV183b 'The average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need', was signed off by PARC on 7 September 2006.

**4. TRAFFIC LIGHT STATUS AT THE END OF AUGUST 2006**

4.1 At the end of August 2006 the High level Indicator status was as follows:

<b>June</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>August</b>
11 indicators at status green	12 Indicators at status green	12 Indicators at status green
4 indicators at status amber	4 Indicators at status amber	3 Indicators at status amber
4 indicators at status red	3 Indicators at status red	4 Indicators at status red

- 4.2 This table lists the indicators that have changed 'traffic light' status between July and August.

<b>PI</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status Change</b>	<b>Comments</b>
LPI 11	Market stall usage	Red to Amber	Positive
BV12	Sickness	Amber to Red	Negative
BV170b	Museum visits in person	Amber to Red	Negative

The remaining indicators have maintained the same 'traffic light' status during this reporting period.

- 4.3 The performance results and commentary can be found at Appendix A.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

## **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS (if appropriate)**

- 8.1 Not applicable.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That PARC notes the status of the High Level Indicators during July and August 2006.  
9.2 That PARC notes areas of under-achievement as well as good performance.

## **10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 The recommendation(s) contained within paragraph 9 are made in accordance with the declared policy of the Council.

## **11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 Not applicable

## **12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix A - Details of the High Level Performance Indicators – April to August 2006.

### **13. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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13.2 Liz Green  
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### **14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14.1 Performance Information Files 2000 to date - available from the Performance Library, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth.

# HIGH LEVEL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007

# APPENDIX A

BVPI	Description	Cumulative/ Monthly		@ 30 Apr	@ 31 May	@ 30 June	@ 31 July	@ 31 Aug	@ 30 Sept	@ 31 Oct	@ 30 Nov	@ 31 Dec	@ 31 Jan	@ 28 Feb	@ 31 Mar
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## Financial & Regulatory Services Directorate

BV76d	The number of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) prosecutions and sanctions, per year, per 1,000 caseload, in the local authority area.	Cumulative	2006/07	0.00	0.98	1.46	2.31	3.15							
			Profiled target	0.00	0.50	1.00	2.30	2.50	3.30	3.80	4.10	4.50	4.70	4.90	5.00
			Status	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green							
			2005/06	Reported quarterly in 05/06		1.60	Reported quarterly in 05/06		4.40	Reported quarterly in 05/06		4.30	Reported quarterly in 05/06		6.74

BV78a	The average processing time taken for all new housing and council tax benefit claims submitted to the local authority.	Cumulative	2006/07	28.2	25.3	24.9	23.7	24.0							
			Profiled target	38.0	37.5	37.0	36.5	36.5	36.5	36.0	35.5	35.5	35.0	35.0	35.0
			Status	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green							
			2005/06	No data	No data	44.1	45.2	43.0	38.7	31.9	30.2	30.3	31.5	31.4	28.7

BV183b	The average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need (weeks).	Cumulative	2006/07	51.00	40.63	36.50	35.89	36.26							
			Profiled target	38.00	38.00	38.00	38.00	38.00	38.00	38.00	38.00	38.00	38.00	38.00	38.00
			Status	Red	Amber	Green	Green	Green							
			2005/06	75.43	56.58	51.4	46	46	41.19	43.75	42.59	41.47	42	42.65	36.89

# HIGH LEVEL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007

# APPENDIX A

BVPI	Description	Cumulative/ Monthly		@ 30 Apr	@ 31 May	@ 30 June	@ 31 July	@ 31 Aug	@ 30 Sept	@ 31 Oct	@ 30 Nov	@ 31 Dec	@ 31 Jan	@ 28 Feb	@ 31 Mar
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BV109a	Percentage of planning applications determined in line with development control targets to determine: 60% of major applications in 13 weeks	Cumulative	2006/07	66.67% 4/6	84.62% 11/13	78.26% 18/23	76.92% 20/26	75.00% 21/28								
			Profiled target	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%
			Status	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green								
			2005/06	71.43%	66.67%	54.55%	64.71%	65.00%	68.18%	66.67%	66.67%	66.67%	68.75%	69.39%	70.59%	
BV109b	Percentage of planning applications determined in line with development control targets to determine: 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks	Cumulative	2006/07	66.67% 20/30	68.12% 47/69	63.27% 62/98	59.42% 82/138	62.11% 100/161								
			Profiled target	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	
			Status	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber								
			2005/06	73.68%	73.85%	69.79%	67.20%	70.00%	71.81%	72.15%	71.90%	70.57%	71.02%	71.26%	71.97%	
BV109c	Percentage of planning applications determined in line with development control targets to determine: 80% of other applications in 8 weeks	Cumulative	2006/07	77.53% 69/89	77.05% 141/183	79.32% 234/295	80.63% 333/413	81.17% 418/515								
			Profiled target	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	
			Status	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green								
			2005/06	89.19%	85.48%	85.28%	82.82%	84.04%	83.67%	83.68%	83.78%	83.93%	83.74%	83.25%	83.81%	

**BV109b** – The return for BV109b has improved and it is anticipated that the target figure of 65 per cent will be achieved by the end of the second quarter of 2006/07. A detailed report relating to planning performance indicators will be presented to PARC in October 2006.

BV204	The number of planning appeal decisions allowed as a percentage of the total number of planning appeals against refusals of planning applications.	Cumulative	2006/07	0.0% 0/4	20.0% 2/10	13.3% 2/15	16.7% 3/18	14.3% 3/21						
			Profiled target	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%
			Status	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green						
			2005/06	50.0%	30.0%	23.1%	25.0%	25.0%	28.6%	25.0%	27.6%	27.6%	28.1%	25.7%

# HIGH LEVEL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007

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BVPI	Description	Cumulative /Monthly		@ 30 Apr	@ 31 May	@ 30 June	@ 31 July	@ 31 Aug	@ 30 Sept	@ 31 Oct	@ 30 Nov	@ 31 Dec	@ 31 Jan	@ 28 Feb	@ 31 Mar
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## Customer Services Directorate

BV12	The number of working days/shifts lost to the Local Authority due to sickness absence	Cumulative	2006/07	0.60	1.20	1.71	<b>2.42</b>	<b>3.25</b>								
			Profiled target	0.44	0.88	1.52	<b>2.16</b>	<b>2.80</b>	3.60	4.48	5.36	6.16	6.88	7.36	8 days	
			Status	Red	Red	Amber	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Red</b>								
			2005/06	0.49	0.92	1.61	<b>2.18</b>	<b>3.27</b>	3.82	5.49	5.53	6.57	7.53	8.37	9.09	

**BV12** – There has been an increase in short term absence in August and a fall in long term sick leave. Service managers have been reminded of the requirement to conduct return to work meetings and to contact HR where cases are triggered under the Attendance Procedure.

BV82ai	Percentage of household waste arising which have been sent by the Authority for recycling	Cumulative	2006/07	13.35%	12.92%	13.62%	<b>13.85%</b>	<b>13.41%</b>								
			Profiled target	13.64%	12.50%	12.49%	<b>12.57%</b>	<b>12.84%</b>	12.80%	13.31%	13.49%	13.60%	13.72%	13.92%	13.63%	
			Status	Amber	Green	Green	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>								
			2005/06	14.5%	12.08%	13.72%	<b>13.78%</b>	<b>14.07%</b>	14.01%	14.44%	14.64%	14.64%	14.94%	14.98%	15.34%	
BV82bi	Percentage of household waste sent by the Authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion	Cumulative	2006/07	14.06%	21.53%	23.87%	<b>22.86%</b>	<b>21.70%</b>								
			Profiled target	14.4%	20.59%	21.54%	<b>21.40%</b>	<b>21.09%</b>	20.97%	20.27%	19.80%	18.87%	17.84%	17.20%	16.59%	
			Status	Amber	Green	Green	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>								
			2005/06	9.56%	11.54%	14.88%	<b>14.99%</b>	<b>14.75%</b>	14.72%	14.65%	14.20%	13.52%	12.52%	11.89%	11.40%	

# HIGH LEVEL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007

# APPENDIX A

BVPI	Description	Cumulative /Monthly	@ 30 Apr	@ 31 May	@ 30 June	@ 31 July	@ 31 Aug	@ 30 Sept	@ 31 Oct	@ 30 Nov	@ 31 Dec	@ 31 Jan	@ 28 Feb	@ 31 Mar
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<b>BV84a</b>	No. of kilograms of household waste collected per head of the population	Cumulative	<b>2006/07</b>	35.3	83.1	132.8	<b>172.5</b>	<b>210.9</b>							
			<b>Profiled target</b>	47.8	97.3	147.1	<b>189.3</b>	<b>232.0</b>	278.1	319.3	362.2	398.2	435.5	468.7	511.2kg
			<b>Status</b>	Green	Green	Green	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>							
			2005/06	43.9	85.7	130.6	<b>168.4</b>	<b>206.6</b>	248.0	287.0	326.0	358.9	397.9	434.8	470.4kg

<b>BV170a</b>	The number of visits to/usage's of Local Authority funded or part-funded museums/galleries per 1,000 population	Cumulative	<b>2006/07</b>	59	135	184	<b>230</b>	<b>309</b>							
			<b>Profiled target</b>	37	75	113	<b>167</b>	<b>220</b>	275	326	350	388	425	462	500
			<b>Status</b>	Green	Green	Green	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>							
			2005/06	Reported quarterly in 05/06		116	Reported quarterly in 05/06		258.94	308.82		380.88	Reported quarterly in 05/06		591.42
<b>BV170b</b>	The number of those visits to Local Authority funded, or part funded museums/galleries that were in person, per 1,000 population	Cumulative	<b>2006/07</b>	24	46	68	<b>94</b>	<b>126</b>							
			<b>Profiled target</b>	24	46	70	<b>108</b>	<b>149</b>	173	204	231	251	273	300	325
			<b>Status</b>	Green	Green	Amber	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Red</b>							
			2005/06	Reported quarterly in 05/06		70	Reported quarterly in 05/06		160.51	189.57		230.15	Reported quarterly in 05/06		295.6
<b>BV170c</b>	The number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups	Cumulative	<b>2006/07</b>	0	37	424	<b>527</b>	<b>527</b>							
			<b>Profiled target</b>	213	426	640	<b>747</b>	<b>747</b>	800	1226	1653	2080	2453	2827	3200
			<b>Status</b>	Red	Red	Red	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>							
			2005/06	Reported quarterly in 05/06		1101	Reported quarterly in 05/06		1255	1340		2068	Reported quarterly in 05/06		298.3

**BV170b** - In July there was a well-reported national drop in museum and gallery attendance, due to the hot weather. Some museums were over 10% down. Outdoor attractions had a corresponding rise in figures so that even though August numbers were actually very good, the museums appear to be doing badly. Possibly the targets were over-optimistic. **BV170c** - We expected to have very poor figures because we were without a Learning Officer for the first six months of the year. The new Learning Officer is busy booking schools in for the autumn term, so we expect this indicators performance to improve.

## HIGH LEVEL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007

## APPENDIX A

BVPI	Description	Cumulative /Monthly		@ 30 Apr	@ 31 May	@ 30 June	@ 31 July	@ 31 Aug	@ 30 Sept	@ 31 Oct	@ 30 Nov	@ 31 Dec	@ 31 Jan	@ 28 Feb	@ 31 Mar
LPI 11 (LC4)	The percentage of market stalls hired as a percentage of stalls available	Monthly	2006/07	52%	50%	50%	49%	54%							
			Profiled target	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%
			Status	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red	Amber							
			2005/06	53.22%	54.48%	54.98%	54.85%	53.72%	53.72%	55.38%	57.46%	57.26%	51.49%	51.33%	50.58%

**LPI 11** - Full Council agreed a significant reduction to stall charges for Hitchin market to £10 on a Tuesday and £15 on a Saturday, for a trial period for six months. The aim is to increase utilisation. This was introduced at the start of period 6 (8th Aug 06) and has already seen an increase in utilisation on both days. To achieve annual target, utilisation will have to increase to approximately 63%, therefore, target is still stretching.

The breakdown for stall utilisation for August is as follows:

	No. of stalls	Max Stalls
• Royston Wednesday	30	60
• Royston Saturday	33	60
• Hitchin Tuesday	115	202
• Hitchin Friday	85	202
• Hitchin Saturday	131	202

LPI 15 (LC15)	The number of swims and other leisure visits per 1000 population	Cumulative	2006/07	645	1299	2020	2934	3701							
			Profiled target	626	1233	1857	2725	3536	4011	4512	4975	5307	5881	6475	7300
			Status	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green							
			2005/06	512	1005	1578	2453	3247	3796	4329	4804	5136	5718	6312	7137

**LPI 15** – There is an alteration to May's figure. The previous figure of 1228 was due to an administration error at the leisure centre.

# HIGH LEVEL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006/2007

# APPENDIX A

BVPI	Description	Cumulative /Monthly	@ 30 Apr	@ 31 May	@ 30 June	@ 31 July	@ 31 Aug	@ 30 Sept	@ 31 Oct	@ 30 Nov	@ 31 Dec	@ 31 Jan	@ 28 Feb	@ 31 Mar
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LPI 24 (L59)	% staff receiving appraisal within the allowed time-scale	Cumulative	2006/07	1.47%	9.58%	36.12%	<b>66.63%</b>	<b>75.41%</b>							
			Profiled target	3.6%	13%	26%	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
			Status	Red	Red	Green	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>
			2005/06	3.37%	14.22%	29.73%	<b>49.24%</b>	<b>62.93%</b>	68.87%	79.77%	81.58%	83.89%	91.50%	92.12%	92.23%

**LPI 24** – This local indicator should have achieved 100% of staff receiving their appraisal and returning the completed paperwork to the L&D team by 31 July 2006. The August percentage equates to 306 out of 405 staff having had their appraisal and the paperwork processed. L&D have contacted service managers and although the majority of appraisals have now been completed the paperwork has yet to be returned.

LPI 19 (PE1)	No. of collections missed per 100,000 collections of household waste	Monthly	2006/07	14.41	24.31	17.96	<b>16.05</b>	<b>13.83</b>							
			Profiled target	32.40	32.40	32.40	<b>32.40</b>	<b>32.40</b>	32.40	32.40	32.40	32.40	32.40	32.40	32.40
			Status	Green	Green	Green	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>							
			2005/06	33.04	29.83	32.04	<b>24.54</b>	<b>33.19</b>	24.10	16.36	23.85	21.17	14.19	14.62	15.39
LPI 20 (PE2)	% of missed collections put right within allowed time-scale	Monthly	2006/07	96.55%	96.33%	94.87%	<b>95.83%</b>	<b>91.94%</b>							
			Profiled target	99%	99%	99%	<b>99%</b>	<b>99%</b>	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	
			Status	Amber	Amber	Amber	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Amber</b>							
			2005/06	100%	100%	99.22%	<b>96.08%</b>	<b>100%</b>	100%	97.06%	96.88%	97.73%	96.61%	96.36%	95.31%

LPI 19 - This shows an alteration to May's figure. The previous figure of 67.78 was due to a contractor administration error.

<b>PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE</b> <b>12 October 2006</b>
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<b>*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No.</b>  <b>9a</b>
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**TITLE OF REPORT: REVENUES AND BENEFITS PERFORMANCE: BEST VALUE  
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR - 79b (i) (ii) AND (iii)**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

**1. SUMMARY**

1.1 The Council has been unable to report on the above Performance Indicators since June 2006 due to a bug in the software used to compile these Indicators.

1.2 The Indicators relate to:

- BVPI 79b (i)

The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered during the period being reported on as a percentage of all Housing Benefit overpayments during that period.

- BVPI 79b (ii)

Housing Benefit overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of the total amount of Housing Benefit overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period plus amount of Housing Benefit overpayments identified during the period.

- BVPI 79b (iii)

Housing Benefit overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of Housing Benefit overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period, plus amount of Housing Benefit overpayments identified during the period.

1.3 At its meeting on 7 September 2006, members of PARC requested a report explaining why it has not been possible to produce these Indicators.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 These Indicators were introduced at the beginning of 2005/2006 and required a major re-write of software by our suppliers (Northgate Information Solutions) to enable the data to be extracted to meet the new requirements.
- 3.2 This work was not completed until the second quarter of 2005/2006.

### **4. ISSUES**

- 4.1 The reports were run as normal for the individual months of April and May. We were suspicious of the validity of the output data from these reports and logged a call with our Supplier's Help Desk on 3 May 2006. At the end of June, the reports were run again. As this was the end of a quarter, the reports are run twice, once to reflect the monthly figures for June alone and secondly for the overall quarterly performance statistics. It was clear at this point that the data could not be relied on.
- 4.2 It became clear from the initial investigations carried out by the Suppliers and following further calls being logged by us that there were a number of problems with the reporting suite for these Indicators and the reconciliation needed to reconcile back to two further Government returns, STATS 124 and 124A.
- 4.3 On 1 June 2006, we were advised that the Supplier was looking to confirm a specification of exactly what was required and that they would be consulting on this with a group of Users.
- 4.4 The Supplier has now confirmed that work is in progress to remedy the faults in the reports and that these will be included in the Full Release of Software scheduled for week commencing 18 December 2006.
- 4.5 The remedies will include:
- Production of an Overpayments Management Information Guide. This will explain valid reasons why there are discrepancies between some reports and the processes to be followed to make the reports balance
  - Advice on the best use of parameters and the order that reports are run
  - Most importantly, a script that will identify any discrepancies between the Overpayments reported through the Overpayments Reports and those reported on the other Government returns STATS 124 and 124A. The script will be available in very early January 2007.
- 4.6 Because we have been proactive in dealing with the Suppliers over this matter and because we work with them to test software prior to release, we have been selected to test the corrective software they will be issuing before it is released generally.
- 4.7 As we are with the Country's leading supplier of Benefits software, we will be one of around 140 Councils, which will be experiencing the same problem. We are aware that a number of Authorities will return the spurious data, even if it is known to be inaccurate.

- 4.8 Although important to meet all requirements in terms of measuring performance, the value of these particular Indicators is questionable. Traditionally those Authorities that perform well in these Indicators will be those who are least proactive in terms of identifying Fraudulent and other Benefit Overpayments. The lower the number of Overpayments raised, the easier it is to have a high recovery rate and low incidence of write off. Those Councils like NHDC that are very proactive in this area have a much tougher job to perform highly in these Indicators.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has an obligation to report on its Best Value Performance Indicators. It is recognised that from time-to-time it is not possible to report on certain Indicators and in those circumstances any Authority should advise the Department for Works and Pensions or other relevant Government Department of any problems and what it is doing to remedy these.
- 5.2 We should be in a position to make an accurate return for the third quarter of 2006/2007 and beyond.

## **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There is a risk that the deadline of December 2006 will not be met. The Council will continue to seek assurances from the Supplier that the deadline will be met. As we will be involved in the pre-release testing, we should be in a position to influence the quality of the release.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no Human Resources or Equalities implications in this report.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

- 8.1 There has been no consultation in relation to this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That Members of PARC note this report and that a further report be prepared should the Supplier not meet the December 2006 deadline to remedy the errors in the reporting suite.

## **10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To enable Members to keep informed of progress.

**11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

11.1 None.

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 None

**13. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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**14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14.1 None

**TITLE OF REPORT: BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 109 a,b and c  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS - UPDATE**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING &amp; BUILDING CONTROL

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To inform and update Members regarding the current situation regarding BVPI 109.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 The report does not contain any key decisions and is thus not included within the Forward Plan.

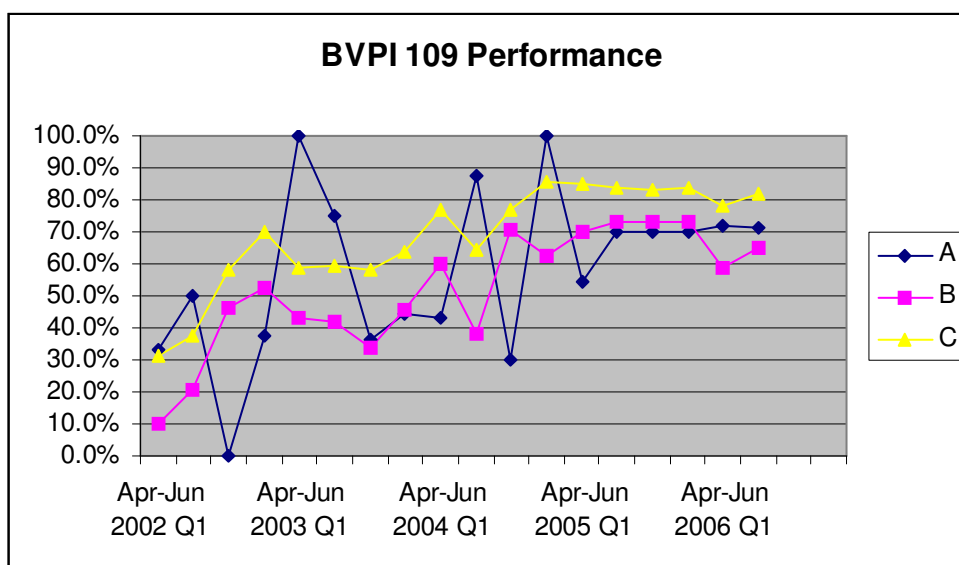
**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Audit Commission contacted the Authority early in 2005 to advise that a service inspection would be undertaken on the Planning and Building Control Service. The service inspection was one of the first to be carried out for an environment service area which embraced the corporate Value For Money (VFM) principles. The Audit Commission team were on site in the week commencing the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2005 and the on-site week constituted a series of meetings with Officers and Members, sitting-in on technical meetings and team meetings and a number of staff focus groups. In essence, the process that the Audit Commission followed was that of a mini CPA Inspection rather than a traditional audit.
- 3.2 The report of the Audit Commission was published in February 2006 and it was considered by PARC in April 2006. In concluding on the matter PARC requested an update on BVPI 109 at its October meeting.

**4. ISSUES**

- 4.1 Members of PARC will be aware the performance of the Planning Control function of the Council in relation to BVPI 109 has been an area of concern in 2002/03 and (to a lesser extent in 2003/04) following acute staff recruitment and retention problems within the Service. There have been significant improvements to the performance of the Planning Control Service in the period since 2002/03 and on a rolling year basis the service now meets and exceeds all the requirements of BVPI 109. The requirement to meet BVPI 109 comes into place on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.

- 4.2 Over the previous years a series of improvements have been introduced and these have included a “trajectory” for profiling the improvements to the speed of determining applications and again, these have all been either met or exceeded.
- 4.3 The Council was not designated a "Standards Authority" for 2006/7 and on present performance it will meet or exceed BVPI targets for 2006/7.
- 4.4 During the early part of this monitoring year there were a number of short term difficulties that affected performance in the early part of 2006/7 which PARC will have noted in their monthly report on the high level indicators. These short term difficulties stemmed from a combination of a reduction in the number of staff and an increase in applications compared with the profile. In terms of staffing there was a coincidence of two long term sickness absences in one of the teams combined with difficulties in securing maternity cover. Applications numbers are still approximately 4% higher than last year. The measures put in place have dealt with these matters and the service is on target to meet or exceed BVPI 109 targets by the end of September 2006.
- 4.5 The graph below shows performance improvement since 2002/3 and demonstrates sustained improvements in the speed of determining applications.



- 4.6 Two vacant Planning Officer posts will shortly be filled which will assist the capacity of the team which has been dealing with workloads in excess of DCLG guidelines.
- 4.7 There have been significant improvements to the process of booking -in applications since the early part of 2006. An increased amount of information is available on the Council's web site and **all** applications are now updated on a daily basis. Applications are now booked in within 2-3 days of receipt and this includes scanning and uploading of all documents.

- 4.8 BVPI 204 shows that the number of appeals against decisions has fallen (20 compared with 21 to the end of August) and perhaps more importantly the Council's success rate at appeal has increased (14% allowed compared with 25% - the national average is approx. 35% appeals allowed).

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial or risk implications directly arising from this report. The final year of Planning Delivery Grant awards is for the period 2007/8. The consultation on criteria can be found on the DCLG website [www.dclg.gov.uk](http://www.dclg.gov.uk). The Council's response to the consultation is set out in Appendix 1 to this report. The Planning Control award for 2007/8 relies on Council's meeting the BVPI targets. Unlike previous years there is no performance award for Councils exceeding the target.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no human resource or equalities implications arising from the contents of this report, except the additional work that will be required to implement the Action Plan which was agreed by PARC and Cabinet in April and June 2006 respectively. This is taken into account in the use of PDG and through the Service and Financial Planning process.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

- 8.1 Councillor Thake is being kept fully informed and involved through regular Portfolio Holder briefings.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That the contents of this report are noted and that the measures to maintain and improve performance within budget constraints form a key feature in service delivery.

## **10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 To ensure that BVPI 109 performance meets or exceeds the national targets set out in Public Sector Agreement 5.

## **11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 The Council is required to meet the BVPI and the options for improving performance have been included in the previously approved Improvement and Action Plans.

## **12. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 13.1 Audit Commission Inspection Report  
13.2 PARC Reports

## **14. APPENDICES**

- 14.1 Appendix A - Letter to DCLG